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Harley Clark Mansion
2603 Sheridan Road
Evanston, Illinois

Architectural Facility Assessment

This report will focus on the condition of the facility as it relates to the physical condition of architectural elements. There are two structures that comprise the property. The first is what will be referred to as the main house and the second will be referred to as the coach house.

MAIN HOUSE

EXTERIOR ELEMENTS

The house is faced with limestone masonry. This limestone is most probably a variety of Wisconsin Lannon stone with a hand-chiseled cleft finish. The warm ochre tone of the stone is typical of material quarried in this region during the era of the construction. In most cases the stone is in excellent to very good shape. The grout in some cases was hard to evaluate because of ivy clinging to the walls. The grout is in fairly good shape in places where it is visible. Some general restoration-quality tuckpointing is probably required in some locations, although the majority of the stone is not in need of this sort of repair at this time.

There are some areas of grout decay on all elevations. There are decorative elements such as piers with limestone Corinthian capitals that are in immediate need of historically-correct tuckpointing. (figures 1 & 2)



figure 1



figure 2

The conservatory, presently being used as an iron shop, sits on the south end of the mansion. The roof has been replaced with new metal and appears sound. The west and east elevations were originally identical. The west elevation has the original wood and glass door that probably need to be remade to match the design as the door is in very poor condition. Also the decorative plinth blocks underneath the “baldacchino”

pilasters seem to be missing. The steel windows to the north of this door have been removed and boarded up. New windows to match will have to be installed there. (figures 3,4)



figure 3

On the east elevation the original door and decorative trim is missing altogether. These elements will have to be replicated and installed. There are also glass panels missing from some of the windows. The limestone and lannon stone are in good condition. (figure 4)



figure 4

On the conservatory there are windows on the south elevation where the sills are in poor condition and need replacement. (figure 5). Also the windows are in dire need of restoration and some of the original glass has been replaced with other materials.



figure 5

There are decorative balusters (figure 6) on the east elevation that have spalled and need replacement. There is also a balcony on the east elevation with the same stone balusters. Some of the balusters are missing and will need to be replaced with new limestone replicas. There are other balusters (figure 7) that have been brushed with some sort of bitumen-based roofing tar. It is doubtful that those balusters can be reclaimed, so those would have to be fabricated for replacement as well.



figure 6



figure 7

Most, if not all of the wood brickmold exterior casings are in severely poor condition (figure 8). Most that are visible are partially to totally rotted. There are those that can be salvaged and restored and others that will have to be replaced. It appears that the original brickmold might have been stained but through the course of many seasons and with deferred maintenance, the wood is practically bare. New stain products are superior to paint and should be considered being used to replenish this wood.



figure 8

The terrace leading to the dining room is paved in slate. The limestone steps leading up to the terrace need to be re-set as they are currently in poor condition. The slate appears to be in good condition.

The staircase leading to the basement on the north elevation is in need of repair. (figure 9). The stone base for the railing is in particularly bad shape and needs to be re-set and most likely some stone will have to be replaced. The iron railing is not original to the building and is also in poor condition and should be

replaced with an era-appropriate railing. The door that enters the basement is not original and an appropriate door replacement would be advised.



figure 9

The small retaining wall that runs around the north side of the building and circles the west side is in generally failing condition.(figures 10,11). The stone itself is in good condition but needs tuckpointing. The foundation is obviously failing and pitching forward. The remedy for this would be to remove the stone, clean all of the existing grout off the stone, pour a new foundation and reset the original stone onto this new structure.



figure 10



figure 11

The original steel casement windows are still in place. The general note that can be applied to all of these windows is that they have not been maintained properly. The finish on all the steel parts of the windows has deteriorated. The closing mechanisms and locks are in very poor condition and will not open or close properly. Many, if not all of the original insect screens are missing. Some windows have been removed

and replaced with double-hung windows in order to install window air-conditioning units. In some cases, the windows are still in place but are propped open permanently and another window has been installed with an air-conditioning unit. (figure 12).



Figure 12

These windows can be restored although the restoration would be extensive and new hardware would most likely have to be custom-forged. The hardware could be restored as well, but is a difficult process. New steel windows that are double-insulated could be used as replacement windows if allowed by the local preservation board.

The doors on the house are wood and are generally in need of restoration, not replacement.

There is a screened porch on the northwest corner of the first floor. The stone is in good shape although the stone clad buttress needs to be repaired and tuckpointed. There are what appears to be original wood insect screens on this porch that would need to be restored if elected to remain. (figure 13)



figure 13

There is a small courtyard tucked into the corner of the screened porch and the main entry. There is a low stone wall surrounding this area that needs major re-setting of stone and new grout. There is a possibility that a new foundation would be required to stabilize this arrangement.

The large limestone slab steps leading to the entrance to the building are in good condition. There is an iron railing that although in fair condition, is inconsistent stylistically with the house. There is an accessible ramp running from the south to the entry which is also in good condition. Whether it meets code needs to be determined. Also the termination of the ramp at the entry seems to be difficult for a wheelchair to navigate. The header stone over the entry has a large fissure running through it that is probably not safe. This stone should be replaced with a matching species and with the same hand dimpled chiseled finish. (figure 14)



figure 14

The gutters are fabricated in copper. The downspouts, scuppers, decorative trim and cisterns appear to be lead-coated copper. They are all exquisitely detailed and in good condition. They would probably need to be restored and made watertight as some of the soldered joints and connections are most likely worn. The cisterns look to be somewhat damaged and probably need some expert repair.

The original clay tile roof is most likely from the famed Ohio manufacturer "Ludowici". It is generally in good shape. There are small portions that might need re-setting or adjustment. One common method of dealing with the roof of a building of this vintage is to remove the tile, repair any roof decking material and check for rot, re-sheath the decking with a water-resistant membrane, apply Grace ice and water shield in all of the valleys and on the eaves and then re-install the roof tile. There is no way of knowing if this sort of drastic method is required at this time, although it is a possibility. Roofs of this age installed with older technology and with lead or copper flashing in the valleys sometimes have used up their life expectancy. The tile is sound but what is underneath is not yet known. It may be prudent to assume that this method of rejuvenating the existing roof will be required. It should also be noted that the ridge tiles of the roof appear to have missing or cracked mortar and at the very least this would have to be attended to.

There is also some residual streaking, staining and discoloration on parts of the roof tiles where metal flashings around the chimneys have combined with rainwater over many years.

The brick chimneys appear from cursory inspection, to be in good condition. More extensive tests and observation need to be performed at a later date to determine the condition of flues, dampers and termination caps.

INTERIOR ELEMENTS

FIRST FLOOR

A general overview of the interior of this house is mixed. There are some portions of the interior that are somewhat well-preserved and others that are beyond saving.

The front entry hall is a wonderful example of a great house tudor staircase and paneling arrangement. The wood is hand-carved pickled oak with a clear varnish finish. It is in good shape although some patching will have to be done to cover holes where 1950 era light fixtures have been drilled through it. (figure 15). The entry vestibule, stairs, treads, railing and balusters are all in good condition and can definitely be salvaged. There is also an anteroom beyond the entry hall with the same wood and wood ceiling panel. Again, all of this is in good condition. The front vestibule has hand-troweled plaster decorations and moulding that has somehow survived and is salvageable.

The Conference Room, which was almost definitely the library in the original house, is in excellent condition. It has oak paneling and shelving which is in good condition. Most likely the original floor underneath the existing carpet is intact and can be reclaimed.



figure 15

The foyer, just beyond the entry hall, has the original plaster decorative door head that leads to the East Gallery. It is in almost pristine condition. Other elements such as the hand carved doors and plaster niches remain as well and are definitely salvageable. There are several electrical elements on the walls and ceiling that need to be removed and the plaster patched. The original quartersawn white oak floors are still intact and need only a light sanding and new finish.

The East Gallery is an octagonal room with original hand-made tile with an ivy leaf pattern. (figure 16). Although the tile is not in perfect condition, it could be preserved since it would be nearly impossible to find a tile of its artistic quality today. One option would be to make new tile with the same design and colors. (figure 17).



figure 16



figure 17

The North Gallery, or the original Dining Room, has exquisite oak-paneled walls with the original light sconces which are presently obscured by white plaster walls installed for gallery use. These walls appear to be attached at the floor so the hope is that these walls can be removed and the paneling exposed. The original quartersawn white oak floors are in place and most of it should be salvageable. The photograph on the following page shows some of this paneling. (figure 18).



figure 18

Just north of the original Dining Room is the kitchen . The original cabinets remain and are in surprisingly good condition.

East of the kitchen and connected by a doorway that has been covered up, is the original Study. It has most of its original finishes intact including the trim. The windows, as discussed earlier, need significant restoration.

The Living Room on the southeast corner of the first floor, has been adapted for gallery use. The walls are a newer vintage which leads one to wonder if there isn't oak paneling or plaster relief work hidden underneath. Whether there is or not, there is no way of knowing if it is salvageable. We would recommend looking at historic photographs of the house before it was converted to see if we can find evidence. Careful demolition would be required to uncover any elements. The original quartersawn white oak floor is in reusable condition.

There was originally a connection between the Living Room and the Conservatory that has been closed. This opening would then become the only interior access to the Conservatory if this was desired. The opening would require a great deal of careful historic restoration. On the Conservatory side of this opening there are still what appears to be the original doors and slate and limestone staircase. (figure 19,20).The stone is extremely dirty having been exposed to airborne contaminants from the use an iron shop. There is a beautiful plaster surround on the Conservatory side that appears to be salvageable. Wood trellises were originally installed in the apse-like opening and are beyond repair and must be replaced if desired.



figure 19



figure 20

There are stone walls in the Conservatory that have suffered the same fate as the stone steps. They are extremely dirty from soot. These walls would need to be cleaned with an environmentally safe detergent to try to reclaim them. The floors are concrete and it would seem that the original floors were slate. The concrete is in fair condition. The roof/ceiling has been sprayed with some sort of cementitious finish. From looking at the metal framing under the roof, it appears as though there were operable roof panels at one time. This also makes one think that the original roof may have been glass.

BASEMENT

The staircase that connect the first floor to the basement is stained and varnished oak trim treads and risers. The wood is in good shape and need to be refinished. The rough plaster walls probably need to be replaced with same.

The basement level of the house appears to be sound and watertight. There is a possibility that there is water seepage in locations but nothing visible to the naked eye. Most of the rooms that have been formed and re-formed for the Art Center uses are in extremely poor condition.

Although there is quite a bit of square footage on this level, not much can be realized for habitable rooms. There lone room that could be reclaimed is currently being used as a pottery glazing studio and was once the Billiard Room. (figure 21). There are two stone arch openings that have been painted lime green and will probably be salvageable using an environmentally safe paint removal system. There is also a slate floor which is in very good shape considering the amount of abuse that has been inflicted. It most likely can be saved. There are ceiling beams with trim that may be able to be restored.

There is also some original stained millwork on the east end of the room including a door that used to lead to a lightwell that sits adjacent to the first floor Living Room. The millwork has been ravaged over time due to the spinning of pottery turntables and splattering clay. If careful restoration of this area were undertaken, it is likely that the wood could be saved. There are also original steel casement windows that are closed-up and obviously part of a lightwell that has since been abandoned.



figure 21

SECOND FLOOR

A general note regarding the doors on the second floor: Some of the original doors remain and most likely can be refurbished and used again. There are some newer doors that do match the details of the original doors that are substandard and not worth saving. Some of the original hardware resides on these original doors and could be cleaned and re-plated if so desired.

One arrives at the second floor level via the oval entry stair that ascends from the first floor entry hall. The wood paneling from the first floor stairwell ends at the second floor and transforms into a highly detailed plaster interior. (figure 22). The railings, balusters and trim are in good condition. The ceiling plaster moulding is in very good shape and only needs some minor repair. The original quartersawn white oak floors are in good shape.

The room directly east of the stair hall was most likely a bedroom. The original walls are obscured by new gallery walls. The windows facing east are also obscured by newer walls. There is obviously a fireplace on the north wall that has been covered. The original quartersawn white oak floors are in good shape where exposed. There is no way to know the extent of damage of the floors beneath the new walls.



figure 22

To the north of the staircase is another staircase in a corridor that ascends to the third floor. It is in serviceable shape. The corridor and openings to the corridor in are in poor shape. Beyond this staircase is a large open workspace that is probably culled from a couple of original bedrooms. There are no finishes that are salvageable. There is vinyl tile that is most probably on top of the original oak floors. There is no way to ascertain the salvageability of this wood floor. The windows appear to have the original casings and sills that would need refinishing to resurrect. All plaster surfaces need to be skimcoated and painted.

Adjacent and to this space on the building's northeast corner is a small office which is mostly intact. Casings appear to be original and worth saving. (figure 23).The original quarter-sawn white oak floor remains and needs refinishing. All plaster surfaces need to be skimcoated and painted.

There is an original bathroom in this area facing east that has the original tile floors and walls. This tile may be salvageable but this would take time and skill. Some tile pieces would have to be fabricated to take the place of missing or broken pieces.

There is another studio on the northwest corner of the building that is in fair shape. As is the case with most of the second floor rooms, all the exposed plaster surfaces need to be replaced with a skimcoat of new plaster. The original floors have been painted so it is unclear what sort of re-use is available.



figure 23

The northeast corner of the house has been opened to a large studio from what was probably bedrooms. The floor is covered in vinyl tile and the original floor is most likely underneath. (figure 24). There is no way to know its condition at this point. All the exposed plaster surfaces need to be replaced with a skimcoat of new plaster. Some of the original window casings and sills are intact and need refinishing. Other casings have been removed and would need matching replacements. There is one window that has been removed and replaced with a wood double-hung to accommodate a window air conditioner. Another window has been removed to install a door leading to a newer fire escape. The original casings are now gone and a new steel casement window and new casings would have to be installed



figure 24

The room adjacent to this studio is at the southwest corner of the house. It has two sets of steel casement windows. The floor is covered in vinyl tile and the original floor is most likely underneath. There is no way to know its condition at this point. The wall that separates this room from the larger studio is constructed of gypboard.

The studio facing west and adjacent to the main staircase was probably a bedroom with an en suite bathroom. The room has most of the original trim and could be salvageable. (figure 25). There is a bathroom off the north end of this room which has the original tile floors and walls. This tile may be salvageable but this would take time and skill. Some tile pieces would have to be fabricated to take the place of missing or broken pieces. There is also some sort of paint that has been splattered over the tile walls and it is unclear at this point if it can be removed.



figure 25

THIRD FLOOR

The secondary stair leads from the second floor to a third floor vestibule. This vestibule looks to be mostly original. The original door and window casings are original and salvageable. There is no crown moulding. The original quartersawn white oak floors are still intact and could be reclaimed. The plaster walls and ceiling appear to be in good condition. (figure 26).

There is a small office to the south of this vestibule. This was probably storage originally although the walls have been covered in wood slats and it is unknown if the plaster beneath is salvageable. The original flooring could be saved.

There is a large Ballroom to the southeast of the stair vestibule. It has large exposed, decorative trusses fabricated with hand-carved oak. There are also oak battens, or half-timbering on the sloped roof/ceiling that are also of the same oak species and finish. All of this wood is in very good shape. Fluorescent lighting fixtures have been hung in this room and there are holes in the original ceiling plaster to accommodate their installation. There are also can lighting strips attached to the trusses and the hole from their removal would have to be repaired. (figure 27).

The plaster walls have been covered with a contemporary drywall construction. Some of the original plaster and half-timbering walls remain on the north end of the room. The original oak floors are there and could

easily be salvaged. There is no remaining base trim and the original window casings are not salvageable. (figure 28).



figure 26



figure 27



figure 28

There is a room now used for a computer lab to the northeast of the stair vestibule. Most of the original character and finishes of this room are gone and would need to be replaced.

There is an additional storage room to the northwest of the stair vestibule that is windowless and would probably best be used as storage.

COACH HOUSE

EXTERIOR ELEMENTS

The coach house sits to the south and west of the main house. The ground level houses the garage area, miscellaneous storage areas and a greenhouse. Two residential units occupy the top, or second floor.

The Coach House has recently undergone an exterior renovation. The lannon stone has been tuckpointed and appears to be in good condition. The exterior window trim has also been recently refurbished and at present needs no immediate renovation. The Ludowici roof tiles that match the main house appear to be in fairly good shape. The ridges of this roof have missing grout between those tiles and would have to be addressed immediately.

The copper decorative gutters also match the house and are in good shape. Much like the main house, the gutters need renovation as there are joints that are opening or cracked. The original scupper collection boxes are intact but probably need some restoration to function properly. It appears some lead downspouts have been replaced with copper ones.

The original wood doors are in fairly good shape and most likely can serve for some years to come. The coach house overhead garage doors have been restored lately and are in good condition. (figure 29).



figure 29

The original steel casement windows have all been replaced with a vinyl variety. These windows have no true divided lights like the originals. If the intent is to make the buildings authentic, these would have to be replaced.

There is a small greenhouse on the far west end of the coach house. The stone base around the bottom of this greenhouse is in need of tuckpointing. The stone also appears to be in need of an environmentally safe

washing. (figure 30). The glass of the greenhouse looks to be in average condition and will need to be restored at some point in the near future.



figure 30

The chimney is in average condition and without further analysis, it is difficult to make an assessment as to its condition regarding flues, dampers, liners etc.

There are some stone entry portals and slate walkways that are all in very good condition.

INTERIOR ELEMENTS

The garage space of the first floor of the coach house is in fair shape. The concrete slab has some structural cracks. The overall condition of the walls and ceilings is fair. This space will need some cosmetic improvements and possibly a new concrete slab.

The balance of the first floor is a warren of storage spaces. They are all in extremely poor condition. The doors are all in need of restoration. All of the interior walls and ceilings will have to be replaced or replastered. There are no light fixtures that merit saving.

The interior of the greenhouse is also in poor condition. There appears to be many areas that have been exposed to high moisture.

The basement is not full and it mostly houses mechanical equipment. The walls appear to be dry and sound. The staircase leading down from grade is in fair condition as are the stair walls. The concrete slab is in fair to good condition.

The second floor houses two apartments that are in extremely poor shape. The ceiling paint is delaminating in all of the rooms from excessive moisture and possibly from not being climate controlled and thus having freeze-thaw issues. The walls are plaster and probably are past their useful life. There is some original window casing trim that may be salvageable. The original floors are intact and need refinishing. There are no plumbing fixtures or light fixtures that are worth saving.

The two kitchens are both in poor condition with obsolete appliances. The cabinets in one kitchen could be original and might be worth saving. The other kitchen has a 1950's era cabinets inappropriate for this vintage of building.