



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of May 17, 2008**

DATE: April 21, 2008

SUBJECT: Authorization of Loan Agreement with the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City for temporary loan of the disassembled components of the County's historic Clifford M. Krowne Lustron House, donated to the County in April 2006, and authorization for County Manager to proceed with necessary actions to loan the house components for their use in an exhibition about prefabricated architecture scheduled from June to November 2008.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve the agreement (Attachment 1) with Museum of Modern Art in a final form approved by the County Attorney for the temporary loan of the disassembled components of the County's historic Clifford M. Krowne Lustron House, at no cost to the County, in order for it to be featured in an exhibition from June to November 2008, and authorize Chairman to execute the agreement on behalf of the County Board.

ISSUE: This is the final approval of the agreement with the Museum of Modern Art to temporarily loan the Krowne Lustron House, at no cost to the County, so it can be featured in the MoMA exhibit "Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling" that will open July 15, 2008 and run through October 20, 2008. No issues have been identified.

SUMMARY: In April 2006, the County Board unanimously accepted the donation of a historic, all metal Lustron house from property owner Dr. Clifford M. Krowne. The County then hired a contractor to disassemble the building in May 2006, and by June 2006 all the house components were placed in temporary storage in a portable tractor trailer stored in Chantilly, Virginia. A detailed booklet and DVD that document the disassembly of this house have been produced through funding from the Arlington Committee on Jamestown 2007. The MoMA, after learning of Arlington's disassembly of a Lustron house, has inquired if the County would lend portions of this house for an upcoming exhibit this summer at MoMA.

BACKGROUND: The Lustron is a pre-fabricated, all metal house produced in the post-World War II era. Only 2,680 Lustrons were built nationwide between 1948 and 1950; Arlington only has five remaining of its original eleven. The design and manufacture of Lustrons aimed not just

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Cynthia Liccese-Torres and Michael Leventhal, CPHD, Neighborhood Services Division

to satisfy an overwhelming and immediate need for affordable housing, but to raise the quality of living for middle-class Americans. Lustrons were ingenious not only in their materials, but also for their open floor plan, space-saving built-in cabinetry, and maintenance-free and fireproof all steel construction. Today, throughout the nation, because of their small size and unusual construction, Lustrons are at great risk for demolition and are becomingly increasingly rare.

The Krowne Lustron House, built in 1949, is a Westchester Deluxe 02 model with two bedrooms, one bathroom, and 1,085 square feet of living space on one level. With the exception of the kitchen appliances and toilet, the home still retains all of its original interior and exterior features, including: the built-ins in the dining room, living room, and bedroom; all of the floor-to-ceiling closets and the sliding pocket doors; all the metal paneling and roofing; all the bathroom fixtures and the Art Deco-styled bathtub; all the windows and doors; and the original “Gas-o-matic” furnace.

The MoMA’s curatorial staff first contacted the County’s Historic Preservation Program in April 2007. They have since confirmed their interest in borrowing and recreating for the exhibit approximately 75% (or about 814 square feet) of the Krowne Lustron to include the front entrance porch, living room, dining room, kitchen, and utility room. MoMA plans to display the Krowne Lustron at the primary entrance of the main interior gallery space so that all visitors must pass through the house to experience the remainder of the exhibit.

DISCUSSION: Because the County’s own plans to re-erect the Krowne Lustron in Arlington have yet to be finalized, the opportunity to have this significant piece of the County’s modern architectural history on temporary display at the Museum of Modern Art is a remarkable one. There would be considerable positive publicity for Arlington County, as a leader in historic preservation and in finding innovative solutions to preserve and showcase its modern architectural history. This exposure will be a tremendous asset that could then be used to leverage a fundraising campaign to reassemble the house in Arlington for a County use/program, which continues to be the ultimate project goal since the County accepted the house donation.

The MoMA has agreed to finance all of the related expenses involved in the loan of the house, including shipment to New York and return to Virginia, the necessary supplies and tools, and the travel and associated expenses of all the volunteer crew members who will assist in the onsite reassembly/disassembly. County staff will provide technical support.

FISCAL IMPACT: As a result of further negotiations with MoMA, they have agreed to incur all out-of-pocket costs associated with the loan of the Krowne Lustron House. The temporary loan of the disassembled components of the Krowne Lustron House to the Museum of Modern Art will have no fiscal impact to the County.