



Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Erika Storlie, Assistant City Manager
Michelle L. Masoncup, Corporation Counsel

Subject: Resolution 51-R-18, Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with citizens' group, Evanston Lighthouse Dunes, and to File an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness with the Preservation Commission to Begin the Process to Demolish the Harley Clarke Mansion and Coach House and Restore the Site to its Natural State

Date: July 19, 2018

Recommended Action:

Staff submits for City Council consideration Resolution 51-R-18 authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Evanston Lighthouse Dunes, to provide funding for the costs associated with the restoration of the dunes and gardens and demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion and Coach House. Following the execution of the MOU, Resolution 51-R-18 also directs the City Manager or his designee to file an application for a certificate of appropriateness with the Preservation Commission and follow the process outlined in Title 2, Chapter 8 of the City Code of 2012, as amended, to apply for approval to demolish the mansion and coach house.

Livability Benefit:

Built Environment: Enhance public spaces

Funding Source:

Evanston Lakehouse Dunes, a community group

Summary:

At the June 18, 2018 City Council meeting, the City Council adopted Resolution 43-R-18, which authorized the City Manager to meet with the Evanston Lighthouse Dunes (ELD) organization to negotiate the costs associated with the restoration of the dunes and gardens and demolition of the Harley Clarke mansion and coach house.

The City Manager and staff have met with ELD and provided the attached MOU for consideration. The MOU has the following main points:

1. ELD will provide checks from donors directly to the City for deposit in an agency holding account in the total amount of \$400,000 within 60 days;
2. While the City follows the public process outlined in Title 2, Chapter 8 of the City Code of 2012 ("Historic Preservation Regulations") to receive approval to demolish the mansion and coach house, the \$400,000 will remain in the agency account.
3. If the necessary approvals are granted at the conclusion of the public process, the City will use the \$400,000 for demolition of the structures, procurement costs, grading, filling and landscaping. Any remaining funds in the account after this point will remain with the City for future landscaping and maintenance at the property.
4. At the conclusion of 24 months from the effective date of the MOU, if the City has not obtained the necessary approval to demolish the Mansion and Coach House, the MOU will be null and void. The funds deposited in the agency account will be refunded to individuals that donated funds within 60 days of confirmation that the project will not move forward.

Except for the revised cost estimate (\$16,245) submitted by Nels Johnson included in this packet, the cost estimates for demolition and site restoration are based on those provided to the City Council at the June 18, 2018 meeting. Based on these estimates, staff can reasonably conclude that \$400,000 will cover the costs of demolition and site restoration and that no City funding will be necessary to complete the project.

Once the MOU has been executed, the City Manager or his designee will file an application for a certificate of appropriateness with the Preservation Commission and follow the process outlined in Title 2, Chapter 8 of the City Code of 2012, as amended, to apply for approval to demolish the mansion and coach house.

Legislative History:

On June 18, 2018, City Council approved Resolution 43-R-18, authorizing the City Manager to meet with Evanston Lighthouse Dunes Organization to negotiate an agreement on the costs associated with the restoration of the dunes and gardens, and demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion and Coach House.

Attachments:

Resolution 51-R-18

Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Evanston Lighthouse Dunes

Evanston Lighthouse Dunes Pledge List

Nels Johnson Cost Estimate

Wayne Boyer Email

Steve Lubet Letter to the Editor

Blair Kamen Chicago Tribune Articles (2)

51-R-18

A RESOLUTION

Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Funding Agreement with the citizens' group known as the Evanston Lighthouse Dunes to pay for Costs Associated with Demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion and Coach House, Grading the Property and Site Restoration

WHEREAS, the City owns certain real property located at 2603 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois that is improved with a three-story single-family residential structure and a single-story coach house, commonly referred to as the "Harley Clarke Mansion" (the "Subject Property"); and

WHEREAS, the City purchased the property in 1965 in order to expand lakefront public parkland for the benefit of the residents of Evanston; and

WHEREAS, over the past 6 years, the City of Evanston considered many options for adaptive reuse of the Subject Property from various groups with different proposals found to be not in the best interests of the City of Evanston; and

WHEREAS, during the June 18, 2018 City Council meeting, the City Council passed Resolution 43-R-18 which authorized the City Manager to negotiate a funding agreement with a citizens' group, Evanston Lighthouse Dunes, that offered to donate all of the funds necessary to restore the Subject Property to its natural state, including funding the cost to demolish the Subject Property, removal of trees, grade and seed the land and site restoration; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the best interests of the City of Evanston would be served by executing the attached funding agreement with Evanston Lighthouse Dunes group; and

WHEREAS, following execution of the funding agreement, the Council also directs the City Manager or his designee to file an application for a certificate of appropriateness with the Preservation Commission and following the process outlined in Title 2, Chapter 8 of the City Code of 2012, as amended, to apply for approval to demolish the mansion and coach house,

NOW BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EVANSTON, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS:

SECTION 1: The City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to execute the agreement with Evanston Lighthouse Dunes which is attached as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2: The City Manager or his designee are hereby authorized to file the necessary paperwork and process to request a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Preservation Commission and follow all necessary steps and take appropriate actions in conformance with Title 2, Chapter 8 of the City Code of 2012 to seek approval to demolish the Harley Clarke Mansion and the coach house.

SECTION 3: This Resolution 51-R-18 shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

Attest:

Stephen H. Hagerty, Mayor

Devon Reid, City Clerk

Michelle L. Masoncup,
Corporation Counsel

Adopted: _____, 2018

EXHIBIT 1
FUNDING AGREEMENT

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (this “**Memorandum**”) is made and entered into as of the ____ day of _____, 2018 (the “**Effective Date**”), by and among EVANSTON LIGHTHOUSE DUNES, a citizens’ group, (“**ELD**”), and THE CITY OF EVANSTON, a municipal corporation (the “**City**”). Lighthouse Dunes and the City are sometimes referred to herein individually as a “**Party**” and collectively as the “**Parties**”.

R E C I T A L S:

A. WHEREAS, the City owns certain real property located at 2603 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois, which is improved with a three story home and a coach house and commonly known as the “Harley Clarke Mansion” (the “Subject Property”); and

B. WHEREAS, the Subject Property is a total of 219,397 square feet (approximately 5 acres) in size, contains a beach and natural dunes as part of the property, and bounded by a City park to the north and the Lighthouse and Fog Houses to the South; and

C. WHEREAS, ELD is a group of citizens and not a registered group with the Secretary of State, it consists of Jeff Coney, Nicole Kustok, William Stafford, Charles Lewis, Joseph Flanagan, Noreen Edwards and other interested members of the community; and

D. WHEREAS, ELD offers to provide the City of Evanston the necessary funding needed to pay for certain costs associated with demolishing the mansion and coach house, grade the Subject Property and perform deferred landscape maintenance (landscaping);

E. WHEREAS, the City, as property owner, must follow a public process outlined in Title 2, Chapter 8 of the City Code of 2012 (“Historic Preservation Regulations”) to receive approval to demolish the structures on the Subject Property because they are landmarks registered with the City of Evanston; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants set forth herein, and for other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged and agreed, the Parties hereto agree as follows:

1. Recitals. The foregoing recitals are acknowledged to be accurate and are incorporated herein by reference.

2. Funding Commitment. Parties commit to ongoing cooperation to provide the City of Evanston ample time to follow the necessary procedures to apply for and consider the demolition of the structures on the Subject Property. ELD affirms that it will collect and donate \$400,000 to the City of Evanston for the cost for demolition, grading and landscaping if the demolition is ultimately approved following the public process. The money will be put into a City of Evanston agency account within 60 days. If the money is not funded within 60 days of the Effective Date, the agreement will be null and void. ELD agrees to provide a list of names of individuals who have made pledges as of the Effective Date that can be published by the City. After the Effective Date, ELD will update the list with the City as donations are made to the described project.

3. Cost of Demolition and Landscaping. The demolition cost (Taylor Excavating - \$298,672) + tree removal and related costs (Nels Johnson - \$16,245) + Procurement Costs - \$73,350) for a total cost of \$388,267 (see attachments). ELD warrants that it will guarantee funding of up to \$400,000 for the cost of the demolition, grading, filling and landscaping and to allow for inflation during the 6 to 12 month period it is estimated that it will take to receive final approvals for this project.

4. Public Process. The Parties understand that the public process is as follows: The steps for approval of the demolition are as follows:

A. The City Council must adopt a resolution approving the City Manager or his designee to file an application for certificate of appropriateness for the demolition with the Evanston Preservation Commission (§2-8-8(C)).

B. The Preservation Commission reviews and votes on the application within 45 days of receipt. In considering an application for a certificate of appropriateness for demolition, the Commission shall consider only the following general standards and the standards included in Subsection 2-8-9(E):

1. Whether the property, structure or object is of such historic, cultural, architectural or archaeological significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
2. Whether the property, structure or object contributes to the distinctive historic, cultural, architectural or archaeological character of the district as a whole and should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State.
3. Whether demolition of the property, structure or object would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this Chapter and to the objectives of the historic preservation for the applicable district.
4. Whether the property, structure or object is of such old, unusual or uncommon design, texture, and/or material that it could not be reproduced without great difficulty and/or expense.
5. Whether the property, structure or object is of such physical condition that it represents a danger and imminent hazard condition to persons or property and that retention, remediation, or repair are not physically possible or require great difficulty and/or expense.
6. Except in cases where the owner has no plans for a period of up to five (5) years to replace an existing landmark or property, structure or object in a district, no certificate of appropriateness shall be issued until plans for a replacement structure or object have been reviewed and approved by the Commission.(§2-8-9(D)).

C. If the Preservation Commission rejects the certificate of appropriateness, then the City may appeal the Preservation Commission decision to the City Council within 30 days. (§2-8-8(G)(7)).

D. Denial or grant by the City Council of a certificate of appropriateness is considered a final decision of the certificate appropriateness and may be appealed to the Circuit Court of Cook County.(§2-8-8(G)(7)). If the Demolition appeal is granted, the City may proceed with applying for the demolition permit.

E. If the Demolition appeal is denied, the City may apply for a certificate of special merit (§2-8-11) or certificate of economic hardship (§2-8-10). Certificate of Special Merit is reviewed by the City Council.

F. If the City opts to apply for the Certificate of Economic Hardship, this is reviewed by the Preservation Commission. If the Certificate of Economic Hardship is denied by the Preservation Commission, this can be appealed to the City Council. (§2-8-10(M)(1))

5. Overage of Donation Funds. If the demolition is approved, the City will disburse funds to the contractors to pay for the project costs associated with the demolition, grading and site restoration. Following payment to the contractors, if there is a balance in the account from the donations, the City will retain the funds to use for landscaping and other maintenance at the Subject Property.

6. Entire Agreement; Modification. This Memorandum contains the entire agreement among the Parties with respect to the matters contemplated hereby, and supersedes all prior agreements, written or oral, with respect thereto. This Memorandum may not be modified, changed, amended, supplemented or rescinded except pursuant to a written instrument that is duly executed by all Parties. The Parties agree to be bound by all terms of this Memorandum, unless it is modified by all Parties as provided herein.

7. Invalid Provisions. If any provision of this Memorandum is held to be illegal, invalid or unenforceable under any present or future law, and if the rights or obligations of any Party under this Memorandum will not be materially and adversely affected thereby, (a) such provision will be fully severable, (b) this Memorandum will be construed and enforced as if such illegal, invalid or unenforceable provision had never comprised a part hereof, and (c) the remaining provisions of this Memorandum will remain in full force and effect and will not be affected by the illegal, invalid or unenforceable provision or by its severance herefrom.

8. Counterparts. This Memorandum may be executed in one or more original counterparts, each of which when taken together shall constitute one and the same original Memorandum. Any signature delivered by facsimile or by electronic transmission shall be deemed to be an original signature hereto.

9. Headings. The Parties hereby acknowledge and agree that all headings contained in this Memorandum are used solely for convenience and are not to be interpreted as part of this Memorandum.

10. Expiration. At the conclusion of 24 months from the Effective Date, if the City has not obtained the necessary approval to demolish the Mansion and Coach House, this agreement will be null and void. The funds deposited in the agency account will be refunded to individuals that donated funds within 60 days of confirmation that the project will not move forward.

[Signature pages follow]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have executed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the Effective Date first written above.

EVANSTON LIGHTHOUSE DUNES,
a citizens' group

Name: _____
Nicole Kustok

Name: _____
Jeff Coney

Name: _____
Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation

Name: _____
William A. Stafford

Name: _____
Joseph P. Flanagan

Name: _____
Noreen Edwards

THE CITY OF EVANSTON,
an Illinois municipal corporation

By: _____
Wally Bobkiewicz
City Manager, City of Evanston

Lighthouse Dunes List of Financial Pledges

As of July 19, 2018

Ann Adams & Kent Bostick

Linda Mathews

John Alsterda

Alec Mckenna

Daniel Burns

Ann & Tom McMahon

Mary Clark

Noreen Edwards & Mark Metz

Liz & Jeff Coney

Matt Mirapaul

Candice & Tony Dalrymple

Amy Mosser & J David Vance

Steven Demorest

Luke Norland

Margaret & Joe Flanagan

Mike Norris

Veronica & Allan Francisco

Dick Peach

Kathy Gleiss & William Pink

Cydney & Will Post

Lori & Adam Goodman

John Robinson

Ross Hill

Matt Rodgers

Lane Howard

Marc Rolfes

Cindy & Bill Keesom

William Stafford

Amy & Chico Kurzawski

Chris Taylor

Nicole & Zak Kustok

Jess & Jim Ticus

David & Mary Leitchuh

Paula Twilling

Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation

Jean & Bob Ward

Kelly Marcelle

Susan Whiting

Joe & Rachel Mathews

Megan McCarville & Mark Witte

Clark Mathews



912 Pitner Avenue • Evanston, IL 60202 • ph: 847.475.1877 • fx: 847.475.0037 • nelsjohnsontree.com

July 13, 2018

City of Evanston
 Paul D'Agostino
 2100 Ridge Avenue
 Evanston, IL 60201

Job Name:
 Proposal Date:
 SalesRep:

Page:1
 City of Evanston 20180713
 7/13/2018
 David Conrad

Work Site:
 2603 Sheridan Rd
 Evanston, IL 60201

Item#	Description of Services	Item Amount	Accept
1	Tree Removal Removal of all small trees growing up in the dune grasses of Lighthouse Park. Remove all dead ash, boxelders, Norway maples, willow and vines, etc. along transition area from dunes to the table land (lawn) from the parking lot to the LPD parcel. Leave the oaks in the lawn, cottonwood, linden, elm, good silver maple, black cherry, aspen and any other desirable native trees. Leave shrubs above Council Ring. Trim cottonwood northeast of handicap ramp. Trim two (2) bur oak, black oak, linden, and double trunk white oak in lawn between building and dunes. Trim ironwood against building south of front door. Remove ash northeast of coach house. Trim linden and ironwood west side of north wing. Trim two (2) lindens, three (3) silver maples, sugar maple and one (1) beech in west lawn - leave low sweeping branches on the beech. Remove grapevine, honeysuckles, volunteer ash, Virginia creeper only north side of coach house. Dispose of debris. (Dormant season for oaks.)	\$13,400.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Routing Of Stump Rout stumps as much as possible except in dunes. <i>When necessary, Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. will contact J.U.L.I.E. to locate underground utilities. Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. Is not responsible for damages to underground sprinklers, drain lines, invisible fences or underground cables unless the system(s) are adequately mapped by the authorizing party and a copy is presented before or at the time the work is performed. *Typically the stump(s) are not removed the same day as the tree(s). The stump(s) will be removed in a timely manner. *</i>	\$1,900.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Fertilizer Application Fertilizer Application - Liquid pressure fertilize beech, sugar maple, four (4) ironwoods, black, white and bur oaks with balanced tree nutrients. <i>A high analysis slow release fertilizer with water soluble micro-nutrients will be injected into the root zone of your trees and/or shrubs to improve plant health and vigor.</i>	\$800.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Other - PHC Paint Agri-Fos onto south side of beech trunk to help protect against bleeding canker.	\$145.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

All normal work operations to be performed according to ANSI A300 standards. Liability and Workman's Compensation insurance certificates are available upon request. Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. is fully insured. Should you have any questions, or if you wish to make changes to this proposal, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Proposal Subtotal: \$16,245.00

Proposal Total: \$16,245.00



912 Pitner Avenue • Evanston, IL 60202 • ph: 847.475.1877 • fx: 847.475.0037 • nelsjohnsontree.com

July 13, 2018

City of Evanston
Paul D'Agostino
2100 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201

Job Name:
Proposal Date:
SalesRep:

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City of Evanston 20180713
7/13/2018
David Conrad

Work Site:
2603 Sheridan Rd
Evanston, IL 60201

Item# Description of Services Item Amount Accept

Respectfully submitted,

David Conrad
Board Certified Master Arborist
IL-0158B

Acceptance of Proposal: The above prices, specifications and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted. You are authorized to do the work as specified. This proposal may be withdrawn by us if not accepted within 90 days. Please note terms of payment on the back of this proposal.

A 25% deposit is required on all proposals over \$500.
A 3% SURCHARGE WILL BE ADDED IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD.

SCAN AND EMAIL YOUR SIGNED AUTHORIZATION TO: office@nelsjohnsontree.com

Signed: _____ Date of Acceptance: _____



Terms and Conditions

It is agreed by and between Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. and the authorizing party (customer and/or customer's agent) that the following provisions are made as part of this contract:

Insurance by Contractor: Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. warrants that it is insured for liability resulting from injury to person(s) or property and that all employees are covered by Workers' Compensation as required by law. Certificates of coverage are available upon request.

Cancellation Fee: Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. kindly requests that the authorizing party provide at least 24 hours advance notice of any full or partial work cancellation. If a crew has been dispatched to the job site, the customer will be assessed a mobilization fee of 10% for incurred expenses.

Completion of Contract: Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. work crews may arrive at the jobsite unannounced unless otherwise noted herein. Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. agrees to do its best to meet any agreed upon performance dates, but shall not be liable in damages or otherwise for delays because of inclement weather, labor, or any other cause beyond its control; nor shall the customer be relieved of completion for delays.

Tree Ownership: The authorizing party warrants that all trees listed are located on the customer's property, and, if not, that the authorizing party has received full permission from the owner to allow Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. to perform the specified work. Should any tree be mistakenly identified as to ownership, the customer agrees to indemnify Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. for any damages or costs incurred from the result thereof.

Safety: Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. warrants that all arboricultural operations will follow the latest version of the ANSI Z133.1 industry safety standards. The authorizing party agrees to not enter the work area during arboricultural operations unless authorized by the crew leader on-site.

ANSI A300 Tree Care Standard Definitions: The following definitions apply to specifications detailed in this proposal:

clean: Selective pruning to remove one or more of the following parts: dead, diseased, and/or broken branches. Unless noted otherwise on this proposal, all cleaning will be of branches 1 inch diameter or greater throughout the entire crown.

crown: The leaves and branches of a tree measured from the lowest branch on the trunk to the top of the tree.

leader: A dominant or co-dominant, upright stem.

raise: Selective pruning to provide vertical clearance.

reduce: Selective pruning to decrease height and/or spread by removing specified branches.

restore: Selective pruning to improve the structure, form, and appearance of trees that have been severely headed, vandalized, or damaged.

thin: Selective pruning to reduce density of live branches, usually by removing entire branches.

vista pruning: Selective pruning to allow a specific view, usually by creating view "windows" through the tree's crown.

Stump Removal: Unless specified in the proposal, stump removal is not included in the price quoted. Grindings from stump removal are not hauled unless specified in this proposal. Surface and subsurface roots beyond the stump are not removed unless specified in this proposal.

Concealed Contingencies: Any additional work or equipment required to complete the work, caused by the authorizing party's failure to make known or caused by previously unknown foreign material in the trunk, the branches, underground, or any other condition not apparent in estimating the work specified, shall be paid for by the customer on a time and material basis. Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. is not responsible for damages to underground sprinklers, drain lines, invisible fences or underground cables unless the system(s) are adequately and accurately mapped by the authorizing party and a copy is presented before or at the time the work is performed.

Clean-up: Clean-up shall include removing wood, brush, and clippings, and raking of the entire area affected by the specified work, unless noted otherwise on this proposal.

Lawn Repair: Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, Inc. will attempt to minimize all disturbances to the customer's lawn. Lawn repairs are not included in the contract price, unless noted otherwise on this proposal.

Terms of Payment: Unless otherwise noted in this proposal, the customer agrees to pay the account in full upon work completion. Failure to remit full payment within the payment term will result in a finance charge of 1.5% per month. The customer will be responsible for all costs associated with the collection of any past due amounts, including, but not limited to, attorney fees and court costs.

Returned Check Fee: There will be a \$25.00 fee charged for all checks returned to our office for non-sufficient funds.

7/4/2018

FROM: Wayne Boyer / [1324 Greenleaf / Evanston, IL](#)

TO: Blair Kamin
Architecture Critic, Chicago Tribune

CC: Mayor Hagerty and the Evanston City Council

RE: Harley Clark house

Dear Mr. Kamin,

The green spaces of the city's lakefront parks, and open access to the lake and beaches, were major factors in the decision my wife and I made to settle in SW Evanston, one mile from the lake, 42 years ago. The architecture in our city certainly contributes to the quality of life here, and the preservation of historic and deserving structures is important. But what happens when an historic piece of architecture obscures and conflicts with a better one?

You may remember the film "THE BUILDING: Chicago Stock Exchange" - a film I made documenting the fight to preserve the Adler & Sullivan building in the 70's, and graphically showing its eventual destruction. As you know, the loss of the Stock Exchange became a rallying point for architectural preservation and was the impetus for forming Landmarks Illinois the premier preservationist organization in Illinois. I am proud that my film has been presented at many of their annual meetings. This film, and another that I made for Judith McBrian, "The Loop: Where the Skyscraper Began", indicate my interest in the history, and the preservation of architectural landmarks.

I have read many of your articles on Chicago's architecture and have admired your insightful commentary and critiques. I saw your commentary recently on WTTW, about the Harley Clarke house in Evanston, and read your recent Tribune article indicating your support of efforts to save it from demolition. While the mansion may be a good example, as you said, of Tudor revival style architecture, I think there are other factors to consider when deciding the fate of this structure. If the plan were to replace it with a condo building or a commercial structure, efforts to save it might be worthwhile. But that is not the case here. This building is located next to a much more important architectural landmark which is obscured and denigrated by the imposing presence of the mansion. I am referring to Evanston's iconic architectural landmark, the Grosse Point Lighthouse, which sits next door to the Harley Clarke house and, along with it, occupies Lighthouse Park District land. I am surprised that you do not even refer in your commentary to the existence of the 1873 lighthouse, an historic and impressive piece of architecture.

As good an example of a past architectural style as the Harley Clarke mansion may be, in my opinion, its architectural and historical value is minimal compared to

the Grosse Point Lighthouse, one of the most beautiful on the Great Lakes. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in the 1990's, then the only lighthouse to receive such recognition west of the east coast. Its image has become the symbol of Evanston. Its portrait adorns many official city documents, directories, community brochures and business advertisements. It is the lighthouse, and not the mansion that is the rare "treasure" Evanston has on its hands.

The Grosse Point lighthouse is impressive to those who see it - ***if they can see it***. Unfortunately, for people entering the park, the lighthouse is quickly obscured behind the six brick chimneys and the massive hulk of a house that dominates the site. The tip of the lighthouse poking out from behind the chimneys and wall of bricks, can be mistaken for just another smokestack (see pictures).

If the Harley Clarke mansion truly had important architectural significance, I think you would have identified it as such more forcefully. Instead, you say references to it in a book, that includes other, more prominent architects put it in "good company". You admire how solidly the building is built, and suggest that this is somehow a reason to preserve it. Clearly the Harley Clarke mansion was originally designed to present an impressive façade to Sheridan Road, with the lighthouse functioning as little more than a very nice *yard ornament*.

While the building's exterior is interesting, there is nothing welcoming about the mansion for lakefront visitors. It not only obscures the lake and the lighthouse, it is also an obstacle for people to navigate around in order to experience the lake and sand dunes behind the building.

Evanston leaders should be applauded for trying so long to find an appropriate use for the house. While proposals were forthcoming and much discussion occurred, none in actual practice, could ensure easy, open access for all people befitting public park land. *It is time to consider the benefits of not having the Harley Clarke mansion there.*

The City of Evanston now has the opportunity to remove the mansion from what is park-land best made open to be used freely by the public. By doing so the city would allow the Grosse Point Lighthouse to once again oversee the expanse of its site with dignity, with only grass and trees in the foreground rather than a labyrinth of chimneys and bricks. Finally, it is possible to bring it out from behind the Harley Clarke "wall", which, in the afternoon casts its looming shadow across the sand dunes to the east. It would be far better that the slim shadow of the lighthouse sweep unencumbered across the park land. After all, with architecture, site matters.

You indicated that a group of people "who live nearby" want to finance the demolition of the Harley Clark house. No doubt these folks would like to have the mansion removed to open up Lighthouse Park for a better view of the lake and they, among others, are willing to pay for it. How can there be anything wrong with that, since it would also be opened up for all of us.

Sincerely,

Wayne Boyer

wboyer-1@outlook.com





Letter: Evanston has a choice: A historic mansion or a restored lakefront

JUNE 25, 2018, 3:10 PM

Tribune architecture critic [Blair Kamin](#) argues strongly against even considering the demolition of Evanston's Harley Lyman Clarke mansion and returning the grounds to dunes and beachfront.

Recognizing that the building has been empty and deteriorating since 2015, and that full rehabilitation of the mansion will cost in excess of \$7 million, Kamin is still optimistic that "an appropriate vision for its future" will eventually materialize. As an example, he offers the old Cook County Hospital, empty since 2003, which will soon become the home of a \$135 million hotel and office building.

The unappreciated irony, however, is that many of the people now protesting demolition were previously responsible for killing a proposal to turn the mansion into a boutique hotel (while maintaining public beach access), under the slogan "People Not Profit."

We might wish it otherwise, but historic preservation most often depends on finding viable commercial uses for old buildings. Having observed this process for three years — without any preconceptions — I have come to the reluctant conclusion that we Evanstonians can have either a profit-free lakefront or a preserved mansion. But we cannot have both.

— *Steven Lubet, director, Bartlit Center for Trial Advocacy, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law*

Submit a letter to the editor [here](#) or email letters@chicagotribune.com.

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Column: Wake up, Evanston leaders. You've got a treasure on your hands. Don't demolish the Harley Clarke Mansion.



The Harley Clarke Mansion is owned by Evanston and is the home of the Evanston Art Center.



By **Blair Kamin**
Chicago Tribune

JUNE 22, 2018, 6:00 AM

Even some of the people who want to tear down [Evanston's](#) Harley Lyman Clarke House admit it's a valuable piece of architecture. But they don't seem to know just how valuable.

The impressive but down-at-the-heels Tudor Revival mansion, which boasts six towering chimneys, a red tile roof and a spectacular curving stair hall, gets six full pages in a book that celebrates North Shore houses designed by such architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Howard Van Doren Shaw and David Adler. That's elite company. Yet despite the opposition of dozens of community members,

Evanston's City Council on Monday [authorized the city manager](#) to look into a still-vague, privately funded plan to scrap the mansion and turn its lakefront site into parkland.

What in the name of progressive politics is going on here? How can a left-leaning town that has shot down skyscraper proposals on the grounds that they would wipe out historic buildings be contemplating the destruction of an official city landmark?

To be sure, Evanston has been trying for years to figure out a way to preserve and reuse the mansion, which has sat empty since the Evanston Art Center moved out in 2015. But the failure of those attempts and the financial hurdles facing a renovation do not justify even the first step down the road to demolition.

The mansion, just north of Northwestern University's campus, is a precious, irreplaceable architectural and cultural resource. Instead of exploring how to get rid of it, the city should be redoubling its efforts to save it.

As Evanston-based architect Stuart Cohen and historic preservation consultant Susan Benjamin write in their 2004 book, "North Shore Chicago: Houses of the Lakefront Suburbs, 1890-1940," the 1927 mansion at 2603 Sheridan Road was designed by architect Richard Powers and built for its namesake, a utilities magnate, and his family. It had 16 rooms, including a conservatory that provided relief from Chicago's bleak winters. "It was the last house of its size to be built in Evanston before the 1929 stock market crash," the authors observe. Jens Jensen did the landscaping. A little more than 20 years later, things changed.

According to Cohen and Benjamin, the Clarke family left Evanston in 1949 and sold the mansion to the Sigma Chi fraternity, which turned the house into its national headquarters. Evanston bought the house in the 1960s and leased it to the local arts center. In the last few years, reuse proposals have come and gone.

The most notable plan, Jennifer Pritzker's [attempt to convert](#) the mansion into a boutique hotel, was rejected by the City Council in 2013 after residents objected that it would put a key chunk of the city's public lakefront in private hands. Then last April, the council turned down a proposal from the nonprofit Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens to turn the mansion into an environmental education center after aldermen expressed doubt that the group could reach its multimillion-dollar fundraising goals.

Which brings us to the present demolition plan, which comes from an informal group that calls itself Evanston Lighthouse Dunes. The group consists of about 25 households, one of its leaders, former Northwestern Director of Economic Development Jeff Coney told me Thursday. "We're not saying it's

not a valuable piece of architecture,” he said of the mansion, but Evanston lacks the “philanthropic bandwidth” to restore the house while addressing other needs.

The plan to demolish the mansion, Coney said, presents a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity” to restore lakefront dunes, recreate green space and open views of the adjoining Grosse Point Lighthouse. The group has garnered pledges of \$300,000 toward the project, which has an estimated price tag of \$447,000, he said, but the offer won’t last forever.

“Either we get this done and move forward or this will be taken off the table,” Coney said.

The view here is very different: Evanston needs to slow down, not move on. And even though it expects to run a budget deficit next year, the city needs to ensure that private citizens don’t usurp its public planning process. Once the mansion’s gone, it’s gone, and nothing can bring it back. The key going forward is to ask the right questions about the house’s current condition and keep it stabilized until an appropriate vision for its future materializes. Think of Cook County Hospital, which faced a teardown threat in 2003 but was mothballed after wiser heads concluded what a loss its demolition would be. On June 12, developers broke ground for a \$135 million revamp that will turn the vacant beaux-arts landmark into hotel, office and retail space.

The mansion remains structurally sound, according to Edward Gerns, a principal in the Chicago office of Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, which in 2016 did a pro bono assessment of the house for the advocacy group Landmarks Illinois. The firm’s report estimates it would cost about \$400,000 to fix cosmetic problems like cracked stonework at the mansion. But that’s just the low-hanging fruit. Evanston has estimated that a full-blown rehab would cost more than \$7 million.

City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz, who will meet with the dunes group, said he’s likely to update the City Council in late July or mid-August. He should press the group for a design, which it currently lacks, and ask whether the group would pony up for a contingency fund should the demolition costs exceed estimates.

The bigger issue, though, is time. It’s understandable that, after years of frustration, Evanston officials want to settle the mansion’s future. But that’s no excuse for expedient decision-making.

Keep the mansion on life support until it can thrive.

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Column: Evanston plan to demolish Harley Clarke mansion: Public vision or hidden agendas?



The Harley Clarke Mansion is owned by Evanston and is the home of the Evanston Art Center.



By **Blair Kamin**
Chicago Tribune

JULY 14, 2018, 11:43 AM

With a lack of transparency that would be stunning even in Chicago, Evanston is about to move forward with a plan that would privately fund the demolition of a publicly owned building that's an official city landmark and part of a district listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

With its six towering chimneys and a red-tile roof, the 91-year-old Tudor Revival Harley Clarke Mansion at 2603 Sheridan Road is a striking architectural presence. It also has some prominent neighbors.

Evanston Mayor Stephen Hagerty, who said in June that it was time to resolve the long-running debate over the building's future, lives in a lakefront mansion on a secluded street just to the south. Nicole Kustok, one of the public faces of a group that would bankroll the demolition, lives almost across Sheridan Road. And Charles Lewis, a philanthropist who has acknowledged supporting the group, lives in another lakefront mansion a few blocks north.

The group, which calls itself Evanston Lighthouse Dunes, is selling its proposal as a public-spirited gesture, one that will take a long-festering problem off the hands of its financially strapped city by replacing the shuttered mansion with a swath of parkland, beaches and dunes. But because the group isn't a registered nonprofit, it doesn't have to list its leaders and document fundraising activities. That leaves critical questions unanswered:

Who belongs to it? How much are they giving? What percentage of them live nearby? Would their property values rise if the Harley Clarke mansion were converted to open space, ensuring that the site could never be developed? Or would their plan, as they claim, benefit the community as a whole?

These questions assume fresh urgency now that Evanston's City Council will consider an agreement with the Lighthouse Dunes group on July 23. The so-called "memorandum of understanding" could take the city a significant step farther down the path toward demolition.

To be sure, the group's leaders have committed to revealing who the donors are, as Erika Storlie, Evanston's assistant city manager told me. But they need to list both the funders and the amount of their donations *before* the council takes up the plan. Otherwise, the disclosure will be meaningless.

"I don't see any legitimate way that the council could vote to accept this without knowing who's paying for it," said Evanston alderman Thomas Suffredin, who opposes demolition.

(For the record, my requests to the Lighthouse Dunes group for donor information went unanswered. Hagerty could not be reached for an interview. Kustok has said in past public meetings that tearing down the house would not open views of Lake Michigan from her home.)

Yet even assuming that the Dunes group passes the conflict-of-interest sniff test, its plan to tear down the house, which has been closed since the Evanston Art Center moved out in 2015, makes little sense.

The house, designed by architect Richard Powers for a utilities magnate, is structurally sound. And it's rare architectural gem — potentially, a people's gem.

[READ MORE: Wake up, Evanston leaders. You've got a treasure on your hands. Don't demolish the Harley Clarke Mansion. »](#)

A successful reuse could bring much-needed social diversity to the city's nearby Lighthouse Landing Park, Rep. Jan Schakowsky wrote last month in a letter to the mayor and council. Schakowsky, whose district includes Evanston, urged them "to step back and take a time-out from advancing the irreversible decision to demolish the building." (A listing on the national register typically does not protect a building from being torn down. And Evanston's City Council could vote to let a demolition proceed, effectively stripping the building of city landmark status.)

The council's rejection of previous reuse proposals — one, from Jennifer Pritzker, would have converted the home into a boutique hotel while another, from the Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens group, was for an environmental education center — should not automatically trigger the wrecking-ball option.

Smart cities mothball such treasures and play for time. Chicago did that with the once-decrepit Reliance Building, now a posh hotel. And private capital isn't the only way to save such buildings. The 1960s effort that saw architects and preservation-minded citizens join to save Henry Hobson Richardson's Glessner House, now a museum, attests to that.

The Lighthouse Dunes group's plans to remake the Harley Clarke Mansion landscape, which was designed by the great Jens Jensen, also deserves sharp scrutiny.

The group proposes to restore "key elements" of Jensen's garden. It will be interesting to see how it defines those elements: — with integrity or for maximum wiggle room?

Also worth putting under a microscope: The group's pledge to provide \$50,000 to \$75,000 for landscaping, according to Storlie. That would be in addition to a promised \$447,000 for demolition.

At least one experienced landscape architect characterizes the projected landscape funding as insufficient to achieve the group's stated aim of "restoring the beach, park and dunes to their natural states." About \$150,000 to \$250,000 "would be more realistic," said Mike Ciccarelli, an associate principal at Chicago's Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects, who has designed private landscapes in other North Shore towns.

Evanston taxpayers should not be subject to a bait-and-switch that forces them to cover unanticipated demolition and landscaping costs. Nor should they be left in the dark about the \$64,000 question of this controversial plan: Is the Lighthouse Dunes group treating the city's lakefront as a public trust or as a private fiefdom? The view from here is that the landscape restoration plan is a ruse to get rid of a building that should be saved.

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