



October 23, 2018

**Statement to the Evanston Preservation Commission by Landmarks Illinois regarding Harley Clarke Mansion, 2603 Sheridan Rd., and the city's request for demolition of the Harley Clarke Mansion and coach house.**

Good evening Members of the Evanston Preservation Commission. I'm Bonnie McDonald, President and CEO of Landmarks Illinois, the statewide, historic preservation advocacy nonprofit. We have assisted Evanston residents for the past four years in their efforts to save the Harley Clarke Mansion and develop a reuse plan. We urge you to deny the City's request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the Mansion stating the obvious fact that the Mansion is a designated Evanston Landmark, a building in the City's own care that belongs to its citizens and for which the City is charged with protecting.

The Mansion is listed in the National Register of Historic Places – a list created in 1966 for the specific purpose of illuminating places to be preserved because they tell our nation's story.

We note that the City's demolition application is deeply flawed in erroneously asserting 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." There is no evidence to support this assertion, to date.

More confusing is the fact that the City's report provided with the application describes the building as being in "good working order" and needing only minor, inexpensive repairs to comply with the Building Code. These incongruities necessitate an updated examination by appropriate experts. To address this, we submitted a request on September 28 to allow a

select group of expert architects, engineers and contractors to examine and assess the Mansion's interior and exterior condition. The Council denied our request.

For your reference, I submit to you a list of many experts here this evening who we have assembled to speak to their previously submitted testimony. They will demonstrate that the Harley Clarke Mansion continues to meet the Evanston Landmark criteria and that there is no cause to award a Certificate of Appropriateness for its demolition. We hope you will agree with our experts' findings and vote to deny the demolition application. Thank you.