

June 12, 2017

VIA E-MAIL: arainey@cityofevanston.org

Ald. Ann Rainey
Chair
Planning and Development Committee
City of Evanston
2100 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201

Re: Opposition to 1726 Hinman Landmark Nomination

Dear Ms. Rainey:

We are writing this letter as counsel to the Sigma Chi Foundation, the owner of the property located at 1726 Hinman Avenue. As a threshold matter, this nomination was not made by the City, City Staff, the Preservation Commission, or the property owner. Rather, in very unusual fashion, the nomination was made by a private citizen and seriously impinges on the not-for-profit owner's right to use the property. The Foundation opposes the landmark designation of the 1726 Hinman property.

- The City's Preservation Ordinance includes a duty to conduct an ongoing survey to identify historically, culturally, and architecturally significant areas, properties, and structures and to nominate and designate properties as appropriate for landmark designation. (Sections 2-8-3(G)(1)(6)(25).)
 - The Property has never previously been identified by the Preservation Commission or City Staff as appropriate for landmark designation.
 - The Property has never been nominated by the Commission or City Staff for inclusion on any historic register.
 - The Property has never previously been listed as eligible for designation as a landmark or inclusion in a landmark district.

CHICAGO MIAMI FORT LAUDERDALE WEST PALM BEACH BOCA RATON SPRINGFIELD

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- Architecturally the Property is not representative of Colonial Revival style and is not a new or derivative style.
 - As established by expert testimony, the property neither is a pure rendition of Colonial Revival style nor an example of another style nor a style setting example followed by others.
 - As established by expert testimony, the Property has significant departures from Colonial Revival style.
- The City of Evanston issued permits for the disconnection of utilities to the property and the County of Cook has issued demolition permits.
- Historically the Property is not significant.
 - There is no evidence of any historically noteworthy event having taken place in the building.
 - John Nyden, the former owner and architect of the Property, was an accomplished architect but is not recognized by any professional architectural organization as a significant architect.
 - There are other examples of John Nyden's architecture already landmarked in Evanston so as to obviate the need to landmark an otherwise unremarkable building.
- The Property lacks integrity.
 - As demonstrated through expert testimony, the overall application of architectural elements and materials that compose the building are not organized in a way that represents the Colonial Revival style. Rather, the structure was for the architect's personal use, represents the architect's preferences, and was never intended to represent or establish of a style.
 - As demonstrated through expert testimony, it is uncontested that based on the condition of the Property renovation costs would exceed \$3,200,000.00 and likely would far exceed that amount because of expected hidden structural issues.
- Landmarking would seriously impact the Foundation's charitable mission.
 - Sigma Chi is a long time Evanston resident and landmarking would adversely impact its ability to give to those who rely on it to complete their educations, avoid drug and alcohol use, and

seriously impact the Foundation's attempts to minimize the serious problem of suicide among our youth.

- Negative precedent.
 - If landmarking is granted in this case where the City Ordinance has not been met and the process was initiated by a non-owner citizen, any third party could nominate an older property without regard to the high and objective standard associated with landmarking which would unduly impinge on private property rights. This would, in turn, increase administrative costs and could lead to costly litigation when decisions are challenged in the courts.

- The earlier covenant and ordinance are inapplicable.
 - At the time the initial variance was granted to permit the Foundation to house scholarship consultants in the 1726 Property, the City and area residents were concerned with the Property becoming transient housing. Now, the times have changed and that is no longer a concern as the Foundation is not looking to add transient housing but is looking to improve its already in place headquarters at 1714 Hinman.

As has been the case for the almost 60 years that the Foundation has been an Evanston resident, the Foundation stands ready to continue to work with the City. However, based on the foregoing, and the materials submitted to the Commission, including the only expert testimony, Sigma Chi Foundation respectfully believes that the split Commission vote to recommend landmarking should be rejected.

Very truly yours,



Hal R. Morris

HRM/jt

cc: Ashley Woods – Sigma Chi Foundation