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May 15, 2012

Brian Jimenez, Chief
Codes Enforcement Division
City of Lawrence
Lawrence KS 66044

By email (signed and scanned to PDF)
TO: bjimenez@ci.lawrence.ks.us

RE: 1313 Haskell property, with relocated Hanscom family house (ca. 1900)

Dear Brian,

I submit this letter—instead of joining you, and the City Commission, and my good friends and colleagues, Michael Almon, Jenna Coker, and Fred Sack, at tonight's Commission meeting, for the hearing of this Agenda item—only because I have a longstanding medical appointment this evening which presents a time conflict. I do regret that I cannot be there in person to answer your questions; but I am sure that Michael, Jenna, and Fred will have more answers than I would have—and of course, I will answer any questions that you ask of me, as promptly as possible.

It seems to me very reasonable and proper that the City Commission should receive tonight an updated review of the project, as it now stands ... i.e., at the very *brink* of successful conclusion.

"Saving the Hanscom House" has been, as we know, almost a Sisyphian task: two steps forward and one back—throughout not only the 16 months since this was last heard by the Commission (on Jan. 4, 2011), but all the way back to 2005, seven (7) years ago, when the developers of the "Hanscom-Tappan Addition" at East 15th St. & Haskell Ave. first consented to the relocation of this structure to its current site, by the then-owner of 1313 Haskell, Greg Seibel.

Some of you will recall that Michael Almon and I were directly involved in arranging for the structure to be relocated, and its rehabilitation begun. But please keep also in mind that Haskell Row Partners were unable even to begin work on this, until the former owner's considerable amount of personal property was removed from the house, and full, unfettered possession and access were gained: a mere 12 months ago.

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Many stakeholders—the City and its Codes Enforcement Division; the original “Haskell Row Partners”; the adjacent owner-residents on Haskell; the Eastside neighborhoods of Brook Creek and Old East Lawrence—have earnestly wished that this project had already moved more swiftly to its intended conclusion: a two-story, solid-boned, Palladian-style residence, a century old, fully rehabilitated and renovated and serving its highest purpose, as a home.

Reviewing your accurate, comprehensive Memo to the Planning Dept., dated May 9, 2012, and comparing the repairs required by the City (last year) versus the many substantial repairs and improvements that have, in fact, been accomplished by HRP LLC within this past year, one is reminded of the poet Robert Browning’s words, in “A Last Ride Home”: *“The petty done; the undone vast!”*

And yet, the truth is that this lengthy process has now almost reached the turning-point whereupon a fully-capitalized restoration project can, and will, commence and be completed timely by qualified builders. The economic viability of this project may be marginal, but it does remain viable and, in principle, it can certainly be completed within this year.

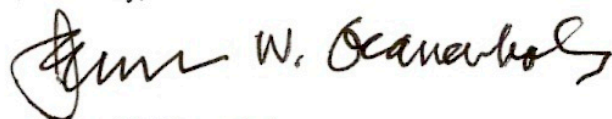
Haskell Row Partners LLC has engaged the serious interest of at least two potential, near-future purchasers—one of whom has retained the design firm, **Struct/Restruct**, to conduct a financial-feasibility study of the project’s last stages. The study’s results are expected soon.

If a Demolition Order (as proposed in draft Resolution No. 6971), for the razing and destruction of this building by “June 1st, 2012” is approved tonight, the intended buyers of 1313 Haskell and the Hanscom house will suddenly have no incentive to complete their feasibility study, nor to purchase the property—which I believe Haskell Row Partners LLC are willing to sell at a price not terribly far from “break-even,” since our motivations have been primarily civic-minded, not profit-motivated.

In a one-minute vote, if taken by the Commission tonight, the best intentions of the Partners and the likely near-term purchasers could be dashed by the erasure of any remaining purpose in HRP LLC attempting to sell, or the intended buyers attempting to purchase, the house to complete its restoration.

We have come so *far*, and are today so *close*, to the completed rescue and final restoration of this handsome structure ... it would be, I think, a great pity, if seven years of effort were wiped out in one minute. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to defer the hearing of this item for at least 45 days.

Sincerely,



James W. Grauerholz