# LANDMARK LINK

The newsletter of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission.

## Commission to embark on two major projects

#### Architectural Review Guidelines

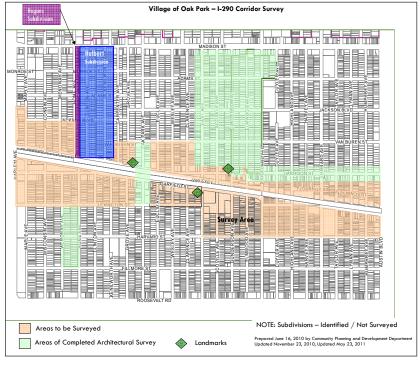
In 1994 the Village adopted Architectural Review Guidelines to assist property owners of historic properties when proposing work on their buildings. They are also the principles by which the Historic Preservation Commission reviews submittals for proposed work within the historic districts or work on Oak Park Historic Landmarks. The Historic Preservation Commission is currently in the process of updating these Guidelines in terms of content and visual illustrations, to incorporate current historic preservation best practices and create a more userfriendly document. The revised Guidelines will be easier to use and interpret by property owners, contractors, architects and other interested parties. The document will include ample illustrations and/ or photographs that will assist users in understanding and interpreting the Guidelines.

The Village recently hired Preservation Design
Partnership of Philadelphia to complete this project,
which the Historic Preservation Commission hopes
to complete by early 2012. Public input on any
proposed changes will occur later this year. The
Village of Oak Park received a \$2,000 grant from
the National Trust for Historic Preservation to assist with the
project.

#### I-290 Corridor Architectural Survey

The Historic Preservation Commission is soon to begin an architectural survey of properties along the I-290 Corridor. The Survey will identify historic resources for the potential designation of historic landmarks and historic districts. The I-290 expressway, which opened in 1960, extends from Austin to Harlem between Harrison and Garfield Streets. The survey will look at properties one block to the north and south of the expressway.

Conducting the I-290 Corridor Survey is a high priority for both the Village of Oak Park and the Historic Preservation Commission as well as for the larger community. As the I-290 expressway celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010, important questions on its local significance have been triggered by a proposal from the State of Illinois to potentially expand or in some way alter the expressway as it passes through Oak Park. The importance of completing the survey and identifying the historic resources prior to a final decision on the potential expressway expansion is vital in order for the Village of Oak



Park, and the State of Illinois, to adequately participate and make informed decisions on preserving the historic and architectural history of the neighborhood.

The Village of Oak Park has determined that conducting an architectural survey is the most feasible and effective approach to understanding the nature of the resources that may be impacted by an expansion or alteration of the I-290 expressway. This will afford the Village of Oak Park with the opportunity of providing historic resources with recognition and protection well in advance of any formal plans that may be released by IDOT. The Village of Oak Park has participated in IDOT planning meetings, analyzed the situation with input from regional and national transportation planning experts, examined our options, and arrived at an architectural survey as one of several important courses of action.

The Village has recently hired the firm Preservation Services and Technology Group from Kentucky to complete the survey. Information and maps resulting from the survey will be available on-line. Look for more information on this project in the coming months. The Village received a \$20,300 grant from the Certified Local Government program to assist with this project.

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### Residents weigh in on expansion of FLW district

The Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission is considering an expansion of the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District. The boundaries of the National Register Historic District were expanded in 2009 as the result of a multi-year public process. Redrawing the boundaries was necessary to correct problems with the initial district, whose boundaries cut through blocks, ran down alleys, and omitted large groups of homes that were of the same style and date as the rest of the district. The HPC would like the boundaries of the local landmark district to match those of the National Register district.

Why do we need to take this extra step, if the buildings are already listed on the National Register? The answer is simple -- a listing on the National Register of Historic Places sounds impressive and brings recognition, but it offers no protection. Buildings on the National Register can be demolished, if the demolition uses private funds. Including these properties in a local historic district helps ensure that these beautiful buildings and homes will not be demolished and replaced with

something that is much larger and out of scale with the rest of the block, or that the exteriors are not radically altered in ways that will destroy the neighborhood's appearance and property values. Ultimately, it helps the Village maintain those things that make the Wright district such an interesting, attractive, and desirable place to live and work.

The HPC held a series of three public meetings this summer to gather comments from the residents in the district and the proposed expansion area. Turnout for these meetings was rather low, with the comments split fairly evenly between residents who support the expansion and those who oppose it. The HPC would like to bring this issue to a vote in the Fall, but we want to hear from you first. If you are a resident in the proposed district boundary, please send your questions or comments to Doug Kaarre at <code>kaarre@oak-park.us</code>. Also be sure to check out our Frequently Asked Questions about the district expansion on the Village website which answers some of the most common questions about local historic districts and the HPC review process.

#### **New Landmarks**



**317 N. KENILWORTH AVE.**: The William A. Douglass House was designed by architects Patton & Fisher in 1893 in the Queen Anne style. Designated on September 20, 2010



**432 N. KENILWORTH AVE.**: The Charles E. Matthews House was designed by architects Tallmadge & Watson in 1909 in the Prairie style. Designated on February 22, 2011



**178 FOREST AVE.**: The Nineteenth Century Club was designed by architect James L. Fyfe in 1928 in the Neoclassical style. Designated on September 20, 2010



**1515 N. HARLEM AVE.**: The Harlem Office Building was designed by architect W. B. Cohan Associates in 1958 in the Modern style. Designated on March 7, 2011



**308 N. OAK PARK AVE.**: The Rutherford-Dodge House was designed ca. 1872 in the Italianate style. Designated on January 3, 2011



**130 S. EAST AVE.**: The John D. Caldwell House was designed by architect George H. Borst in 1890 in the Queen Anne style. Designated on July 5, 2011



**633 N. EAST AVE.**: The Vernon W. Skiff House was designed by architects Nimmons & Fellows in 1909 in the Prairie style. Designated on January 3, 2011



**629 FAIR OAKS AVE.**: The Charles W. Helder House was designed by architect Charles E. White, Jr. in 1906 in the Prairie style. Designated on July 5, 2011

#### Historic Preservation Commission Members

Christina Morris, Chair

Joerg Albrecht Garret Eakin Frank Heitzman Bob Lempera Rosanne McGrath Regina Nally Drew Niermann Gary Palese Michael Plummer Tony Quinn The Historic Preservation Commission is an 11-member body of citizen volunteers appointed by the Village President to implement the Village's Historic Preservation Ordinance. Its mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the distinctive historic and architectural heritage of Oak Park. The Commission strives to preserve the historic integrity of the Village by reviewing alterations of the exteriors of historic properties to ensure that the historic character of the building exteriors is preserved. The Commission also identifies landmark buildings and historic districts, and seeks to enhance the attractiveness of the Village by educating property owners and citizens about the importance of preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of properties.