

Say Goodbye To Dragon Head, Say Hello To Calvin's New Beach House

by Andrea Aurichio | [13 Comments](#)



SLAYING THE DRAGON: The mansion, as significant as it has been all these years, was not deemed historically significant or architecturally relevant by the Architectural Review Board (ARB) in Southampton earlier this year. *Photos by Andrea Aurichio*

Southampton - It was quiet on Meadow Lane except for the occasional banging of a hammer in the distance and the song of a red wing blackbird about to take flight near the shores of the Atlantic. History was being made in the midst of this tranquility as a small crew of workmen began dismantling Dragon Head. Soon Calvin Klein's 50,000 square foot mansion set on a beautiful ocean bluff will be no more as it is gently razed to make way for a new, much smaller, 17,000 square foot, streamlined beach house.

Very Calvin, clear, spare, modern and, of course, chic and green. The new Southampton home, symbolized by Klein's cutting edge design that has shaped the American fashion industry for more than a quarter of a century, will take hold as a storied historic manse is erased from the landscape where it has amused and amazed since before Calvin became famous for his jeans.

The mansion, as significant as it has been all these years, was not deemed historically significant or architecturally relevant by the Architectural Review Board (ARB) in Southampton earlier this year when they approved Klein's plans to demolish the old house and replace it with a new one, due to the myriad of alterations to the interior over the years.

Klein's building permit was displayed prominently at the service entrance on the eastern portion of the oceanfront estate on Wednesday afternoon where the parking area was filled with pick-up trucks and heavy equipment. Hay bales lined both sides of the road mindful of the work in progress at an ecologically fragile waterfront location. Klein's property totals 11 acres in all, and includes parcels on both sides of Meadow Lane, providing its high profile owner with direct access to the bay as well as a magnificent ocean beach. Dragon Head was the largest private home in the Hamptons for decades until Sagaponack resident Ira Rennart built a house more than twice its size on oceanfront property more than a decade ago.



The Chesterson Estate during the DuPont days.

A few residents drove by quietly in a Mercedes convertible coupe with the top down to take advantage of the exemplary day as well as maximize their view of the subdued demo in progress as they waved and pointed. Klein's architect, Michael Haverland, was on site supervising the workers. A silver Porche was parked at the property's western gate. Red wing black birds flitted about on the trees in front of the Klein property.

No one was available for comment as work progressed quietly at 4:30 p.m. Early reports of the work underway began circulating on Wednesday morning when members of the real estate community began emailing one another.

"Dragon Head is being demolished right now" one observer emailed to her colleagues, "history is being made."

Dragon Head had several owners before Klein purchased the property in 2003 for \$28.9 million. It was a bargain in its day since the house had been listed for sale with no takers at \$45 million by its previous owner, Francesco Galesi, who put it on the market in 2000. Galesi purchased the house from Barry Trupin for \$2.3 million in 1993.



When Klein purchased Dragon Head, the house resembled a castle by the sea, having undergone substantial renovations and alternations by a cast of previous owners, including one who installed a turret for special effect. Originally the property was developed by the DuPont family in the 1920s when they built a traditional seaside manse on the ocean. The stately home was originally dubbed the Chesterson Estate and later Elysium.

A bird's eye view of the massive estate in its heyday as Elysium. *Image courtesy of Sotheby's*