



P.O. Box 4173 Glendale CA 91202
www.GlendaleHistorical.org

October 24, 2021

Mayor Devine and Members of the Glendale City Council
City of Glendale
613 East Broadway
Glendale, CA 91206
via email

RE: Comments on Reuse of Rockhaven (Agenda Item 8d)

Dear Mayor Devine and Members of the City Council:

TGHS was thrilled to learn that Senator Portantino had secured \$8 million from the State for the rehabilitation of the Rockhaven Sanitarium Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016, and for the creation of a museum on the property.

TGHS urges you to accept the funding from the State and begin rehabilitation of the property, which is suffering from demolition by neglect. The Staff Report acknowledges that the site lacks even “proper maintenance” and warns “that the more damage is caused to the property,” the more difficult and expensive it will be to preserve (Staff Report, October 26, 2021, p. 3). Staff’s acknowledgment that ongoing deterioration continues to occur at this historic resource suggests swift action is required. Any plan to “mothball” the buildings would be a tremendous waste of a valuable asset, and vacancy is the worst thing for historic buildings, as evidenced by the current state of this property.

The staff report lays out several options, but two of these are easy to reject. #3 (Entertain Non-Exclusive Discussions with Interested Parties) and #4 (Seek New Development Proposals) would mean rejecting the funding from the State and almost certainly see further deterioration of the building while a course of action is contemplated.

TGHS urges the City to adopt #1 (Develop the Site as a Park and Community Asset). This use is clearly the intent of the State funding. It is also a timely goal, given the number of density bonus, multi-family projects coming in this part of Glendale, which do not provide adequate open space.

The Glendale Historical Society (TGHS) advocates for the preservation of important Glendale landmarks, supports maintaining the historic character of Glendale’s neighborhoods, educates the public about and engages the community in celebrating and preserving Glendale’s history and architectural heritage, and operates the Doctors House Museum. TGHS is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and donations to TGHS are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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This number will only increase given the need for more housing in Glendale and given that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors plans to meet their RHNA numbers in part through increased density nearby.

TGHS notes that proposal #1 does not preclude commercial development at the site. We believe that allowing a restaurant, a café, and other uses tailored to the site would be extremely attractive amenities for North Glendale residents and would attract people to the museum and the park, while helping the City to recoup costs associated with maintaining the property. No proposal should be approved, however, that does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

What is clear is that Rockhaven has fallen into a state of disrepair. We urge the City to vote to accept the money and move forward with a full rehabilitation plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Schwab-Sims
VP Preservation
The Glendale Historical Society