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## **COLUMBUS LANDMARKS FOUNDATION'S RESPONSE TO IMMINENT DEMOLITION OF 1266 E. BROAD ST.**

Physical evidence at the Joseph Firestone Mansion located at 1266 E. Broad Street suggests that demolition is imminent. Columbus Landmarks Foundation (CLF) is disappointed with the Columbus Foundation's decision to demolish this historic building as part of the restoration and expansion of its headquarters at the Old Governor's Mansion. CLF's Board of Trustees and membership have made significant efforts over the past several months to persuade the Columbus Foundation to preserve the National Register-listed residence in the East Broad Street Historic District in recognition of its architectural, historical and urban design importance. It appears however that those efforts were in vain and that the building will be lost.

With the support of the Near East Area Commission, Old Town East Neighborhood Association, The Council of Historic Neighborhoods, King-Lincoln Bronzeville and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, CLF met with the Columbus Foundation on several occasions. We created a dynamic team of preservation consultants, neighborhood representatives, architects, engineers, developers and contractors, who prepared detailed recommendations for demolition alternatives.

CLF presented several phased design schemes that promoted saving the property and integrating it into a long range campus master plan for the Columbus Foundation. The scenarios incorporated the Columbus Foundation's concerns about parking, expansion, access, security, connectivity, image, and landscape. The CLF team's proposals included funding sources, incentives and detailed cost estimates from subcontractors to renovate the exterior of the house and mothball the interior for future use.

"I'm sure all those who are interested in the preservation of Columbus landmark locations are disappointed in the decision to demolish the Joseph Firestone Mansion. However, we are grateful that the Columbus Foundation seriously reviewed our proposals, provided us access to the building and extended its original timeline to listen to the community's concerns about this historic property. The Columbus Foundation should be applauded for staying and investing in the neighborhood and for the impressive restoration of the Old Governor's Mansion," said Kathy Mast Kane, Executive Director. "We regret the outcome of our combined efforts was not different. Now

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understanding that the demolition is imminent, we encourage the Columbus Foundation to pursue salvage of any re-usable materials in the interest of keeping as much of the building as possible out of the landfill.”

“Columbus Landmarks Foundation is dedicated to preserving and celebrating Columbus’ architectural legacy,” said Donna Laidlaw, CLF President. “We devoted time and resources to saving the Joseph Firestone Mansion because it is an important part of our history and the urban fabric of the Near East Side. The continued loss of historic buildings on East Broad Street, a gateway to our downtown, reinforces the need for stronger city policy to protect our older neighborhoods and encourage economic revitalization.”

“The *Update to the Near East Plan* encourages the preservation and restoration of existing historically significant and contributing buildings along the East Broad Street corridor. The *East Broad Street Initiative* published by CLF in 2007 encourages investment while retaining and enhancing the unique character of East Broad Street. It includes a preservation strategies report with appropriate preservation tools to protect the neighborhood. These neighborhood-driven plans and initiatives need city support and enforcement. Although we are losing another important piece of our historic urban neighborhoods, we hope the loss will inspire a new effort to improve city policy and legislation to protect the heart of our city,” Laidlaw said.

#### **About Columbus Landmarks Foundation**

Columbus Landmarks Foundation (CLF) was founded in 1977 by a dedicated group of historic preservationists and local residents who were committed to preserving Columbus’ architectural heritage. Since that time, CLF has played an integral role in educating the community, encouraging responsible public and private sector enhancement of historic areas and structures, and promoting the highest standards in the design and construction of new buildings and spaces. Our membership includes more than 500 individuals and corporations who remain devoted to CLF’s mission and vision.