

Lake Forest Preservation Foundation

# PRESERVATION

Early Spring 2015

*Bridge Over Troubled Waters*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thanks to the support of our members, other community supporters, and community organizations, 2014 was an outstanding year for the Preservation Foundation.

- Friends and neighbors joined with generous homeowners to make our Fall Historic Home and Garden Tour in the elegant Ridge Lane neighborhood a resounding success.
- Foundation members and friends across the community generously supported our Annual Fund campaign with a record-breaking \$28,000, ensuring support for Lake Forest's future by preserving its past through preservation projects.
- As the result of the success of past Annual Fund drives, the Foundation's Board voted to contribute \$5,000 to the Forest Park Project and to initiate a Heritage Fund, which will this spring accept applications from the community for grants to support preservation projects. (Read more about the Fund on our website, [www.lfpf.org](http://www.lfpf.org).)
- Eleven homeowners received Preservation Awards recognizing the dedication, stewardship, and diligence required to help preserve the architectural gems that make our community unique.
- Our annual Holiday Celebration welcomed members to a first-ever look at the beautifully-restored James Ward Thorne house and an introduction to *Mrs. Thorne's World of Miniatures* by author Sally Sexton Kalmbach.

We welcome the community to join us throughout the year, both as members and as residents who care about the future of Lake Forest's treasured historic architecture, landscapes, and amenities. Please support preservation by submitting nominations to recognize preservation stewards with our annual Preservation Awards, see back cover. And plan to join us at our interesting and educational events, including our Annual Meeting. See back page for dates and times. This is a great way to learn more about what makes Lake Forest unique in the nation and what we're doing to help keep it that way. If you have time to volunteer for preservation, please contact us about volunteer projects. We would love to share your ideas and would welcome your participation

Spring marks the start of our annual Membership Drive. Your membership ensures the opportunity to participate in programming throughout the year, so please renew now or join the Foundation if you're not already a member. Your support helps secure the future of the special qualities we all love about Lake Forest.

*Gail*

Gail Hodges

## Celebrating Preservation

LFPF members and guests enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of the recently renovated Historic Genesee Theatre.



## Annual Holiday Celebration

LFPF Members celebrated the holiday season at the beautifully restored James Ward Thorne house.



Photos by Cappy Johnston

## NEW FOR 2015 –LFPF HERITAGE FUND

The visual character of Lake Forest is defined by its many wonderful examples of civic art and architecture – from buildings to public spaces, streetscapes, parks and landscapes. Some are well known, but others are overlooked. Each of these historic “treasures” is a valuable part of our community's heritage.

The Lake Forest Preservation Foundation established the HERITAGE FUND to give Lake Foresters an opportunity to nominate endangered local “treasures” for possible grant funding. During its annual meeting each April, the LFPF will award grants to one or more preservation projects based on need, impact on historical visual character of our community, and overall project cost. For more information and an application to nominate a “treasure,” visit [www.lfpf.org](http://www.lfpf.org).

## PRESERVATION

EARLY SPRING 2015 –  
VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1

### CONTRIBUTORS:

Peter Coutant, Maureen Grinnell,  
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Arthur Miller.

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Cappy Johnston and Lisa Staton.

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# BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

*On Lake Road, near the intersection of Woodbine Lane, a preservation debate is emerging regarding the fate of a century-old bridge that spans the ravine.*



The City of Lake Forest, with funding from IDOT, the state's Department of Transportation, seeks to replace the bridge at the intersection of Lake Road and Woodbine Lane with a new structure. The existing bridge, which has been determined to be deficient with respect to safety requirements, was built around 1913-14 and is classic in style. Although the bridge designer is unknown, it's likely that the firm of Howard Van Doren Shaw played some role in its design. The construction date coincides with construction of the Clayton Mark House, nearby at 999 North Lake Road and designed by the Shaw firm. At the time, both David Adler and engineer George Eich were on the Shaw staff. The bridge's type, design, proportions, dimensions and placement all have important significance – as elements of an individual structure and within the context of the larger National Register Historic District.

This past November, City staff provided an introductory presentation to the Historic Preservation Commission on the replacement bridge. Staff indicated that no design decisions had yet been made. Several alternative concepts were presented to the Commission, including a recommended option prepared by the City's engineering consultant. Although the recommended option attempts to incorporate some design elements from the historic bridge, the overall concept fails to incorporate the bridge's main character-defining elements – the three closed spandrel arches that support the bridge roadway as it spans the ravine; the unique height, profile and spacing of the railing and balustrade system; and a pedestrian sidewalk on only one side of the roadway.

- The recommended option eliminates the characteristic three-arches that make up the understructure of the bridge and are most visible from Woodbine Lane. Also absent is the "closed-spandrel" feature of the original design. Closed-spandrel refers to the solid triangular-shaped wall surface above the arch ring and below the railings, thus replicating the massive appearance of a masonry arch bridge. The recommended option, and in fact all of the

alternative options being considered, are of a completely different bridge type – a single arch spanning the ravine with an "open-spandrel" design. In an open spandrel design the solid triangular wall surface above the arch ring is eliminated and a series of exposed posts and beams support the bridge deck. The effect creates a bridge that is visually lighter in appearance than the heavier closed-spandrel design intended by the original designer. Changing the bridge type is akin to altering the style of a historic building – like changing a Georgian Revival house into a Mid-Century Modern house – both styles may have their historic precedent, but the character-defining element of the original design is forever lost in the transformation.

- Above the bridge deck, the existing bridge railing is low in height with robust balusters spaced sufficiently to allow sight through them to Lake Michigan on the east and the ravine on the west. The railings' height and transparency are intentional. Arthur Miller, Emeritus Archivist and Librarian for Special Collections Donnelley and Lee Library, Lake Forest College, has noted that this classic treatment enhances the illusion of flying over the ravine – consistent with the intention of Almerin Hotchkiss who designed the original 1857 town plan, and who chose to create roadways near the Lake that bridged the ravines rather than running roadways down the middle of tableland between the ravines. At the time, this would have given the sensation of flying over the ravines in the same manner that railway trellises of the day gave passengers the sensation of flying over wide gorges. In contrast, the recommended bridge design shows a railing system that is taller in height with thinner balusters spaced closer together. One alternate concept even proposed solid pre-cast panels with the look of balusters applied to the surface, meaning the entire railing system would consist of a solid wall with no open spacing between the balusters. The original bridge was designed to allow a view extending to the ravine and the Lake. The preliminary design is, in effect, a wall.

- The existing bridge has only one sidewalk on the west side of the roadway to align with an existing sidewalk on the west side of Lake Road. Although no sidewalks exist on the east side of Lake Road, the preliminary design shows a bridge with sidewalks on both the east and west sides of the roadway – apparently an IDOT requirement – but certainly without regard to the context of the neighborhood and resulting in an overall increase to the width of the relatively narrow existing bridge.

Many of the early design decisions shown in the preliminary plan appear to be driven by IDOT standards. In conversation with officials at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, which must review final plans for this bridge since federal funds are involved in the project, the Foundation has been informed that rigid adherence to IDOT standards can be and have been waived in the past for historic bridges on the basis of their importance to the history of communities like Lake Forest. There is a special review section at IDOT that must review historic projects such as bridges.

The City staff has stated that as the design of the bridge moves forward, the Commission will continue to be involved in the project, have the opportunity to review the design in progress at public meetings and provide input along the way. While that's good news, the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation urges that ongoing discussion and City planning focus on ensuring that renovation of the historic Woodbine Bridge is consistent with its existing historic, character-defining elements and the character of its role as a significant structure in the Lake Forest National Register Historic District.

Tell us what you think about the proposal to replace the Woodbine Bridge. You can find us on Facebook or send us an email at [office@LFPPF.org](mailto:office@LFPPF.org).



*Photo by Lisa Stanton*

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## Lake Forest Renovation and Restoration IOI

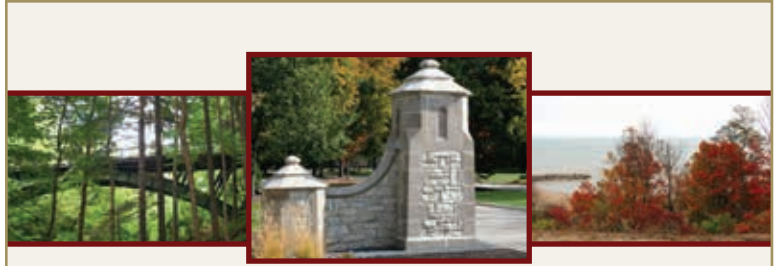
On Sunday, March 22, the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation will sponsor a panel presentation and discussion aimed at de-mystifying the processes for modifying and renovating properties in Lake Forest. Experienced, expert panelists from various perspectives will present nutshell summaries on City permitting and approvals, potential property and income tax incentives for historic properties and the advantages of working with expert design professionals.

The program will be of special interest to property owners considering possible changes to their homes, real estate professionals who advise clients on the efficacy of making alterations to properties before they buy and design professionals who work with local clients on modifying and renovating their properties.

Why is the Preservation Foundation doing holding this event? Its mission is to promote the preservation of the visual character of Lake Forest. The Foundation is not against change to the built and natural environment; rather the organization seeks to support City efforts to guide property owners in making alterations that are compatible with the established character of streetscape and neighborhoods. We do this not only through advocacy but also through education with a goal of familiarizing the community about the uncommon local historic values of excellence in design. This in turn encourages all to help maintain this high level of accomplishment.

The panel, moderated by Arthur Miller, will include City of Lake Forest Director of Community Development Cathy Czerniak; Landmarks Illinois expert on tax incentives Suzanne Germann; architect and former City of Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission member Guy Berg; and a local homeowner with considerable personal experience in living with and making adjustments to an historic property. There will be time for questions and discussion followed by an informal reception.

**Sunday, March 22 at 2:00PM  
Gorton Community Center**



*“Vibrant historic communities are places where generations meet and learn from each other. They’re infused with the richness of the past, an abiding appreciation for the present, and a palpable sense of optimism about the future.”*

*David Brown – National Trust for Historic Preservation*

If you’re reading this latest issue of Preservation, but aren’t currently a LFPF member, please join us. Here’s why:

Through our continuous dedication to the preservation of the historic visual character of Lake Forest, we:

- **Educate** – our community (and beyond) through quality programming that offers insight into preservation best practices, issues and examples, to increase awareness and appreciation of Lake Forest’s historic resources. Last year we presented a program on esteemed architect Edwin H. Clark, offered an up-close history of the stained glass windows that grace our local churches and offered walks that showcased the best locally.
- **Advocate** – for sensitive development that adheres both to city ordinances and codes and is respectful of its surroundings. We regularly observe City meetings to provide input and assistance with preservation issues. And we recognize projects that contribute to the visual character of Lake Forest through our annual Historic Preservation Awards.
- **Fund** – to assist in the restoration and preservation of historic sites, structures, landscapes and amenities in our community. The LFPF-commissioned *Historic Structure Report* helped generate over \$2 million in grant dollars and continues to return its investment by funding ongoing improvements to the East Lake Forest train station. The more recent restoration of the Castlegate Gates, our contribution to the Forest Park project, and the establishment of community-initiated Heritage Fund to ensure the preservation of local treasures, are all examples of LFPF’s mission in action.

And, the fellowship and experiences enjoyed by our membership and supporters through our garden strolls and annual house tour and holiday party in a historic home are not to be missed!

We all are fortunate to enjoy and appreciate this community’s beautiful streetscapes and architectural treasures. The LFPF ensures that future generations will continue to value Lake Forest’s integrity, beauty and historic character.

Please pay it forward by becoming an LFPF member—or renewing your current membership—today. Simply complete the enclosed reply envelope or make an online contribution at [www.lfpf.org](http://www.lfpf.org). We, and your fellow Lake Foresters, thank you!

# LFPP & THE CITY OF LAKE FOREST PARTNERING ON RESTORATION OF 1857 TOWN PLAN

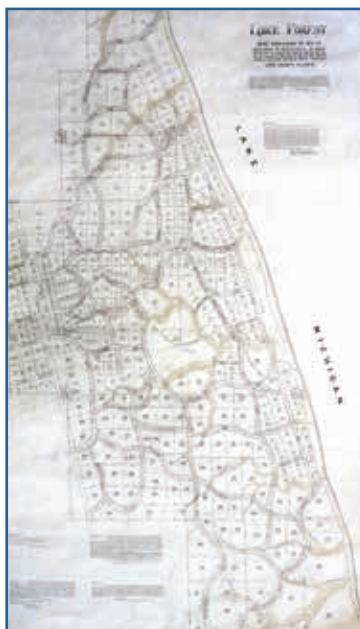
The Lake Forest Preservation Foundation is funding one quarter of the cost to restore what may well be the only surviving original, officially-signed version of the 1857 plan of east Lake Forest. The plan has traditionally hung at City Hall, and has reached a fragile condition requiring professional preservation to ensure its longevity. The work to ensure the future of this significant document is being undertaken by Chicago's Conservation Center.

To understand the significance of the 1857 plan, Arthur Miller, Emeritus Archivist and Librarian for Special Collections Donnelley and Lee Library, Lake Forest College, provides the following context of importance based upon his research.

**The Setting:** The original area of Lake Forest rests on one of the narrowest patches of St. Lawrence River flow area in all the Great Lakes, located about a mile more or less just east of Green Bay Road. This area is a rare gravel/clay moraine left from the glaciers. The 1857 town plan includes ten glacier-made ravine cuts through this terrain into Lake Michigan. The relatively rapid descent from Green Bay Road's ridge to the bluffs at the Lake about 90-100 feet above the shore line and the many ravines east of the ridge create an irregularly undulating landscape on the higher western land and a series of tablelands punctuated by ravines on the east.

**The Creator(s):** In 1988 Michael Ebner, in his book *Creating Chicago's North Shore: A Suburban History*, first identified in print Almerin Hotchkiss as the designer of the town plan. Hotchkiss was born in 1816, and first worked at Brooklyn's early Green-Wood Cemetery. By 1848 he was based at Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis and, in 1855, he designed Chippianock Cemetery in Rock Island, Illinois. In 1856 Hotchkiss visited Chicago to consult on a plan to create the university and suburb at Lake Forest. Hotchkiss's plan for Lake Forest was registered with the County in July 1857. Underlying this document would have been instructions to the surveyor from Hotchkiss, presumably a sketch plan to guide the surveyor. Since any sketch and markers likely were discarded (or subsequently lost) when this plan was completed, the plan being restored is the earliest known version extant showing the designer's intentions. The Lake Forest Association minutes show that Hotchkiss's work was in hand by the LFA trustees by late March 1857, and that this was the basis of the County-registered plan in July 1857.

**Distinctive Elements of the 1857 Plan:** Hotchkiss's plan includes his decision to create roadways that surf on bridges across the deep ravines near the Lake along Lake, Mayflower, Sheridan and other roads in the manner of railway trellises of the day that gave the sensation of flying. The 1860's Highland Park plan, in contrast, ran roads more down the middle of tablelands near the Lake, and avoided some of the immediate engineering challenges of bridging the gorges. Lake Forest's plan had east-to-west streets converging at



the central depot, as at a gatehouse in a cemetery—a familiar design concept for Hotchkiss. As a result, this is one of the first, in effect, gated communities. The curvilinear streets, too, were disorienting and meant to make finding unknown houses impossible. See Philip Pregill and Nancy Volkman, *Landscapes in History: Design and Planning in the Western Tradition*.

**Documentation:** It is believed that the large-format document displayed at City Hall may be one of the only remaining period copies of the 1857 plan. In fact, surviving documentation relating to the origins of the plan is scarce, most likely due to various fires in the community over the years, as well as the Chicago Fire of 1871. From this version of the original plan, apparently two large-scale copies were made on hard board, in foldable quarters or segments – one for the City and one for the County, at Waukegan, which apparently have gone missing in recent years.

**Provenance:** There are no copies of the plan found among the Lake Forest Association archival papers held in the Lake Forest College Archives, so this original 1857 plan of the City's may have been given to the City by the Association or by the institution. This could have taken place in 1861-62, when the City was chartered; in 1878, when the archival papers were turned over to the Lake Forest University, now Lake Forest College, as successor; or perhaps most likely in 1899 or soon after from the institution when City Hall was built.

**Significance in the History of American Landscape and City Planning:** Hotchkiss's design was an attempt to make a refuge for urban dwellers to escape the city. Lake Forest was incorporated in 1861 under a charter granted by the Illinois State Legislature and was primarily founded to support the establishment of church-related educational institutions. It was among the earliest, large-scale, residential developments in the Chicago region – predating Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., and Calvert Vaux's design for Riverside (1869) and Nathan Franklin Barrett's design for Pullman, Illinois (1870s) by more than a decade. Lake Forest was established just five years after the first such planned community in America, Llewellyn Park, West Orange, New Jersey, was founded in 1852. While other designed suburbs predate Lake Forest, no other is of a scale comparable to Lake Forest's original 1,200 acres.

*The LFPP has a long history of providing grants for local preservation projects including restoration of the Lake Forest Train Station, Elawa Farm, Ragdale, Dickinson Hall, Walden-Bluff's Edge Bridge, the Entry Gates at Deerpath Hill Estates and Castlegate Court Subdivisions and relighting of the City's historic gas lights. In 2014, LFPP established The Heritage Fund, a grant program that will award funding to one or more preservation projects annually based on need, impact on historical visual character of our community, and overall project cost.*

# LAKE FOREST PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

2014-2015  
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## NOMINATIONS FOR 2015 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS DUE BY MARCH 25TH

Every year, coinciding with National Historic Preservation Month in April, the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation honors families, businesses, and organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in preserving Lake Forest's architectural heritage. The annual Historic Preservation Awards fall into five categories:

***Preservation; Rehabilitation; Restoration; Reconstruction;  
and New Construction or Infill.***

A description of each of these categories can be found on the Foundation's website.

**Nominations for the 2015 awards are being accepted now. Any Lake Forester may nominate a property they would like to see recognized for an award by submitting an application online through the Foundation's website, [www.lfpf.org](http://www.lfpf.org), or by calling the LFPF office 847-234-1230.**

**The deadline for 2015 entries is March 25th.**

## LFPF Has Put Together A Full Program of Educational and Inspiring Preservation-Related Events for 2015. You Won't Want To Miss Them!

*Sunday, March 22 – 2:00 pm*

**“Lake Forest Renovation  
and Restoration 101”**

Gorton Community Center -  
Free admission

Please RSVP to [office@lfpf.org](mailto:office@lfpf.org)  
or call 847-234-1230

*Sunday, April 26 – 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm*

**Annual Meeting and**

**2015 Historic Preservation Awards**

Member and guest reception following  
at an historic home

*Friday, June 19 – 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm*

**Summer Garden Stroll**

*Friday, August 28 – 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm*

**Summer Garden Stroll**

*Sunday, September 20 – 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm*

**Annual Architectural Home  
and Garden Tour**

Advance ticket \$85, Day of event ticket \$100

*Sunday, December 6 – 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm*

**Annual Member Holiday Celebration**

Members and guests only

Check [www.lfpf.org](http://www.lfpf.org) for additional information on upcoming events



## We appreciate our Members!

*Together we can protect the historic  
visual character of  
Lake Forest for generations to come.*

Renew for 2015 or join in our mission at  
[www.LFPF.org](http://www.LFPF.org)

*LFPF is committed to expanding  
its endeavors for education, advocacy and  
funding to preserve local landmarks.*