

WHAT HISTORIC PRESERVATION IS TRULY ALL ABOUT... AND HOW IT WORKS!

by Paul A. Myers

Did you know that the concept of historic preservation has been around for decades? Did you know that it is an international and national movement that increases property values and improves the quality of life for all of the citizens in a city or town where a historic preservation commission exists? Did you know that the most progressive cities and towns have Historic Preservation Commissions? Did you know that cities in Indiana like Valparaiso, Bloomington, Elkhart, Fort Wayne, Jefferson, Kokomo, Lafayette, La Parte, Logansport, Madison, Indianapolis, South Bend and yes Hammond and Crown Point all have Historic Preservation Commissions? Did you know that there are more than forty Historic Preservations Commissions in Indiana alone? Did you realize that there is more misinformation on this subject being provided to you than you can imagine, and usually by people who know absolutely nothing about historic preservation and just don't want to give it a chance in East Chicago?

Setting the Record Straight!

In 2003 when developers announced their plan to raze (bulldoze) the First National Bank building on the corner of Indianapolis Blvd. and Chicago Avenue, Mayor Robert A. Pastrick announced that he not only wanted the building preserved, but to facilitate that concept, he had called upon a local attorney to draft an historic review board ordinance. The initial draft of that ordinance came from the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and has already stood the test of the Indiana Supreme Court.

The Department of Planning and Business Development, under the direction of Kimberly Julkes felt that the passage of this ordinance was so important to the city of East Chicago that she placed it on her list of goals for that department for 2004. Earlier this year the Planning Commission unanimously approved the draft of the ordinance and forwarded it to the Common Council for consideration.

Just who will be members of the Commission? Your guess is as good as mine. But this is what the ordinance calls for. There will be more than three members but no more than nine members. All of the mem-

bers will be appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Common Council of East Chicago. All of the voting members of the Commission must be residents of East Chicago.

Preservation & Property Values

Does official designation as a local historic district hurt or help property values in those districts? A study conducted by the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana confirms what preservationists have long suspected: historic district regulations improve the quality of neighborhoods, in turn boosting property values. In a nutshell, the study found:

■ **Local historic district designation** has a positive effect on property values, despite the common misconception that regulation damages property values. According to the study, the value of properties in locally designated historic districts appreciated as much or more than properties in other parts of the community,

including new subdivisions and non-regulated historic neighborhoods.

■ **Designation as a local historic district** does not discourage reinvestment in existing buildings.

■ **Listing in the National Register of Historic Places**, which is largely honorary and not protective, does not boost a neighborhood's property values as much as being designated as a local historic district.

■ **Buyers** in historic districts usually have broader choices in building style, size, and features, and get more house, dollar for dollar, for their money.

■ **Local historic districts** contain racially and economically diverse populations that mirror their community's mix of people.

■ **Historic districts** do not push out old and poor residents; in fact, local historic districts typically provide affordable housing at many price points for both homeowners and renters.

■ **People who purchase homes in historic districts** aren't just passing through but tend to remain for an extended period, adding stability to an area. Local historic districts promote increased levels of home ownership.



Do you remember this building? It was Fire Station No. 4 on Kennedy Avenue. Built in the Tudor Revival style in 1925 it was torn down to make way for an empty lot, something this city probably needs more of. Could it and should it have been saved? Absolutely. Were there other uses for this great old building? Absolutely!

■ **Historic district designation** can force better-quality new construction. Proposed new construction is reviewed to make sure it "fits in" with a neighborhood's character in terms of building materials, scale and quality of construction.

■ **Strong, consistently enforced of local ordinances** have a greater positive impact on property values than do weaker ordinances.

■ **Historic district commissions** approve more than 90% of the proposals they receive. Far from limiting what people can do with their properties, historic district commissions actually aid property owners by offering design assistance, advise on restoration techniques and produce a guidance in finding suitable contractors.

■ **Historic downtown districts** can still effectively serve its traditional, multifunctional role in a community.

Local Historic District Designation

Local historic sites, neighborhoods, and downtowns can be designated only after an enabling ordinance creating a historic preservation commission is passed by the Common Council.

Local designations will:

- protect unique architectural and historical features of a property, neighborhood, or local downtown.

- create preservation guidelines based on the historic character of the designated area.

- offer the public an educational resource for information on rehabilitating historic buildings.

- provide for a local level of control of historic resources.

- offer a positive planning tool to allow historic architectural resources to be integrated into long-range plans for the community.

- improve the quality of life for designated neighborhoods through economic reinvestment and increased property values...

Local designations will not:

- require owners of historic property to automatically make repairs to their houses.

- require owners of historic property to undo past changes.

- create funds for preserving historic properties.

- increase property taxes.

- be as restrictive as most new subdivision deed restrictions (which are also concerned with the protection of investments and aesthetics).

Steps in Creating a Local Historic District

Once a community has passed a local enabling ordinance creating a Historic Preservation Commission or Review Board, a commission is authorized to designate local historic districts through a separate ordinance passed by the Common Council. This can be as small as a single building, site, or structure but most often consists of a collection of buildings. Ongoing public education would occur under each step of the process. The following steps are generally recommended:

1. Proposed building or area identified as potential district.

2. Commission member and staff meet with property owners of proposed historic districts or sites

3. Working with the property owners, the commission holds a series of informational meeting designed to answer question about the proposed district or designation.

4. Commission members and staff meet with property owners to draft preservation guidelines which are specific to the proposed historic district. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are often used as a basis for the guidelines.

5. Commission holds public hearing to review historic district designation and

hears comments from the public.

6. With a recommendation of the Commission, the historic designation ordinance is referred to the Common Council, which holds a separate public hearing. The Common Council may adopt an ordinance designating a historic district as it is recommended, they may amend the ordinance, or they may reject it entirely.

You see, there's nothing to fear in Historic Preservation, but there is everything to gain if it is approved and moves forward. Together, all things are possible!

If you would like more information on historic preservation we suggest you contact the Calumet Regional Office of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. Call 938-2200 and ask for Erica Taylor.



When will it end? If East Chicago had an historic preservation ordinance there would be no question that the First National Bank Building could have not only been saved, but more importantly preserved for the present and restored for future generations to enjoy. Is there a use for the building? Absolutely! It could be used as a Walgreens and a bank with offices on the second floor made handicap accessible. Shouldn't we consider saving this East Chicago Landmark?

Historic Preservation Is A Concept For All Of East Chicago And Not Just The Marktown Historic District

by Paul A. Myers

Marktown Update - July 2004

What saved Marktown from the wreckers ball in the early 1970's was by all means historic preservation. As we noted in earlier issues of Marktown Update, had this most unique neighborhood not been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, or at least protected by a municipal historic preservation ordinance, Marktown would have been razed to make way for the Riley Road interchange of Cline Avenue. But are the homes and commercial buildings in Marktown the only historic structures in East Chicago? Are there other buildings of significant importance to the history of East Chicago and the people who have made this city their home for more than 110 years? The answer is YES - there are literally hundreds of homes, commercial buildings, industrial structures, churches and yes, municipal buildings that merit our attention.

About a year ago when it was announced that Walgreens intends to raze the First National Bank Building on the corner of Indianapolis Blvd. and Chicago Avenue the comment was made

to me that *"Isn't it a shame that this building is the last architecturally significant building in East Chicago?"* I was somewhat overwhelmed with the comment. While this is by far one of the most significant buildings in East Chicago it is not by any means the last or only building of architectural or social significance in East Chicago.

So, just where do we go for the answer to this question? Well you could talk to me, Paul Myers. As the Director of Cultural Affairs and Historic Preservation for the city of East Chicago I spend much of my time researching the histo-

ries of these buildings and of their prior residents. If you can't readily find me, then you might want to pick up a copy of the 1996 Lake County Interim Report. The report, sponsored by the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana is more than 450 pages long and includes a detailed explanation of how and why the report was developed and a comprehensive catalogue of the properties that initially merit our attention from an architectural and historical standpoint.

The East Chicago section is divided into several sections: 1) Indiana Harbor Commercial Historic District, 2) Washington Park Historic District, 3) Indiana Harbor Scattered Sites. 4) Marktown Historic District, and 5) East Chicago Scattered Sites. With the exception of the

Roxanna neighborhood, Sunnyside and Prairie Park, virtually all of the other areas of East Chicago abound in historic properties that, at the least, merit our attention in reference to preserving them for future generations of East Chicago residents.

I was recently asked why Sunnyside was

not listed in the report, after all, it like the Marktown Historic District was not only built at approximately the same time, but Sunnyside was also built as industrial housing for Inland Steel employees. The answer is quite simple. Sunnyside use to be an outstanding example of the arts and crafts movement in this country. Unfortunately the homes were modernized with aluminum siding and modern windows some 30-40 years ago. In doing so all of the architectural features that made it so unique were removed, thus preventing the properties from ever being



The 1929 First National Bank building has been the commercial anchor at the corner of Indianapolis Blvd. and Chicago Avenue for more than 75 years. It is one of the most architecturally important buildings in all of Northwest Indiana. Developers working for the Walgreens Company want to raze this building to make way for yet another one of their cookie cutter type drug stores.

This is the time that we draw the line in the sand and say No... Not this building, not again and not in East Chicago!!!



The Riley Bank Building on the corner of Chicago and Kennedy Avenues is slated to become the Riley Center for Cultural Heritage and Historic Preservation. The architectural plans for the restoration and renovation of the building are being completed and the funding is being sought to complete the project. When completed it will host a number of architectural and cultural exhibits and programs while serving as the headquarters for historic preservation in East Chicago.



The Grand Boulevard Library which was built at the turn of the last century is slated to become the Carnegie Library Center for the Performing Arts. A commission has been established, an architect is on board and once again, funding is being sought. When completed it will provide a much needed venue for the performing arts in East Chicago while at the same time, saving a most unique link to the historic past of this great city. Music, dance and drama will be taught once again in E.C.

considered for landmark status.

What makes the architecture in East Chicago so unique? There are several factors that need to be considered. The first and foremost is the time period in which much of East Chicago was built. It was during the great industrial revolution of the early part of the last century. More than 60 nationalities of immigrant workers made East Chicago their home, and the home for the next generations of their families. In

moving here they brought with them the ideals and concepts of their homelands. As you drive through East Chicago take a close look at the top of some of the buildings. In Indiana Harbor there is a classic two flat apartment building with a massive stone porch and facade. In the header of the porch is carved San. Jose. On a property in East Chicago that is now a church there is a stone

engraved with "Transylvania Hall." The names, stories and histories go on and on.

The old First National Bank building on the corner of Indianapolis Boulevard and Chicago Avenue is not just important to East Chicago, but more importantly is one of the best examples of Neoclassical Bank architecture in all of Indiana. If you have never been in the bank you should take just a moment to walk in and see the outstanding architectural details of the main gallery.

What many do not realize is the number of absolutely outstanding properties that have already been razed in this city. The old fire station on Kennedy Avenue is a classic example. While it was listed in the interim report as "notable" this 1925 Tudor Revival fire house was razed to make way for an empty lot. Could it have been saved? YES! Was their a plausible reuse for the building? YES!! It could



The Lake County Interim Report of 1996 provides a comprehensive guide for historic preservation for all of Lake County. Not including the Marktown Historic District, there are more than 500 historic properties listed in East Chicago, each one of which deserves the opportunity to be preserved and restored to its former glory.

Unless History Lives In The Present It Has No Future



While this great little church on the corner of Grand Boulevard has seen better days, it still stands not only as an example of early 20th century church architecture, but more importantly, it stands as a link to the cultural heritage and diversity that is so unique to East Chicago. It's up to you - save it or raze it!

have been used as a fire safety and training facility for school children or as a fire fighter museum for those that serve and protect us in this great city. But those ideas were never considered at the time that the building was torn down.

One of the other truly great buildings in East Chicago is the old Wickey house on 145th street just north of City Hall. This is East Chicago's only example of a Queen Ann house that is still standing. Built in 1890 it was also one of the first homes in E.C. with electricity. Will it be saved?



Who in this city does not want to see the classic homes in Washington Park maintained in their classic setting for generations to come? We need to celebrate our architectural heritage and not take it for granted any longer!



This is by far one of the most unique two-flat homes in all of East Chicago. While the stonework has been painted for several years, the detail of the original building has not been lost. Carved in the header of the front porch support is the name San. Jose, making this building a most unique link to our cultural diversity.

Will it be restored to it's former glory? Only time will tell.

Does historic preservation pay for itself? Absolutely and in more ways than most people can imagine. Historic preservation brings people together. It can unite them in the heritage that is integral to their community. Property values can and do increase with each and every property restored. But the problem that we face is that before the concept can even be considered some people, ignorant of the facts, have stepped for-



This row of classic Chicago Two-Flats is one of the most unique neighborhoods in this city. The classic line of these homes may be in jeopardy if just one property owner decides to do something inappropriate in this most unique neighborhood.



It doesn't take a great deal of imagination to find a use for this grand old union building located on Broadway and Grand Avenue in Indiana Harbor. How about a union museum and offices for various nonprofit organizations in East Chicago? Not a bad idea and a great way to preserve the past for future generations.



This classic brick six-flat is an outstanding example of early 20th century residential architecture. Built during the rapid expansion of Indiana Harbor during the early 1900s the housing was designed for supervisors at Inland Steel, located just down the street. Much of the original stained glass is still intact.

ward to denounce something that they don't even know about. So let me leave you with a quote from Marktown's National Register Nomination:

"...Marktown presents a living lesson in history and culture from the pioneer growth period of the Calumet Region. This region, which is America's industrial heartland, is quite young compared to other great regions of this nation. Sometimes in such areas the concern for history is lost. But here there is the opportunity to preserve the Marktown community as a living and useful landmark

of genuine architectural and cultural significance for the Calumet Region, the state and the Country. The Marktown area is an important cultural resource which should be restored to accurately present the intentions of the original design."

The same applies to a good number of buildings in this great city. They should be considered as important cultural resources and not as potential empty lots. They should be preserved today for future generations of East Chicago residents and not razed out of ignorance or apathy.

Every building in Marktown deserves to be restored to its former glory. All of the homes and all of the commercial building as well. Along with this we also need to work with those in other historic neighborhoods in East Chicago to see to it that our cultural and architectural heritage are preserved for generations to come!



How about an idea for the restoration of the old Marktown Market Square? While those of a lesser mind would like to see it torn down, those that understand Marktown and historic preservation can see this not only being fully restored but more importantly an active part of this community once again. How about a convenience store and a laundry mat. Two of the apartments could be restored and used by the Salvation Army for families in East Chicago who have need for emergency lodging due to fire or natural disaster. Now that's an idea!

If you would like more information on historic preservation or a copy of the East Chicago section of the Lake County Interim Report, please feel free to give Paul Myers a call at 397-2239 or stop by his home at 405 Prospect Street in the Marktown Historic District. Let's all give historic preservation a chance!

We have but three choices; we can burn bridges, we can build bridges or we can restore bridges. Before we build or burn, let's work together to preserve those few precious bridges that we have. Marktown and hundreds of other buildings in East Chicago are but bridges unto the past. Let's work together to preserve and restore them before it is too late!

What's This Historic Preservation Stuff All About? by Paul A. Myers

Marktown Update - July 2004

Several years ago a Marktown resident wanted the Marktown Preservation Society to solicit funds from local industry so that we could purchase baseball bats, balls and gloves for the children of Marktown. We explained to her that the Marktown Preservation Society wasn't set up for this type of activity. Her response was "Well I guess I need to find out what this preservation stuff is all about."

It is difficult if not impossible to sum up the concepts of Historic Preservation in a one page article, for Historic Preservation can mean something different to virtually everyone who is involved in the field. It can mean that you want to restore and preserve your family home. It can mean that you are interested in the work of a particular architect and you want to see his work preserved.

While we will be addressing what Historic Preservation means from a brick and mortar (OK stucco and fences) in later issues and meetings, lets just talk about the numbers.

In 1970, according to the U.S. Census, the property values in Marktown were approximately \$10,500. The same census reports that the average value of a home in the Pullman Historic (Chicago) in 1970 was also \$10,500.

The 200 U.S. Census shows that the average price of a home in Marktown is \$20,500, while at the same time the average price of a home in Pullman was \$110,000! That's right -- \$110,000!!!!

What happened to Marktown? Better yet, what happened to Pullman? The answer to both questions is the same -- HISTORIC PRESERVATION. In city after city and in town after town, with absolutely no exceptions, Historic Preservation of neighborhoods like ours has turned the tide in property values, and at the same time has reversed the tide of gangs, crime and drugs. As the value of the homes increases, the criminal element disappears.

OK. You're a skeptic. You say, "So our property values go up to \$110,000. What about our property taxes? Are they going to go up at the same rate as the property values? NO! Not if we work together. We can actually increase the property values, eliminate blight, gangs, drugs, have 100% occupancy and still keep our property tax at virtually the same level OR LOWER. How do we do this? The first thing we have to do is quit our bickering and

WORK TOGETHER!

How did Pullman manage to turn things around in the past three decades? That's simple. The first thing they did was WORK TOGETHER! They not only placed their property on the National Register of Historic Places, but they also established an Historic Review Board and set standards for preservation that everyone could live with comfortably.

How difficult was it for Pullman? Believe it or Not, it wasn't all that difficult and no one was forced to make changes. They made changes because that was the only logical and financially feasible alternative to the problems that faced their community. You see, about thirty years ago the neighboring community of Roseland wanted to tear Pullman down and turn it into an industrial park. Today, Pullman is nearly totally restored and Roseland is in ruins.



The Pullman Historic District in Chicago stands today as an example of what historic preservation can do for a neighborhood. All they had to do was give historic preservation a chance and work

How easy would it be to restore Marktown? Very easy compared to Pullman. We are a smaller community with a common exterior finish of stucco and a unified architectural plan. The windows and doors were all of the same architectural style and we have many of the original plans for our community. So what's the next step? You can wait until the future issues of Marktown Update to find out, or just give me a call and we

can discuss what WE need to do as a community.

The following is a quote from the 1975 National Register Nomination for the Marktown Historic District:

"...Marktown presents a living lesson in history and culture from the pioneer growth period of the Calumet Region. This region, which is America's industrial heartland, is quite young compared to other great regions of this nation. Sometimes in such areas the concern for history is lost. But here there is the opportunity to preserve the Marktown community as a living and useful landmark of genuine architectural and cultural significance for the Calumet Region, the state and the Country. The Marktown area is an important cultural resource which should be restored to accurately present the intentions of the original design."

Let's start and think "RESTORATION" and not "DEVISTATION."

(This article was originally printed in Marktown Update - June 2003)

INCOME TAX CREDITS FOR HISTORIC HOMES

by David B. Duvall, *Historical Architect*

Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology

Marktown Update - March 2005

In its 2001 legislative session, the Indiana General Assembly enacted a new program to provide financial assistance for owner-occupants of historic residences. Ever since enactment of federal income tax credits for certified rehabilitation of income producing properties, preservationists have sought to seek similar assistance to homeowners who are restoring registered historic properties. Though the federal Historic Homeowner Assistance Act has never quite made it to the point of signed legislation; the Indiana State Legislature has now stepped in to provide such support. The new Residential Historic Rehabilitation Credit is available to Indiana State income taxpayer's who rehabilitate historic buildings that are principally used as that taxpayers residence. The state incentive allows a taxpayer to take a State Income Tax credit for 20% of the total qualified rehabilitation or preservation cost of a project.

To be eligible for this program, the property must be listed on the Register of Indiana Historic Sites and Historic Structures. The rehabilitation or preservation work for which the credit is claimed must conform to a Rehabilitation Plan or a Preservation Plan submitted to and approved by the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology. The qualified expenditures for preservation or rehabilitation of the historic property must exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

Qualified expenditures include the cost of work for preservation or rehabilitation that enables the structure to be principally used and occupied by the taxpayer as the taxpayer's residence. Qualified expenditures do not include cost of acquiring the property or realtor's fees associated with the property, taxes due on the property, costs of additions or enlargement of the existing structure, paving and landscaping, and sales and marketing costs. The preservation work must be completed during a measuring period not to exceed two (2) years for a single phase project, or not to exceed five (5) years if the approved plan authorized that the rehabilitation be completed in phases.

Any unused portion of a certified credit that results from limited annual tax liability may be carried forward and applied to succeeding taxable years for up to fifteen (15) years following the initial credit year. The tax credit may be recaptured from the taxpayer(s) if the property is transferred within five

(5) years after completion of the certified rehabilitation or preservation work, or if additional modifications to the property that do not meet the standards of the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology are undertaken less than five (5) years after the completion of the certified rehabilitation.

The total amount of Residential Historic Rehabilitation Credits allowed for each state fiscal year cannot exceed two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000). Depending on the demand for these credits which becomes manifest; claims beyond this funding allocation may be assigned to future tax years. There is no fee for obtaining tax credit certification from the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology. Information regarding the eligibility of any property for this credit may be obtained from the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology. Applications are currently available from the DNR.

So, here it is in a nutshell:

1. The property must be located in the State of Indiana.
2. The building must be at least fifty years old.
3. The property must be listed on the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures.
4. The property must be owned by the taxpayer(s), used and occupied by the taxpayer(s) as his/her/their principal residence.
5. The rehabilitation or preservation work for which the credit is claimed must conform to a rehabilitation Plan or a Preservation Plan submitted to and approved by the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology.
6. The qualified expenditures for preservation or rehabilitation of the historic property must exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).
7. Qualified expenditures include the cost of work for preservation or rehabilitation that enables the structure to be principally used and occupied by the taxpayer as the taxpayer's residence. Qualified expenditures do not include cost of acquiring the property or realtor's fees associated with the property, taxes due on the property, costs of additions or enlargement of the existing structure, paving and landscaping, and sales and marketing costs.
8. The rehabilitation or preservation work must be completed during a measuring period not to exceed to years for a single phase project, or not to exceed five years if the approved plan authorized that the rehabilitation be completed in pahses. The measuring period begins when physical work of construction or destruction begins in preparation for construction.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR HISTORIC HOMES

by Paul A. Myers - Marktown Preservation Society

There is an old adage that says "There are only two things certain in life: death and taxes." We have all heard it said and I think we all understand what it alludes to. This past year the Marktown Preservation Society assisted more than thirty homeowners in our neighborhood in the filing of mortgage, homestead and senior citizen exemptions, thus greatly reducing the amount of their property tax. We are very pleased to step forward and be the first to explain a totally new exemption: **The Historic Property Renovation Exemption.**

One of the first qualifications for this exemption is that the residence be fifty years old or older. Well, that takes in all of Marktown and most of East Chicago as far as that goes. The state statute that covers this is IC 6-1.1-12-22 through 24. It reads:

(a) If the assessed value of property is increased because it has been rehabilitated and the owner has paid at least ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) for the rehabilitation, the owner is entitled to have deducted from the assessed value of the property an amount equal to fifty percent (50%) of the increase in assessed value resulting from the rehabilitation. The owner is entitled to this deduction annually for a five (5) year period. However, the maximum deduction which a property owner may receive under this section for a particular year is:

(1) One hundred twenty-four thousand eight hundred dollars (\$124,800) for a single family dwelling unit; or

(2) three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for any other type of property.

(b) For purposes of this section, the term "property" means a building or structure which was erected at least fifty (50) years before the date of application for the deduction provided by this section. The term "property" does not include land.

(c) For the purposes of this section, the term "rehabilitation" means significant repairs, replacements, or improvements to an existing structure that are intended to increase the livability, utility, safety or value of the property under rules adopted by the de-

partment of local government finance.

The form required for this exemption is 322A. While they are available at the North Township and Lake County Assessors Offices the Marktown Preservation Society is pleased to make them available to Marktown property owners and anyone else who owns property in East Chicago who qualifies and may wish to apply.

The form is very simple to fill out and is only one page long. It requires simple information based upon the requirements of the state statute. We would recommend a few things before you even consider this exemption:

1. Take "before and after" photos of the property to show the exact problems that were resolved in the renovation process.

2. Put together a budget for the entire project and build in cost over runs that are bound to happen.

3. If you or your family are doing the work yourself, document the renovation by keeping a file of all receipts for materials purchased and if possible a listing of the hours on a day by day basis.

4. If you are having a contractor do any or all of the work, make sure that he is a licensed and bonded contractor in East Chicago and that he has a certificate of insurance covering not only damage to your property, but more importantly, Workmen's Compensation.

5. When the job is completed, make sure you take new photographs to prove the work was done properly.

Oh yes, and don't forget to go to the Building Department at City Hall and **MAKE SURE YOU OBTAIN THE PROPER PERMITS FOR THE WORK BEING DONE!**

The renovation and restoration of historic homes can be fun and rewarding. Doing the job right the first time is always important. And don't forget that the Marktown Preservation Society is here to help each and every property owner to make this most unique community a cleaner, better and safer place to live, work and raise our families. *We would like to thank Councilman-At-Large Anthony Copeland for giving us the heads up on this one. His tip lead us to do the research into this most important piece of legislation.*

The Future of Marktown Lies In Our Historic Past, and The Realization That Historic Preservation Is The Key To Our Future!

Marktown 1917 to the Present

It is difficult if not impossible to sum up the eighty-five year history of any neighborhood, let alone a community with such an unusual architectural, industrial and social history. The Mark Town Site was developed under the English Garden City concepts of social reform. A part of the design called for modest, well built housing of four, five, six and seven room single, duplex and quad structures. There were originally more than thirty sections of the town designed. Of this only four were completed.

Under the Garden City Concept the homes were placed at the lot line adjacent to the street. Each home had an open front porch

facing the street so that neighbors could converse with one another as they passed by. The back windows of each home looked out onto the garden of the adjacent properties. The original plan called for the entire neighborhood to be painted in a unified color scheme, with buildings painted various pastel tints with coordinated trim schemes. The

plan also called for the sale of the homes to the workers as opposed to the retention of the properties as rental units by the company.

As a result of the Companies financial problems following WW I, the Mark Town Site along with the Indiana Harbor Works was sold to the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company of Ohio in 1942. YS&T retained the housing as rental units for some of their skilled workers until 1942 when a U.S. Supreme Court decision against Ford Motor Company sounded the death nil for all such ventures.

In 1942 YS&T sold the property to the Riley Company. They in turn turned it over to

the real estate firm of Dupes & Kinney of East Chicago who then sold the individual units to the residents of the community who were interested in the purchase.

In the early 1950's when YS&T began plans for the No. 2 Tin Mill, they petitioned the City of East Chicago to zone both Marktown and the adjacent property as industrial so that they could not only build the Tin Mill, but in the process begin purchasing back the houses so that the area could all be used for the production of steel. Residents of the neighborhood united and Marktown was saved from the wreckers ball. In the process a buffer zone park was deeded to the city of East Chicago, and is one of three distinct parks in the neighborhood today.

In the early 1970's the U.S. Government announced plans to complete the long awaited Cline Avenue extension from Columbus Drive in East Chicago to the Indian Toll Road at approximately 129th Street. The ideal route for the road was down Dickey Road. Realizing that one-third of Marktown would be

razed in the process, the newly elected Mayor Robert A. Pastrick along with Councilman James Ginther, Precinct Committeeman Wm. Hess and attorney Wm. Morrisroe placed Marktown on the National Register of Historic Places, and in doing so caused the U.S. Government to reroute the Cline Avenue extension away from the Marktown Historic District.

In 1980 the City of East Chicago announced the approval of a federal program under the Coastal Redevelopment Plan. The program restored and renovated the more than thirteen acres of Marktown Parks. Included in the plan were elements of Mr. Shaw's original de-



Marktown's Original Market Square included a recessed garden area and fountain. The garden and fountain area were removed in 1936 due to traffic problems on this corner. Plans for the New Marktown Community Center include a fountain and garden area. Circa 1920

signs which included ample trees, berms along the back edge of the park and tennis and basketball courts for community recreation.

In 1990 the residents of the Marktown Historic District worked out a plan with fellow preservationist and architect Charles Gregerson of the Pullman Historic District for the total restoration and renovation of the streets and sidewalks of the community. Incorporated in the plan was original styled lighting and a unified fence and street side planting area. When the plan was begun it was found that one of the residents had worked privately to remove the fencing and the garden areas from the plan. While it has taken over a decade to complete this project, we are pleased to report that all but one street has been completed. That one remaining street (Spruce Avenue) is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2004.

In 1999 the East Chicago Sanitary District began the upgrading of the entire municipal sewer pumping stations. The Marktown Pump House, which was built in 1917 was expanded and totally rebuilt. The new system provided for two new pumps, new relay equipment and a computer monitoring system which is designed to keep the basements dry in all weather.

Marktown Today and Tomorrow

Marktown has been referred to as **"The Brigadune of Industrial Housing - rising out of the mists of industry every few years."** It has been called **"The Eighth Wonder of the World"** and as we know it was a feature in Ripley's Believe it or Not (1967) as **"A community in Indiana with narrow streets patterned after a town in Switzerland. Parks it cars on the sidewalk - and the people walk in the road-**

way." Sound bites and cliché do not do this community justice, nor can they give the reader the reality of the neighborhood. The Marktown Historic District is one of the most unique Industrial Housing communities in the United States.

Is it fully restored? No, not nearly. Is it restorable? Absolutely! In 1970, according to the U.S. Census, the property value in Marktown was approximately \$10,500 per house. That's right, only \$10,500. The same census reports that the average value of a home in the Pullman Historic District in 1970 was also \$10,500.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that the average price of a home in Marktown is \$20,500, while at the same time the average

price of a home in Pullman was \$110,000! That's r i g h t \$110,000.00!!!!

What happened to Marktown? Better yet, what happened in Pullman? The answer to both questions is the same -- HISTORIC PRESERVATION. In city after city and in town after town, with absolutely no exceptions, Historic Preservation of neighborhoods like



Park Street at Pine Avenue. Note the original cast concrete light post at the corner. When Marktown was first built, the only fences were the two concrete fences on the 500 block of Lilac Street. Note the open porches which actually increased the level of security for each home. Circa 1920.

ours has turned the tide in property values, crime and drugs. As the value of the homes increases, the criminal element disappears.

Seven years ago plans were set in motion to fund a new community center in Marktown. A year ago the neighborhood and city officials began working with the architectural firm of Detella, Planera & Paukner for the designs of that center. In the spring of 2004 construction will begin on a \$2,500,000 - 15,000 square foot center which will include an indoor basketball court, a computer lab, neighborhood library and much, much more. This is made possible through the tax revenues generated by the

Harrah's Casino in East Chicago .

Today, the Marktown Preservation Society conducts guided tours of the neighborhood for hundreds of visitors each year. We have established a web page and now have e-mail service. We publish a 10-12 page monthly newsletter that is hand delivered to all of our residents and is mailed to more than 300 former residents, city officials and Friends of Marktown. It is also now available in color on the official City of East Chicago web page at www.eastchicago.com. We have provided literally thousands of walking tour maps to individuals and groups who have requested them.

In 1990 we hosted a major museum display in entitled "**Marktown: The Architect the Builder and the People.**"

After the close of the exhibit at the East Chicago Main Library, the exhibit toured a number of museums and university libraries for the next three years before being retired. As a part of this first exhibition we printed a walking and driving tour map of our neighborhood. Since that first printing in 1990 we have moved forward with

no less than three subsequent editions of the map. Today, with the aid of Bob Bender - a commercial artist from Michigan, the Walking Through Marktown map has been fully updated and redesigned and is distributed through the Marktown Preservation Society and the Lake County Convention and Visitor's Center in Hammond, Indiana.

Since our first exhibition we have been asked to include Marktown in two other exhibits. The first was the "**Frank Lloyd Wright and Colleagues: Indiana Works**" at the John G. Blank Center for the Arts in Michigan City, Indiana (1999). The second was as a part of the "**Steel**

Shores" exhibit at the Lake County Welcome Center at Kennedy Avenue and I80/94 earlier this year.

The Marktown Preservation Society has also issued a number of video tapes, not only of archived items that were taped by others, but more importantly, of major programs that have been developed for each of these exhibits. We are now looking into the aspect of reworking the information into the new DVD format.

Marktown as a neighborhood has three very distinctive community groups which all work together for the betterment of the Historic District. They are the Marktown Women's Club, the Committee for a Better, Cleaner and Safer Marktown Historic District, and the Marktown Preservation Society

which is a community based nonprofit organization. These, combined with the continued support of Mayor Robert A. Pastrick, Councilman Adrian Santos of the 5th District, the Common Council of East Chicago, and the general population of the Marktown Historic District makes this one of the most restorable historic neighbors in



While only three Supervisor's Homes were completed, both sides of Broad Street were to have been lined with these classic Howard Shaw designs. Each home had its own garage and all were separated from the worker homes by a brick garden wall. C.1920

the Midwest.

Currently, a comprehensive history of the neighborhood along with a plan for the total restoration and preservation of the Marktown Historic District is being developed. The plan titled "**Plan of Marktown**" will be released later this year.

The Problems at Hand...

As we have noted, over the past thirty years the City of East Chicago has made numerous reinvestments in the infrastructure of our neighborhood. From the park redevelopment program of 1983 to the New Marktown Community Center, the city administration has set the

This article is a part of an ongoing series written by Marktown Historian Paul A. Myers. For copies of prior articles please contact Paul at (219) 397-2239

stage for the total restoration of the Marktown Historic District. But just what needs to be done.

In conducting a detailed survey of the homes in Marktown we have found that of the approximately 210 residential properties in the neighborhood, over 20% are currently vacant. In reviewing the new property reassessments conducted by Cole Layer Trumble on behalf of the State of Indiana we find that, without exception, all of the properties in Marktown are depreciated by 50-65%.

To see Marktown preserved and hopefully restored we need several things. The first and foremost is a consolidated plan for the renovation and restoration of the neighborhood. The second is funding.

But just what needs to be done? Well, to begin, if you have more than one layer of shingles on your home, then it needs to be stripped and replaced. If your home doesn't have 100 amp electrical service, it needs to be upgraded. If you do not have an energy efficient gas furnace it should be upgraded. And what about central air conditioning? With the new energy efficient units it is a makes sense to change units now.

If your home has not had the internal water pipes replaced in the past 85 years, then chances are you have very, very low water pressure on the second floor, especially the hot water. And what about the cast iron sewer pipe that goes from the roof line to the exterior wall of the basement? Did you know that because Marktown was built during WWI that the pipe is referred to as Liberty Pipe? That's because they found out how to cast pipe thinner during the war years. What that means to us is that many

of the pipes are cracking and need to be replaced.

Have you looked at the chimney of your home lately? If you are missing mortar between the bricks you and your neighbor have a problem. What about windows and doors? Do you have bad wood in either? If you do, then chances are they should be replaced.

And what about those color schemes? Has anyone noticed how much better the buildings look if both sides of a duplex or all four units of a Marktown quad are painted in a consolidated paint scheme?

Yes, Marktown, all of Marktown needs work. While some owners have been able to reinvest in their property it is obvious that total reinvestment is needed if Marktown is to survive.

If reinvestment is provided it will need to be closely monitored and will need to be done under a consolidated plan. If the property values are to ever improve in Marktown then the reinvestment must be compatible with the Department of Interior Guidelines for Historic Preservation.

Is Marktown restorable? Yes!

Do the homes and commercial properties in our neighborhood need a great degree of reinvestment? Yes! Would you like to see every home in this neighborhood not only restored but more importantly occupied? Yes! What will it take to get this done? Cooperation with one another! We, the residents of the Marktown Historic District need to work together if we are to see a positive future for OUR neighborhood. It is not up to you, it is up to All of us to make a difference. Let's give Marktown and historic preservation a chance! Let's work together for a brighter future for all of us.



Pine Ave. and the Old Marktown Park. The original park was designed by Jens Jensen, one of the nation's most renowned landscape architects. Note the open porches and historic lighting. At the end of the park was a wading pool and bath house.

Life begins when you begin to serve. Serve your neighborhood. Serve Marktown. Volunteer to help make Marktown a Better, Cleaner and Safer Place to Live and Raise a Family.