



### Impact on Property Values

Studies conducted at the community and state level around the country consistently show that historic designation not only increases property values, but also helps neighborhoods hold their property values

better over time, even during the recent economic downturn. Although economic and development pressures, shifting population trends, proportion of rental-to owner-occupied properties, crime, general appearance and overall perception all affect property values, most historic districts have experienced improvement in the appearance of the area and an increase in home-ownership. At a minimum property values remain constant.

### Ownership Responsibilities

Exterior changes to historic buildings that are visible from the street must be reviewed by Village Staff and/or the Historic Preservation Commission. All decisions are based on the Village's Architectural Review Guidelines, which are posted at [www.oak-park.us/sites/default/files/historic-preservation/booklets-reports/preservation-guidelines.pdf](http://www.oak-park.us/sites/default/files/historic-preservation/booklets-reports/preservation-guidelines.pdf). A permit application usually is approved by Village staff within days of submittal. Only larger projects, such as additions or demolition, require review by the Historic Preservation Commission, which meets on the second Thursday of each month.

For National Register properties, projects that require state or federal permits, licenses or fees require review by the State Historic Preservation Office. This review is intended to minimize adverse

effects of a project on historic resources by encouraging property owners to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which may be reviewed at [www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm). For example, the proposed I-290 Expressway expansion/reconstruction project would require the State of Illinois to identify any physical and environmental impacts on historic resources and ways to minimize them.

### About Thomas Henry Hulbert

Thomas Henry Hulbert was born in Lee, Massachusetts in 1848. He moved to Chicago in 1886, first working as a realtor and then completing his first major subdivision in West Humboldt Park in 1890. The **Oak Park Hulbert Houses** were constructed at the turn of the 20th century as a new suburban neighborhood that catered to the growing middle class. They were designed to provide affordable opportunities for homeownership in an attractive and safe environment with easy access to downtown Chicago via a new metropolitan elevated station Hulbert constructed at Oak Park Avenue to serve the neighborhood.

Hulbert used aggressive advertising to attract middle-class families to Oak Park beginning in 1905. The houses were designed in a number of styles, most prominently Queen Anne, as well as Craftsman and Prairie-School influenced American Four-squares. Many of the homes were repeated with variations in the siding, bays, dormers, gables and porches.

**The Hulbert Houses, Oak Park**

RESIDENCES ONLY—No Flats Allowed; \$4,500 to 7,000. ON PAYMENTS ANY BUYER CAN EASILY MAKE.

Do you realize that the attractive, artistic house is more the product of careful thought and effort than of extra cost? Careful thought and effort have been the "watchwords" on the HULBERT property, and on the houses built on it, with the result a property in a class absolutely by itself, unapproached in attractiveness by anything about Chicago, AND with it goes protection against everything which could mar its beauty or usefulness.

TRANSPORTATION—Central Park branch of Metropolitan Elevated to Oak Park Ave., with two blocks west: Lake Street Elevated to end of line, walk one block east, four blocks south. From West Side, Madison Street car direct to Clinton Avenue.

**THOMAS H. HULBERT**

"BUILT ON HONOR HOUSES"

JACKSON BLVD. & CLINTON AVE., OAK PARK CITY OFFICE, 6 MADISON ST.



For more information:

Call 708.358.5417 or email [historicpreservation@oak-park.us](mailto:historicpreservation@oak-park.us)

### About the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission is comprised of 11 volunteer Oak Park citizens. Its current membership includes architects, contractors and people whose professional or personal interests include historic preservation. Most importantly, they are your neighbors, who understand and value maintaining Oak Park's historic buildings while allowing them to remain viable in the 21st Century.

# The Hulbert Houses

## Historic District Designation Proposal







533 S. Kenilworth

The Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission is considering creating the **Hulbert Houses Historic District** to recognize its special historical and architectural character. This area, which encompasses the 500 through 800 blocks of Clinton and South Kenilworth avenues, has long been identified as one of Oak Park's premiere neighborhoods. Formal recognition will encourage continued pride in ownership through long-term maintenance, appropriate alterations and careful attention to maintaining its character.

In 2012, historic preservation graduate students from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago surveyed the houses within the original subdivision boundaries created by Thomas H. Hulbert. The survey identified 175 homes constructed between 1905 and 2009, with 158 homes built by Thomas H. Hulbert between 1905 and 1913. The Hulbert Architectural Survey is available online at [www.oak-park.us/village-services/planning/historic-preservation/historic-resources](http://www.oak-park.us/village-services/planning/historic-preservation/historic-resources).

### What is Being Proposed

Property owner support is being sought to formally recognize a historic district that would be both locally designated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, similar to Oak Park's three existing

historic districts. This would provide formal recognition, eligibility for tax incentives, and, more importantly, protection of the significant architectural and historical characteristics within this important neighborhood through the review of future demolition and exterior alterations.

### National Register of Historic Places:

The National Register is the nation's official list of places recognized for their historical or architectural significance and considered worthy of preservation. Listing on the National Register is an honorary designation and does not prevent property owners from making changes (including demolition) or require owners to make improvements to their property. This designation does not limit use of a building. The potential **Hulbert Houses Historic District** was officially determined to be eligible for the National Register in 2013 based on the following finding:

*The district appears to retain enough integrity and would be locally significant for community planning (Criteria A) and architecture (Criteria C). The period of significance would be from 1905 – 1928, the years the neighborhood was developed.*

### Local Historic District Designation:

A local historic district is an area with



611 S. Kenilworth



833 S. Kenilworth

specific boundaries that possesses a concentration of properties that have significant historical or architectural characteristics and has been designated by Village ordinance. Properties within the local historic district are classified as *contributing* or *non-contributing* to the overall historic or architectural character of the district. Exterior changes visible from the street, including demolition, require review by the Historic Preservation Commission and/or Village staff. Interior work is not reviewed.

### The Designation Process

The Historic Preservation Commission currently is conducting outreach to property owners within the neighborhood to provide information and seek support for creating the new district. A public information meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m., Mon., April 27, 2015 in the Veterans Room of the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake St. Based on community support, the Village will determine whether to prepare the historic district nomination report, which would be used for both the local and National Registration process. The National Register process requires review and approval by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council and the National

Park Service. The Local historic district requires review and approval by the Village Board of Trustees.

### Benefits of Living in a Historic District

In addition to the intangible benefits of individual and community pride, properties within a historic district enjoy financial benefits. Properties that are contributing resources in a historic district are eligible for tax incentives for interior and exterior rehabilitation. The **Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze** program will freeze the property taxes of owner-occupied single-family residential properties for up to eight years at their pre-rehab assessed value, which can result in a significant savings in property taxes. In fact, hundreds of residential properties in Oak Park's three historic districts have used this incentive. Information on the assessment freeze program is posted online at [www.illinois.gov/ihpa/Preserve/Pages/taxfreeze.aspx](http://www.illinois.gov/ihpa/Preserve/Pages/taxfreeze.aspx).

Contributing resource properties also are eligible for a Preservation Easement through Landmarks Illinois that offers a one-time charitable donation on the owner's federal income taxes by donating the value of an exterior or interior facade easement. More information on easements can be found at [www.landmarks.org/easement\\_overview.htm](http://www.landmarks.org/easement_overview.htm)



635 Clinton