

## Dragon Head Is Approved For Demolition Marking End To Era Of Excess; Enter Klein's Minimalism

by Andrea Aurichio | [4 Comments](#)



The imposing home owned by Calvin Klein at 650 Meadow Lane is slated for demolition. The 50,000 square foot house is the second largest house in Southampton Town. *Photos by Andrea Aurichio*

**Southampton** - It's official. Calvin Klein can demolish his 50,000 square foot oceanfront mansion on Meadow Lane.

The imposing castle like structure complete with a turret referred to as Dragon Head will be replaced with a much smaller 17,000 square foot minimalist modern design that will blend into the dunes on the oceanfront site. The 11-acre property includes land on both sides of Meadow Lane encompassing both bay and ocean front parcels. Taxes on the property are in excess of \$100,000.

Klein's architect, Michael Haverland, of New York and East Hampton, sat quietly in the back of the meeting room at Southampton Village Hall, an unimposing member of the audience as the application for the multi-million dollar project came up for a vote before the Southampton Village Historic Preservation and Architectural Review Board (ARB) earlier this month.

ARB Chairman Curtis Hightower was absent for the vote that unanimously approved the demolition permit by a vote of 4 to 0. "Will you read the resolution out loud before we vote," ARB member Harold Hoge said, "since this is so important."



Klein's architect, Michael Haverland, of East Hampton and NYC sat quietly as he awaited the Architectural Review Board's (ARB) decision.

At prior ARB meetings Haverland presented elaborate sketches and models of the new house that will consist of three structures united by tunnels. Klein has expressed his commitment to going green with his new project.

Village consultant and architectural historian Zachery Studenroth noted the house, while a major structure and integral part of the Village, lacked any real architectural significance since it has been remodeled over the years to an extent that destroyed the original architectural integrity of the building. Studenroth also described Meadow Lane as an area composed of many incongruous homes united more by their size and opulence than by an architectural style or distinction.

The Klein house has been remodeled several times over the last century as it changed ownership. The first house on the site dubbed "Chesterton" was a traditional home set on the sparsely populated strip of beach when the Duponts built it as a summer home in 1926.

The house was sold to "Baby" Jane Holzer and her husband Leonard in 1969, one year after Henry DuPont died. Shortly after purchasing the house the Holzers defaulted on their mortgage and the house was sold at auction to John Samuels III.

Financier Barry Trupin acquired the property in 1979 and began major renovations that resulted in the expansion of the former 20,000 square foot home into a castle encompassing nearly 50,000 square feet. Trupin dubbed the house "Dragon Head," and the gothic beach house became a well-known local landmark of sorts carrying with it the distinction of being the largest house in Southampton.

Trupin eventually sold the house to World Com Chief Executive Francesco Galesi for \$3.3 million in 1993. Galesi removed some of the more elaborate architectural details from the gothic oceanfront mansion and dubbed his beach house "Elysium." Galesi put the house on the market for \$45 million in 2000 eventually selling the property to Klein for \$28.9 million in 2003.

"Dragon Head," at 50,000 square feet had the distinction of being the largest house in the Hamptons until industrialist Ira Rennert built a house twice its size in Sagaponack. Rennert's 100,000 square foot mansion has 29 bedrooms, 39 bathrooms and two bowling alleys.



Dragon Head in winter, immaculately maintained and apparently unoccupied as Fashion Week kicked into full swing in the city where Klein was hard at work.

Village officials and residents are eyeing the demolition project closely, concerned about the impact the major undertaking will have on the neighboring properties and streets as heavy equipment and work crews make their way to Klein's Meadow Lane property.

Haverland had no definite demolition date or specific plans. He left shortly after the board's vote of approval - exiting quietly through a side door.