



## President's Message

Recently, I drove around the neighborhood to see how much construction was occurring within Lincoln Central Association boundaries. I see the construction near my house and expected similar activity on other blocks, but boy was I surprised. I did not make it to every street, so what I saw reflects most of the activity within our boundaries, but not all of it.

In the southern half of Lincoln Central Association, there are about **30 construction projects under way**. These projects involve demolition of existing structures and the construction of new single-family homes. The 1800 and 1900 blocks of Burling have the most with eight sites under construction. Orchard had five in that same area and I observed three each on the 2000 block of Mohawk, the 1800 block of Cleveland, the 1800 block of Howe and the 500 block of Dickens. That is a lot of construction and a lot of Port-a-Johns sitting on the parkways. What also was surprising was the size of some of these projects. I counted six projects that are three- or four-lot properties. I also observed numerous "For Sale" and "Under Contract" signs within our neighborhood. Most of those signs appeared to be on buildings that will be coming down to make way for new single-family homes. The days of the old Chicago cottage that was raised up to become a two-flat are quickly coming to a close in our neighborhood.

A Realtor recently said to me that **Lincoln Central is becoming more desirable than the Gold Coast for young families**. The Gold Coast is "land locked" and will remain that way. The Old Town Triangle district will not change because of the historical status of the area. That leaves Lincoln Central as the closest neighborhood to downtown and the beach that allows development of homes with the amenities people are looking for today. I don't see this trend changing in the near future.

I personally think the change that is occurring within our boundaries is a natural progression of our neighborhood. Our original neighborhood was developed in the late 1800s and much of our housing stock is more than 100 years old. Some of these homes have outlived their usefulness and should be replaced. But others define the "character" of our neighborhood and should be preserved. Much of what is happening in our neighborhood is a good change for the neighborhood, but not everything. The question for all of us within Lincoln Central Association's boundaries is **where do you "draw the line in the sand"** regarding future development? How do you allow the "good changes" to progress without losing what we love about our neighborhood?

The Lincoln Central Board constantly monitors and discusses the ongoing development in our neighborhood. In January, we restructured the Zoning Committee (*see inside flap*). This seems to be working. We also listed all "orange" buildings within our boundaries in the last newsletter and posted pictures on our web page ([www.lincolncentral.org](http://www.lincolncentral.org)). Much of the character of the future LCA neighborhood will be determined by which of our original buildings stay and are rehabbed, and what type of new homes are constructed.

It will be an interesting transformation.

**Richard Rausch**

## Ogden Park Advisory Committee Formed

By David Varnerin

In February 2004, the advisory committee for Ogden Park held its first meeting in the Old Town Triangle Center. The purpose of the committee is to serve as a focal point for an evaluation of the park as it exists today, with a view toward making changes and modifications to the park, where appropriate.



**Ogden Park is located adjacent to the Midwest Buddhist Temple** on the 1800 block of Hudson Avenue and stretches northeast to Sedgwick Street. The park is right on the boundary between the Old Town Triangle Association and Lincoln Central Association. It was constructed in 1975 over what had been Ogden Avenue and was originally intended as a passive park, where people could come and relax. About ten years ago, there were some improvements made to the park fountain and to the play area at the northern edge of the park. Since then, certain features of the park have deteriorated, although the park remains in relatively good condition today. The park is

under the jurisdiction of the city's Department of Transportation, not the Chicago Park District. The Old Town Triangle Association has funded some of the park maintenance over the years, including the installation of a new central fountain and several trash cans plus weekly trash pickup.

The Committee conducted a community survey in May to solicit input as to how the park is used now and what changes neighbors would like to see. Over 400 households and park users were solicited, with more than 80 responses received (*an excellent response rate*). The results showed that the park is used frequently by a diverse group of neighbors for a variety of purposes. The park serves as a vital link between Sedgwick and Hudson. It also serves as a gathering place for adults who congregate and chat and for pet owners while walking their dogs. Of the features of the park most liked by park users were the horse sculptures (*by noted area artist John Kearney*) and the water fountain in the central plaza area. Most frequently mentioned as needing improvement were landscaping, additional trashcans and an improved children's play area.

The survey results will serve as a basis for a professional study of the park. The Old Town Triangle Association has appropriated funds to begin this study. The completed study will enable the committee and neighborhood organizations to pursue funding from the city and other organizations. With the tight financial situation in most governmental bodies, innovative ways will have to be found to carry out any substantial capital projects.

**Individuals interested in helping to improve Ogden Park are encouraged to join the committee.** Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Old Town Triangle Center located at 1763 N. North Park. Dave Gallowich is the Committee Chair. Interested individuals can contact the committee through the Old Town Triangle Association (Phone: (312) 337-1938; e-mail: info@oldtowntriangle.com).

By Sharon Jenness

How does an extreme makeover occur, especially one that involves a diminutive

Victorian lady? On TV, plastic surgeons and consultants converge on the willing but often tearfully distraught client who wants a miracle transformation. Giving voice to their underlying psychological and physical needs, clients tell their story to a sympathetic audience before and during their transformation. But a building made of bricks, mortar, stone, steel, or wood has no voice. Its makeover or renovation depends on the instincts, talents and sensitivity of others.

In 1995, my husband Jim and I bought a building that had a story to tell. It was a simple 1880's Victorian brick cottage on Mohawk Street that had been renovated so many times its façade had lost its architectural core. In the 1960s, the front of the building was covered in white stucco and trimmed with dark wood and shutters. The building looked like an alpine cottage scooped up from a Bavarian village and dropped onto a Chicago street. Mrs. Dombroski and her daughter lived in the building then, with their small dog. Family members visited, and everyone, including neighbors, gathered when Mrs. Dombroski celebrated her 100th birthday. After Mrs. Dombroski and her daughter died, the building was sold and remodeled. This renovation removed the shutters and wooden trim and simplified the heavy stucco exterior. When Jim and I discovered the house, the only element of the front that was original – and the only part of the exterior we liked – was the ornate gingerbread cornice. (See *detail photo.*)

The exterior had gone through several face-lifts, but the interior was pristine, and that's what sold us on the house – pocket doors, transom windows, crown molding, leaded glass doors.



We didn't love the exterior but we were sensitive to the building's

history, and it was only a matter of time before we decided to recreate the original exterior – to an 1880's Victorian cottage.

This was a daunting but love-filled task. The first step was to find an architect with an expertise in 19th century buildings. Through the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois,\* we found such an architect, Frank Heitzman. With Frank's help we found contractor Roger Keys, a true craftsman dedicated to historical restoration.

Tearing down had to begin before the restoration could start. Stucco was removed and the gingerbread cornice taken down. The original barge board and brackets were dismantled, restored, reinstalled and painted as they would have been in the Victorian era. The painting was an artisan masterpiece incorporating the colors and style true to the building's heritage. All trim around the windows had been lost with the earlier renovations so research determined the appropriate replacement. The lintels above the windows were hand-carved of Texas yellow limestone by master sculptor, Walter Arnold. (See *detail photo.*) The stucco was removed and replaced with "Chicago" brick.



The building held keys to the original façade. The horizontal red bands of bricks that now add textured detail to the Chicago bricks were added to the plan when we discovered the same element on the sides of the house. The copper canopy that now graces the entranceway incorporates features of the Victorian cornice—scalloped edges, rosettes and painted brackets.



Some of the detail work entailed sleuthing and legwork. Jim and I scoured architectural salvage stores and found a pair of old Newell posts. Our contractor, Roger, restored and installed them on the bluestone entry. Even the original limestone carved lintel that was uncovered during demolition found a new home – in the garden’s stone pathway.

The whole project was an adventure, complete with all the frustrations of any construction – obtaining the building permit, months of banging, hammering and sawing, ugly scaffolding, dust, dirt and debris. For the community, it has been an unfolding story of a building that survived several extreme makeovers. The latest makeover didn’t cover up flaws but instead unveiled the true core and beauty of a small Victorian lady.

### **“Your House Has A History”**

The story of the Jenness’ loving restoration of their Victorian cottage is a reminder that many of our homes have a history. To research your home, you can purchase a step-by-step guide, *Your House Has A History*, produced in 1998 with the support of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the U.S. Dept. of Interior. Copies are available by mail for \$2.00 from the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development Landmarks Division, 320 N. Clark St., Room 516, Chicago IL, 60610.

Lincoln Central has a limited supply of the guide. Contact us: [mail@lpci.org](mailto:mail@lpci.org).

*Your House Has A History* breaks down the project of researching a house into six steps.

**Step One** is to check the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, available at your local Chicago Public Library. It can also be viewed at the Commission on Chicago Landmarks.

**Step Two** entails finding a copy of the building permit filed when your house was built. Permit copies are available at University of Illinois Chicago’s library. If your building was built after June 1954, go to the Chicago Dept. of Buildings.

**Step Three** Using the facts and sources provided in the permit, you can research information on the construction and additions to your house. Fire insurance maps can help you find out about the construction of your house. Historical trade magazines, construction reports and information on your architect may provide valuable information.

**Step Four** entails finding information on the previous owners. The permit should provide the names of the original owners. A legal description of your property is necessary if you want to find out about others who lived in your house. This description will be in the permit. Following up on the names may entail going over City and County records, Census Records, visits to the Chicago Historical Society and the Newberry Library.

**Step Five** is finding copies of original plans, drawings and photos of your home. This is a more difficult task. The guide recommends tracking down previous owners. Asking older neighbors may also provide clues. Streetscape historical photos, community newsletters, and local neighborhood papers may provide helpful information on how your neighborhood looked. Some may contain a photo of your building. The Prints and Photographs collection of the Chicago Historical Society are worth browsing.

**Step Six** is researching your neighborhood history. The Neighborhood Research Collection of the Special Collections Division of the Chicago Public Library is a solid resource. In Lincoln Park, we are especially fortunate to be included in the Lincoln Park Community Research Initiative, a joint effort of Lincoln Park community organizations (including Lincoln Central Assoc.) and DePaul University to collect artifacts and significant documents about Lincoln Park. The Lincoln Park Collection is in the DePaul University Library.

\* Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois  
53 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 752  
Chicago, IL, 60604



## LCA's Zoning and Planning Committee

LCA's zoning and planning committee was formed last year (2003) to ensure an open and fair process for developers and homeowners. We are committed to the conservation of historic buildings, as they contribute to the uniqueness and desirability of our neighborhoods. Builders are urged to preserve facades and/or entire buildings. We look favorably on projects that are comparable in quality, scale, and design with the historic homes and commercial buildings that make up our distinctive streetscapes. We strongly recommend space for mature trees and other greenery in the front and rear of homes. We oppose walled-in breezeways and other elements which adversely affect light, views and access. Beautification has long been a stated part of Lincoln Central's mission.

We are a volunteer group of residents, approved by the LCA board. Our decisions are presented to the board, which approves them or asks us to reconsider, get more information, hold a public meeting, etc. Recommendations to the Alderman come from the LCA board.

Our meetings are open to the public.



## SCHOOL NEWS

Lincoln Park High School opened with a student population of **2200 students**, the highest number in recent years. The new principal began July 1st, **Dr. Bessie Karvelas**. Twenty-five new teachers have been hired for this school year. The LPHS community is proud of its eight National Merit semi-finalists: **Nathan Cohan, Sophia Darugar, Ian Feldman, Andrew Lawrence, Douglas Power, Jennifer Terrell and Roger Waite**.

The fall **Open House** for prospective students will be **Sunday, November 7, 2004** from 1:30 to 4:30 pm with presentations on all the LPHS offerings.



Send this completed Application, with your check, made payable to **Lincoln Central Association**

to:

Membership Chair  
Lincoln Central Assn.  
P.O. Box 14306  
Chicago, IL 60614-0306

Voice Mail  
(312) 409-2783

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### Membership Type

- Family (2 Members) \$25.00
- Individual (1 Member) \$20.00
- Organization (1 Member) \$25.00
- Senior (1 Member) \$10.00

### Contribution

*(includes membership)*

- Patron \$50.00
- Benefactor \$100.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

### Please indicate your interests.

- Membership
- Newsletter/Public Relations
- Planning/Zoning
- Beautification/City Services
- Parking
- Fund Raising
- Safety/Security
- Community Relations
- Finance
- Parks
- Social Programs
- Schools

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P.O. Box 14306  
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# *Spotlight*

## SPOTLIGHT QUIZ

**Where in LCA's world can you find this architectural detail?**

