



# Beverly Hills Acquires Greystone Estate Parcel

City Has Option to Buy Two More Sections; Reservoir, Park and Cultural Area Planned

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Beverly Hills city officials handed over a \$350,000 check Tuesday and took title to the 8.1-acre main section of the Greystone estate, palatial home of the late Edward Laurence Doheny II.

The city has an option to buy two remaining parcels of the 19-acre property for \$275,000 each within 21 months from the present owners, the Park-Grey Corp. of Chicago.

Officials hope to use the mansion and grounds at 501 N. Doheny Road in the hills north of Sunset Blvd. for a water reservoir, a park and undefined "cultural purposes."

## Museum Plan Fails

Original plans to convert the castle-like mansion, with its thick concrete walls and many bedrooms and banquet halls, into an art museum have fallen through and the city must now seek an alternate use for the building.

The Greystone purchase is being financed with water bond revenues and general funds. If Beverly Hills exercises its option on the remaining parcels, as expected, the total cost of \$1.1 million will be met from \$330,000 in water bonds and \$770,000 in general funds.

The city also has made application for possible federal assistance under an open-land acquisition act recently passed by Congress, but its eligibility has not yet been determined.

## Three-Year Effort

The exchange of deeds in the Beverly Hills City Council chambers Monday was the culmination of a three-year effort to preserve Greystone from possible destruction by subdividers.

At various times, the city, state and private institutions considered acquiring the estate for various purposes.

The mansion was built between 1929 and 1931. It is constructed of steel-reinforced concrete with sandstone facing and a slate roof. It includes such features as a movie theater, a bowling alley and its own dry-cleaning plant.

The grounds surrounding it include a waterfall and

small lake, a formal garden with a fountain and statuary, a guest house, tennis courts, swimming pool, stables, kennels and guest apartments.

Although some of the rooms have been stripped of their fine wood paneling and the house is badly in need of reconditioning, it is mainly intact. The Doheny heirs moved out in 1955 and it has been vacant since then.

City officials have estimated annual maintenance of the grounds will run \$75,000 and the house, \$5,000.

Beverly Hills does not plan to recondition the house at its own expense. This will be up to the party that agrees to make use of it for a city-approved purpose.

Efforts on the part of the City Council to finance the purchase through a bond issue failed when voters last May refused to give it the necessary two-thirds majority.

## Postcard Poll

The councilmen then ordered a postcard poll of registered voters in August. This resulted in informal approval of their decision to go ahead with the purchase anyway. The vote was 4,891 yes and 1,991 no.

The council unanimously approved the purchase agreement Monday, 5 to 0.

Opposition within Beverly Hills to buying the estate became militant over the bond issue during the campaign, but since then has been relatively quiet.

However, a group of realtors and businessmen has been meeting privately in recent weeks to map opposition in next year's councilmanic election to Mayor Frank Clapp and Councilman Leonard Horwin, the main sponsors of the purchase.

There are also reports of a possible taxpayers' suit, but these are unconfirmed.