



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 am Lisa DiChiera, Director of Advocacy for Landmarks Illinois. 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 and irreplaceable landmark. Built in 1928, utilities magnate Harley Clarke hired prominent Boston architect Richard Powers and landscape architect Jens Jensen to design 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.

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.

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.