

# ARB Okays Dragon's Head Demolition

By Brendan O'Reilly

The Southampton Village Board of Historic Preservation and Architectural Review signed off Monday on the demolition of the former Dragon's Head, a controversial Meadow Lane mansion now owned by fashion designer Calvin Klein.

Though the Architectural Review Board, known as the ARB, has given the green light to razing the mansion, and to the design of its replacement, it will likely remain standing until the village Zoning Board of Appeals also gives its approval to the new design, which may be altered to satisfy the ZBA.

"It's going to be a while before you see that wrecking ball taking it down," ZBA Chairman Kevin Guidera said Tuesday.

Mr. Guidera said Mr. Klein's architect, Michael Haverland, came before the ZBA last month and is not far along in the application process.

"We haven't gotten too deep into his variance request," the chairman said. "We have a whole lot of questions that we want to ask him."

Mr. Klein is seeking height and area relief from the zoning board and a wetlands special permit to add more native plants to the landscape.

"While adding to the privacy of the

occupants of the residence, the landscaping will, to a considerable extent, obscure the residence from public view along Meadow Lane," the ARB wrote in its decision signing off on the design.

The ZBA, meanwhile, requested to see alternative plans for the property that would show the board what the design would look like if it conformed to village zoning regulations, Mr. Guidera said. "In other words: What can he build with no variances whatsoever?"

The mansion was originally erected as a prim, brick Georgian house in the 1920s for Henry Francis du Pont, but a later owner, Barry Trupin, converted it in the 1980s into a faux-Norman chateau, without a permit and in violation of zoning codes, compromising its historic integrity.

The plan Mr. Haverland presented to the ARB calls for replacing the mansion once labeled "Disneyland on LSD" with a modern, more modest structure.

At its highest point, the 47,700-square-foot former Dragon's Head is 51 feet tall, and it sits on 7.69 acres, according to the ARB. The design of the replacement calls for three sections—a main house, a guest wing and studio—connected underground and totaling 17,850 square feet of heated space. Being that the three

parts would be sprawled out across the property, the ARB said the width is substantial but still scaled appropriately considering the size of the parcel.

Because the mansion is in the village's historic district, the Building Department could not issue a demolition permit without a "certificate of appropriateness" from the ARB, which it got Monday.

The ARB concluded that the mansion is not a contributing resource to the historic district because it has no distinctive or architectural style representative of the district's character. The proposed replacement is "in the traditional style of modern architecture, and the character and design of the proposal is appropriate for the neighborhood," the ARB wrote.

A man who answered the phone at Calvin Klein Studio said Mr. Klein does not comment on his personal life, including the demolition of his Meadow Lane house.

Mr. Haverland, who successfully pitched the demolition and new design to the ARB, said he cannot comment on the project until it also gets the approval of the ZBA.

The application is on the agenda for the ZBA's February 26 meeting.