

Evergreen CC reaches accord with the Manor House preservation group

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The stately manor house sits proudly in its Greek revival grandeur at the foot of the Bull Run Mountains on the grounds of Haymarket's Evergreen Country Club.

On Oct. 25, the house received a remedial shot in the arm when the country club's board of directors entered into an agreement with a private group, the Manor House Preservation Fund, to begin preserving the building's exterior.

It has taken months of dealing with many issues, including liability responsibilities and the club's intentions for the building, to construct the current agreement. The decision to improve the exterior was made in a way to ensure it was done in a first-class and timely manner.

"I have a good feeling. I think they will give us a chance," Dave Prokop, chairman of the nonprofit Evergreen Manor House Preservation, predicted in early October. "We want to preserve the exterior and prevent further deterioration. This is not a restoration project."

Perhaps after this effort is completed, work on the interior can be considered. There are a number of reasons for these efforts, including the hope the building can someday be put to good use as a convention



Preservation process planned for this manor house.

E. Bruce Davis / the Bull Run Observer

center or bed and breakfast. Sprucing up the building's exterior will also help restore curb appeal and help maintain the community's high property values. Maintaining the building's historical significance is another priority.

However, the preservation group has its work cut out for it. Evergreen Country Club placed a condition on the agreement: the group must raise \$100,000 before it starts work. The agreement allows

the group 18 months to raise the money and complete the work.

"We have issues with money and authority," Prokop said. "The agreement gives us the authority to raise the money to do the work." The project entails repairing the building's exterior and preventing future water damage. The main body of the house is covered with stucco that has powdered and flaked in some areas. It will be patched, painted, and made watertight. Wood on windows on the building's wings must be replaced and painted; areas of the front and rear porches need to be replaced and fixed. Minor repairs on shutters and gutters will be addressed as well.

While working to create the stabilization project, Prokop has realized the manor house is steeped

in historical significance. Lewis Berkeley built the house in 1827 on a 1,064-acre plantation. His eldest son Edmund, who inherited Evergreen Farm, formed the Evergreen Guard of the 8th Virginia Infantry during the Civil War, commonly referred to as the "Berkeley Regiment." Evergreen has been credited with supplying more men for the South's cause than any other farm in the Confederacy. The Delashmutt family acquired Evergreen and built the wings and dormers on the manor house. Today, Thomas Delashmutt owns Oak Hill, the home of President James Monroe.

The Berkeley property served the Haymarket townspeople well when fires set by Union troops destroyed their town. Edmund Berkeley's wife, Mary Lawson Ber-

keley, made three homes available on the property that were quickly inhabited by those left homeless by the fires.

Now, the Manor House Preservation Fund is trying to work with the Haymarket Historical Foundation to establish a nonprofit 501(c)(3) preservation fund as well as its own fundraising foundation.

Gainesville Supervisor John Stirrup accompanied National Trust members on a tour of the manor house. The National Trust is working to secure the necessary insurance for the Manor House Preservation Fund to complete the project.

Prince William County has recognized the manor house as a "designated cultural resource." It also sits in the 174-mile stretch of "hallowed ground" from Gettysburg to Monticello that the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2005 added to its list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.

"Most of the people working toward the stabilization project are members of the Evergreen Country Club and live in the Evergreen neighborhood," said Prokop. "This is a challenge for us, but this agreement gives us credibility to do the work." He appreciates the country club's authorization, recognizing the club has a business to operate in serving all of its members. He said he would work hard to see the job is handled quickly and professionally.

Evergreen resident Tina Boyd will head up the fundraising effort, which will start soon. More information about the manor house and this project is online at www.evergreenmanorhouse.org.

