



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Latrobe's Pope Villa Lexington, Kentucky



The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation (BGT) invites inquiries from parties interested in rehabilitating and purchasing or leasing Latrobe's Pope Villa, an early nineteenth-century residence that famed architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe designed for Senator John and Eliza Pope. The Pope Villa ranked among early Lexington's most elegant and sophisticated residences, but it was converted into apartment housing in the early twentieth century. Its original configuration was believed lost until a 1987 fire revealed that most of the building remained intact behind a series of additions and alterations. The Blue Grass Trust acquired the house in 1988 and immediately began stabilizing it. Subsequent investigations have shown that the surviving structure is an extraordinary example of early nineteenth-century Neoclassical architecture.

After more than three decades of care and study, Latrobe's Pope Villa is now poised to be rehabilitated and given new use. BGT is excited to invite expressions of interest from outside parties with a desire to guide the next chapter of this exceptional building's history.

OVERVIEW



Latrobe's Pope Villa is located at 326 Grosvenor Avenue in Lexington, Kentucky. The property lies within the historic Aylesford neighborhood, southeast of the downtown business district and within easy walking distance of the University of Kentucky. Aylesford is characterized by an eclectic mix of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential architecture. Although the Pope Villa was situated on a thirteen-acre tract when completed in 1811, the subsequent development of the neighborhood has created a compact residential environment of single-family homes and small apartment buildings. Today, the Pope Villa occupies a quarter-acre parcel that is currently zoned residential (R-3). The 1987 fire left the structure in ruined condition with extensive interior damage. BGT installed a new roof, stabilized the structure, and restored much of the exterior. It has since continued to maintain the building and conserve the early nineteenth-century architectural fabric revealed by the fire.

Extensive study of the Pope Villa has produced a detailed portrait of the building's history while also laying a sound basis for rehabilitation. A master plan produced by a highly regarded architectural firm proposes restoring the main public spaces and adaptively renovating others. This document will be made available to interested parties.

Individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Pope Villa is one of three surviving domestic buildings designed by Latrobe (1764-1820), America's first professional architect. Latrobe is best known for his work on the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. and his designs for the Baltimore Cathedral, the Bank of Pennsylvania, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Alexandria. Of the sixty residences that Latrobe designed, Pope Villa is the most ambitious and architecturally sophisticated. BGT has copies of Latrobe's drawings for the building (the originals are housed at the Library of Congress) and will be happy to provide reproductions to interested parties upon request. Persons wishing to learn more about the house should consult Michael Fazio and Patrick Snadon, *The Domestic Architecture of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 389-446.

BGT also owns a parcel adjacent to the Pope Villa that includes a ca. 1915 1½-story bungalow. This may also be considered for inclusion in rehabilitation proposals, depending on the inclinations of interested parties.



CONDITIONS

The location of the Pope Villa presents exciting possibilities for residential, commercial, or institutional use. Aylesford is a designated local historic district and is subject to applicable municipal laws and regulations. BGT is open to a long-term lease or sale of the property to parties committed to carrying out a rehabilitation that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. BGT will also require the establishment of protective easements to ensure the preservation of the building's most significant interior and exterior features. In addition, BGT expects to reach an agreement with any potential lessee or buyer regarding occasional access to the property for public educational programing.

Rehabilitation of Latrobe's Pope Villa may qualify for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program (20 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenses) and/or the Kentucky Rehabilitation Tax Credit (up to an additional 30 percent). Parties that act quickly on this opportunity may also take advantage of a \$748,000 Save America's Treasures grant the BGT has secured toward rehabilitation costs.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Expressions of interest should be submitted to Dr. Jonathan Coleman at jcoleman@bluegrasstrust.org by June 30, 2024. Expressions of interest should include:

- ⦿ Proposed reuse. Describe your plans for use of Latrobe's Pope Villa.
- ⦿ Potential partners. Please indicate who will be involved in rehabilitating and using the Pope Villa.
- ⦿ Funding sources. Describe expected and potential sources of funding to be used in rehabilitating and operating Latrobe's Pope Villa.
- ⦿ Evidence of past rehabilitation experience (if any).

More information on Latrobe's Pope Villa, along with helpful resources, can be found at bluegrasstrust.org/lpv

For questions, please contact
Dr. Jonathan Coleman at
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or (859) 253-0362.

