

Fwd: Fw: Islander Historical Preservation

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Mon, Aug 18, 2025 at 8:35 AM

To: Ray Stearns <rste4040@aol.com>, Rick Dethloff <rcdethloff@aol.com>, Ron Short <dorissshort806@gmail.com>, Eleanor Wolfe <theislandernrbfl@gmail.com>, "Christie S. Jones" <largolaw@aol.com>, ppmorell@comcast.net

Dear Christie (and all Islander board members = Ray, Rick, Eleanor, Doris & Phil)

Thank you for your response and for sharing your perspective. I'd like to clarify the intent behind submitting the historical preservation package and address a few points.

I thought that our goal is not to drastically alter or "modernize" The Islander but rather to repair and, where needed, rebuild in the same style it has always had. The vast majority of owners love The Islander for its charm and unique setting, and preserving that is one of the main reasons I thought about exploring this avenue. Any required approvals for historically sensitive repairs would be in line with our shared objective—to bring The Islander back as close as possible to its original form.

Regarding costs, owners already pay annual fees that go toward repairs, maintenance, and reserves, additionally, it is my understanding that we have received insurance proceeds. Historical designation does not necessarily mean higher out-of-pocket costs per owner—it simply adds a layer of review to ensure the repairs are consistent with the historic character. For many of us, that is not seen as a burden but as a safeguard.

I also want to clarify that my submission of the report was not done in secret. Eleanor was aware and assisted in gathering information. In addition, I spoke at length with Dr. Kyra Lucas, the supervisor of the Florida Department of State, Bureau of Historic Preservation. She understood the urgency of our situation and agreed to put the matter in front of her committee as early as this week. This means we will have a preliminary answer very soon. If the Islander is not eligible, then we can put the matter to rest knowing we have exhausted that option. But if it is eligible, then we will have a real opportunity to preserve what makes The Islander so special and that is something I would hope all of us would be excited to share with the owners. Additionally, this process does not commit us to anything—it simply allows us to explore all possible options before making a final decision.

While I understand some owners may prefer to sell and walk away, others believe it's worth investigating every opportunity to restore The Islander before that becomes the only option left. If the Historic Preservation Committee finds the property eligible, I believe it should go to a full ownership vote with all of the facts so that all voices are heard.

We cannot predict future storms, but we also cannot plan our lives or decisions based on fear of what might happen. Whether repaired or rebuilt, the underlying value remains in the land itself, which historically appreciates over time. The only guaranteed loss will come if we do nothing to try to save The Islander.

With respect, your response read as though the conclusion had already been made and that pursuing this is not worthwhile based on your past experience. However, my research suggests the situation is not quite as restrictive as it may seem, and that eligibility does not automatically mean insurmountable hurdles. Rather than close the door, it makes sense to at least hear from the state's preservation experts directly before we decide. (see below for additional information)

Finally, instead of creating a bound memory book (which feels like an ending, but our story isn't over yet), we could consider a framed historical photograph for each room—something tangible and lasting that honors The Islander's heritage while also reminding everyone that we fought to preserve it.

I suggest we wait to hear from the Historical Preservation Committee. Their feedback will give us the facts we need to determine the next steps together as a community.

Respectfully,

Lisa Joaquin
Unit Week Owner, The Islander

Regarding all of the restrictions and limitations listed in your response letter, based on the research that I have done, they may not be completely accurate.

Additional Information Regarding Preservation

1. Modifications May Require Approval — Only Under Certain Circumstances

Contrary to the attorney's implication that any modification requires National Park Service (NPS) approval, federal oversight is only triggered when federal money, permits, or licensing is involved. If your association isn't using federal funds, you're not obligated to follow the NPS approval process.

At the federal level, NRHP listing does not impose restrictions on private owners—you can alter or even demolish the property unless federal involvement is present.

2. Additional Cost, Complexity, and Time—Only If You Opt In

True, renovations under programs like federal tax credits must meet specific preservation standards and involve additional paperwork and review.

But this only applies if the association or owners are applying for those incentives—not a universal requirement.

3. Buyer Reluctance / Developer Hesitation—Some Basis, but Not Universal

It's possible that some developers might shy away from properties with historic designation due to perceived complexity or cost. However, federal listing itself doesn't legally prevent future development or diminish property rights. .

What's Misleading or Overstated

1. "Few if any modifications ... can be made" — Not Always True

As long as federal resources aren't involved, the property remains under normal private ownership rights: repairs, updates, and even demolition are allowed.

2. "Very expensive, complicated, and time-consuming" — Only if Leveraging Benefits

The added complexity generally comes into play only when you apply for federal or state historic grants or tax credits, since these require adherence to preservation standards.

Without that, it remains largely an honorary designation without legal restrictions.

3. "Improvements cannot be removed to make way for new construction" — Not Federally Enforceable

Again, that only applies if regulatory oversight is activated through incentives or federal involvement. Otherwise, removal or redevelopment is a private choice.

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Real Considerations—and Often Overlooked Nuances

Here are the true pros and cons of NRHP listing:

Pros Cons / Drawbacks (if you choose to leverage benefits)

Honorary recognition of historic significance. Requires adherence to preservation standards for funded or incentivized projects.

Eligibility for federal/state tax credits and grants. Paperwork, review timelines, added cost, and complexity.

Potential boost in prestige or market appeal. Repairs using historically accurate materials can be costlier.

Doesn't constrain private actions—until or unless incentive programs are embraced. Local/state historic designations may impose stricter guidelines, separate from NRHP.

Summary: What You Should Know

Federal NRHP listing alone doesn't restrict or limit what owners can do unless federal funding or permits are involved.

The added cost and complexity emerge only when seeking historic-related incentives, which come with preservation standards and reviews.

Local or state historic designations may impose separate, enforceable rules—so you'll need to check if such overlays apply to The Islander.

The attorney's description, while not entirely accurate, reflects concerns often associated with historic designation—but those apply only under specific, elective circumstances.

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