



Public hearing set for Edwards House in Downers Grove

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DOWNERS GROVE – In the latest chapter of what has been a months-long debate about whether to keep a historic Downers Grove home intact, the Downers Grove Plan Commission on Monday will host a public hearing on a plan to build 56 luxury condo units on the property.

The home, a historic 1880s Queen Anne Victorian property, known locally as the Edwards House, would be demolished and replaced by a five-story condo building on two lots at 942 Maple Ave., according to the proposal.

“[Developers] will present to the plan commission, and interested residents will have the opportunity to speak about the petition,” said Stan Popovich, planning manager for the village of Downers Grove.

Afterward, the plan commission will make a recommendation to the council, he added.

Downers Grove resident Christine Martin wants residents to be aware of the ramifications that a condominium building will bring to the leafy neighborhood.

“I am all for property rights,” Martin said. “You purchase a property and you can do what you want. But when you put up a five-story condominium on Maple, the traffic will increase substantially. It’s completely out of place.”

The Edwards House was last used as office space, and the lot is currently zoned as downtown business. Multifamily structures like condominium buildings are allowed in downtown business districts, according to village special use permits.

Tom Nybo has been heading up a grass-roots effort to bring awareness to the community about the potential razing of the historic home and is helping to create a historic district along Maple Avenue.

“We are working on the historic district and it is not looking as good as we thought it would be, but we are still encouraging people to attend the meeting [Monday] for now,” Nybo said.

To create the historic district, 51 percent of the property owners in the proposed district have to agree to create the distinction, which would have to be approved by a review board and then the village council.

Nybo wouldn’t comment on the number of property owners who have agreed to sign on to create a historic district but said some owners were upset with the rules and regulations that would accompany owning a home in a historic district.

Undeterred, Nybo said that other options were being considered, but he didn't want to mention specifics.

"It's been a lot of work and people have a misconception about how positive this could be," Nybo said of the historic district concept. "It's protection for one simple area of Downers Grove."

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