



Exploratory Request for Expressions of Interest RESPONSES

Will County Courthouse, Joliet



Photo credit: Lee Bey

RFEI Responses Summary

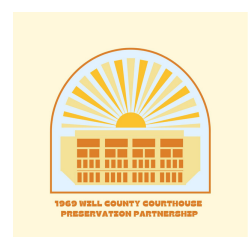
Landmarks Illinois & Courthouse Preservation Partnership issued an exploratory Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for the Will County Courthouse in Joliet, Illinois, on January 18, 2023. RFEI responses were due March 10, 2023.

The purpose of the RFEI was to collect potential reuse ideas for the architecturally significant but threatened former courthouse building and share these ideas with Will County officials as a means to encourage the county to issue an official Request for Proposals (RFP) for redevelopment. The full responses are available at landmarks.org. Following is a summary.

Landmarks Illinois received responses from six firms, which include developers, architects and engineers that specialize in historic preservation and adaptive reuse. The responding firms have collectively completed award winning projects locally, regionally and nationally. Responding firms are:

- Alexander Company
- Gorman and Company
- JLK Architects
- Klein & Hoffman
- Metropolitan Properties of Chicago
- Studio GWA

Each firm indicated the courthouse is reusable and expressed interest in responding to an official Request for Proposals, should the county initiate such a process in the future. Five of the firms responded to Landmarks Illinois' RFEI with a Letter of Interest (LOI). Four LOI responses are accompanied by firm credentials and extensive project summaries, many of which underscore the possibilities for reuse of the 1969 former Will County Courthouse. One firm, Gorman and Company, chose to provide three responses that include reuse renderings and floor plans. The creative and thought-provoking renderings follow this summary.



RFEI Responses Summary (Cont.)

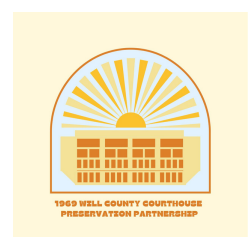
Suggested reuse opportunities envisioned by the responding firms include:

- Residential
 - Affordable
 - Mixed Income
 - Market Rate
- Office Building
- Hotel
- Educational
- Arts and Entertainment
- Cultural

As is evidenced by the responses, the courthouse poses unique opportunities for redevelopment. While each suggested reuse has merit, three in particular provide services and amenities currently in demand in downtown Joliet: consolidated government services, housing and a hotel.

Given the level of interest expressed by these experienced firms to respond to a formal request by Will County to seek reuse options, it is imperative that the county follow that path to ensure that all information and possibilities are under consideration. The pursuit of demolition without giving consideration to a full menu of options is a choice, as the building does not pose a threat to public safety requiring immediate mitigation. The financial and environmental costs, coupled with the loss of opportunity to redevelop an iconic structure and bring economic development to the area, will be extensive as a result of undertaking demolition.

Before fully committing to that irrevocable process, Landmarks Illinois encourages Will County officials to review the full responses to this exploratory RFEI to understand what is possible. Further, we encourage the county to issue a Request for Proposals or a Request for Information to ensure all information is available to make an informed decision regarding the fate of the unique historic resource.





View from corner of Jefferson & Ottawa
Outdoor terraces activate primary elevation



View from Ottawa
Plaza raised to Ground Floor elevation

View from Plaza
Active ground floor with terraces above





Interior View
Expanded lobby creates unique spaces



February 27, 2023

Quinn Adamowski
Landmarks Illinois
30 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2020
Chicago, IL 60602-3402

Re: Redevelopment of old Will County Courthouse

Dear Mr. Adamowski,

We recently received the request for expressions of interest in the redevelopment of the old Will County Courthouse and we would certainly be interested in looking further at the possibilities. The Alexander Company had been working with the adaptive reuse of historic structures for more than 40 years, including a former federal courthouse. These projects are inherently difficult but if there is a community desire to see the building redeveloped, we feel strongly that it can be achieved.

While a program for the redevelopment is premature, our initial thought would be to approach the project as a workforce housing project (targeted at 60% area median income). There is currently a national shortage of workforce housing and repurposing this building to help address that issue would be a unique and productive use for the structure. Additionally, this type of program would bring both low-income housing credits and historic tax credits into the capital stack for the redevelopment costs. The Alexander Company has a long track record of bringing together a variety of financing sources to make the impossible projects a reality.

Aside from helping to address the affordable housing crisis, repurposing this building would also help to preserve some of that architectural history that makes a place unique. Nobody is building brutalist buildings like this anymore and it serves as a unique point of interest in the architecture of a city. It seems that every multifamily building being constructed today looks much the same – this is an opportunity to stand out. Furthermore, the redevelopment of the building is really the most “green” alternative – what is more “green” than recycling an entire building!

We do understand that there are some legal questions that would have to be addressed to pursue redevelopment of the property by a private developer. While these certainly present a challenge, the Alexander Company has had experience with these kinds of issues. We have a number of projects that could not be transferred fee simple for redevelopment and we have experience working within a lease structure that allowed the project to proceed. Just for one example, the redevelopment of the old federal courthouse in Kansas City required us to negotiate a lease with the Government Services Administration within their guidelines but also acceptable to lenders and investors!

I have attached a short project summary with some projects that I think are relevant. You can also check out our website for additional examples of some of our work. If you have any comments/questions/concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 608-268-8126 or via email at ckc@alexandercompany.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CCJ", written in a cursive, stylized script.

Colin Cassady
Development Project Manager



 P: (608) 835-3900
F: (608) 835-3922
 info@GormanUSA.com
www.GormanUSA.com
 200 N Main Street
Oregon, WI 53575

March 9, 2023

Quinn Adamowski
Landmarks Illinois
30 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2020
Chicago, IL, 60602-3402

RE: Request for Expressions of Interest Response

Mr. Adamowski:

Please accept our attached RFEI response.

We are submitting three response concepts/visions for the historic Will County Court House 1) an Office Building, 2) Mixed-Use/Mixed Income Apartments, and 3) a Hotel.

We've chosen to submit three options because we believe there are conditions where any of these three options can benefit the County and downtown Joliet. Each option has the potential to be a catalyst to downtown growth and create a population density that can lead to local economic growth.

Enclosed you will find our description of the vision, the possible financial execution, and a Gorman & Company resume. Gorman & Company is one year from celebrating our 40th anniversary. We are a fully integrated community development firm including architecture, development, general contracting, property management, and asset management. Our integration serves to drive innovation and efficiency. Our business model is to bring capital from outside Will County to hire local trades and community members in the construction and operations of our projects so that our investments provide returns to Will County and its residents.

Gorman & Company has specialized in downtown revitalization, historic preservation, mixed-use, live-work, workforce housing, neighborhood transformations, and the construction and preservation of affordable housing. It is our niche to identify persistent issues, that when solved, trigger an economic resurgence and new community vitality. It is from this experience we framed our project concept and proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity!

Ron Clewer
Illinois Market President



JOHNSON LASKY KINDELIN
ARCHITECTS

Mr. Quinn Adamowski
Regional Advocacy Manager
Landmarks Illinois
30 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2020
Chicago, IL
60602-3402

Mr. Adamowski,

Johnson Lasky Kindelin Architects, Inc. (JLK) is pleased to submit this response to the exploratory Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) issued by Landmarks Illinois and Courthouse Preservation Partnership on January 18, 2023 for purposes of compiling and sharing potential reuse ideas with Will County officials.

JLK is a full-service certified Women Business Enterprise (WBE) historic preservation architecture firm based in Chicago, IL with proven history working with communities across the state, including Joliet. We're currently proud to be working at another prominent architectural gem in the city, the Rialto Square Theater, which is a local preservation success story. Forward-thinking members of the community undertook what seemed like an impossible task: revitalization of an abandoned building into a destination for the community and beyond. How could the transformation of the Will County Courthouse impact the future of Joliet as it continues to grow in the face of its diverse and marvelous history?

As architects, historians, and preservationists, we see great value and potential at the Will County Courthouse, which is an architecturally and culturally significant Brutalist building locally and beyond. The Will County Board is in a position with incredible opportunity to be a leader and set a precedent in the preservation of Brutalist buildings.

Among the various historic building, structures, and sites that make Joliet unique, the Will County Courthouse stands alone in its Brutalist style which is locally unmatched. Just as the limestone commercial buildings and Rialto theater characterize the city, the Will County Courthouse occupies an important place in the fabric of the built environment; it's form and design convey the power of government and the sensitivity in which it can be enacted through textures, materials, and light which fashion a unique and powerful expression.

Like local and regional organizations, including Landmarks Illinois, prominent national preservation organizations, such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and even international organizations, like Docomomo, are elevating the significance of Brutalist buildings and advocating for their retention and reuse around the world. The Will County Courthouse is significant to Joliet and Illinois, but it also plays a part in this larger, global conversation.

Great opportunity also lies in the reuse possibilities at the Will County Courthouse. A noteworthy feature of the building, which retains a high degree of physical integrity throughout, is that it lacks

interior load-bearing walls which provides flexibility in the way space is configured. As noted in the REFI, local advocates identified several adaptive reuse options for the building, including a boutique hotel. The size and configuration of many rooms, coupled with the lack of load-bearing interior walls, is amenable to this use, which could also feature bar/restaurant, recreation, and even small theater space.

Precedents for this kind of reuse could include the Game Room at the Chicago Athletic Association Hotel (12 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL) which presents a flexible lounge, gaming, and dining space for various groups. Another precedent in the region includes the Saint Kate Arts Hotel in Milwaukee, WI (139 E. Kilbourn Avenue) where dining options and rotating special exhibitions at dedicated gallery spaces attract both local and out-of-town guests.

In addition to a hotel use, the Will County Courthouse appears amenable to many other public or private uses, including:

- a. Residential use: The REFI describes advocates have proposed the idea for market-rate or mixed-income housing with commercial space at the first floor. This is certainly a viable option to be explored further.
- b. Office use: The building could provide additional public or private office space to support the growing county and city.
- c. Educational Use: The building could support school functions or serve as an incubator lab. The size and configuration of many rooms lend themselves to seminar, classroom, or collaboration functions.
- d. Entertainment: The building could provide a variety of practice and performance spaces for theater, dance, entertainment, and exhibition. Similar to a hotel function, this could also include bar/restaurant and recreation opportunities.
- e. Cultural Institution: The building could support a museum, archive, library or other cultural institution seeking to relocate or expand.

From a technical perspective, any issues with the building, such as water infiltration or failing windows, are typical problems faced by historic preservation architects and not exclusive to buildings of any particular style or age. As such, these issues are of little concern when presented in the face of detrimental alternatives such as demolition, which ignore not only the architectural and cultural significance of the building, but also the environmental costs associated with such an act.

A significant step was taken to secure the future of the Will County Courthouse with the unanimous vote by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council on February 24th to nominate the building for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If listed, the opportunity for future development to take advantage of the 25% Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (IL-HTC) and the 20% Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (F-HTC) will be instrumental in the reuse of the building. JLK has successfully led tax credit projects for buildings of various styles and sizes through the tax credit process and witnessed the impact these programs can have at the community level.

Much like the Rialto Square Theater, a coalition of preservationists and community members have assembled and are asking the question: How could the Will County Courthouse shape the continued growth and development of Joliet and serve as a destination within the community? The Will County Board can seize this unique opportunity to work with the community, preservationists, architects, and developers to set the standard when it comes to the preservation of our Brutalist buildings.

Sincerely,
Johnson Lasky Kindelin Architects, Inc.



Marguerite A. Kindelin, AIA
President

Enclosures:

1. Resumes of Secretary of the Interior-Qualified JLK Staff
2. JLK Services Information
3. Select JLK Project Information

March 10, 2023

Mr. Quinn Adamowski
Regional Advocacy Manager
Landmarks Illinois
30 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2020
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: Professional Support for Exploratory Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for the Will County Courthouse, Joliet
Will County Courthouse
100 West Jefferson Street
Joliet, Illinois 60432

Dear Mr. Adamowski:

Klein and Hoffman, Inc. (K&H) would like to formally express our interest in assisting with the perseveration and reuse for the Will County Courthouse in Joliet, Illinois. This letter and interest were sparked when Landmarks Illinois released the Exploratory Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) on behalf of Will County Courthouse.

Our firm has a long history of providing facade consulting and structural engineering services for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic and architecturally significant buildings. We have serviced many historic and vintage buildings in the greater Chicago, Philadelphia, and Milwaukee area that have landmark or soon-to-be landmark status and are experienced with retrofitting these older systems to meet current performance requirements and programs. K&H has provided professional services as either architect, building enclosure consultant, and structural engineers for projects with similar scale and construction type as the Will County Courthouse. With this letter of support, we provide an overview of our firm and examples of our work for your review.

K&H is interested in teaming up with other interested team members to find a potential reuse for such a unique piece of modern style of architecture. As leaders within our profession, the Will County Courthouse provides a wonderful example of concrete design as well as serve as a pivotal example how modern architecture can hold historic importance and sustainability by providing reuse to an existing building.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our support for the Will County Courthouse.

Sincerely,
Klein and Hoffman, Inc.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Terry McDonald', with a stylized, flowing script.

Terry McDonald, S.E.
Principal

METROPOLITAN PROPERTIES OF CHICAGO LLC
RESPONSE TO LANDMARKS ILLINOIS RFEI FOR
The Former Will County Courthouse

March 10, 2023

Metropolitan Properties appreciates the opportunity to respond to Landmarks Illinois' Request for Expressions of Interest regarding the former Will County Courthouse building in downtown Joliet, Illinois. Metropolitan Properties believes that the building may be suitable for adaptive reuse.

Proposed Reuse.

Metropolitan Properties has extensive experience with adaptive reuse, transforming historic office buildings to luxury residential condominiums in downtown Chicago. We successfully converted over 1,000,000 square feet of office space at 310, 318 and 332 South Michigan Avenue. We also have a deep understanding of many of Chicago's CBD submarkets and can anticipate future trends. Further information about our projects can be found at MetropolitanProperties.com.

Our principal and founder, Louis D. D'Angelo, became familiar with this opportunity during his many visits to the current County courthouse in Joliet as a volunteer legal mediator. Since Will County has authorized the demolition of the former Courthouse, Metropolitan Properties has not invested resources to analyze the structure and study market demand for private sector office, residential, hotel, retail or other potential uses. We are told that the County is currently abating asbestos and other hazardous materials from the building. We have not had the opportunity to tour the building.

Even though we have not toured the property, we believe that this building (once abated) could successfully be preserved by introducing new uses.

Our *initial impression* of downtown Joliet does not – presently - inspire us with lofty visions of hotel and retail adaptive reuse. Our approach would preserve the structure and allow the current owner, Will County, to remain in control of the asset. Metropolitan Properties would propose that we assist Will County to relocate County departments which directly service the public to this convenient location. We would consider partnering with an established restaurateur to explore the viability of a full-service restaurant, fast casual or curated food hall for the first floor or lower level. We would also maintain and program the plaza and surrounding landscape with year round activities.

Potential Partners/Funding Sources

Metropolitan Properties would propose advising Will County to assess all of its options: reuse the property by relocating County offices, demolishing the property, or issuing (and evaluating responses to) an RFP to sell the property to private developers. Metropolitan Properties would be interested in acquiring and redeveloping the property – employing historic tax credits and possibly other incentives – only if Will County withdraws its authorization to demolish the structure. Metropolitan Properties and its team would thoroughly examine the feasibility of repurposing the building and relocating County offices. We would collaborate with County officials to develop and implement a plan to relocate County offices to the former courthouse.

If Will County desired to privately fund the renovation costs, Metropolitan Properties could source the necessary capital to renovate the property. We would structure a short term public-private partnership or contractual relationship with the County to allow our investment to be paid back with market returns.

Conclusion.

By retaining ownership and relocating some of its offices, Will County would preserve the building and would remain in control of the land, improvement and air rights for the County's future needs. There may be cost saving by relocating offices to County owned facility. Metropolitan Properties is positioned to assist Will County in reusing this notable property.



March 9, 2023

Dear Will County Board,

Studio GWA is very much interested in, and concerned for, the fate of the historic Will County Courthouse. Our firm was founded in 1982 on the principles of historic preservation and adaptive reuse, all for the sake of retaining significant architectural structures that have shaped our communities for generations. We are a team of architects and designers that has a passion for the redevelopment of historic and architecturally significant structures. In our 40 years of existence, we have teamed with dozens of developers to help revitalize downtowns all across the Midwest. With all that experience, we have developed a keen eye for reimagining the forgotten, dilapidated, and underutilized buildings in our midst. In our professional opinion, the Will County Courthouse has inarguable historic significance, retains extraordinary architectural importance, and has unlimited potential for redevelopment and adaptive reuse.

Below are a few of the many reuse options possible for the Will County Courthouse as well as a few tools we have used in partnership with developers to ensure projects are financially viable and sustainable. Projects of this scale are giant undertakings for even the largest developers and therefore require time and patience to execute the required feasibility studies and build the capital stack.

Proposed Reuse. Attached are some of the buildings that Studio GWA has repurposed, renovated, and reinvented. The value of these buildings have proven time and again how important they are in a community's revitalization efforts. These structures have inspired and encouraged others to reinvest in adjacent and nearby structures. Reinvestment in existing structures has a proven track record of success.

Built of reinforced concrete, a fine example of the Beton Brut architectural style, the harbinger of the Brutalist movement, the Will County Courthouse is a one-of-a-kind building with exposed coffered ceilings. The structure provides flexibility to be adapted to many uses. Based upon our review of the existing drawings we are firmly convinced of its adaptability to multiple uses.

Potential Use: Hospitality. We believe the building could easily be adapted for hospitality as a boutique hotel that could fill a significant need in downtown Joliet. There is a void that could be filled much like the development of the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Rockford, Illinois. Rockford had no downtown hotel for 40 years. The Friends of Ziock, an advocacy group, saw a need and surveyed surrounding businesses if they would use a downtown hotel. The need for 30,000 room nights was identified and given to the developer, Gorman and Co. The results were a 160-room Embassy Suites Hotel that has been extremely successful. We identified Gorman and Co. as a significant force in the redevelopment of this 12-story industrial structure because of their familiarity with using Historic Tax Credits as well as the EB- 5 Investment program. These were critical financial resources to make the project happen. A feasibility study would need to be undertaken that would be critical to finding financing for the project. Hospitality financing is difficult to find in the current climate, but a compelling



study of need would be of great help. Identifying and working with a development team that can bring multiple resources to a project like this can be essential to a project's successful redevelopment.

Potential Use: Housing. Studio GWA has been involved in redeveloping over 500 residential loft units in downtown urban spaces over the past 7 years in communities similar to Joliet. When done well, urban residential units are a community asset that attracts talent to a community's workforce. It offers a very desirable lifestyle alternative to conventional apartment housing. This building could lend itself to unique housing opportunities.

Potential Use: Office. The other opportunity is to use the building for Will County offices. It is understood that the county has a need for additional office space. The current space can be re-adapted as imaginative office space that could surpass a new construction building for almost half the cost, thanks to Historic Tax Credits. The building's eligibility to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places opens up the opportunity for Historic Tax Credits to be used. Up to 45% of the qualified rehabilitation expenses would qualify. In other words, county taxpayers could potentially spend 45% less than a new conventionally built office space. There is a tremendous opportunity for imaginative design that can enhance worker productivity and give the taxpayer a great sense of value with creative financing.

Flexibility is key in adaptive reuse projects of this nature, and we have experience updating historic buildings with modern systems that are compatible with the historic features of the building. For example, a new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing system would introduce a more energy efficient and sustainable vision to the building. Architectural assets and materials that have given the building its identity can be readapted, repurposed, and even relocated elsewhere in the building – all while keeping in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Funding Sources. There are several financial resources that can assist in the redevelopment of the Will County Courthouse. The greatest potential impact is the use of the Historic Tax Credits program. As stated earlier, this building is eligible to have 45 % of the qualified rehabilitation expenses qualify as a tax credit.

To emphasize again: The Historic Tax Credits can be passed through to private investors of those credits, who in turn pay the developer, instead of having the State and Federal Government invest those funds directly into the redevelopment project. The investors retain an ownership interest in the project for five years. The County can lease or partner with the developer for those five years or longer if desired. The purpose of the partnership is to take advantage of these significant financial incentives.

Depending on the need of the financial stack to fill the financial gap, the use of a TIF can be requested to offset the increase in property taxes the property would generate if it was a private property. These are discussions that can be negotiated with the developer based on need.

It is with great urgency and passion for Will County to consider this amazing public asset and seek continued qualifications from qualified developers that could take advantage of all the possibilities that could occur at the Will County Courthouse. The financial and economic ramifications of this historic structure are extraordinary.

Sincerely,



Gary W. Anderson, AIA