**Index of Expert Written Statements**

*Submitted by Landmarks Illinois to the Evanston Preservation Commission on October 10, 2018 to be included in the meeting materials for the October 23rd, 2018 meeting*

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October 10, 2018

Evanston Preservation Commission

RE: 2306 Sheridan Rd. Harley Clarke Mansion, Application for Demolition – Statement

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing to state my opposition to the demolition of the Clarke House. I am an architect with over 35 years of experience and owner of an architectural firm specializing in historic preservation. Previously, I also taught in the School of the Art Institute’s Master of Science Preservation Program. I am also a past member of the Evanston Preservation Commission.

In 2012, our firm was retained by the City to perform a code review of the Harley Clarke House and Coach House during the period of occupancy by the Evanston Art Center (EAC). The purpose of the evaluation was to determine any code deficiencies relative to the occupancy of the house, Business Group B, and the Coach House, Residential Group R-3.

At the time and as reported we found:

- “No major structural deficiencies were observed in the EAC; the conditions observed are generally a result of deferred maintenance, with exterior resulting in varying states of material degradation.”
- “The interior of the house appears to be in good condition structurally.”
- “The exterior of the coach house is in good condition, due to the recent repair work.”
- “The interior of the coach house is in fair to poor condition. The prolonged vacancy of the residential units, and presumably the lack of heat in winter months, had resulted in extensive peeling paint, and deteriorating interior conditions.”

In 2017, I had the opportunity to visit the buildings and perform a walk through. It is my opinion that the conditions now are generally the same as they were in 2012. Although additional deterioration has occurred, the conditions are generally the same, are repairable and do not pose a danger.

While the efforts to find a resolution to the use of the facility remains unsolved, this does not justify the demolition of an Evanston landmark. The property should be mothballed until a proper adaptive reuse is found. As Tribune columnist Blair Kamin said in his article in June this year: “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.”

Respectfully,

McGuire Igleski & Associates, Inc.

Anne McGuire, A.I.A.
The Harley Clarke House: A Statement on Its Cultural Importance

Audrey Niffenegger

As John Lennon once wrote:

“There are places I’ll remember
All my life, though some have changed
Some forever, not for better
Some have gone and some remain....”

The Harley Clarke house is an important part of the cultural history of Evanston. I have come here to speak for myself and many other artists who love this place.

I first came to the Evanston Art Center when I was fourteen, to study printmaking. I was fascinated by the house, and spent years exploring it and taking many classes in various parts of the building: etching classes in the master bedroom on the second floor, photography in the basement, drawing in the ballroom on the third floor. The house itself was my instructor, I felt transformed by my time there.

I first learned to teach in the Harley Clarke house and I taught there for fifteen years. Making art and teaching have been my life’s work. Many of my former students have been writing to me, wondering what will happen to this place that was at the center of our artistic lives for so long? So many artists had their first shows here, myself included, and the grand setting gave us the feeling that we had joined the conversation, that we were part of a real community. Artists have asked me questions about the fate of the house as though it is an old friend of ours who is in the hospital: what’s the prognosis? We reminisce about better days, share old photos: there are marriages and children that wouldn’t exist without this grand house. So many things happened because the Harley Clarke house was a magnet for creative, curious, warm-hearted people.

The beauty and serenity of the Harley Clarke house gave me a sense of the seriousness, the importance of making art. We make art, and houses, for many reasons: to communicate with each other and with the future, to shelter and give solace, to be our best selves, to find a home. This is a place that was home for generations of artists. We created, learned and lived there. If this house is torn down the empty space will be a sadness, a wound.
Evanston needs places where its citizens can gather and experience a sense of calm and well-being. This house belongs to all. The Harley Clarke house is still beautiful and sound. It stands waiting for us to give it its next life. Too many valuable things are being lost lately. Please let this house stand. We will fill it again with joy.
October 10, 2018

Ms. Diane Williams, Chair  
Evanston Preservation Commission  
City of Evanston  
2100 Ridge Avenue  
Evanston, Illinois 60201

Re: City of Evanston Certificate of Appropriateness request to demolish Harley Clarke Mansion, a designated Evanston Landmark

Dear Chairman Williams and Members of the Commission:

I am writing to you on behalf of Landmarks Illinois, a membership-based nonprofit organization, dedicated to preserving historic properties, such as the Harley Clarke Mansion, for future generations. We urge you to deny the city's request for demolition, submitted to the Commission through a Certificate of Appropriateness on August 31, 2018, of the Harley Clarke Mansion, a designated Evanston Landmark.

We note that the City of Evanston's application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, asserts that “the buildings in their current state present a danger to persons inhabiting or visiting the property” and that “remediating or repairing these requires great difficulty or expense.” Yet, there is no evidence included to support this conclusion. More confusing is the fact that the report provided by the City with the Certificate of Appropriateness describes the building as being in “good working order” and the electrical inspection shows minor repairs to comply with the Building Code that are not difficult or expensive. We believe the incongruities in reporting on the condition of the Harley Clarke Mansion necessitate an updated examination and report by appropriate experts.

We submitted a request on September 28, 2018 to allow Landmarks Illinois and a select group of expert architects, engineers and assessors to access the Harley Clarke Mansion in order to conduct an examination of the interior and exterior conditions of the building, but this request was denied by the City Council on October 8, 2018.

As you know, in addition to being a designated Evanston Landmark, Harley Clarke is a contributing resource to the Northeast Evanston National Register of Historic Places district. Landmarks Illinois included the Harley Clarke Mansion on our 2016 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois List due to its extraordinary history, architecture and its importance to the city of Evanston and the region. In 2016, Landmarks Illinois provided a pro-bono condition assessment by the firm Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. to the city that verified, while in need of
repairs and improvements, the historic mansion is stable and reusable. We continue to work with local citizen advocates dedicated to finding a reuse solution for this one-of-a-kind building.

Demolition standards 1 and 2 of the City of Evanston Preservation Ordinance contemplate the benefit and welfare of designated landmarks to the residents of Evanston and Illinois. Undeniably, the demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion will result in unprecedented loss of the city’s architectural heritage, especially considering the public ownership of the property, which has historically provided public access and use of this great landmark. Built in 1928, utilities magnate Harley Clarke hired Boston architect Richard Powers to design his three-story home and a nearby coach house in the French Eclectic style with a rough stone exterior, a ballroom on the top floor, and a conservancy on the house’s south side. Clarke also hired famed landscape architect Jens Jensen to sculpt the estate grounds and together this powerhouse team of designers created a lakefront estate where architecture and landscape are intrinsically linked. We believe demolition and destruction of this property should not be an option, especially considering its local landmark designation and the fact that the City purchased the property to ensure its preservation. If the city of Evanston demolishes its own designated landmark, this will set a terrible precedent for the future of designated landmarks in Evanston that are presumed to be protected.

In addition to its irreplaceable architecture and landscape design, additional public benefit that preservation of the Harley Clarke Mansion can provide relates to jobs, local economic investment and the environment. Investing in historic places creates more jobs than new construction, or in this case demolition, per dollar spent because it is labor intensive. Preservation rather than demolition prevents otherwise reusable materials, that could never be sourced again, from entering the waste stream. Even deconstruction is not as efficient in the use of material as preservation. Preservation of Harley Clarke contributes to Evanston and the region as a more interesting place in which to live and work and sustains our shared heritage, culture and civic values.

Again, we urge the Preservation Commission to deny the city’s request for demolition, especially in light of its unsupported claims that the building is in a life-threatening, dilapidated state. The Harley Clarke Mansion is a mansion for the people and should be protected as such, as a publicly owned local landmark. Its future should be returning it to productive use for the citizens of Evanston.

Sincerely,

Bonnie C. McDonald
President & CEO
Cc:
Mayor
Hon. Stephen H. Hagerty (shagerty@cityofevanston.org)

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Carlos Ruiz, Planner (cruiz@cityofevanston.org)

Illinois State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural Resources
Anthony Rubano, Deputy Historic Preservation Officer
(anthony.rubano@illinois.gov)
Memorandum

To: Evanston Preservation Commission

From: Brad White

Re: City of Evanston’s Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion and Coach House

Date: October 10, 2018

I am writing as an expert on historic preservation in opposition to the proposed demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion. I am the Associate Director of the Alphawood Foundation, a Chicago-based private foundation working for an equitable, just and humane society. I was appointed by President Barack Obama as a General Public Member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in 2011; and I was reappointed in 2014. During my time as a member of the Advisory Council, I led the task force on Historic Preservation and Rightsizing, directed the development of a policy statement on community revitalization, and managed the drafting of recommendations for the policy initiative marking the 50th Anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. I previously served as Chair of Landmarks Illinois, Preservation Action, and the Ely Chapter of Lambda Alpha.

This statement will address Standard #3 of the Standards for Review of Demolitions under § 2-8-9(D) of the Evanston Historic Preservation Ordinance. Standard #3 provides that the Commission shall consider: “Whether the 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.”

Section 2-8-1, Statement of Purpose, includes nine provisions describing the purposes of the ordinance:

A. Identifying, preserving, protecting, enhancing, and encouraging the continued utilization and rehabilitation of such districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects having a special historical, community, architectural or aesthetic interest of value to the City and its citizens, as described in 65 ILCS 5/11-48.2-1;
B. Safeguarding the City’s historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects determined eligible for designation by ordinance as landmarks and historic districts;
C. Fostering civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past as represented in such landmarks and districts;
D. Protecting and enhancing the attractiveness of the City to everyone, including homeowners, home buyers, tenants, tourists, visitors, students, employers, employees, and businesses, and thereby supporting and promoting business, commerce, industry and tourism, and providing economic benefit to the City;
E. Fostering and encouraging preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects, including entire districts and neighborhoods, and thereby preventing future urban blight and neighborhood deterioration;

F. Fostering the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people of Evanston through the designation of landmarks and districts;

G. Encouraging orderly and efficient development that recognizes the special value to the City of protecting districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects as landmarks and districts;

H. Continuing surveys and studies of Evanston’s historical and architectural resources and maintaining and updating a register of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that may be worthy of landmark designation; and

I. Encouraging public participation in identifying and preserving historic and architectural resources through public hearings on proposed designations, as well as reviewing and recommending applications for certificates of appropriateness (“COA”), economic hardship, or special merit.

Harley Clarke was constructed in 1927 pursuant to designs by Richard Powers. The landscaping plan was designed by Jens Jensen. The property is an Evanston Landmark meeting three Criteria of Architectural Importance: Exhibits a high quality of architectural design without regard to the time built or historic associations; exemplifies the work of a nationally or internationally known architect, or major local architect or master builder; and exhibits an unusual, distinctive or eccentric design or construction technique which contributes to the architectural interest of its environs as an accent or counterpoint. It is also identified as a contributing structure to the Northeast Evanston Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Demolition of Harley Clarke would be inconsistent with the purposes of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, as described by the ordinance itself. Based on the provisions in § 2-8-1 above, it is clear that demolition of Harley Clarke would conflict with paragraphs A, B, C, D, E, and G in the following ways:

1. It would not preserve, protect, enhance or encourage the continued reuse of a designated landmark.
2. It would not safeguard the City’s historical and cultural heritage.
3. It would not foster pride the beauty and accomplishments of the past; it would, in fact, destroy it.
4. It would not protect and enhance the attractiveness of the City.
5. It would discourage the orderly and efficient development that recognizes the special value of landmarks, particularly since there is no plan for replacement of the landmark.
October 9, 2018

City of Evanston Preservation Commission
c/o Mr. Carlos Ruiz
Preservation Coordinator
Community Development Department

RE: City of Evanston Application for Certificate of Appropriateness to Destroy
the Harley Clarke Mansion and Coach House

Dear Members of the Commission:

I am writing on behalf of The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) with regard to the application to demolish the Harley Clarke Mansion, a property owned by the City of Evanston. TCLF is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to document and advocate for the stewardship of significant cultural landscapes throughout the United States. As such, we routinely serve as a consulting party under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, and we provide technical assistance to municipal administrations, as well as private entities.

As you know, the Harley Clarke Mansion is designated as an Evanston Landmark and is also a contributing feature of an historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to those worthy distinctions, let me add that the site is home to a very significant work of landscape architecture designed by the renowned Jens Jensen (1860–1951) and his protégé, the equally celebrated Alfred Caldwell (1903–1998). As is well documented, Jensen was hired in the 1920s to design the landscape for the home of Harley Lyman Clarke, bringing along Caldwell to supervise the work. The two men had previously collaborated on the design for the grounds of Clarke’s vacation home, Clear Sky Lodge, on the southern shore of Geneva Lake in Wisconsin. Jensen was the progenitor of the uniquely North American aesthetic in landscape design known as the Prairie Style, an approach that Caldwell would also champion in his long and noteworthy career.

The landscape created for Clarke in Evanston by these two masters did indeed exhibit many features of the Prairie Style. Generous expanses of lawn were oriented to afford views from the residence, which also enjoyed views of the dunes and Lake Michigan to the east. Stone terraces and walkways linked a series of outdoor rooms carefully demarcated by thickets of ornamental shrubs. Jensen planned a border of flowering plants to the north of the property; the repetitiveness of the prairie was broken up by shrubs and dogwoods, while hawthorns and crabapples were scattered along the curving driveway linking Sheridan Road to the main house. A planting of prairie rose anchored the eastern edge of the property where it met the lakeshore, and a grove of hemlocks was included on the southern edge of the parcel to provide shade for a stone grotto and the home’s attached conservatory. The hemlock grove also screened the site from the adjacent Grosse Point Lighthouse. While the landscape of the Harley Clarke Mansion has been altered over time, the hemlock-shaded grotto, the signature Jensen council ring, and many terraces and pathways survive today, as do portions of the original plantings.

From the above description one will note that the landscape was carefully designed to be experienced in tandem with the architecture of the mansion, without which the design would be completely illegible. Indeed, the drives, terraces, viewsheds, and plantings all respond by varying degrees to the footprint of the buildings, and it is erroneous, then, to believe that the mansion could be demolished without the simultaneous loss of the landscape, a culturally significant work of art in its own right. Moreover, the most recent plans to demolish the historic site call for returning the property “to its natural state,” such that the design by Jensen and Caldwell would be lost forever.
Myriad books, scholarly articles, essays, lectures, and a recent documentary have been dedicated to chronicling and communicating the scope of Jensen’s impactful career. His projects reflect his constant efforts to relate forms and materials to the surrounding native landscape, and his use of color, texture, and gradations of light evokes emotional responses. A social reformer, Jensen was committed to humanizing what he perceived to be an increasingly industrial environment. That commitment spawned a highly original approach to both his public and private commissions and assured his prominent place in the history of American landscape architecture and, in particular, America’s Heartland.

Following in the footsteps of his mentor, Alfred Caldwell would go on to a brilliant career of his own and would be known as America’s last great Prairie School landscape architect (he and Jensen remained in communication until the latter’s death in 1951). Caldwell, too, is the subject of considerable scholarship, and he received many awards and honors throughout his life. The Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects gave him the Distinguished Educator Award in 1980, the Associated Collegiate Schools of Architecture named him Distinguished Professor in 1985, and the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) bestowed upon him the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in 1988. More recently, Caldwell was honored in perpetuity by an annual lecture series, which bears his name, at IIT’s College of Architecture.

Finally and most notably, only two designed landscapes in Chicago have been honored with National Historic Landmark designations (of the fewer than 75 works of landscape architecture so honored nationwide): Columbus Park, by Jens Jensen (designated in 2003) and the Lily Pool in Lincoln Park, by Caldwell (designated in 2006). The estate-scale, historic designed landscape at the Harley Clarke House is a rare, publicly accessible, and culturally significant work by these two masters of their craft, and it should without doubt be preserved and rehabilitated for the benefit of Evanstonians, both now and in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR
President + CEO
The Cultural Landscape Foundation
September 28, 2018

Carlos Ruiz, Preservation Coordinator
City of Evanston

Carlos:

On behalf of the Design Evanston Board of Directors and members, I want to express our deep concern over the uncertain future of the Harley Clarke mansion.

The City Council commissioned a condition assessment study by Wiss Janney Elstner Associates that found the building to be in surprisingly good shape.

Because of the Harley Clarke mansion’s landmark status—and location within the Northeast Evanston Historic District—it’s likely that the Preservation Commission would vote against demolition should that recommendation ultimately come before the commission. We know, however, that the Commission’s vote is not binding and that City Council could override it and still pursue demolition.

Design Evanston supports Alderman Revelle’s recommendation to give Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens one year to raise $1 million and, if successful, provide them with an opportunity to renegotiate the proposed lease for Harley Clarke.

When that effort succeeds it will permit Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens to restore and operate the Harley Clarke house as a valuable Evanston asset.

Jack Weiss, Director
Design Evanston
October 9, 2018

Evanston Preservation Commission
2100 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201

Dear Evanston Preservation Commission members,

The National Trust for Historic Preservation joins Landmarks Illinois in support of preserving the historic Harley Clarke Mansion. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately funded nonprofit organization that works to save America’s historic places.

Approving demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion would be contrary to the purpose and intent of the Evanston Preservation Ordinance, and to the objectives of historic preservation for the historic district.

As the grandest French Eclectic style house in the National Register-listed Northeast Evanston Historic District, the Harley Clarke House is a key contributor to the distinctive historic character of the district and brings undeniable value to the community as an irreplaceable part of Evanston’s heritage.

The Harley Clarke Mansion helps define Evanston’s unique sense of place and can continue to provide unique benefits to the community as a public amenity. We urge you to deny the demolition permit, and we continue to urge the City of Evanston to investigate all possible options for reuse of this historic landmark building and grounds.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Sandy
Associate Field Director
Julia Bachrach  
6337 N. Hermitage Avenue  
Chicago, IL. 60660

Dear Evanston Preservation Commission:

I am writing as an expert on historic landscapes to ask you to deny the proposed demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion. I am a preservation planner and historian with considerable expertise on Jens Jensen. I have curated several exhibitions on Jensen including *A Force of Nature: The Life and Work of Jens Jensen*, and I have published several books documenting Jensen’s contributions such as *The City in a Garden: A History of Chicago’s Parks*. I served as the Chicago Park District’s preservation planning supervisor for 28 years and currently have my own consulting practice. My professional experience includes having served on the Board of Trustees for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency for six years and participating on a committee that helped the National Park Service prepare the Secretary of Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes. (On a personal note, I am an Evanston Township High School graduate.)

Based on my detailed knowledge of Jens Jensen and involvement in the field of landscape preservation, I believe that the Harley Clarke Estate is among nation’s most important historic landscape resources. Only a limited number of Jensen-designed private residential properties remain today. Jensen was named “Dean of American Landscape Architecture,” by the *New York Times*. In recent years, his contributions have increasingly drawn national attention including a full length documentary called *The Living Green*, which has been shown on public television stations and film festivals across the nation and abroad.

The Cultural Landscape Foundation concurs with my evaluation of the Harley Clarke landscape as one of the most important and threatened historic landscapes in America. The Washington DC-based non-profit organization has included the property on *Landslide*, its list of the most significant and endangered historic landscapes throughout the nation. The Cultural Landscape Foundation’s web-site states, the Harley Clarke “mansion now faces impending demolition, which would leave an orphaned and illegible landscape that should instead be restored and maintained along with the historic structure.”

Professor Leonard K. Eaton, author of *Landscape Artist in America: The Life and Work of Jens Jensen* cited the Harley Clarke estate as one of Jensen’s “finest works.” Eaton wrote:

“Jensen is usually described as a naturalistic landscape architect, but a space like this is only naturalistic in a very special sense. Nothing like it occurs in nature, but it does represent a highly stylized and ordered concept of nature. In every respect it is the work of a great artist.”
In reviewing your Standards for the Review of Demolitions, I believe that the proposal to raze the Harley Clarke Mansion should be denied based on Standards 1 through 4 of Subsection 2-8-9(E).

Without question, the Harley Clarke Estate (building and landscape) possesses an extremely high level of significance and its demolition would diminish the character of the historic district (Standard 2). The destruction of this historic resource would be quite detrimental to the City of Evanston, State of Illinois and even the nation (Standard 1).

There is no doubt that the demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion would be contrary to the intent of the Evanston Preservation Ordinance (Substandard 3). The ordinance states that one of its goals is to “safeguard the City’s historic and cultural heritage.” Destroying one of the most significant historic resources in Evanston (and nation) certainly does not safeguard this City’s historic and cultural heritage.

It seems that some proponents of the demolition have implied that the building could be razed but the Jensen landscape could be preserved. But this is not possible. As explained by Professor Eaton, the “highly stylized and ordered concept of nature” that Jensen produced for the Clarke family is a landscape composition that includes the house. The property is of such distinctive design and material that it could not be reproduced. The impediment is not based on cost, however, but the fact that once you destroy the house, you destroy the character and meaning of the landscape (Substandard 4).

Today, only a small number of Jensen-designed landscapes remain throughout the United States. The Chicago Park District has restored several of Jensen’s parks, and other government agencies and non-profit organizations have made similar commitments to save these valuable places such as the Ford Estates in Michigan and Lincoln Memorial Gardens in Springfield. It is extremely disappointing that Evanston’s leaders don’t see the value of protecting such a valuable asset. There are numerous examples of adaptive re-use projects in which private buildings have been transformed to private public uses. The building is stable and funding in phases should not be seen as an impediment.

I hope you will deny the demolition permit and implore the City’s leaders to fulfill their responsibility as stewards of a landmark property by asking them to get back to work to find a solution that would lead to the preservation of the Harley Clarke Mansion and landscape.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Julia S. Bachrach
Statement of Historic Character and Integrity regarding the Harley Clark Mansion

PROPERTY: Harley Clark Mansion
ADDRESS: 2603 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL
DATE: October 10th, 2018

The following statement of historic character and integrity is submitted in respect to Standard #4 of the Standards for Review of Demolitions under §2-8-9(D) of the Evanston Preservation Ordinance. **Standard #4 Reads: Whether the property, structure or object is of such old, unusual or distinctive texture, and/or material that it could not be reproduced without great difficulty and or expense.**

All opinions and observations in this document are that of Mario Machnicki, President and Founder of US Heritage Group and sister company, Marion Restoration. US Heritage Group has served thousands of historic sites across the country and provides a variety of services such as testing mortar and materials, consulting, education, and restoration. Some of the sites include the US Capitol building, a number of Frank Lloyd Wright homes, North Point Tower in Milwaukee, as well as many churches and cemeteries. US Heritage group has more than 20 years of experience and Marion, Inc. is the only masonry restoration firm in the Midwest to employ certified conservators to ensure proper restoration and conservation of architectural details.

The Harley Clark Mansion epitomizes every aspect of Standard #4. This English Tudor mansion, done in the French Eclectic style in 1927, exhibits an extraordinary array of distinguishing features such as: bays, arches, hip roofs, setbacks, a clay tile roof, pinnacles, an oriel window, distinctive masonry, embossed copper gutters, and five massive chimneys, all crafted with intention to appear aged. Each independent characteristic of the mansion was done with great care and intent. The expertise of the development paired with the variety of materials obtained resulted in a property of great integrity. Even 91 years after construction the materials are in immaculate shape, a true testament to the quality of which it was built.

The roof of the Harley Clark Mansion is an example of the quality of craftsmanship on the property. The mansion features a hip roof topped with Ludowici Celedon Imperial clay tiles laid to look aged and in an old style. Almost all of the roof tiles has survived the test of time. Also featured are five chimneys, each different in some way. There is a twisted chimney, a chimney with four or more flues, etc. The brickwork on each varies from corbeled to staggered, clustered to tapered, and the brickwork integrated burnt clinkers to make a polychrome effect. The chimneys and roof were constructed to look aged and worn. This desired aesthetic was not only executed successfully in 1927, but has maintained its look since. The addition of the chimneys to the house was expressive and it was something to be celebrated.

The masonry of the Harley Clark Mansion is truly a triumph; it speaks to the skill of the expert masons who completed it. The masonry walls, entryways, arches, and buttresses all contain distinctive, unusual features; even the lime putty mortar is unique in its composition. The
property also features hand crafted ornamental spindles, urns, and shell details. The wide variety of limestone selected from different quarries are comprised of different textures and patterns and is configured in an undulating, random ashlar composition. The different stone and stone elements are all dressed by hand with basket-weave, diaper, stippled and bush-hammered textures. It was almost as though the masons wanted to see how many different texture they could create. This distribution of stone appearing “random” was intentional by design, a composition that is very difficult to execute successfully. As opposed, constructing a uniform pattern or linear design is relatively easy and can be reconstructed with a lower level of skill. The master masons purposefully arranged and dressed the masonry to look centuries old, giving the mansion a timeless look that has aged impeccably. The historic, unique personality of the masonry is only lessened by improper preservation and inappropriate repointing of joints. Mortar deteriorates over time and requires repointing as part of standard building maintenance. The job of the mortar is to be softer in compressive strength than the masonry so that it is permeable enough to allow moisture to escape through the joints; this protects the masonry from spalling and cracking. Considering the state of the mansion now, it is evident that the original masons were masters of their craft as the individual stone units are in exquisite condition and the mortar has only started failing in the recent decades. The Harley Clark Mansion’s masonry is more embellished, varied, elegantly carved, and tooled than any other house in Evanston. Attempting to replicate something so extraordinary would be no easy feat. The wide variety of stones from different quarries could not be collected without great difficulty, and procuring artisans talented enough to properly execute such an artistic arrangement on a property of this magnitude would prove onerous. The mastery of the masons of this period is unmatched, and the knowledge of their craft is no longer available. The Harley Clark Mansion’s masonry alone embodies Standard #4. To demolish such a historic and unique property would not just be a travesty, but a direct violation of the Evanston Preservation Ordinance, Standard #4.

The Harley Clark Mansion is Evanston’s only public lakefront estate. It provides priceless aesthetic value to visitors and gives the public opportunity to appreciate Evanston’s history. The mansion remains with more than 90% of its exterior intact, demonstrating the incredible architectural integrity of which it was built. Had the property been maintained properly there would be no debate on whether it should remain. The mansion was produced with the highest of standards, from the material to the quality of craftsmanship. This mansion is one of the best public properties Evanston has to offer. It is historical, unusual, and distinctive; it epitomizes Standard #4 of the Commission’s demolition ordinance better than any other Evanston landmark. To allow the demolition of the Harley Clark Mansion would be to erase history, and it would directly violate the Preservation Ordinance. There is no question, the Harley Clark Mansion must remain.

Mario Machnicki, President, US Heritage Group

Date 10/10/2018
October 9, 2018

Evanston Preservation Commission
c/o Carlos Ruiz, Preservation Coordinator
Evanston Civic Center
Evanston, Illinois 60204

Re: Harley Clarke House
2603 Sheridan Road
Evanston, Illinois

Commission Members:

In July 2013, Central Street Neighbors Association unanimously adopted a position supporting public ownership, use, and conservation of the Harley Clarke House at Lighthouse Beach, including public ownership, use and conservation of its surrounding gardens and park.

We reiterate that position today, more than five years later, and with greater urgency than in the past. The City of Evanston, as owner of the Harley Clarke House, seeks to demolish that historically and architecturally significant home for the sake of satisfying the private request of a select few citizens who are neighbors of the property. The City seeks to enact public policy for the sake of pleasing a few, yet the City’s application for preservation review of a certificate of appropriateness for demolition fails to meet the standards stated by municipal ordinance and the Preservation Commission.

The house, coach house, and its gardens and property should remain intact in the public domain in perpetuity, to provide for recreational, cultural, historic, artistic, educational, and similar public-oriented uses that provide services and directly benefit the community as a whole and will serve generations to come. Those historic features and uses will attract visitors to Evanston and will contribute to public awareness and understanding of the community, its ecology and its history, including but not limited to Lake Michigan.
We urge the Preservation Commission to carefully consider the testimony and reports of the witnesses and the experts who will appear before you in opposition to the City’s application for a certificate of appropriateness for demolition. We consider that the City’s evidence in support of its application pales in comparison to the testimony and reports that will support preservation of the building, consistent with the landmark designation awarded by this Commission many years ago.

CSNA represents some 350 households in and around the Central Street neighborhood, principally in the 6th and 7th Wards. We have worked cooperatively with neighbors on a number of issues since our founding 10 years ago. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Sloane

Mark Sloane
President, Central Street Neighbors Association

Central Street Neighbors Association “Together we have a stronger voice.”

www.centralstreetneighbors.com P.O. Box 7050, Evanston, IL 60204
A Brief History of the Designation Process of Evanston Landmarks

The passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 led to preservation activity in Illinois, which began a statewide windshield survey of historic structures under the guidance of architectural historian Dr. Paul Sprague. In 1972 architecture student and Evanston resident Jon Pohl surveyed the City and identified 276 buildings as architecturally significant. Pohl was appointed to the first Evanston Preservation Commission in 1975.

In 1970 the Planning and Development Committee of the Evanston City Council received a request to consider "whether the City should establish an historic site preservation program." (Evanston Architecture: Preserving the Best for the Future, Report of the Evanston Preservation Planning Conference, Vol. II, Fall, 1974, p. 1) The reference was passed to the Evanston Plan Commission, which in 1973 asked the City Council to establish the Evanston Preservation Planning Conference "with a charge to develop a preservation or community conservation plan and implementation program...." (Evanston Architecture: Preserving the Best for the Future, Report of the Evanston Preservation Planning Conference, Vol. II, Fall, 1974, p. 1) The Preservation Planning Conference, a large body comprised of architects, architectural historians, historians, and interested Evanston residents, established subcommittees that studied specific preservation topics. The Conference issued a report in 1974 that described how the City in recent years had been implementing, albeit informally, preservation practices through down-zoning, the strict enforcement of the zoning ordinance, and a "concern for [the] enhancement of the lakefront, [including] the Dawes House, the Evanston Art Center (the Harley Clarke House), and the Grosse Point Lighthouse." (Evanston Architecture: Preserving the Best for the Future, Report of the Evanston Preservation Planning Conference, Vol. II, Fall, 1974, p. 1)

The report delineated goals of the preservation program and suggested specific means to achieve those goals, many of which appeared in the 1975 Evanston Preservation Ordinance. Under Section 2–203 of the Preservation Ordinance, the Preservation Commission was

- to identify and evaluate the historic resources and elements of fine visual and physical character of the City of Evanston;
- to propose conservation districts based on such evaluations and relevant planning consideration;
- to propose detailed preservation or urban conservation programs for such districts;
- to review specific preservation problems affecting those building [sic] listed in Schedule B (the 1972 State Survey of Evanston) and
- to make recommendations pertaining to them; to conduct the temporary review procedures established in Section 2–205; and to encourage interest and understanding of preservation and urban conservation. (1975 Preservation Ordinance, pp. 1-2)

Section 2–204 then laid out over two pages of the duties of the commission, all of which were to be completed in two years, at which time the commission would cease to be, since it was assumed that the commission would have completed its work in that time. (1975 Preservation Ordinance, pp. 1-2)
Ordinance, pp. 2–4). It is important to note here that the 276 Evanston buildings listed in the 1972 State Survey comprised the basis of the Evanston preservation program. Under the 1975 ordinance, all these buildings were automatically designated as Evanston Landmarks under the category, A9, which merely stated that these buildings had been identified as significant in the 1972 State Survey (see below). Additional research on these buildings was to be conducted later.

Before the Preservation Commission, which began meeting in 1976, could begin its review process it platted all 276 buildings on the 1972 State Survey on a map of Evanston. This allowed the commission to identify ten clusters of buildings that were called Intensive Study Areas. In the fall of 1976 over 300 Evanstonians took to the streets to identify additional buildings of possible significance. Several hundred buildings were added to the list of buildings to be reviewed in the Ten Intensive Study Areas. The commission compiled a list of criteria to be used to determine whether a building qualified to be an Evanston Landmark. A building had to be at least 25 years old and meet one or more of the following criteria:

**Historical Criteria**
- **H1** Exemplify the cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of Evanston
- **H2** Be the site of an historic event 25 years in the past
- **H3** Be associated with a nationally, regionally, or locally prominent person who has been dead for 25 years, or a locally prominent organization

**Architectural Criteria**
- **A4** Exhibit a high quality of architectural design without regard to the time built or historic association
- **A5** Exemplify the work of a nationally or internationally known architect or major local architect or local builder
- **A6** Exhibit a high quality of architectural design that is the result of a change or a series of changes to an original structure
- **A7** Exemplify an architectural style, construction technique, or building type once common in the city
- **A8** Exhibit an unusual, distinctive, or eccentric design or construction
- **A9** Be selected for inclusion on the 1972 Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey

When the commissioners began the review process in early 1977, they sat as a body of the whole. Meetings ran until 1:00 am; the commission accomplished little other work, as the building review process dominated the agenda. The commission quickly appointed a group of Associate Commissioners, as allowed under Section 2–202 of the Preservation Ordinance (1975 Preservation Ordinance, pp. 1–2) and established the Evaluation Committee, comprised of commissioners and associates, to do the preliminary building evaluations. The commission also hired a trained architectural historian, Dr. C. William Westfall, to do the initial building reviews, to guide the Evaluation Committee through the evaluation process, and to write the required statements of significance for every designated structure. The Evaluation Committee began its work in Intensive Study Areas I and IV in Southeast Evanston. These areas had the largest concentrations of identified buildings.
Addressing the Criteria for the Demolition of Evanston Landmarks

The following criteria for demolition are to be considered at the meeting of the Evanston Preservation Commission on October 23, 2018. This paper addresses the first three criteria.

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 City and the State.

The Harley Clarke House at 2603 Sheridan Road, in Intensive Study Area IV, was not identified in the 1972 State Survey. The Evaluation Committee began its full survey of Area IV in 1981. At its July 29, 1981, meeting the Evaluation Committee determined that the Harley Clarke House at 2603 Sheridan Road, designed by Richard Powers and built in 1927, merited designation as an Evanston Landmark as a fine example of French Eclectic architecture (criterion A4) and as an excellent representation of the work of architect Richard Powers (criterion A5). In addition, the Preservation Commission cited the Harley Clarke House under criterion A8. The imposing size of the Harley Clarke House with its massive, steeply pitched roof and multiple tall chimneys made the building a highly recognizable and prominent site on the lakefront side of Sheridan Road. The garage to the Harley Clarke House, with a separate address of 2609 Sheridan Road, received an A4 designation. A building need meet only one criterion to be designated an Evanston Landmark; the Harley Clarke House met three criteria.

Before the Preservation Commission identified the Harley Clarke House as architecturally significant, members of the Preservation Planning Conference had identified the Art Center as a building that should be protected. Conference members were not referring to the Art Center—the tenant—they were speaking of the building that housed the Art Center—the Harley Clarke House. Given the history of Evanstonians' concern for the Harley Clarke House, demolishing the building would clearly be "detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the City and the State." (see Paragraph 2, Designation History, above).

2. Whether the property, structure or object relates 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.

The Harley Clarke House was included as a contributing structure in the 1999 nomination to list the Northeast Evanston Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places and to designate the same district as a local historic district. On July 1, 1999, William Wheeler, Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer signed the document declaring that the Northeast Evanston Historic District nomination met the criteria to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Later, the Evanston Preservation Commission found that the Northeast Evanston Historic District nomination met the criteria to be designated an Evanston Historic District.

The overarching theme of the Northeast Evanston Historic District is the transformation of the area from farmland and cow pastures to a vibrant urban section of Evanston. The story of the
The evolution of the built environment from simple vernacular building types of the 1860s to sophisticated, architect-designed houses of the 1920s onward documents that change. Northeast Evanston encompasses an eclectic mix of working class, middle class, and wealthy families, and the houses in the district reflect this mix. Demolishing the Harley Clarke House would diminish the overall character of the Northeast Evanston Historic District.

Subthemes in the nomination—how the extension of a light railway opened the area for residential development; how the street grid influenced settlement patterns; how the designation of Sheridan Road on the east side of the district as a pleasure drive encouraged wealthy businessmen to build mansions on the lakefront; how architects and developers influenced the look of the built environment; and how city planning and zoning influenced and was influenced by the development of Northeast Evanston—explain the transformation of the district. (Northeast Evanston Historic District National Register Nomination, Statement of Significance, pp 47–129)

Housing construction in Evanston was heaviest in the decade between 1920 and 1929, the era when the Harley Clarke House was built (1927). Harley Lyman Clarke could have chosen to build his house in any of the suburbs to the north where other wealthy people were choosing to live, but he chose Northeast Evanston in which to build his imposing French Eclectic mansion. Architectural historian Susan Benjamin, who wrote the architectural descriptions of all the buildings in the nominations, described the style:

Compared to Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles, the incidence of French Eclectic structures is comparatively rare. The French Eclectic style found its way into the suburban setting during the 1920s. Americans who had served in World War I came home with first-hand knowledge of the French prototypes. Moreover, the publication of books and articles on French architecture helped to popularize the style... The style persisted through the 1930s.

The principal identifying feature of French Eclectic architecture is a steeply pitched hipped roof... Walls are brick, stone, or stucco... Dormers, especially those that project from the wall and extend up through the cornice are common; they may have gabled, arched, hipped, or shed tops. Quoins, French doors with shutters, and prominent chimneys are other characteristic features of the French Eclectic style. The majority of French Eclectic houses are formal and imposing.

The Northeast Evanston Historic District has 18 French Eclectic residences, built between 1921 and 1965... Most are quite formal... The Harley Clarke House (2603 Sheridan Road) is the grandest French Eclectic style house in the District. (emphasis added) Designed by Richard Powers in 1972, it has a symmetrical central section, stands two-and-one-half stories, and is capped by a very steep roof with its ridge paralleling the front of the house. It is built of stone, and large chimneys feature prominently in the design.

Sited on the lakefront just north of the Grosse Point Light Station, the Harley Clarke House is clearly visible from Sheridan Road and is thus an important visual feature of not only Sheridan Road but also of the Northeast Evanston Historic District. Demolishing this building would
remove this significant feature of the district and would be contrary to "the objective of the historic preservation for the applicable district," as Criterion 3 states.

3. Whether the demolition of the property, structure or object would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this Chapter and to the objective of the historic preservation for the applicable district.

Beginning with the 1975 ordinance and continuing to the present with the ordinance adopted March 21, 1994, the purpose and intent of all the Evanston Preservation Ordinances has been to protect buildings identified as historic from inappropriate alterations or from the ultimate inappropriate alteration, demolition. For over forty years the City has supported the Evanston preservation program, as Preservation Commissioners issued Certificates of Appropriateness for remodeling projects on Evanston Landmarks and approving only a small handful of demolitions.

Two firms specializing in assessing the condition of historic buildings have looked at the Harley Clarke House and determined the building to be basically sound. Wiss, Janney, Elstner is a nationally known organization that specializes in the investigation, analysis, testing, and design of repairs for historic and contemporary buildings and structures. (Wikipedia) McGuire Igleski & Associates is an Evanston architectural firm specializing in the restoration of historic buildings. Both firms are well qualified to assess the condition of the Harley Clarke House. Wiss, Janney, Elstner visited the Harley Clarke House and issued a Condition Report dated August 24, 2016 that concludes that "Generally the building is in serviceable condition." The Code Analysis and Conditions Assessment Report prepared by McGuire Igleski & Associates, Inc., in consultation with WMA Consulting Engineers, Ltd. in 2012, concluded that the Harley Clarke House could be brought up to code. Both Wiss, Janney, Elstner and McGuire Igleski & Associates determined the work could be done for under $500,000. The only conclusion to draw from these reports is that the Harley Clarke House is an old building in need of repairs. Neither firm suggested that the building should be demolished. Demolishing a historic building that simply needs to be repaired and brought up to code compliance is not the aim of the Evanston preservation ordinance.

Most demolitions of Evanston Landmarks took place in the early years of the preservation program, before binding review was adopted in 1994. All those demolitions were preceded with a thorough discussion that Preservation Commissioners conducted with each applicant. Before 1994, applicants who had been denied demolition permits simply had to wait ninety days after which they were free to demolish their buildings. Since 1994, if the Preservation Commission denies a demolition permit, the applicant must comply with the commission's decision. To reverse the denial an applicant must appeal to City Council, which can grant permission to demolish the building. In most appeals City Council has chosen to reverse the Preservation Commission's decision and allow the demolition.

With the demolition of each of the buildings listed below Evanston has lost part of its history. With some buildings, the loss was minimal. The house at 1722 Central Street is an example of a minimal loss. On the north side of the 1700 block of Central Street brick buildings with shops on the first floor and apartments above lined the street. On the south side all but two of the original...
single-family houses had been replaced with buildings like those on the north side; the house at 1722 Central was the only remaining unaltered single-family house. No illustrious person had lived there, and no event of historic importance had happened there.

With the demolition of other buildings such as 1637 Chicago Avenue (The Hereford Apartments), 1024 Emerson Street (the Henry Butler Livery), and 1822 and 1834 Sheridan Road the loss to Evanston and its history was substantial. (see comments below) The Harley Clarke House falls into the latter category. In addition to being an excellent example of French Eclectic design, the imposing size and prominent location on the lakefront just north of the Grosse Point Light Station of this house would make its absence a noticeable loss.

Since the passage of the revised preservation ordinance in 1994, there have been fewer requests to demolish Evanston Landmarks, but most have involved large, prominent buildings whose demolition altered the surrounding landscape considerably. Most of the demolished buildings have been replaced with perfectly serviceable larger buildings or, in the case of the block bounded by Orrington Avenue on the East, Colfax Street on the South, Sherman Avenue on the West, and Lincoln Street on the North, nineteen large houses that max out the floor area ratios of each lot. Some of those replacement buildings may be deemed architecturally significant when enough time has passed to assess them more objectively.

No one will argue that as a land-locked community Evanston must find creative ways to increase its revenue sources. Building to increase the density in the Central Business District and other commercial areas is a time-tested method of bringing in needed revenue to both building owners and the City in the form of taxes. When the construction of larger, taller buildings requires the demolition of historic buildings, however, it is important for the City to pause and weigh the consequences of that demolition. And when nothing is to replace the historic building, as is the case of the proposed demolition of the Harley Clarke House, the demolition is a net loss to the City and its citizens and contradicts all good preservation practices.
Monday, October 8, 2018

Re. Harley Clarke House & Garden - Preservation Commission – City of Evanston

Dear Colleagues –

I write to encourage you to forcefully oppose the demolition of the Harley Clarke House and Garden. As an educator and historian (I have published books and articles) I am impressed by the remarkable quality of the Harley Clarke House and Garden. Demolishing a significant part of the architectural, landscape, and social history of Chicago will attract negative press and condemnation from around the country. It is not a coincidence that The Cultural Landscape Foundation, based in Washington, has already listed the Harley Clarke House and Garden as “threatened” on their website. [https://tclf.org/harley-clarke-house-and-garden](https://tclf.org/harley-clarke-house-and-garden)

Thanks to the efforts of illuminated organizations and foundations based in Chicago, a remarkable number of historic homes have been repurposed over the past decades. Recall for example how the Society of Architectural Historians spearheaded the preservation and re-use of the Charnley Perksy House (Louis Sullivan with Frank Lloyd Wright) and how the Graham Foundations for the Fine Arts adopted the same approach for the Madlener House. Both these urban villas in the Gold Coast were threatened and are now the permanent homes of flourishing research organizations and foundations.

After reviewing the Evanston Preservation Ordinance I believe Standards one, two, and three are highly relevant criteria to consider when arguing against demolition. Standard One: Demolishing a building and garden/landscape of significance would indeed deprive Evanstonians, Chicagoans and Americans (present and future) of an
important part of their collective memory. Standard Two: Since the property engages with the Lake Michigan shoreline, it is distinctly part of the development Evanston’s built and natural environment. Standard Three: By demolishing a part of your history, you would undermine a rigorous preservation ordinance and open it up to future threats.

Although I am relatively new to Chicago, I have come to really appreciate the communities of the North Shore in large part because of their historic houses and gardens. I encourage the members of the Preservation Commission of the City of Evanston to continue to serve as responsible custodians of our collective heritage.

Sincerely,

Michelangelo Sabatino, PhD
Professor and Dean, College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology
The Rowe Family College of Architecture Endowed Chair
John Vinci Distinguished Research Fellow
October 10, 2018

Evanston Preservation Commission
Evanston Civic Center
2100 Ridge Ave
Evanston, IL 60201

Dear Commission Members:

The Southeast Evanston Association (SEA) is a nonpolitical and nonpartisan civic organization established in 1960 with a mission to defend and enhance the essentially residential character of Southeast Evanston.

SEA serves as a watchdog and advocate for the residents of southeast Evanston. With over 600 supporters, SEA plays an integral role in our community by creating coalitions, engaging elected officials, working for both constructive change and prudent preservation, and speaking out on behalf of our members and the citizens of our city about concerns such as land use, zoning, historical preservation, and the environment.

Over the past 50 years, SEA has witnessed the city of Evanston grow and develop at an increasingly rapid rate. To ensure that the needs of our community are met within the larger context of Evanston imperatives, SEA has been engaging with other like-minded community organizations to address critical issues whose outcomes will have a significant impact on the quality of life for citizens in southeast Evanston and beyond.

One such critical issue concerns the potential demolition of the Harley Clarke mansion and property, and in this respect, we urge you to oppose the City of Evanston’s demolition proposal and vote to preserve the Harley Clarke mansion.

SEA members have a historically strong commitment to protecting and sustaining the natural integrity of Evanston’s entire stretch of lakefront, as well as preserving its historical and cultural significance. For example, SEA representatives were active participants during the community planning process to develop and enact the city’s Lakefront Master Plan of 2008, which was unanimously approved by the Evanston City Council.

There is no better example of a structure with historical and cultural significance to Evanston’s lakeshore than the Harley Clarke mansion. SEA began supporting preservation of the mansion as a community asset in Summer 2013. SEA Board members spoke to City Council against commercializing the house as a private luxury hotel and in support of public use and community programming. Over the last five years, SEA Board members have been actively working with other organizations to create a successful public use alternative for the mansion.
The Harley Clarke mansion possesses great cultural significance. The third-floor film archive room exemplifies Harley Clarke’s role in pioneering the use of film in education. Harley Clarke founded The Society for Visual Education in 1918. In Evanston, a pioneer study (funded by Harley Clarke) that proved the worth of motion pictures utilized for the purpose of education was conducted in four Evanston public schools including Foster School. The study proved successful and the curriculum was rolled out to all Evanston schools, Chicago Public schools and eventually, after direction from President Hoover, and with help from Harley’s persistence, nationwide. His commitment helped advance "talkies" and when he saw what a difference visual education could make in the lives of children he became President of Fox Film for that purpose.

Given the merit of this structure, we urge the Commission to oppose the City of Evanston’s request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the Harley Clarke Mansion.

Sincerely,

Southeast Evanston Association
Peter Demuth
President
To: Evanston Preservation Commission

From: Susan Benjamin, Architectural Historian

I am writing this testimony to encourage the Evanston Historic Preservation Commission to strongly oppose the demolition of the Harley Clarke House. In this testimony, I will address the Standards that the Commission needs to consider when reviewing demolitions:

Standard #1: How the property is of such architectural significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest of City of Evanston.

Standard #2: How the demolition of the Clarke House would negatively affect the intent of the National Register Northeast Evanston Historic District, which was to showcase the significant residential architecture in Northeast Evanston.

Standard #3: How the demolition of the property would be contrary to the intent of Evanston's preservation ordinance, which is to safeguard--(hold safe) the City's historic and cultural heritage.

I am an architectural historian with over 40 years of experience writing National Register and local landmark nominations and evaluating properties for their significance for local governments--including Lake Forest, Winnetka and the City of Chicago. I am the co-author, with Stuart Cohen of North Shore Chicago, Houses of the Lakefront Suburbs, 1890-1940, which includes an essay on the Clarke House.

I have asked Stuart to read a statement on my behalf because I will not be able to attend the October 23rd, 2018 Preservation Commission meeting.

Standard #1: It would be detrimental to the public good should a house of this architectural caliber be demolished. When we wrote our book on the North Shore's residential architecture,
Stuart and I selected only 42 houses from among numerous architecturally important properties on the North Shore. We only selected five in Evanston, and one was the Harley Lyman Clarke House. There are numerous reasons we chose the Clarke House, finding it particularly significant.

Constructed in 1927, just before the Great Depression, it was built at a time when historical eclecticism dominated architecture. With English Tudor influences, its steep roof, random course ashlar limestone walls and imposing presence make it an excellent example of French Eclectic Architecture. On page 98 of the Northeast Evanston Historic District nomination, it states that there are only 18 French Eclectic residences (of the 739 buildings considered Contributing to the significance of the district) and "The Harley Clarke House (2603 Sheridan Road) is the grandest French Eclectic style house in the District". The nomination then elaborates on how it exemplifies the style.

Rarely do you see such a high level of decorative treatments and craftsmanship. Ornamental features including twisted columns, molded brick chimneys, highly detailed copperwork, and classical elements complement the graceful massing of the building.

Only the finest materials were used--limestone, copper and roofs of Ludovici tile. All features were executed with the highest level of craftsmanship and could not be replicated today. And most important, the house has excellent integrity. Its design hasn't been compromised; no artificial materials have been used to replace the excellent choices made by architect Richard Powers.

It is important to note that the Clarke House occupies a familiar site on Sheridan Road, the pleasure drive that winds its way up the North Shore. Set well back from the road, with no buildings blocking it from the street, it is highly visible--one of the few homes of this size and quality located in such a prominent lakeside locale for all Evanston residents to enjoy.

The Clarke House serves as a gracious reminder of a time when successful businessmen of taste, like utilities magnate Harley Clarke, had the ability to hire a distinguished architect, along with Jens Jensen as a landscape designer, to integrate the landscape seamlessly with the beautiful lakeside home.

**Standard #2:** The demolition of the Harley Clarke House would be contrary to the intent of the Northeast Evanston Historic District.

I likely am uniquely qualified to address the significance of the Harley Clark House in relation to the Historic District, having been hired by the City of Evanston to prepare the nomination for the Northeast Evanston Historic District, where the house is located. I coordinated a community effort with Jeanne Kamps Lindwall from Camiros Ltd.
Several Evanstonians, including historian Mary McWilliams and graphic designer, Jim McGuire devoted a considerable amount of volunteer time on the nomination. One of the most actively involved volunteers was City Council member Judy Fiske, Judy worked diligently on the Survey, Research and Photography and, like the other dedicated members of the Evanston community, is so credited in the nomination.

**Standard #3:** There is no question that the demolition of the Harley Clarke house would be contrary to the intent of the city's preservation ordinance--which was penned to preserve the city's distinguished architectural heritage, to safeguard it from demolitions that would erode the community's significant and highly regarded character.

Evanston has always been a beacon of preservation, an example for other cities and villages who were writing similar ordinances. I know. Having helped draft Highland Park's first preservation ordinance and served as first chairman of our Commission, we looked to Evanston's ordinance as a template, modeling our ordinance on that of Evanston. If the City Council of Evanston votes to remove the Harley Clarke House, it will rightly lose face. You, as stewards, have the opportunity to stand fast and vote to dissuade the City Council from demolishing the Harley Clarke House.

_Susan S. Benjamin_

Susan S. Benjamin

Architectural Historian

Benjamin Historic Certifications, LLC

October 10, 2018
October 10, 2018

Evanston Preservation Commission
Evanston Civic Center
2100 Ridge Ave
Evanston, IL 60201

Dear Commission Members:

Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens (ELHG) is an Evanston based 501 c 3 non-profit organization with a mission to preserve and restore Harley Clarke by creating an inspiring community space that fosters appreciation of the environment, the arts, and cultural history. ELHG was founded in 2015 following inconclusive efforts to repurpose Harley Clarke by the City of Evanston, Colonel Pritzker, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Harley Clarke Citizens Committee. ELHG has broad support across the Evanston community, including an email list of over 1,375 individuals; 811 followers on Facebook; 138 individual donors; and over 2,800 individuals who signed a petition circulated in June 2018 asking the City Council not to demolish Harley Clarke. Numerous organizations support our community oriented vision for Harley Clarke including: the Preservation League of Evanston, Design Evanston, Central Street Neighbors Association, Southeast Evanston Association, Northern Illinois Historic League, Landmarks Illinois, National Trust for Historic Preservation, The Cultural Landscape Foundation, Openlands, Jensen Ecology, Liberty Prairie Foundation, Alliance for the Great Lakes, LakeDance, District 65 3rd Grade Teachers, Northwestern’s Center for Water Research and U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky. All of this points to the cultural significance and broad public support for maintaining Harley Clarke’s landmarks status and re-purposing the building for future community use.

In October of 2017, we submitted a 100-page response to the City of Evanston’s Request for Proposals for non-profit partners to help the City restore the building, which was accepted by City Council by an 8-1 vote in November 2017. Our response described the various environmental education, arts and cultural programs that would enrich life in Evanston, and the partners interested in using the space. Ultimately, the City Council declined to enter a lease with ELHG due to concerns over insurance risks and fundraising timing – both of which we publicly stated we were happy to work with the City to adjust to work for both parties.

We currently have over $220,000 of pledges and cash secured towards restoration of Harley Clarke and have offered publicly in front of City Council and in the Evanston Roundtable to pay $15,000 to defer the City’s annual building maintenance costs while restoration plans, and funding are advanced. This would eliminate any financial burden, however minimal, from the City. Ultimately, our vision is not about us, but rather about saving our only public lakefront facility, and we would be happy to work with other partners and organizations to help achieve a community-oriented solution that the City would support.

Thank you for your service and your consideration of the merits of saving and repurposing Harley Clarke.

Sincerely,

Tom Hodgman, Board President, Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens
October 10, 2018

Preservation Commission
City of Evanston
2100 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201

Dear Preservation Commission,

I am writing regarding your evaluation of the proposed demolition of the Harley Clarke buildings. I was asked by the City of Evanston’s Harley Clarke Planning Committee to assess potential education opportunities at Harley Clarke, and my findings are in the public record for the Planning Committee meeting on December 13, 2016. In addition, I am an acknowledged technical expert in hydrology and geomorphology, and so here I will also comment on the integrity of the lakeshore properties including the Harley Clarke buildings, grounds, adjacent parkland, and lakeshore.

The Harley Clarke buildings and grounds are an important community resource for the City of Evanston. Specifically, the Harley Clarke mansion together with the adjacent parks and lakeshore provides a unique setting for sustainability education. This complex is unique in the area because of the combination of a landmark large public building, integrated grounds and gardens, and adjacent parkland, beach, and dunes. While there are other sites for public environmental education in the area, such as the Evanston Ecology Center, Harley Clarke is the only location that supports direct, hands-on educational opportunities at the lakeshore.

The Harley Clarke house is an essential component of environmental education at the site, because broad public education of youth and adults at the site requires a combined indoor-outdoor facility. While it is certainly possible to take students to the lakeshore at the Lighthouse Dunes Park – or indeed any park on the lakeshore – only a very small number of education activities can be done solely on the beach. Full educational use requires the house and gardens not only as a staging area for education programs at the beach, but also for unique educational facilities including a classroom with an overlook of the beach, space for analysis of water and ecological samples from the beach and dunes, and gardens for sustainable development and landscaping in the lakeshore environment.

All of these activities both rely on and utilize the unique historical aspects of the Harley Clarke buildings for environmental education. My professional opinion is that the Harley Clark buildings are essential to provide unique and valuable hands-on indoor-outdoor environmental experiences utilizing the lakefront, beach, and dunes.

The Evanston Lighthouse Dunes organization has suggested that demolition of the buildings will represent a significant ecological benefit to the lakeshore. This claim is false. The Harley Clarke grounds do not represent a natural landform in the area, and the footprint of the buildings will not add significant land area of any natural habitat. The City of Evanston repeats this claim in the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) that they have submitted to you. Quoting the COA: “the demolition of the buildings will result in open lakefront land which will restore the original condition of the property to its natural state.” This claim by the city is unequivocally false.
Demolition of the buildings will not restore the property to its natural state, as the existing beach, dunes, and grounds are all artificially stabilized by extensive engineering of the lakeshore. Further, there is extensive construction immediately surrounding Harley Clarke, including driveways, parking lots, the Gross Pointe lighthouse, and foghouses that the city proposes to remain in place. The small footprint of the Harley Clarke mansion and coach house relative to the extremely extensive surrounding development can readily be seen in any aerial images, such as Google Earth. For this reason, any claims of renaturalization of the property are entirely spurious and should be dismissed by the Preservation Commission.

In sum, both the historical value and the present public value of the property rest solely in the integrated lakeshore development including the Harley Clarke buildings, the surrounding Harley Clarke gardens, the Gross Pointe lighthouse, and the Lighthouse Beach. As far as I am aware, this represents a completely unique grouping of historical buildings purpose-designed into a lakeshore setting in the Chicago area. For this reason, as well as the public good for environmental education using the Harley Clarke building and grounds, I recommend that you reject the City of Evanston’s request to demolish Harley Clarke.

Yours truly,

Aaron Packman
Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Director, Northwestern Center for Water Research
12 October 2018

Ms. Bonnie McDonald  
President  
Landmarks Illinois  
30 North Michigan Avenue  
Suite 2020  
Chicago, IL  60602-3402

Project 181668 – Structural Condition Statement, Harley Clarke Mansion, 2603 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL

Dear Ms. McDonald:

At your request, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc. (SGH) performed a limited structural condition assessment of the Harley Clarke Mansion located in Evanston, Illinois. This letter contains our opinion on the structural condition of the building.

1. BACKGROUND

The Harley Clarke Mansion is a former single-family home built in the English Tudor style in 1927. We understand that from 1951 to 1965 it served as the national headquarters of the Sigma Chi National Fraternity. The City of Evanston acquired the building and leased it to the Evanston Arts Center from 1965 until 2015. In 2015, the City of Evanston closed the building due to lack of maintenance funding. Presently, the City of Evanston has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Evanston Lighthouse Dunes to demolish the house and restore the dunes along Lake Michigan. The Evanston Preservation Commission will meet on 23 October 2018 to consider a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition.

Landmarks Illinois asked SGH to perform a visual structural condition assessment of the Harley Clarke Mansion. You specifically asked for SGH to determine if the building represents a danger or imminent hazard to persons or property. Our review is limited to a visual review of the exterior-only of the building as the City of Evanston has not provided interior access.

2. OBSERVATIONS

On 10 October 2018, Peter M. Babaian of SGH visited the Harley Clark Mansion to make the following exterior observations:

- The Harley Clarke Mansion is a former single-family house approximately three stories in height (Photo 1).
- The building exterior features stone masonry walls, steep-slope roofs with hung metal gutters, six brick masonry chimneys, and windows with metal frame storm windows in a wood surround (Photo 1).
- The steep-sloped roofs appear to be clay tile. The solarium has a steep-slope metal roof (Photos 2 and 3).
- The building is heavily covered with ivy and other vegetation.
- The stone masonry has limited deterioration visible through the vegetation. Deterioration includes minor mortar joint spalls, cracked mortar joints at changes in plane, and open head joints in stone cornices (Photos 4 and 5).
- The brick masonry chimneys do not show any evidence of deterioration or previous repairs (Photos 6 and 7).
- The exterior wood work around the windows is heavily water damaged and rotted in many locations (Photos 8 and 9).
- The stone masonry at the scupper boxes and downleaders is typically wet (Photo 10).
- Gutters at multiple locations around the building have vegetative growth, such as weeds and small trees, growing out of them (Photos 2 and 11).
- At several locations, balustrades on balcony and window well railings are deteriorated or missing (Photos 12 and 13).

3. **DISCUSSION**

Historic mansions from this era are typically constructed using load-bearing masonry walls and wood floor joists and roof timbers. We do not know the composition of the masonry walls, but based on our experience, it is likely that it consists of at least two wythes of brick masonry with a single wythe of stone masonry on the exterior. We cannot determine the connection between the stone masonry exterior wythe and the backup wythes. We generally observed that the stone masonry is in sound condition with deterioration generally limited to small mortar spalls, mortar cracks at changes in plane, and open head joints at cornice locations. We did not observe any cracking, bulging, settlement, or other movement of the stone masonry walls, indicating that the masonry load-bearing walls are not structurally compromised. The ivy and vegetation growing on and against the stone masonry can lead to deterioration of the stone masonry by damaging and displacing the mortar joints.

The roof is clad with clay tiles and appears to be in generally good condition. We did not note any locations where the roof has sagged or otherwise shown evidence of structural damage to the assumed wood structure beneath it.

The brick masonry chimneys appear to be in sound condition with no evidence of a potential hazard. We have not assessed the structural capacity of the chimneys and their ability to withstand current building code imposed loads. We assume that the chimneys were designed in accordance with the building codes and standards in effect in 1927.

The deteriorated balustrades at balcony railings create two potential localized unsafe conditions. The first is that the railing may not have the full strength needed to resist applied horizontal loads. The second is that the missing balustrades create larger than normal openings at the railings through which objects could pass. These do not represent a larger structural issue for the building and are only an issue if the balconies are accessible, which presently they are not.
Due to lack of interior access, we cannot assess the interior structural conditions or the foundation conditions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on our limited review of the building structure from the exterior, we do not observe conditions that indicate the building is a danger or imminent hazard to persons or property on the exterior. We cannot assess the adequacy of the interior structure without access.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

We include the following recommendations for general maintenance to prevent continued deterioration of the exterior non-structural components:

- Remove the ivy from the masonry walls and cut back vegetation.
- Repoint the isolated spall and crack locations in the stone masonry wall.
- Clean all gutters, scupper boxes, and downleaders to allow water to drain away from the building.
- Remove deteriorated wood surrounds from the window locations and replace with new wood. Paint all exposed wood to prevent further deterioration.
- Replace balustrades at balconies and other locations where they are missing or deteriorated.

6. LIMITATIONS

Our review is limited to the exterior observations we made at the time we visited the site. We have not been provided any drawings, specifications, shop drawings, repair records, or other documents that may provide additional information about the building. We did not have access to the building interior to review its condition or other evidence of structural deterioration.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]
Peter M. Babaian, S.E.
Principal
IL License No 081.006829

Encls.
Photo 1
Harley Clarke Mansion.

Photo 2
Steep-slope clay tile roof on main building. Note vegetative growth in gutter in foreground.

Photo 3
Steep slope metal roof on solarium.
Photo 4
Minor mortar joint spalling in stone masonry.

Photo 5
Open head joints in stone cornices (red arrows) and cracked mortar joints (black arrow) at changes in plane.

Photo 6
Brick masonry chimney.
Photo 7
Brick masonry chimneys.

Photo 8
Deteriorated wood at window surrounds.

Photo 9
Deteriorated wood at window surrounds.
Photo 10
Wet stone masonry behind a scupper box.

Photo 11
Vegetative growth in gutter.

Photo 12
Missing balustrade on window well railing.
Photo 13

Missing balustrade on balcony railing.
My firm, Paul Janicki Architects, has been in Evanston for 25 years. We specialize in Historic structures and their renovation and restoration. The City of Evanston has awarded our firm 15 Preservation Awards.

I would like to address the Standards for Demolition as called out in the City Code for Historic properties and structures in Historic Districts and how they relate to the Harley Clarke Mansion.

The first standard, 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.

The Harley Clarke Mansion has been the titular gateway to Evanston when entering our City from the north. You know you have left Wilmette when you pass the Baha’i Temple and are entering Evanston when you come upon this gracious architectural gem. Scores of citizens have derived the benefit of gazing at this stately edifice which is one of only two such houses available to the public in our city. Demolition of this building would indeed be contrary to the notion of preserving it for the people of the City and State. The architectural style, a sort of modified French country house, has very few examples remaining in the region. For these reasons, I believe that demolition does not meet Standard #1.

The second standard, 2) Whether the property, structure or object relates 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.

The compound formed by the Mansion, the adjacent Coach House, the Lighthouse and the Jens Jensen gardens does indeed contribute to the character of the district as a whole. Without them, the character of the district suffers a huge blow. This assemblage of structures has been here almost a hundred years and by virtue of this holds a distinct font of memories for the people of the City and State. There are very few intact examples of the architect's work and even fewer sites remain of Jens Jensen's work. The destruction of any of these elements does not meet the criteria set forth in the 2nd standard.

The third standard, 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.

The intent of this chapter is "preservation." The demolition of a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places flies in the face of this standard and this standard alone and the Chapter in general would normally disqualify the demolition in any other jurisdiction.

The fourth standard, 4) Whether the property, structure or object is of such old, unusual or distinctive design, texture, and/or material that it could not be reproduced without great difficulty and/or expense.

As a practicing restoration architect, I am involved in the everyday process of salvaging these structures and overseeing the repair of them. The design, as mentioned earlier, is unique and one of only a handful of similar examples. The notion of attempting to reproduce a structure like this with the craftsmanship that is so evident here would be a huge undertaking and a massive investment. Elements such as the stone carvings, wood carvings, bronze and copper gutters, scuppers and downspouts, roof tiles and interior finishes such as the exquisite staircase and wall
paneling would take an army of craftspersons which, in truth, are in rapidly dwindling supply. Because of this, the demolition does not meet the requirement of standard #4.
Harley Lyman Clarke, the human side to the story…

Harley Lyman Clarke is most commonly referred to and known as a utilities magnate. However, while living in Evanston at 2603 Sheridan Road, Harley’s commitment to philanthropy, visual education and the betterment of society, led to impactful changes --locally and nationally-- whose impact can still be felt today. His cultural significance should not go unrecognized.

Born in 1881, Harley Clarke was a self-made man who went to the University of Michigan to study Mechanical Engineering, but also focused on conservation and nature. In 1910, he, his wife, and infant son were living in a rented apartment on Greenleaf Avenue in Rogers Park. As early as 1917, they had moved to 118 Broadway Avenue in East Wilmette, and in 1927 they moved to the home we now refer to as the historic Harley Clarke Mansion and Jens Jensen gardens.

In 1918, Mr. Clarke co-founded The Society for Visual Education (SVE), a for-profit organization dedicated to the use of technology as a learning tool. That same year, a pioneering study, personally funded by Harley Clarke and supported by SVE, was conducted in several Evanston schools, including Foster School. This successful study proved the worth of motion pictures for education purposes, and resulted in rollout of the curriculum to all Evanston schools and Chicago Public Schools. After direction from President Hoover, and with help from Harley’s persistence and wallet, this ground-breaking curriculum was rolled out nationwide in 1931. One hundred years ago, Harley Clarke was a pioneer in alternative learning methodology. When he saw the difference that visual education could make, Clarke committed significant personal resources to advancing movies with sound (“talkies”) for the primary purpose of education. In 1931, Harley promised to “place all the resources of his concern” behind this effort.

Clarke’s interest in the educational value of film and his mechanical engineering background led him into the movie and film business—first in projectors, then in visual education. By 1930, Clarke had gained control of Fox Film properties, which included Gaumont-British Pictures Corp., Fox Film Company, and Fox Theatres Corporation. Clarke already owned several theater concerns (National Theater Supply, General Theatres Equipment, Inc. and Grandeur, Inc., a failed early cinemascope invention). The Fox Film Company acquisition allowed him to combine resources and provide equipment and supplies for the educational efforts he backed. According to his family, acquisition of Fox Holdings was motivated solely by his hope to use motion pictures to improve education at the national level. At the time he took control of Fox, both Paramount and RKO were bankrupt. Clarke tried to reduce costs, but met great resistance from staff and actors, many of whom had iron-clad contracts. Clarke lost control of Fox in 1932.

Concurrently, leading into and during the depression, Harley Clarke was the President of Utilities Power and Light Corporation, which held direct control of 50 subsidiary companies, including Interstate Power Co. (which served Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), Eastern New Jersey Power Company, Indiana Power Company, Laclede Gas Company, the Madison and Litchfield Railroad, and a brick yard in New Jersey.

He also owned real estate in Wisconsin and the Chicago Loop (including the Utilities Building at 327 S. LaSalle where Clarke maintained an office, the old Continental Illinois Bank Building at 208 S. LaSalle, and the First Federal Savings Building at 1 South Dearborn), and maintained satellite offices in NYC and London. According to his family, Clarke was an early advocate (along with contemporaries Burnham and Bennett) for the development of an underground delivery route to lessen congestion and increase safety in Chicago’s Loop, which ultimately became Lower Wacker Drive.
Clear Sky, his residence in Lake Geneva, still stands today much as it did when Clarke, Architect Harold Zook, and Jens Jensen collaborated and opened it in 1925. The stonework used at both Clear Sky and in Evanston is believed to have come from a quarry that the Clarkes owned in Wisconsin.

Clarke resigned from the presidency of Utilities Power and Light in 1936 after the Atlas Corporation, a NY investment trust, gained control of the company. In 1945, Clarke became a Railroad Lobbyist, commuting to Washington, DC until his death in 1955, though his commitment to philanthropy and giving back to the community never waned.

In addition to Harley’s broad support of public education causes, his wife Hildur volunteered with garden and horticultural clubs in both Evanston and Lake Geneva. Both were active philanthropists in Evanston, Chicago, and Lake Geneva, focusing on the arts and underprivileged children. Both were life members at the Art Institute of Chicago, opened their home repeatedly for multifaceted fundraisers, and donated heavily to the theatre arts.

In 1931, the Clarkes underwrote The Chicago Shakespeare Civic Theatre Company to the tune of $500,000—the equivalent of $8.4 million today. The Chicago Civic Shakespeare Theatre Company first performed at the Auditorium Theatre and later at the Civic Opera House in Chicago. Clarke was also the inspiration for the Civic Theatre, a smaller theatre within the Civic Opera House. Additionally, Harley was a Trustee for the 1933-34 World’s Fair Exhibition / Century of Progress.

Harley and Hildur continually donated, volunteered, opened their home, and raised funds for the Chicago Junior School (for orphaned children) in Elgin and Evanston. They felt strongly that one of the most important things they could do in life was to help provide education to those less fortunate, and those without access due to financial or location constraints. They were among the philanthropic pioneers in Evanston and believed in equity and access for all.

Harley Clarke Life Member Art Institute of Chicago
HC Chicago Civic Shakespeare Theatre opens in Civic Opera Building
World’s Fair Guide / Trustee List
Clear Sky Lodge Lake Geneva
SOCIETY FOR VISUAL EDUCATION, INC.

327 SOUTH LA SALLE STREET
CHICAGO, ILL.

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Visual Instruction in the Public Schools of Evanston, Ill.

At its regular meeting in June, 1919, the Board of Education of District 75 authorized the organization of a bureau of visual instruction in its school curriculum. In taking this action, the Board had two purposes in mind—first, to establish more definitely the use of motion pictures in the system, and, secondly, to obtain a closer and more immediate correlation between the films and the subject matter in the school courses. The words "more definitely" are used advisedly, for the Evanston schools have made use of regular educational motion picture programs since November, 1918.

The introduction of the educational type of film into our schools was a matter of evolution, based upon seven years of experimentation in various school systems on the part of the director of the Evanston bureau, and guided by the observation of the efforts of our best educators and of many progressive school administrators in all parts of our country, to evolve a method which would adapt the cinema to the school needs.

In this connection, many empirical attempts, often abortive, can be cited, but they serve to demonstrate that consciousness everywhere is awakening to the educative possibilities of motion pictures. One needs only to review the educational publications of this and other countries to judge of the progress that is being made in this field and to note the direction in which this progress is tending.

As outstanding guideposts of the movement, reference should be made to

(a) Recent decisions of Boards of Education in such important school centers as Newark and Detroit, to establish departments of visual instruction.

To-wit:

In a recent magazine article, Mr. A. G. Balcom, Superintendent of the Newark schools says, "Newark, N. J., is one of the first of the larger cities of the United States seriously and officially, through its board of education, to adopt motion pictures as an integral part of its school system. Visual education, so far as Newark is concerned, is an accepted fact. The school board has authorized its superintendent, through his assistants assigned for the purpose, to equip the schools of the city with fireproof booths and standard professional apparatus, and it has authorized appropriations for educational film service."

Likewise, Mr. Charles L. Spain, Deputy Superintendent of the Detroit schools, says: "In Detroit we are just getting started on motion picture work in our public schools and have purchased a number of projection machines. We have contracted for films covering quite a field, including travel, literature, history and a great many industrial films. The Ford Motor Company is still at work upon production of films for us under the direction of our supervisor of geography, but so far no films have been released. We are using motion pictures in fourteen schools, organized on the platoon plan, our form of organization being that one day each week is given over entirely to film work in the auditorium of the school. Machines are being operated by the teachers themselves and the film service is being cared for by the supervisor of this work. It is expected that this work will be extended next year to include probably fifteen or twenty more schools."
(b) The work of visual instruction carried on by the extension departments of state universities such as the University of Wisconsin and Iowa State College.

(c) The recent activities in visual education on the part of state departments of public instruction of which the efforts of the department of North Carolina are typical.

Evanston is by no means in the rear guard of this movement, for motion picture programs, selected for community evening entertainments and for so-called educational afternoon presentations, shown after school sessions, were irregularly carried on several years before the fall of 1918.

At this time four of our grade school buildings, which were provided with projection apparatus, became the nucleus of an earnest endeavor to promote the establishment of a regular circuit of educational films within our own school system. The experiment developed in the following manner. For several months, two and three-reel programs were shown weekly, within school hours. No attempt was made, during this time, to correlate the pictures with the study of text material, but they were given for the general educative information which they might impart. Some attempt was made to announce the titles of the films a day or two in advance of their appearance on the screen, for it was hoped that the teachers might incorporate the picture topics in their language lessons. Typical among the films shown were these—“Mexico’s Floating Gardens,” “Night Animals,” “Furs and Quills,” “Screen Telegrams,” Pathé and Ford “Weeklies,” and kindred material.

Furthermore, there was not, during these first months, any attempt to adapt certain films to different grade groups of children, but all films were shown, without differentiation, to all the pupils of the schools.

The cost of these regular weekly shows was defrayed by an “entertainment fund” which was supplied by the receipts from monthly “diversional movies” in which current drama and comedy plays were shown.

Sample of “diversional show” announcement.

COME
To Lincolnwood School to our movie and see “Cinderella’s” Fairy Godmother turn the mice and pumpkin into a “coach and four.”

A new film—All star cast—260 child actors.
Two afternoon shows—3:00 and 4:30. Admission 10 cents.
At eight o’clock another show. One of the world’s classics.
New films. Also O. Henry’s famous story filmed.

Admission 15 Cents.
The circuit programs were well received by both the children and the teachers, for they clarified and greatly enlivened the drab values of texts hitherto lazily scanned and but partially understood. This enthusiasm gave rise to a new idea—to associate the pictures more closely with the classroom work.

Accordingly, in April, 1919, arrangements were made with a large educational film company of Chicago, whereby our “teacher-operator,” Miss Lucile Berg, who has contributed much time and many valuable suggestions to the launching of our “movie” project, was given permission to visit the library exchange of this film corporation from week to week. While there, she selected and reviewed suitable film materials, itemized their subject content, and booked the pictures, usually two weeks in advance of their appearance in the schools. This proceeding enabled us, on the one hand, to discriminate carefully in the choice of purely educational matter which could be directly applied in amplifying and explaining the school texts and, on the other hand, to give to teacher and to pupil a suggestive synopsis in outline form, of the picture to be viewed the week following its receipt.

When, in June, 1919, the members of the Board of Education were apprised of the success of this scheme in the four schools where it was used, they straightway voted an appropriation sufficient to equip all of our eight schools with standard apparatus and, in addition to this, a fund which would cover film rental for the succeeding school year, 1919-1920.

The installation of all new equipment took place in the summer vacation. In full compliance with the rulings of the fire insurance underwriters of Chicago, every precaution was taken to provide suitable booths for the several machines. In buildings where it was impracticable to construct permanent booths, movable structures, made of 24-gauge sheet steel, were erected on large piano casters, in order that they might, when not in use, be rolled into the most inconspicuous corner of the auditorium or into a convenient closet.
Beginning with the new school term in September, 1919, a regular schedule of picture presentation was observed by the schools. It ran as follows:

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Each week's program consisted of four topics:

**TOPIC A**

Usually fairy stories, animal action or children's activities pictures.

Shown to kindergarten, first and second grades or Group 1.

**TOPIC B**

Usually animal action pictures, transportation, modes of living (foreign countries) and simple industries.

Shown to third, fourth and fifth grades or Group 2.

Sample programs are given here to indicate the method of announcement. These outlines are published in our School Bulletin and are distributed each Monday morning to every teacher and school child, which gives them every opportunity to study the topics assigned the various grades.

**EDUCATIONAL MOVING PICTURES FOR WEEK OF MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1919.**

**Topic A**—Three Bears and Golden Locks.

(Develops somewhat from story.)

**Topic B**—Story of Sheep. Shropshire Breed.

Sheep and lambs.

Yearling ewes.

Ewe lambs.

Sheep dog "rounding up" or "milling" sheep.

Sending dog alone to bring sheep in at night.

Where we got our game of "Follow the Leader."

**TOPIC C**

Usually geographic, industrial scenes, historical plays, scientific material.

Shown to sixth, seventh and eighth grades or Group 3.

**TOPIC D**

Ford Weeklies

Shown to sixth, seventh and eighth grades or Group 3.

Seventy-five thousand sheep being driven to shearing ground.

Stables where 2,000 sheep are sheared per day.

(Compare old and new methods of shearing.)

**Topic C**—Boston Tea Party, Reel 1.

Reel 1 shows home life, styles and customs of Colonial times.

**Topic D**—Ford Educational Film.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to secure outlines of these Ford Films at present. Watch for the announcements of the following week's title at the end of the Ford pictures at each successive presentation.

Note: Topic C in this case is a three-reel production and was run one reel each week for three successive weeks.

General colonial history was studied during this time.
Clipping from Evanston School Bulletin, District 75, Monday October 20, 1919:

**EDUCATIONAL MOTION PICTURES FOR WEEK BEGINNING OCT. 27, 1919.**

**Topic A—African Sea Birds.**


Solen geese or malagas. Island 300 yards square, harbors 300,000 birds. Note how similar their flight is to that of the sea gull. Courtship of malagas. Note black wingtip and tail. Preening for the day.

Duckers or divers.

Ostrich farming—South America. Complete growth, egg to plumed bird. Plucking plumes. Why does covering the head quiet ostrich? Why cut feathers instead of pulling them?

Capturing a bob-cat.

**Topic B—Scenes in Florida.**

Everglades—reclaimed land.

Deep in the everglades.

Ants on sandy soil.

Spanish air moss.

Seminole Indians.

Alligator farm, showing nest, eggs and alligators from those just hatched to full-grown ones.

Florida in winter.

**Topic C—Over the Northern Andes.**

Study relief map of South America—it will be shown on film. Section of scene—Colombia. Colombia has very few railroads, due to the mountains making railroad construction expensive and frequently impossible.

There is a railroad between Cali, on the Cauca river, and Buenaventura on the Pacific. It begins on the plains about Cali and passes over high mountains before reaching Colombia's chief seaport.

The native huts in Buenaventura are made of loose boards and have thatched roofs. The only frame building is the cable station.

Natives live in huts, good-sized boats and under the wharves.

One of the chief products of Colombia is the cocoa bean.

Cachimbo planted with cocoa to protect it from sun.

Cocoa pods growing on branches and trunk. Blossoms and pods grow on tree at same time. (Of what other tree is this characteristic?)

Steps in growth—gathering and preparing of cocoa for market.

Open pod.

Planting bean.

Height attained in one month, three months, three years.

While young, protected by banana tree. (What other plant or tree is protected by banana tree while young? Why banana tree?)

Pods collected from trees with long-forked sticks.

Pods beaten open to get beans.

Pods fed to cattle.

Leaf of cocoa shaped like pod—feather-veined.

Beans wrapped in leaves and allowed to ferment; then dried, packed, shipped.

Product of beans—cocoa, cocoa-butter, chocolate.

**Topic D—Ford Educational Film.**

Note: Topic C is one reel of a series of three reels on South America. Grades seeing these reels had a comprehensive three weeks' study of this country.

One feature of our work which deserves a little more than passing attention is the co-operation existing between the public library and the Bureau of Visual Instruction.

A "motion picture reference shelf" has been established in a corner of the children's room of the public library. Here pupils may find much pertinent material in the form of books and magazines which have been conveniently marked for the purpose of ready reference.

The librarian is supplied in advance with copies of our Motion Picture program—outlines which give her an opportunity to stock the "reference shelf" with literature that suitably illustrates the film topics.
A bulletin board placed above the shelf displays a bibliography of the material selected and acts as a guide for the pupils in their study.

Two such bibliographies are here presented.

**ROYAL GORGE.**

Steele, D. M.—Going abroad overland, p. 144-147.

**ELK AND DEER.**

Wright—Four-footed Americans, p. 302, 304-308.

**PERU.**

Bowman—South America, p. 84-127.
Miller—In the wilds of South America, p. 265-278.

**Callao.**

Bowman—South America, p. 104.

**Callao to Lima.**

Peck—South American tour, Chaps. 6 and 8.

**Lima.**

Bowman—South America, 105-108.

Incas.


**Simon Bolivar.**


**SHEEP.**

American Woolen Co.—From wool to cloth.
Austin, M. H.—The flock.
Carpenter, F. G.—Sheep and wool in Australia: In Australia, p. 24-34.
Tappan, E. M.—Ways of the sheep. In Farmer and his friends, p. 72-78.
Wright, M. O.—Bighorns. In Four-footed Americans, p. 243-5.
U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Bulletin 94.

**Stories.**

Hamp, S. F.—Dale and Fraser, sheepmen.
Pierson, C. D.—Lamb with the longest tail; Why the sheep ran away. In Among the farmyard people.

The question of the teachers’ attitude toward the pictures may be answered by presenting excerpts of letters.

*From an eighth grade teacher*

“The movies are very valuable in the teaching of Geography and History as co-operation has made it possible to have films given that fitted into our work by making of lists of topics ahead of time. The pictures seemed to be as valuable when given after the lessons as before or at the same time, as then they constituted a very pleasant form of review, and the comments of the children showed they enjoyed them as such. Often very good comparisons were drawn. They developed observation and several boys told me that having them in school had taught them to be far more observing when attending other movies and to utilize the information they received.”

*From a seventh and eighth grade Geography teacher*

“If presented before the topic is studied, it forms a good working basis and adds much interest. Example—About ten days ago a film showing many mountain views in California was shown and yesterday my seventh grade, in
giving their description of Yosemite Park, made use of the knowledge gained and named the various pictures shown that day (rather remarkable, as they were not named on the film at all). The children are continually making allusions to some process, view, etc., seen in the movies (perhaps last fall) and connecting it with their daily work. In recitation you'll sometimes hear, "You saw that point explained in the movies," when a child asks the one reciting a question and the others will nod emphatically, thus attention is taught to some careless pupils.

"If shown after topic is studied, the pictures prove a valuable source of review."

From a fifth grade teacher

"Pictures are almost the only means many children have of gaining a knowledge of the topography of a country. Few of our pupils have had the opportunity to travel, and moving pictures stimulate their interest in a subject and induce them to do more research work.

"Pictures of the different industries have been especially valuable to the pupils who are studying geography."

From a third grade teacher

"In my estimation there is great value in the motion pictures for the lower grades, when the pictures are adapted to the work and the work outlined in advance. The pictures can be used as a basis for the Nature work, given in a more interesting and clearer manner than is possible in merely reading or trying to find one's own material.

"The pictures are an excellent device in beginning composition work in the lower grades. The pictures form a splendid foundation for visualizing Geography which will be studied in a higher grade."

From a first grade teacher

"I have been amazed this year at the direct help the movies have given us. The types which have helped us most are the nature pictures and the fairy story types. Moving pictures have brought to us things we need in our work in the way of illustrative materials which it would be impossible for us all to go and see. For instance, today we had a song about geese building their nests by a reedy lake and if it hadn't been for our last movie we wouldn't have had so easy a time understanding what a reedy lake was. And so it is almost daily, some reference in our work is given to some animal or story we have seen on the screen.

"Children at this age (primary grades) are so very eye-minded that we have wonderful help in observation.

"Then, too, movies give us much material for independent seat work. Much free hand cutting can be done.
"The joy which the movies give us is inestimable. The pictures are so well chosen that they are within the comprehension of the children.

"The outlines have been a great help in bringing the messages to the parents of what is going on at the movies."

Pupils were recently asked to write a short, one-page composition concerning our "movies." They were given no ideas or suggestions upon what to write. Several representative selections are presented:

Elizabeth P.—"I think the movies have helped us a great deal. Our knowledge of the manufacture of things we see in the home is much larger. We can remember how things were made if we see them made. We can’t remember so well if we read about it.

"The pictures of places we know about but have not seen give us a very much better idea of the people and country the pictures are about.

"Therefore I would like to have the movies continued."

Laura C.—"I have received information from the school movie which is very valuable to know.

"I have learned a lot of another world, a world of insects, animals and birds.

"Before I saw the movies here at Lincolnwood I knew almost nothing of the outside world.

"I have learned things that will be of value in future years as well as now.

"Our mothers and fathers have also become interested in these films and have attended a great many. I hope that this movie will be used in the school right along."
Marjorie G.—“The trap-door spider makes a hole in the ground and lines it with silk. It has a hinged lid which fills the opening of the hole. There are two little holes in the edge of the lid farthest from the hinge.

“When the spider enters its nest it runs over the door and, catching the claws of its hind leg into these holes, it pulls the door shut after it.”

Two themes are given below in full to illustrate further the stimulating effect of the screen. Hazel, aged 11, 6th grade, is deeply impressed by the mental nourishment derived; while Maurice, aged 11, 5th grade, is moved to pictorial utterance as well as verbal. Maurice’s interesting spelling of “noise” is an unconscious mark of loyalty to his home and school in Evanston, where Noyes street and the Noyes School are easily dominant in his mind over all other noises.

THEME No. 1.
By Hazel.

The Soo Canal is situated between Lake Superior and Lake Huron, in the St. Marys River. It is named after the city Sault Ste. Marie. The St. Marys River has a great many rapids. So the people that lived around there built this very large canal. Since they built this canal there has been a great deal of transportation going on there. If something happened to the locks of the Soo Canal, it would stop all transportation between Lake Superior and Lake Huron.

This film was most interesting to me because I have never known much about the Soo Canal. And just from that one film my head was filled. If the Soo Canal was not there the northwestern part of the Western States would not be half as important as it is now. It is one of the most important places in the United States. And I think the Soo Canal is going to grow even more.

THEME No. 2.
By Maurice.

**HE** Western States have many wonders. Its mountains are most noted. The film of “A Little Bit of Heaven.” It showed a great many of the wonders. You would leave here in a train and go west to a small town near the Yosemite Valley, or in it. When you leave the station you would go for a horse at a nearby stable. Then you are off to the
wonders away from the street noyeses.

But there is another noyes. It is the water falls which are bordered with lofty precipices of granite, and pine trees galore.

There are boulders half as tall as a man. Some are so close together that a horse can't get through.

There are places where you can stand out on a river above a fall on the rocks.

Let it be stated in conclusion that the end for which we are striving is to make the Motion Picture a real factor in the education of the child. He grows intellectually in proportion as he increases his power of thought and expression. To gain this end we give the child, not a passive viewing of the picture, but a presentation which will be of definite informational and thought-producing value. We try to accomplish this by giving opportunity for

(1) *Active study.* (Guiding the pupil to look for the significant thing while undertaking a preparatory study of our outline.)

(2) *Thoughtful consideration.* (Conducting socialized class-room discussions and reports on topics assigned.)

(3) *Careful observation.* (Silence is preserved during the showing of the film to permit complete concentrating upon the picture. Close attention is further encouraged by the pupil's knowledge that he may be asked at any time to write a theme upon the picture he has seen.)

W. Arthur Justice,
*Director of Visual Instruction, Public Schools,*
Evanston, Ill.
IN THE CITY HALL

What the City Officials and Men of Affairs Are Doing for the Chicago Public

Health Commissioner Robertson and Alderman Adamowski will attempt to reduce the cost of living by having army food and placing it on sale at police stations. Chinese are being denied their share of these stacks through delays in the parcel post.

The days are to be curtailed, possibly forbidden. The council judiciary committee Tuesday, after lengthy discussion, directed Chairman Olen to have the legality of the street collections inquired into. "If the practice is legal then we should enact an ordinance to protect the public against spurious organizations and for insuring the use of the money for charitable purposes only," suggested Alderman Schwartz. The Chicago Law Enforcement League, through James N. McManus and J. E. McElroy, told the alderman the practice was illegal. Alderman Peter, Kretzer and Steffen were appointed a subcommittee to delve into the question and to submit a report at the meeting next Tuesday.

Daylight saving agitation in Chicago was revived again Tuesday by the new judiciary committee of the city council. In view of the repeated requests for the extra hour of daylight by thousands of workers and various trade union organizations, the aldermen believe enough votes may be mustered to enact the required ordinance. At the suggestion of Chairman Olen action was deferred until next Tuesday, when hearings will be given those interested who have not already presented their views.

Members of the Board of Education occupied the role of noise patrons Tuesday afternoon when the newly formed society for Visual Education, whose board of directors, Frank A. Vanderbilt recently became chairman, placed a number of their reels on view in the new board rooms on S. Clark street.

Films selected from a number made under the direction of leading American minstrels were shown. The educational scenarios were written by Professor William C. Badger of Centralia University.

Among those who witnessed the demonstration were President E. J. Davis, Assistant Superintendent D. E. Cole, George B. Arnold, A. H. Seward of the Board of Education; D. Luther Grant Hayes, director of school extension; Professor Robert E. Bullock of the University of Chicago and president of the Society for Visual Education; Harly L. Clark, vice-president and general manager of the same organization; Professor P. B. Monroe of the University of Chicago and other noted educators.

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Largest Weekly Circulation Among People of Influence and Standing

Clipped By:
shadurcoop
Sat, Jul 7, 2018
Putting Joy Into Kids Lives (Harley Clarke)

Clipped By: shadurcoop
Sat, Jul 7, 2018
Shakespearean drama available to all classes of people in Chicago, with prices within the range of...

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Wed, Jul 18, 2018
CHICAGO CIVIC SHAKESPEARE.

A corner has been found in Chicago's magnificent new Civic Opera Building to establish a theatre for the Chicago Civic Shakespeare Society. The theatre has a seating capacity for 800, and is furnished with up-to-date equipment. Beginning next month, Shakespeare plays are to be given each night, excepting Sunday, until February, with regular seasons to follow in subsequent years. A wealthy benefactor has been found to agree to meet any deficits which may be incurred during the next few years at least, and a number of other citizens of Chicago are giving their support. The aim is to make Shakespearean drama available at a minimum cost to all, and, in particular, to school children. At the same time, the Chicago Civic Opera Company, in a desire to encourage wider interest in opera, has arranged to broadcast many of its performances during the 1929-30 season, over a chain of broadcast stations.
City Bail out for Police Teachers and Firemen by Harley

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Wed, Jul 18, 2018
Interest of son, invested Millions Visual education

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Wed, Jul 18, 2018
"Bring better education to poor and isolated communities..."

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Thu, Jun 14, 2018
Clarke Movies motivated son EDUCATION

Clipped By:
shadurcoop
Thu, May 31, 2018
Clarke's pledge $500,000 in 1931 for Shakespeare Theatre.

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Wed, May 30, 2018
HLC $90K Pledge to STL Opera 1931

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Wed, Jul 18, 2018
Harley Clarke backs education films

Clipped By: shadurcoop
Wed, May 30, 2018
Visual Education/ Washington / Funded by Harley

Clipped By:

shadurcoop  
Wed, Jul 18, 2018
Harley funds films and goes to Washington!

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Wed, Jul 18, 2018
High schools students test film at Harley expense

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Wed, Jul 18, 2018
Educator Experiments (better copy)

Clipped By:

shadurcoop
Wed, Jul 18, 2018
Clarkes open home for benefits

Clipped By:

shadurcoop

Wed, May 30, 2018
Plan Lecture Series at H. L. Clarke Home.

Mrs. Harley L. Clarke is opening her home at 2603 Sheridan road, Evanston, in March for a series of lectures that will benefit the Chicago Junior school at Elgin. The Evanston friends of the school are sponsoring the series which will be given by Eleanor Perkins, commentator on books. The first program will be on March 6.
OP-ED

Too Good To Throw Away
By Lee Bey

It sounds like a throwback to a less-enlightened time: a rambling lakeside estate under threat of being wrecked as if it were no more than an abandoned warehouse. But that’s the case right now in Evanston.

The Harley Clarke Mansion, a city-owned landmark that had been the long-time home of the Evanston Art Center, is being sized up for the wrecker’s ball. The 16-room house is caught in the crosshairs of a private group of influential neighbors who want the house razed so badly they’re willing to pay more than $400,000 to demolish the publicly owned building and Evanston elected officials who won’t back a nonprofit group’s plan to restore and rehab the mansion.

Last July, the Evanston City Council voted 5-3 to enter into a nonbinding agreement that would allow Evanston Lighthouse Dunes to fund Harley Clarke’s demolition and re-landscape the site. Another group, the Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens, had sought to renovate and program the home under a 40-year lease with the city, but aldermen voted against that effort in April after questioning the organization’s ability to raise the millions needed to pull it off.

Built in 1927 at 2603 Sheridan for utilities magnate Harley L. Clarke, the 37,700-square-foot home is a worthy effort by architect Richard Powers; a Tudor Revival beauty with six muscular chimneys thrusting skyward through a red tile roof and wed to a naturalist landscape designed by Jens Jensen.

Put plainly, Harley Clarke is too good to throw away — particularly under circumstances like these. Evanston Lighthouse Dunes group wants the home demolished for parkland, which sounds admirable until one considers the entire site — much of it is landscaped already — is a relatively small five acres.

And what’s the net result anyway? The Evanston Lighthouse Dunes’ offer sets aside only $50,000 to $75,000 for landscaping after the house is demolished. That’s a puny amount — bordering on insulting — for a Jensen-designed grounds. Does this plan restore or complement Jensen’s work? At such gravel-and-sod prices, the additional landscape that is purportedly the reason for understanding this whole thing in the first place, seems like an afterthought.

As Ald. Eleanor Revelle [7th], said in the July city council meeting: “A small amount of additional grass doesn’t do it for me. To restore and repurpose Harley Clarke would really benefit the whole community.”

Revelle is right. The city and its wealthy should instead work together to save and reuse the home and its grounds. Harley Clarke must be preserved and kept open to the public, and hopefully the results of advisory referendum planned for the November ballot can reinforce that idea. Demolition costs could be used to properly secure and mothball the building until a fix can be found. Or the cash could be used as seed money to seek other funding.

Keeping the building is an expensive proposition, but there is enough wealth and brainpower in Evanston to work out a solution. All it takes is the civic and political will.
Column: Evanston plan to demolish Harley Clarke mansion: Public vision or hidden agendas?

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-dec repit 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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Twitter @BlairKamin

**MORE FROM BLAIR KAMIN**

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It's great that the Uptown Theatre has a future. What kind of future will it be? »

We're only stuck with the lousy Union Station design if we fail to rethink it. Let the debate begin. »

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This article is related to: Architecture
Evanston residents spoke out against a resolution concerning the future of the Harley Clarke Mansion and Coach House that Aldermen will vote on at Monday’s City Council meeting.

The resolution, presented by the Evanston Lighthouse Dunes group during the public comment section at the May 29 City Council meeting, calls for demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion and Coach House. Nicole Kustok and Jeff Coney, members of the Evanston Lighthouse Dunes group, said the group had the necessary funds to perform the demolition and restore the Jens Jensen historical garden and dunes at the meeting.
According to city documents, the resolution will allow the City Manager to meet with the Lighthouse Dunes Group to talk further about the city accepting the group’s financial support for the restoration of the gardens and dunes and the demolition of the mansion and Coach House.

The city was previously in talks with non-profit group, Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens, which wanted to restore the gardens and renovate the mansion, but City Council denied (https://dailynorthwestern.com/2018/04/10/city/council-denies-harley-clarke-lease-agreement-due-to-fundraising-concerns-liability-issues/) the group’s proposition of a 40-year lease in April.

Tom Hodgman, board president of Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens, said the restoration of the dunes and the proposition of tearing down the Harley Clarke Mansion are two separate issues.

“The dunes and the house exist in physically different spaces,” Hodgman said. “You do not need to demolish the building to do any restoration to the dunes. … We want to see them remove invasive species and enhance them because they are a really unique environment, but you don’t need to demolish the building to restore the dunes.”

Hodgman added that the Harley Clarke Mansion is the only public lakefront house in Evanston and it gives everyone the opportunity to experience “the connection of built and natural environments” in the Great Lakes area.

Jan Grimes, an Evanston resident and former Director of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, said demolishing the Harley Clarke Mansion could have significant consequences for Evanston, such as jeopardizing the city’s status as a Certified Local Government. She added that the mansion is a National Register designation due to its location in the Northeast Evanston Historic District.

“The city has to study up and demonstrate the community’s commitment to saving the past to be used for future generations,” Grimes said. “Having that status opens the doors to grants and tax breaks, but that CLG status could be in danger if the city unnecessarily demolishes a landmark building.”

Grimes added that preserving landmarks boosts the economy and draws more people to the area, but also raises property values and creates a larger sense of community in the area.

Evanston resident Bennett Johnson said he thinks the demolition is “stupid.” Johnson, who said he lived down the street from the Harley Clarke Mansion in the late 1930s, said tearing down the mansion would take away future opportunities for Evanston residents.

“If it’s a public facility that everyone can have access to, that means that kids and people can come from all over Evanston to have access to the lake,” Johnson said. “The people who live in the surrounding houses do not want … anybody [new] being in the neighborhood.”

Johnson added that he believes a better solution would be allowing Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens to renovate the mansion and turn it into a public space for all residents to use.

Hodgman said Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens hopes the resolution will not pass on Monday and the group will continue to talk and work with the City regarding their plans for the Harley Clarke Mansion. He added that if this resolution were to pass, then the space where the mansion now stands will turn into mostly grass.

“Keeping the building, having diverse programming, having different types of art exhibits come through will make the neighborhood more vibrant and make
Evanston this cool destination place with this gateway to the Great Lakes," Hodgman said. "Ultimately that is more what Evanston is than demolishing a historic landmark building."

Kristina Karisch contributed reporting.
This article has been updated to reflect new information about the historic designation of the Harley Clarke Mansion.

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Comments

Lori Fontana Keenan
So interesting! Thanks for such a great story.

Bonnie James
Great points by Tom Hodgeman and Jan Grimes that I hadn't really heard before. It doesn't make any sense to restore the "Jens Jensen historical gardens" that were designed to complement the house, and then tear down the house. The context of the garden's design is gone then.

Kevin O'Connor
One thing that is never brought up in the current debate is the fact that the Evanston Art Center which was given a dollar a year lease by the Evanston City Council to rent the Harley Clarke Mansion. That lease provided that the Evanston Art Center provide upkeep and maintenance for the mansion during the length of the lease. Naturally, the Evanston City Council never enforced their own lease codicils. Instead the Evanston City Council helped the Evanston Art Center get their next tax free property on Central Street. Of course, most Evanston politicians we're not happy when Jennifer Pritzker w... See More

Lynessa Rissell
You would think that money was being offered for 40 years the city would have taken that offer, plus with all the events that could be held in the mansion after the renovation. Wow.

Also, my father inlaws mothers family are the Jensens, I would love to see the Gardens restored.

Tags: Bennett Johnson, Certified Local Government, City Council Tom Hodgman, Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens, Evanston Lighthouse Dunes, Great Lakes, Harley Clarke
Save Harley Clarke

Editorial August 27, 2018

Last Tuesday, Aug. 21, the City of Evanston’s Electoral Board, comprised of the mayor, city clerk and senior alderman, dispelled challenges to the referendum to save the Harley Clarke mansion and grounds supported by more than 3,300 members of the community. With this development, the referendum will appear on the Nov. 6 ballot.

The fate of the 91-year-old mansion has proven to be a highly contentious issue in Evanston since the building became vacant in 2015 when the Evanston Art Center’s lease expired.

After hearing multiple both privately and publicly funded proposals over the last years, on July 23, the Evanston City Council voted 5-3 to approve a plan proposed by the Evanston Lighthouse Dunes organization, a 41-person private citizen group, to demolish the building and replace it with public parkland. The initial proposal was for $400,000 for demolition and $100,000 for landscaping the new space, even though estimates on demolition cost were as high as $1 million.

More than half of these 41 members live within a one mile radius of the mansion and grounds, meaning that their properties are closely connected to the fate of Harley Clarke. The Evanston Lighthouse Dunes’ website even features a rendering of the “view of lighthouse from Sheridan Road omitting the vacant structure.”

Like those 41 members in favor of the mansion’s destruction, other residents claim that it has sat vacant for too long, has become a financial burden and is nothing but a “bundle of bricks” as Alderman Ann Rainey, 8th ward, said at the July 23 council meeting. Mayor Steve Hagerty has underscored that the debate needs to come to a resolution as it has lasted too long.

It would be irresponsible for the city to jump to an unsatisfactory solution based on the minority perspective of city voices like Evanston Lighthouse Dunes, Mayor Hagerty and Ald. Rainey. The city currently spends $15,000 on building maintenance a year and a citizen group has even offered to cover these costs until the building’s future can be determined.

The so called “bundle of bricks” is actually the only remaining public building on the lakefront.

We at the Evanstonian believe that the Harley Clarke mansion and grounds must be protected from demolition and renovated into a community and event space to benefit the greater Evanston. Mayor Hagerty, along with city officials who are most in tune with public opinion, must devise a plan that maintains the educational and community aspects of the building’s past while generating income to aid with maintenance and repairs.

For several decades, the mansion served as the home for the Evanston Art Center and largely hosted citizens from the nearby area. The updating and repurposing of the mansion presents an opportunity for the building to expands its influence to other areas of the city that may not have previously frequented the building and grounds.

Harley Clarke serves as an access point to the lakefront for families who historically have had minimal access to the area. Destroying the mansion would eradicate this one-of-a-kind center. Permanently.

The Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens group have previously proposed plans to repurpose the mansion for modern needs. One of their salient ideas was the creation of an environmental education center. Their plans could be furthered by the use of the upstairs as a community space that allows for potential events. While the building has a long way to go before it is ready for either of these purposes, taking advantage of the building’s location could prove both beneficial and profitable for the city.

The building’s future is now in the hands of the people, and rightfully so. When going to the ballot in November, keep in mind the history of Harley Clarke and recognize the potential for it to become a greater community space. Vote yes for preservation.
Evanston, IL
United States

Harley Clarke House and Garden

Landscape Information

**Category**

**Types**

**Styles**

**Designed By**

**Designation**

AT-RISK ([category/landslide-status/at-risk](https://tclf.org/fate-harley-clarke-house-and-garden-now-ballot))


Occupying 4.7 acres on the shore of Lake Michigan, the Harley Clarke house was designed in the English Tudor style by Chicago architect Richard Powers in 1927 as a private residence for Harley Lyman Clarke, president of the Utilities Power & Light Corporation. In April 1928 renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen was hired to design the landscape for the property. Jensen brought along his protégé Alfred Caldwell to supervise the work.

The design incorporates many features from the Prairie Style aesthetic that both Jensen and Caldwell championed, while being attentive to the context of the site. Expanses of lawn were oriented to afford views from the residence, particularly of the dunes and Lake Michigan to the east, while stone terraces and walkways linked a series of outdoor rooms demarcated in the landscape by thickets of ornamental shrubs. Jensen planned a border of flowering prairie plants to the north of the property; the repetitive prairie was broken up by shrubs and dogwoods, while hawthorns and crabapples were scattered along the curving driveway linking Sheridan Road to the house. A planting of prairie rose anchored the eastern edge of the property where it met the lakeshore, and a grove of hemlocks was included on the southern edge of the parcel, providing shade for a stone grotto and the home's attached conservatory while screening the property from the adjacent Grosse Point Lighthouse.

The Harley Clarke house was among the last grand residences to be built in Evanston before the stock market crash of 1929, its ownership passing to the City of Evanston in 1965. While much of the vegetation in the Jensen plan has been replaced, the overall layout of the property remains essentially the same; a clearing with council ring, a hemlock-shaded grotto, and stone terraces and paths also remain. The property is designated an Evanston Landmark and is a contributing feature of the Northeast Evanston Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.
Location and Nearby Landscapes

Media Gallery

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Raising Questions, Questioning Razing an Evanston Landmark

By Mary Helt Gavin

Until recently, demolition of the Harley Clarke mansion seemed an unlikely answer to the question of what to do with this City-owned property. But when the City Council on April 9 turned down a request from the nonprofit Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens organization for a lease, demolition of the mansion became more of a possibility.

At the May 29 City Council meeting, Eighth Ward Alderman Ann Rainey asked that City Council consider a proposal from Evanston Lighthouse Dunes to pay for the demolition of the mansion. City Council members will discuss the Dunes proposal at their June 18 meeting.

Evanston Lighthouse Dunes, led by Evanston residents Nicole Kustok and Jeff Coney, is a citizens group whose members have been working for nearly a year on a plan to “restore the natural dunes, beach and parkland as part of a new public space with the iconic Grosse Point Lighthouse, a national historic landmark, as its centerpiece,” Mr. Coney told City Council members.

The offer from the Lighthouse Dunes group, however, appears a limited-time offer of cash. The group would pay the cost of demolition – and possibly deconstruction – of the mansion, and let the City take it from there.

That means the City would absorb costs associated with regular maintenance and additional landscaping after the demolition, but those have not yet been determined. The Dunes group does not at present have a landscaping plan.

“We have a vision and an earmarked donation, enabling the City to [demolish the mansion] now,” Ms. Kustok told the RoundTable in an interview on June 8.

The council ring, the Jens Jensen-designed grotto and the low wall in front of the building would not be razed, she said.

The possibility of demolition raises questions about feasibility, finances and the future.

Feasibility of Demolishing the Mansion

The City has owned the Harley Clarke mansion, 2603 Sheridan Road, since 1965. The mansion is both an Evanston landmark – one of 858 – and a contributing structure to the federally designated Northeast Evanston Historic District. As such, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, said Bonnie McDonald, President and CEO of the advocacy group Landmarks Illinois.

These landmark designations offer some, but not absolute, protection against demolition. What they offer absolutely is an opportunity for the public to be involved in the process to obtain approval for demolition.

“Landmarks Illinois can help mitigate and look for alternatives – e.g., see if a better program could be put in place. That does not mean that the demolition will not happen. [Obtaining permission to demolish a structure] is a lengthy process, and it allows for public input,” Ms. McDonald told the RoundTable. In 2016, Landmarks Illinois listed Harley Clarke fourth on its list of the “most endangered historic places” in the state.

An application to demolish a landmark sets in motion certain review mechanisms to ensure that demolition will not deprive the public of a valuable historic asset.

By City ordinance, anyone, including the City, wishing to demolish or significantly change a landmark must apply for a demolition permit. City Preservation Coordinator Carlos Ruiz described the process: The application for a demolition permit triggers review by the Evanston Preservation Commission, which would include input from the public at public meetings.
The Preservation Commission will evaluate the request against its standards of review. Among those standards are whether the structure’s “historic, cultural, architectural or archaeological significance,” whether demolition would be “detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State” and whether demolition “would be contrary to … the objectives of the historic preservation for the applicable district.”

The Commission needs to be convinced that structure is “beyond repair,” Mr. Ruiz said. In his almost 27 years with the City, applications for demolition of historic structures have been rare.

To clear the way for the renovation of downtown, the City allowed the demolition of the Commonwealth Edison building on Clark Street because the City Council said it felt the benefit of the subsequent use (the movie theater complex) outweighed the benefit of keeping the building.

If the Preservation Commission denies the request, that is, refuses to issue a certificate of appropriateness,” the City still has two other avenues: It can overrule the Preservation Commission and approve its own application for demolition, or it can apply for a “certificate of special merit” from the Preservation Commission. Applying for a certificate of special merit would require additional public hearings.

The fact that the property is on the National Register of Historic Places brings additional scrutiny, said Ms. McDonald. “In the case where there is an undertaking that could jeopardize the integrity of the property – such as a proposed demolition or a proposed addition or change to the building) or jeopardize the historic integrity – this triggers review through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act,” she said.

The administrator of state historical preservation, though the state historic preservation office, conducts these administrative reviews.

Cost of Demolition, Value of Deconstruction

There are no current cost estimates for demolishing the 37,700-square-foot mansion, either alone or with its coach house.

Estimates from 2012 put the cost of demolition, combined with other related costs, close to $200,000. City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz told the RoundTable, “Staff is attempting to update information we have previously gathered. We hope to have that information on the agenda for the June 18 City Council meeting.”

Since the offer from the Dunes group appears to be hands-off except for the offer to pay the demolition costs, it would be up to the City to manage the demolition and the restoration, landscaping and maintenance of the property – which it owns – afterward.

The mansion’s grounds were designed by Prairie School landscape architect Jens Jensen, and it is assumed that the restoration would be in keeping with his original design. The City would be responsible for those costs.

Asked by the RoundTable whether the Dunes group would be willing to foot the bill for deconstruction – often a costlier process than straight demolition – Ms. Kustok said the group had not considered that possibility but she did not think it was out of the question.

Deconstruction is the careful removal of building elements for resale. Deconstruction typically costs more than demolition, but some costs can be offset by the reuse or resale of those elements.

Lou Dickson, director of workforce training for the Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse, says that a building of this size and built with such sought after materials as limestone; copper gutters, collector boxes and downspouts and clay tile roofing would be a logical candidate for deconstruction.

The Future of 2603 Sheridan Road

This English Tudor mansion has changed hands and functions since it was built in 1927 as a private residence for a Chicago business magnate. The Sigma Chi fraternity used the building as its national headquarters from 1951 to 1965. After the City purchased it in 1965 as part of the development of Lighthouse Landing Park, the Evanston Art Center leased it for some 40 years.

The City has been trying to find a new use for the building, including private uses, for the past few years. It appears that most current aldermen would stand by the decision made a few years ago to sell the land to a developer for private use but to keep the property for public use.

The Evanston Lakehouse & Garden group and the Evanston Lighthouse Dunes groups are now competing for the right to determine the future of the mansion.

At the June 18 City Council meeting, Aldermen will vote on how to proceed with the offer from Evanston Lighthouse Dunes.
Council has the ultimate authority to decide, and by the time of that meeting, aldermen may have yet another option.

One alderman told the RoundTable he is considering asking his colleagues to put the question of the future of the mansion back to the residents of Evanston by placing the question as a referendum on the ballot in the November election.

Reader Comments

Posted: Wednesday, June 20, 2018
Comment by: Clare Ruen

I think it's interesting that the group's nickname is "Dunes" group when no natural dunes occur on this side of Lake Michigan

Posted: Tuesday, June 19, 2018
Comment by: Frances Gasharra

Wondering why the dunes folks will not join in with the Lakehouse and Gardens folks to create a wonderful place in Evanston for all to enjoy all year long; young and old, rich and not so, Evanstonians and folks from towns or countries close and far?! Poem, music from those nearby, exchanges of ideas, coffee and tea, edible gardens, stories to tell and write, vistas and fresh air from the beautiful bounty of the lake, sunsets and storms, cold or warm a place to feel life for the those with eyes worn, taste the sweetness of a sprout in January. Small groups, one on one intentional postive interactions, create memories that last a lifetime.

Why is is demolish or Revive? Let's work together! The Dunes.com folks can Stop the erosion at the beach and dune, help restore the habitat. Lakehouse and Gardens folks will Continue the magical, eclectic frenchy Landmark Harley Clark build refreshed and alive with thought, experiential wonderment and training in environment conservatory to help the health of the Lighthouse Landing Beach and surrounding Lawerance Lawson All Ability Park and the legendary storied Grosse Point Lighthouse! The 4 keystones of nature’s invocation. Let’s be stronger as one!

Peace! Let’s Lead Evanston! Not destroy a 37,000 sq foot opportunity for good! ALL year long!!! Not just for kids.

Visit Lakehouse and Gardens, a not-for-profit
Or https://www.bobvila.com/slideshow/15-100-year-old-houses-that-haven-t-aged-a-day-50681#harley-clark-mansion-evanston-il
See erosion issues-

Article Comment Submission Form

The RoundTable will try to post comments within a few hours, but there may be a longer delay at times. Comments containing mean-spirited, libelous or ad hominem attacks will not be posted.

Note: Your full name is required. Your telephone number and e-mail will not be posted. You may type your comments in the space below, or you may type them in a word document and cut and paste them in the space below.

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'Research all options' before demolishing Harley Clarke Mansion, Evanston state reps say

With preservation group supporters successfully getting an advisory referendum on the Nov. 6 ballot about the fate of the Harley Clarke Mansion, and a citizens group’s deadline approaching to make payment on its plans to pay for the building to be demolished, state representatives have reached out to Evanston city leaders.

In separate letters addressed to Mayor Steve Hagerty, the city manager and the City Council, state representatives Laura Fine, D-Glenview, and Robyn Gabel, D-Evanston, have urged the city to find a way to keep the city-owned lakefront mansion from a wrecking ball.

“For many residents, Harley Clarke represents the city’s cultural and historical heritage,” Fine wrote in her letter dated Sept. 17. “For this reason I am urging the city not to demolish the landmark structure.”

Fine, the 17th District representative who is seeking in the November election to switch to the state Senate, suggested that more time be given to "research all options for a creative solution."

Part of her current district includes Evanston.

“An issue that engenders so much passion from everyone is deserving of a deliberate thoughtful process,” she wrote.

Gabel’s correspondence came months before, as the City Council considered entering into a memorandum of understanding with Evanston Lighthouse Dunes — a group of neighbors that has offered to pay for the removal of the 91-year-old structure.

“I would like to see all possible options exhaustively explored before coming to the final decision to tear down the Harley Clarke Mansion,” Gabel wrote in a July 23 letter.
She touted the Tudor-style building as “the only accessible public lakefront building that is open to everyone in our community. Saving that opportunity for all races, ages and abilities is worth taking more time.”

Aldermen voted 5-3 to accept the non-binding demolition payment offer at the July 23 City Council meeting.

Neither letter specifically mentioned turning the mansion and surrounding property into a state park. But in an interview with the Evanston Review, Christian Sorensen, of Gabel’s 18th District office, said that could be a preservation option.

“The idea would be likely to have it be a state park so it’s not on the city’s [financial] rolls. It’s not the city’s cost,” said Sorensen.

A project like that would be coordinated through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, he said.

“It’s a constituent-led request. They came and were looking for alternatives to demolition,” Sorensen said.

Sorensen said almost any alternative that includes working with the state would also require local financial support. That would likely include a fiscal plan detailing 10 years of private local funding for maintenance as well as a contribution to the property’s restoration.

The state would also likely need to take ownership of the land the Harley Clarke Mansion and grounds sit on if it is to become a park, Sorensen said. Evanston currently owns the land.

Further, Gabel said in her letter that the state has previously looked into partnering with Evanston on a public use of the Harley Clarke Mansion. She said that could be a possibility again after the election next month.

“It would be a mistake for the city to foreclose future possibilities by the irreversible destruction of a public asset,” Gable wrote.

Gabel, who is seeking re-election in the Nov. 6 election, represents the North Shore-area towns of Evanston, Wilmette, Kenilworth, Northbrook, Northfield, Winnetka and Glencoe — some in part.

Another citizens group, Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens, had sought to repurpose the mansion into an environmental education center. But a plan to lease the building from the city fell through in April when aldermen failed to approve an agreement, expressing doubt that the group could meet fundraising goals.

Weeks after aldermen denied ELHG’s plan, members of Evanston Lighthouse Dunes came forward with their proposal to pay for demolition. They argued that mansion restoration was too expensive if it were to remain in public hands. They proposed tearing the building down, rebuilding the gardens and dunes and opening the beach to public access.

As part of the memorandum of understanding, the pro-demolition group has to make a $400,000 payment to the city by Oct. 28.

According to city’s website, as of Sept. 28, the group had raised $350,425.

Ald. Don Wilson, 4th Ward, who has voted for Harley Clarke Mansion preservation in the past, said he needs to learn more about any potential partnership between the city and the state before making a decision.

“My concern remains that I don’t want to undertake a course that’s going to put an undue tax burden on the taxpayers of Evanston,” Wilson told the Evanston Review.

Fine said in her letter that, “As an elected official, we have to be stewards of taxpayer dollars, but we are also tasked with protecting and preserving our cultural, historical and natural resources.”

An advisory referendum is on the Nov. 6 ballot.

“Shall the City of Evanston protect from demolition and preserve the landmark Harley Clarke buildings and gardens next to Lighthouse Beach, for use and access as public property, consistent with the Evanston Lakefront Master Plan, at minimal or no cost to Evanston taxpayers?” the referendum asks.

Voters will have the opportunity to respond ‘yes’ or ‘no’ when they go to the polls.

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State Partnership Could Spare Harley Clarke Mansion: State Reps

Ahead of a non-binding referendum next month, local state reps called for "all options" to be explored before an "irreversible" demolition.

By Jonah Meadows | Oct 6, 2018 1:07 am ET | Updated Oct 8, 2018 3:20 pm ET

EVANSTON, IL — Two state representatives for Evanston have written letters to city officials asking them to not to demolish the Harley Clarke mansion. Rep. Robyn Gabel, an Evanston resident, and Rep. Laura Fine, who is running for the Illinois Senate's 9th District, joined U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky in voicing support for a delay on the city's planned demolition of the house in order to find a way to preserve it. The city's application for permission to demolish the building comes before the Evanston Preservation Commission later this month and voters will have an opportunity to weigh in on an advisory referendum in November's general election.
In letters to Mayor Steve Hagerty, City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz and members of the Evanston City Council, the state reps suggested a potential partnership with the state could be an option for preserving the site.

"The Harley Clarke mansion is the only accessible public lakefront building that is open to everyone in our community," Gabel wrote in a July 23 letter. "Saving that opportunity for all races, ages and abilities is worth taking more time." She called for "all possible options" to be "exhaustively explored" before demolition, hinting that potential changes in Springfield following next month's election could open up new possibilities for the site.

"I believe new opportunities to investigate a partnership between the state and the city may open up after the November elections," wrote Gabel, who is running for her fifth term in Illinois House. "It would be a mistake for the city to foreclose future possibilities by the irreversible destruction of a public asset."

Fine, whose 17th District seat includes part of Evanston and who seeks to represent the whole city if elected in to the seat currently held by Sen. Daniel Biss, told city officials she had been hearing from constituents concerned about the mansion's future.

"For many residents, Harley Clarke represents the city's cultural and historical heritage," Fine wrote in a Sept. 17 letter. "For this reason I am urging the city not to demolish the landmark structure, but instead grant all sides more time to research all options for a creative solution." She said the issue was a passionate one for many residents and deserved a thoughtful process.

The fate of the city-owned landmark has been the subject of intense debate through a series of proposals over more than five years. The building served as the home of the Evanston Arts Center for about 50 years, but the group deferred needed maintenance on the structure. An offer from retired Col. Jennifer Pritzker's Tawani Enterprises to purchase the property and convert it into a boutique hotel was rejected after residents campaigned to keep it public. A deal to use it for offices for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources fell through after the governor's mansion changed hands in 2014, with department officials citing the city's unwillingness to part ways with the land. The mansion and coach house have remained vacant since the art center's departure in 2015.
Following a 2017 request for proposals to lease the building, a group called Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens entered into lease negotiations with the city. Concerns over financial risks to the city and the viability of the group's plan led to a 5-4 vote in April to cut off lease negotiations. A few weeks later, a group called Evanston Lighthouse Dunes publicly revealed an offer to pay for the cost of demolition and expand the city park that surrounds it. The City Council approved a memorandum of understanding with the group in July and Bobkiewicz signed an amended version on Aug. 27.

Donors to the demolition effort include Ald. Ann Rainey, 8th Ward, who faces a pair of pending ethics complaints related to her advocacy on behalf of the pro-demolition group, and former Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl, according to the city's website. As of Sept. 28, the group had raised $350,425 from 44 individuals and two foundations. The memorandum of understanding with the city gives the group until Oct. 28 to make a $400,000 payment to defray the costs of demolition.

Fine acknowledged concerns over the cost of keeping the building. Aldermen have shown little or no interest in putting any taxpayer money toward repairs needed to make the building usable, which have been estimated at anywhere from $500,000 to several million dollars, depending on how much work is done. With the city facing a $7.4 deficit and the city manager's office recommending the elimination of the equivalent of more than 38 full-time positions, any solution would likely have to come at no cost to Evanston taxpayers to win City Council approval.

"As an elected official, we have to be stewards of taxpayer dollars, but we are also tasked with protecting and preserving our cultural, historical and natural resources," Fine wrote. "The Harley Clarke mansion and the land it sits on is such a resource." Like Gabel, she also suggested exploring a partnership with state government. One possible partnership, an aide to Fine told the Evanston Review, might involve the Illinois Department of Natural Resources coordinating the conversion of the site to a state park and the transfer of ownership from the city to the state.

City staff have filed an application for a certificate allowing for the demolition from the Evanston Preservation Commission. According to the application, the mansion and coach house "are not a prime example of one particular architectural style or design," the buildings currently "present a danger" to occupants and the demolition will "restore the original condition of the property to its natural state." A hearing to consider it is set for 7 p.m. on Oct. 23. Should the application be rejected, the City Council will have another opportunity to vote to override the commission, and the city may then seek a demolition permit.

Ald. Eleanor Revelle, whose 7th Ward includes the mansion, submitted a formal request to the City Council to allow groups to be able to access the site prior to the commission's hearing. CEO Of Landmarks Illinois Bonnie McDonald and Evanston Preservation Commission Chair Diane Williams each penned letters to city officials offering to provide updated expert reports at no cost to the city. Revelle's request is set to be considered Oct. 8.

A citizen-initiated advisory referendum will appear on the Nov. 6 ballot in Evanston. Voters will have the opportunity to vote "yes" or "no" on the question, "Shall the City of Evanston protect from demolition and preserve the landmark Harley Clarke buildings and gardens next to Lighthouse Beach, for use and access as public property, consistent with the Evanston Lakefront Master Plan, at minimal or no cost to Evanston taxpayers?"

The Central Street Neighbors Association is holding a forum to discuss the referendum, the status of demolition talks and background on how the situation with the mansion has developed. The neighborhood association said speakers representing the Save Harley Clarke group, the referendum's sponsor, and Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens, the group that entered unsuccessful lease negotiations with the city to operate out of the mansion, have confirm they will attend. Representatives from the Evanston Lighthouse Dunes group and the Evanston city staff were also invited, but they both declined the invite, according to the association. The event is scheduled for at 7 p.m. Oct. 10 at the Chandler Center at 1028 Central St.

Read the complete letters from Rep. Laura Fine (D-Glenview) and Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-Evanston) to Mayor Steve Hagerty, City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz:

John Evans breaks his own rules to talk politics and investigate a proposal to save the Harley Clarke Mansion from the wrecking ball. ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN S. DYKES

Faithful readers who turn to these silly musings of mine every other month know that I deliberately avoid any topic that even slightly broaches the subject of local politics. I follow along, as any good citizen should, limiting opinion and commentary to my own internal (and rather hilarious) monologue. But I must confess that I caught wind of a certain civic issue that has me a bit confounded, and concerned—enough to break my own rules and prattle on to anyone who cares to listen.

This all started with a certain city council meeting recently about the fate of Harley Clarke’s old place up on Sheridan Road and a comment made by a certain alderman in attendance that left me feeling, well, a bit flabbergasted. Now I’m sure this public servant didn’t mean any offense when she so casually dismissed a 1927 landmark (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) as “that house,” which happened to come as part of a parcel of land the City of Evanston acquired in 1965 from the Sigma Chi Fraternity. Was “never really looked at as an asset,” she says. Could have been torn down decades ago! Nice to “look at” but is it really worth the bother?
Imagine my internal conflict and consternation. (“But you are biased, Evans!” I kept telling myself.) However, it is in that spirit of community discourse (and not intending any offense to any involved parties) that I so boldly offer my perspective as a 19th century contemporary of Mr. Clarke—one willing to stake my reputation on a claim that this is more than just “that house.”

Walk back with me through time to the flapper-era Evanston that was booming before the Great Depression to the days when Mr. Harley Lyman Clarke (a teetotaling Chicago businessman like myself) hired architect Richard Powers to design a three-story brick mansion right next to the Grosse Point Lighthouse (on the shores of what is now known as Lighthouse Beach). Powers was not as famous as old Howard Van Doren Shaw, but he did get one Mr. Jens Jensen involved in landscaping the five-acre lakefront gardens, determined to ensure that this 37,700-square-foot estate would stand the test of time. Valued at $500,000 in 1938, it was the first in the Chicago area to win an arts commission award. And Jensen, who also designed the Lily Pool at Lincoln Park Zoo, has publicly said that working on the Clarke place with Powers was one of his “fondest memories.”

The style was French Eclectic, representing a new modern age and all the electrified wonder that came with it. They say it was one of the largest and grandest estate homes Evanston had seen before the big stock market crash, with a glass conservatory, a ballroom, and a newfangled basement area called a “rumpus room.” As president of Utilities Power and Light, Clarke was indeed a wealthy man but also a generous one to boot. He was a patron of the arts, donating $300,000 to create the Chicago Civic Shakespeare Society (an institution in Chicago that I’m sure some of the ladies featured in this issue might appreciate) and eventually went on to buy out William Fox for the Fox Studios film empire in Hollywood. Rumor is that he was so enamored with filmmaking in the late 1920s and early 1930s that he installed a state-of-the-art media room in the ballroom of his mansion in Evanston. Can you picture it? I am so sorry I wasn’t there.

And yes, he and his wife eventually lost their $60 million fortune during the Great Depression, and yes, the property did go through one other owner before it landed on the city land records in 1965, but I hereby declare (with some emotion) that this “house” in question is more than just another pile of old bricks and glass. Now ranked as the 6th most endangered landmark in Illinois, the Harley Clarke Mansion is a piece of Evanston history—one that at least one nonprofit organization in town believes is worth saving.

At the center of this recent debate over the fate of the property (which has been going on since last year) is a proposal by Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens to let their group turn the mansion and grounds into an arts center that everyone in Evanston could enjoy. Intrigued to learn more and continue this inquiry, I got in touch with Tom Hodgman and his colleagues.

“We’ve had several conversations with elected officials and feel that there is still significant interest in saving this historic place,” he said. “But our plan is more than saving a historic structure. It’s about saving the building to become something—a Great Lakes education center, a year-round Community Lakehouse with programs for seniors, kids, parents, and a cafe.”

I can see that it’s a complicated proposal and that in its current state, the old mansion is costing the city some $15,000 per year. I can also see that there is some concern that as well-intentioned as the Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens citizens may be, they may not be able to raise enough money to make their vision come to life.

But imagine if they could, and what would be possible if they did. “The mission of Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens is to preserve and restore Evanston’s only public lakefront estate by creating an inspiring community space that fosters appreciation of the environment, the arts, and the rich cultural history of Evanston,” Hodgman and his group added. “This unique building in a unique setting at the intersection of the lake, beach, dunes, and Jens Jensen gardens will become our gateway to the Great Lakes. People will come here to visit historically significant architecture, connect with the Great Lakes, and celebrate special occasions—all of which will generate economic activity in Evanston.”
As far as the alderman’s comments about “that building” which left me so agitated, the group offers this in response: “Communities with vision know so much more now than they did in 1965 about how to adaptively reuse important historic buildings in a way that makes them a true asset.”

The case they make, in my mind, is one worth listening to. The mansion has been a public asset for 49 years, and the only lakefront home in Evanston that could be open to everyone. A “once in a lifetime chance to leave a legacy for future generations, young and old.”

By the time this column goes to press, who knows what will have developed or transpired. But at least I know that I’ve said my peace, and recorded my opinion for posterity. Now off to find that beach token …

Comments

John Walsh says
June 29, 2018 at 9:22 am
Thank you for your wonderful reflective musing by ‘John Evans’ on his 19th Century contemporary Harley Lyman Clarke and “that house.” It was written with insight and humor, which will benefit the Evanston community as this discussion continues to unfold.
Reply

Sari Kadison-Shapiro says
June 29, 2018 at 8:48 am
Thank you for this article. I’d like to add that the mansion did not just “land” in the city’s coffers. One very talented sculptress, named Katy O’Neil worked very hard to wrest the beautiful building away from the national chapter of Sigma Chi and to make it an art center for the city. As an artist myself who learned photography there and computer animation, I know that when one gives away or sells something of great value for a small amount, it is often not valued as it should be. The city leased the house to the Evanston Art Center for a rent of one dollar a year. The Art Center proceeded to spend no money on its upkeep, aside from grass cutting and despite claiming to have a yearly income of $1 million. Then, when the building fell into disrepair, in a very divided vote by board members, the Art Center decided to build a brand new building and abandon Harley Clarke. The Evanston Lakehouse Group has been working on their nonprofit proposal for over 3 years. It has the support of a majority of the Evanstonians who want to save the landmark. The Dunes restoration people want to pay to destroy it because they are wealthy NIMBYs worried about the possible noise and traffic to the now-shuttered mansion. The opportunity to have a beautiful “people’s mansion” on the lake, indeed the only public structure along Chicago’s lakeshore that can provide shelter, architectural awesomeness with integrated gardens, a gorgeous venue for a wedding, and possibilities for lake-related education at no expense to the city should not be undermined.
Tell your aldermen to give the Lakehouse Group a chance.
Reply

Lori Keenan says
June 6, 2018 at 11:49 pm
What a wonderful piece you’ve written here, thank you! It’s hard to believe that on June 18th the City Council may now vote to demolish the building. It is heartbreaking to imagine. Visit online at http://www.evanstonlakehouse.org to help save this wonderful place!
Reply

Evan Bowers says
June 6, 2018 at 4:21 pm
My dear mother in law, Becky, sat at the front desk of “that building” for many years. She saw the students and teachers come and go and always felt the community breathed life into the old building. In return, the building provided a place for the community to rest, reflect and to grow closer. There aren’t enough places like that anymore!

Reply (https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/2018/06/01/that-old-house/?replytocom=57478#respond)

Bonnie James says
June 6, 2018 at 1:18 pm (https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/2018/06/01/that-old-house/#comment-57477)
“Jensen... publicly said that working on the Clarke place with Powers was one of his ‘fondest memories’.

This does make me wonder what the sense is of tearing down the house but restoring the garden, if the garden was designed with the house in mind.

Reply (https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/2018/06/01/that-old-house/?replytocom=57477#respond)

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POST COMMENT

Across The Table
(https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/2018/10/07/across-the-table/)
by John Evans
(https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/author/johnevans/)
October 07 2018
Gather ’round, oh faithful readers. I have two things to say about...
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(https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/2018/10/07/across-the-table/)

The Thor Touch
(https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/2018/10/07/thor-touch/)
by David Rutter
(https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/author/davidrutter/)
October 07 2018
The number was 3,922,275.
By Christmas 2017, that was how many internet...
Read More
(https://jwcdaily.com/evanstonmagazine/2018/10/07/thor-touch/)
Although Evanston Alderman Anne Rainey called the Harley Clarke Mansion a “bundle of bricks,” the house is so much more than that. It is a National Historic Landmark, a part of the Northeast Evanston Historic District, and a lakefront jewel that perfectly symbolizes Evanston’s community, character, and history. It is also a piece of many people’s childhoods, mine included. Nearly thirty years ago, I attended art classes there when the mansion housed the Evanston Arts Center. I’d like to think spending time in the Clarke Mansion is what influenced my love of architecture and old houses.

Now, the mansion faces demolition at the hands of a short-sighted Evanston City Council and a secretive, possibly self-serving group of nearby residents who want to see it obliterated. A tenacious group of local activists continue to organize to save it.

I never thought a legally-protected piece of architectural history, a piece of my youth, could meet such a fate in a town that usually prides itself on environmental sustainability and historic preservation. It is absolutely appalling that Evanston aldermen voted to move forward with the home’s demolition, even though 2,100 petition signatures opposed such a decision. As resident Frederick Weinstein said at the Evanston City Council meeting this past Monday night of the home’s possible demolition, “It will be a wound that will not heal and it will be an absence that
“I’m so mad about this. I worked for the art center, proposed to [my wife] there, spent countless hours in the building making art and helping teach and being inspired. It is such a special place. Not just for me but almost every Evanstonian I know. Just being on the grounds makes me feel like I’ve stepped into a storybook. With the money being offered to tear it down, couldn’t it be used to stabilize and preserve the home until the city figures out what else could be done with it? Shame on the city council for not stepping up. This building could be used for so many different things. Any investment into its preservation is money well spent. It sounds like the folks who want to raze it are just looking for a sunrise view that they can’t afford.” – Alex Tweedie
How did this happen? The group Evanston Lighthouse Dunes is offering $400,000 towards the destruction of the mansion and its coach house in order to restore the Jens Jensen-designed garden and the dunes to their natural state. The group also claims there will be no liability issues for the city, no prolonged construction periods and no additional fundraising required. The group says they just want to “honor the lakefront as a place where the community, nature and history come together.”

But is this really their objective? Or does this have more to do with their own lake views, and their distaste for continued public use of a neighboring mansion? Six of the involved households are located directly across the street from Harley Clarke, while nine live within a quarter mile of it. Something is drastically wrong when a handful of wealthy individuals get to decide the fate of public property. Historic preservation should not be privatized, and the decision of what to do with this publicly-owned treasure should not be left to the self-serving whims of those who would most benefit from its destruction.
The story of the 16-room home began in 1927 when Boston architect Richard Powers, inspired by both the French Eclectic style and the English Cotswolds, designed the mansion for utilities magnate Harley Clarke, who was worth $60 million at the time of its construction, and his wife Hildur Freeman. Located on five lakefront acres, Clarke’s 37,700-square-foot estate includes a spacious glass conservatory, ballroom, third-floor media room, basement rumpus room, and coach house. The limestone mansion also boasts six towering chimneys, a red Ludovici tile roof and a spectacular curving stair hall. The last house of its size to be completed before the 1929 stock market crash, the mansion won a design award from the Evanston Art Commission.
Unfortunately, the wealth did not last for Clarke as he struggled with creditors during the Great
Depression, and eventually was forced to sell the property in 1949 to the Sigma Chi fraternity, who used it as their national headquarters. In 1964 the property was purchased by the City of Evanston to create a public park and beachfront for the community. Shortly after the purchase, the city leased the mansion to the Evanston Arts Center for $1.00 per year with the intention of promoting art and culture, which they did for over 50 years. The main-floor rooms were converted to exhibition galleries and the second-floor bedrooms and third-floor ballrooms were used as classrooms.

It's not just a beautiful house. The integrated landscaping, also slated to be destroyed, reflects the naturalistic sensibilities of Jens Jensen, master landscape designer of the Prairie School movement. Ornate pressed-metal cisterns gather rainwater from the roof, and stone walls curve gracefully along the contours of the lakefront site, leading to one of Jensen’s signature council rings surrounded by a stand of trees. The elegant presence of the mansion and its landscaping enhance, rather than detract from, the presence of the adjacent Grosse Point Lighthouse.
The house has been included in a number of books, like *Evanston: 150 Years, 150 Places,* which chose buildings based on not only architectural significance but also their importance to Evanston. A number of pages were devoted to the mansion in Stuart Cohen and Susan Benjamin’s *North Shore Chicago: Houses of the Lakefront Suburbs 1890-1940.*

A number of reuse proposals were on table when the Evanston Arts Center moved into a brand new building. In 2013 aldermen voted down a plan by Jennifer Pritzker to convert the mansion into a boutique hotel, after residents objected that it would put a key chunk of the city’s public lakefront in private hands, which now seems ironic, all things considered. Last April, the council turned down a proposal from the nonprofit Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens, a group formed specifically to restore the mansion, to make it an environmental education center. Aldermen expressed concerns that the group might not reach its multi-million dollar fundraising goals.

“This is not progress. this is a demolition of the past based on purely selfish reasons.
Thousands of people signed a petition to keep the Harley Clarke Mansion here. You did not vote in favor of the people. You voted for your own interests. Shame on you, Anne Rainey, for standing against history and destroying a valuable artifact of our past. You will forever be remembered for this. You call yourself a ‘public servant,’ when there is nothing about this vote that acts in the interest of the public. I am sick of the argument of ‘it’s just one house.’ That’s what they say about every single one!” – Alina Taber

There is still hope for the Clarke Mansion. Alderman Tom Suffredin floated the idea for a nonbinding referendum on this November’s ballot, and on Monday, Suffredin said that preservation supporters were close to gathering and submitting the number of signatures needed to get the initiative on the ballot.

In a town of almost 75,000 people, why do 41 so-called “concerned citizens” get to determine the fate of this historic home? Let all 74,959 people decide!
The Fate of Harley Clarke | Chicago Patterns

Take Action

saveharleyclarke.org: Learn how you can sign the ballot petition in person if you live in Evanston, or how to support the effort to save Harley Clarke in other ways!

7 responses to “The Fate of Harley Clarke”

Lori Fontana Keenan says:
July 26, 2018 at 6:56 pm
Great article, thank you!

Reply

Ben Gasbarra says:
July 27, 2018 at 12:27 am
Beautiful Article. Harley Clarke had a similar effect on me. It started my path as an artist and developed my appreciation for historic homes. To me, it’s backbone of the historic district, providing structure and continuity to the rest of the homes.

Reply

Deborah says:
July 27, 2018 at 8:09 am
Thanks for the article, really fine work. We collected more than 3,300 signatures in ten days from every Ward in Evanston!

Reply

Sari Kadison-Shapiro says:
July 27, 2018 at 8:13 am
Thank you so much for this article. I’m not certain why when people (over 150 Evanstonians signed up to speak specifically to save this building), the people whose salaries are paid for by those same speakers chose not to listen to them. Peter Braithwaite spoke passionately about helping people and kids less fortunate whose needs might not be addressed (because this building is left standing?)...a non-profit group like the Lakehouse and Gardens has raised money in excess of what the private demo group are offering. The council said pledges are not actual money, despite the fact that GoFundMe and Kickstarter groups’ successes are based on pledges. I invite the council to check out the donor wall at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. Aesthetics of our resources are important to many people. And the talented artists who learned their crafts at the Harley Clarke Mansion and spoke so passionately about saving it, should be listened to! Expertise IS important! It was mean-spirited of Alderman Rainey to disparage that...
by saying, "they could learn to paint anywhere!" discounting the value of inspiration from a romantic setting. The house was wrested from Sigma Chi by a talented sculptor named Katy O’Neil. The administrators of the Art Center were not artists and the decision to build a new building was decided by an administrator, not by the “very divided” board. The city should have either budgeted for its upkeep or insisted that the Art Center maintain it in exchange for its sweetheart deal of the $1 yearly rental.

The place is still a jewel and should present the city with an exciting opportunity to have a public building with innovative programs benefitting Evanstonians and visitors to the city.

Reply

Slim Schramm says:
July 27, 2018 at 11:13 am

This is a wonderful article, & the pictures are great...Much to my regret, I am no longer an Evanston resident which I was for 60 years...I took classes at the art center many years, the conservatory was the sculpture studio, what you are calling the rumpus room I took a ceramic class, & in the ballroom took a drawing...My daughter & granddaughter both took classes...We had great teachers, & made many new friends...It makes me very sad for all these neighbors who want this wonderful house to be torn down...What can they be thinking?

Reply

Ann Jennett says:
July 27, 2018 at 12:06 pm

This is not the Berlin Wall and should not be torn down! City Council: DON'T TEAR DOWN THAT BEAUTIFUL BUILDING!

I, too, have wonderful memories of being in the Harley Clarke mansion.... both as an art student where I did my best paintings, perhaps inspired by the setting, and attended various lovely, fun events there. But most important, I took some of my low income Youth Job Center clients there, just to see the place in its lakefront grandeur... as part of an inspirational experience that involved eye opening job shadowing and Evanston “field trips”, sometimes concluding with a lunch or dinner in an Evanston restaurant... an experience many had not had. Harley Clarke “Castle” as they called it was a high point of these vision creating “adventures “... along with meeting the then African American president of the bank in his elegant office! Let our schoolchildren have a chance at “having” an inspirational house on the lake...

Some of the demolitionists already have one!

I support Evanston Lake House and Garden’s educational and creative plans... but if not them, then at least mothball the beautiful place until some wise and visionary plan comes along. You can not replace that historic beauty once it becomes a pile of rubble sadly heaped on the grounds, creating just another open space of which Evanston, fortunately, already has many and those North End lakefront parks and beaches are used primarily by surrounding neighborhoods, and not the WHOLE community... which the mansion, once public, could conceivably be! PLEASE SAVE IT!!

Reply

Nancy Sreenan says:
July 28, 2018 at 12:50 pm

Thnk f th t til d ll t ht Bth llf i thHl
Thank you for the great article and excellent photos. Both argue well for preserving the Harley Clarke mansion.

Meanwhile, how is the following timeline not suspect?:
Nov. 2017: City Council agrees to enter into lease negotiations with the not-for-profit Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens (ELHG).
March 2018: City revises preservation ordinance regarding tear downs of historic properties in order to make such tear downs easier.
April 2018: City council rejects lease with ELHG, *and* shuts down further negotiations
May 2018: The demolition group, made up of Harley Clarke neighbors first appears on the *public's* radar
July 2018: City council agrees to enter into a “memorandum of understanding” with the demolition group, despite the fact that they downgraded the more generous terms of their initial offer between their presentation in May 2018 and City’s acceptance?

Why the fast track for one group, unregistered with the State, and the dismissal of ELHG which has worked hard and in good faith since 2015? Why is it OK to entertain the idea of private citizens demolishing public property? The City and public must decide. If demolition is the decision, then it’s the City who must issue an RFP.

And the big question I can’t get out of my head: Why wouldn’t the demo group give their $400K to the not-for-profit ELHG? or any NFP for that matter?

I wholeheartedly support ELHG’s proposal!

Reply

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Post Comment
The Fight to Save Evanston’s Harley Clarke Mansion

Geoffrey Baer | May 9, 2018 6:27 pm

In a surprise decision, Evanston City Council last month voted down a plan by a nonprofit group to restore a vacant city-owned mansion on the lakefront and convert it into a Great Lakes education center. It’s just the latest twist in a yearslong saga that has angered residents and has preservationists worried that the mansion could be torn down.

The Harley Clarke mansion sits on the lakefront just north of Northwestern University and the city’s iconic lighthouse. This massive French eclectic-style mansion is a local landmark and part of a landmark district listed on the National Register. It was built in 1927 for utilities executive Harley Clarke. Not much is known about the architect Richard Powers, but the landscape is by Jens Jensen, one of the 20th century’s most important landscape architects.


Landmarks Illinois President Bonnie McDonald said of Jensen, "some might call him the equivalent of Frank Lloyd Wright in returning to an indigenous landscape and a reference to the prairie. So think of him as one of the most revolutionary landscape architects of his time."

"We find it counterintuitive that there may be discussion of demolition by the city of its own landmark," she added.

In 1950 the house became the national headquarters of the Sigma Chi Fraternity (http://sites/default/files/article/file-attachments/ Sigma%20Chi%20%20.pdf). The city of Evanston bought the property in 1963, but Mayor Steve Hagerty says it wasn’t really because of the building.

"It was a 4-acre parcel of land and they bought it for the beach," Hagerty said. "This building just happened to be on it. So then the question was what do we do with this building. Ultimately, it went under lease to the Evanston Art Center, and they held that for 40 years. Part of the arrangement was that they would rent the building for a dollar a year and do any kind of improvements and
maintain it. That never happened. The building has fallen into disrepair. They ultimately moved out to a new facility, and we’re left with a building in need of a tremendous amount of repair.”

Preservationists agree the building needs maintenance but say it’s in relatively good condition overall. It’s now been vacant for three years as a number of plans for its future have fallen through. One highly controversial plan to convert the mansion into a boutique hotel sparked a very loud community campaign against private development on public parkland. A proposal by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to restore the mansion as coastal management offices and an education center fell victim to the state budget crisis.

After a lengthy proposal process, Evanston City Council entered into lease negotiations with a nonprofit group called Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens (http://evanstonlakehouse.org/) that proposed raising $5 million to restore the mansion.

“Our vision is to have a Great Lakes environmental education center here. A place to connect people to the Great Lakes,” Lakehouse board president Tom Hodgman said. “We want to bring adults and children here, teach them about Jens Jensen landscaping and gardening and growing food and how to manage water, storm water,” Hodgman said. “We have too many kids with nature-deficit disorder. They sit in the classroom all day and read textbooks. We’ve got to get them out and experience real scientific phenomenon and this is a place where we can do that.”

Hodgman says a café in the mansion’s coach house is also part of the plan. “We’re right on Sheridan Road. It’s the thoroughfare on the North Shore for cyclists and runners. This would be the spot to stop,” he said. “All the middle-aged men in Lyzra would come out here and have coffee and sandwiches and snacks … and continue on their way.”

Hodgman argues that the Lakehouse proposal conforms very closely to Evanston’s 2008 Lakefront Master Plan (/sites/default/files/article/file-attachments/Lakefront%20Master%20Plan%20-%20Lighthouse%20Beach%20%20Excerpt.pdf).

After months of lease negotiations with the city, the Lakehouse group felt they were close to a deal. But at a meeting on April 9, City Council members raised a number of concerns, including the group’s 10-year timeline for fundraising and insurance liability and abruptly voted the plan down. The five aldermen who voted “no” all had different reasons for doing so. One simply prefers tearing down the building and creating more parkland and said the group was given enough time and didn’t prove it could raise the money. Another expressed fears about commercialization of the lakefront. And others felt the city has higher priorities and worried about diverting potential donors away from other Evanston projects.

“The fact is you’re not going to reach consensus on the Harley Clarke Mansion. We know that,” said Hagerty. “We’ve been working at this for over five years. There are some people that are passionately going to tell you the Evanston Lakehouse and Gardens people should be awarded the mansion on a 40-year lease, and allowed to try to save the building, and there are other people that will passionately tell you that we should take the mansion down, salvage the mansion and create more parkland so everybody can enjoy it. And there are other people in town that will tell you ‘I want to save this mansion but I think the only way to save it is to allow private investment.’"
“The only potential solution we’ve all wrapped our head around is that the city does not have financial means to put city money into the mansion,” he said.

As to how likely it is that the mansion will be torn down, the mayor said: “More likely than it was two months ago.” But for the mayor, he isn’t going to send out bulldozers in the middle of the night – a reference to another lakefront controversy, Mayor Richard M. Daley’s infamous “midnight raid” on Chicago’s Meigs Field in 2003.

And although several aldermen said it’s just time to move on, Hagerty left the door open a crack, saying that if the Lakehouse group can come back with a shorter timeframe for raising the funds – maybe three years – and show that they have a significant amount of money already pledged, the council might be willing to reconsider their proposal. And the Lakehouse group is making more appeals to potential funders and appealing to the public for donations through their website.

**Related stories:**

- Preservation Chicago Announces 7 ‘Most Endangered’ Sites of 2018 (/2018/03/02/preservation-chicago-announces-7-most-endangered-sites-2018)
- Tribune Tower Site Redesign Could Include Chicago’s 2nd Tallest Skyscraper (/2018/04/17/tribune-tower-site-redesign-could-include-chicago-s-2nd-tallest-skyscraper)

**File Attachments:**

1. Lakefront Master Plan - Lighthouse Beach Excerpt.pdf
2. Sigma Chi SS.pdf

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EVANSTON (CHICAGO-NEIGHBORHOODS/EVANSTON)

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