

MARCUS J. MOLINARO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



ROBERT H. BALKIND, P.E.
ACTING COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS

COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

September 5, 2012

Gary E. Beck, Jr., Building Inspector
City of Poughkeepsie City Hall
PO Box 300
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602

Re: Nelson House

Dear Mr. Beck:

County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro has determined that the Nelson House Annex represents a safety hazard to those who walk or work in the vicinity of the structure and is of such deteriorated condition that the building is beyond renovation and repair and it is financially impossible to consider it for any adaptive reuse in the future. For those reasons the County is in the process of preparing a Request for Proposals for the complete demolition of the structure.

In support of the County's position we enclose a copy of a comprehensive Building Conditions Assessment ("Report") commissioned by the County in 2012 and conducted by Sen Architects LLP of New York City and Salt Point, New York.

Noteworthy and in support of the County's position are the following points:

North five Storied Structure:

The structure has been vacant since December 1996, when the last of County offices were relocated out of the building mainly for reasons of life safety, building code compliance, ADA accessibility, antiquated and failing building systems and a lack of functional space usage. (Report, p. 1)

The original of the two structures comprising the building is in extreme disrepair with extensive water damage throughout which has resulted in severe rotting of areas of the wood frame. Overall there is debris as a result of the collapsed ceiling. The continuous water infiltration has led to extensive mold growth visible on all surfaces. Water damage has also caused areas of collapsed door frames, areas of the basement with two feet of standing water and broken windows. (Report p. 2)

Insulation over exposed heating pipes and broken floor tiles appear to be asbestos containing material (ACM). (Report p. 2)

Water and freeze/thaw cycle activity has seriously damaged the exterior masonry causing a dislocation of the parapet, vertical movement cracks to the corners of the building, visible cracks at several window heads and sills, poorly pitted face brick, a deterioration of areas of the exterior brick face which were painted and a roof in very poor condition with delaminated layers clogged drains and areas of water ponding. (Report, p. 2)

South Six Storied Structure:

There are two locations of heavy water entry which has flowed to the second floor. There are gaping holes in the floor with signs of steel corrosion, collapsed door frames, ponding of water and mold growth. There are signs of severe damage from lack of ventilation. (Report, p. 3)

Collapsed interior ceiling areas have caused broken windows which may result in a hazard to pedestrians on the sidewalks outside the building. Report, p. 3)

There are no utilities in the building (Report, p. 2 & 3), therefore, the elevator is inoperable and the existing stairway is non-compliant with the building code.

Without a "major-major" rehab the building cannot be ADA compliant for public use. (Report, p. 3)

Water damage and the same effects of the freeze/thaw cycle as referred to in the report of the old building have caused the same damage to the parapet and exterior of the structure with the South façade being in the worst condition. A large section of the masonry wall is in danger of collapse and falling off the building. (Report, p. 3 & 4)

The roof of the south structure is in total disrepair. (Report, p. 4)

The Sen Report is the fifth done since 1988 and all reports have stated severe deficiencies related to the structures. In depth engineering reports done have suggested a full demolition of the building and those deficiencies noted have only become worse with time posing an increasing liability to the taxpayers. (Report, p. 5)

The Sen Report makes seven general recommendations which include: a safety shed around the structure to protect pedestrians; roof repair and parapet stabilization; abate and remove ACM from the roof and interior spaces and conduct abatement of HAZMAT material. The Sen Report also lists as a recommendation, the demolition of the building.

The Sen Report was supplemented by a review by Robert Silman Associates, Structural Engineers and their report is included in the Sen Report. Silman makes note of the hazardous condition posed by the deteriorated roof as well as the masonry failures of the parapet, south wall and steel lintels at window openings. At the least, Silman's immediate structural stabilization recommendations include a new, temporary roof and repair of roof drains for both structures and the construction of a fence or sidewalk bridge.

We cannot realistically consider the extraordinary cost of renovation to put the structure in an acceptable condition for future use. The cost of such work pales in comparison to the cost of demolition and making the property ready for future development. The County has no choice in the matter. Even if the County was not faced with the horrific financial challenges it must confront and resolve over the next several years, the demolition of the building would be the only responsible and financially viable course of conduct we could consider. No other option makes practical or fiscal sense.

Very truly yours,



Robert H. Balkind, P.E., Acting Commissioner
Dutchess County Department of Public Works