



THE VILLAGE OF
Wilmette

Historic Preservation Plan



DRAFT JULY 22, 2026



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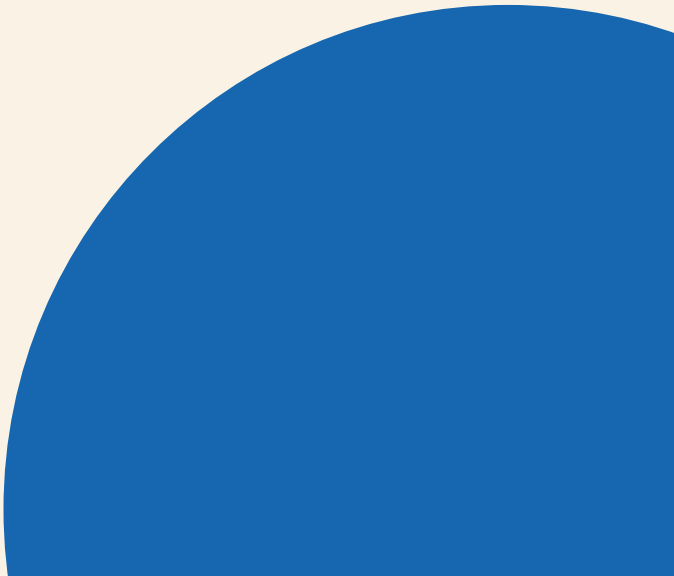
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The action items contained within the plan represent pathways toward achieving the community’s historic preservation goals; adoption of the Plan reflects the Village’s commitment to further exploring these opportunities. The Village Board will direct an implementation process as part of their consideration for plan adoption.

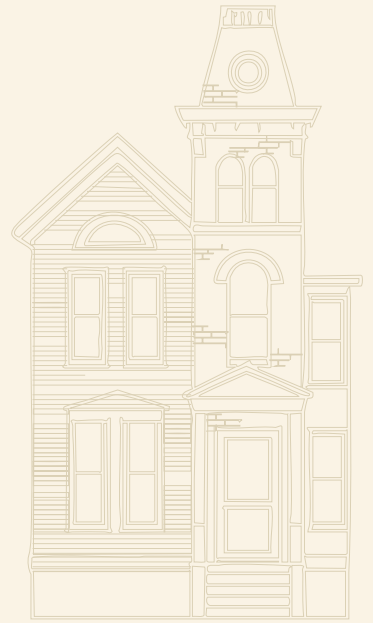
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SECTION 1

Introduction

Historic preservation plays a vital role in shaping Wilmette's future. This plan connects preservation efforts to broader community and planning goals, helping to protect the Village's distinct character while guiding thoughtful growth and change. Building on established priorities, it provides a roadmap for honoring the past while preparing for what comes next.



1900 John Mick Saloon, Lake Ridge, Remodeled 1907 (Wilmette History Museum)

Preface

Wilmette's heritage expresses itself in many forms, from nationally recognized architectural icons to intimate, everyday places that quietly tell the community's story. The Village is home to the world-renowned Bahá'í House of Worship, a landmark that draws visitors from across the globe. It also includes the smaller-scale expressions of history found in postwar homes, early cottages, layered additions, civic buildings, and the hidden gems woven into residential blocks. Taken together, these resources reflect a unique diversity of architectural, cultural, and community identity.

Yet historic preservation in Wilmette has not evolved at the same pace as the community's growing awareness of what is at risk. Over the past decade, residents, Village leaders, and local advocates have voiced concern about the loss of irreplaceable buildings, the demolition of modest older homes, and the challenge of protecting structures that may not meet the traditional thresholds of age, style, or significance but nonetheless shape Wilmette's character. Though the Village has had its own historic preservation ordinance for nearly 40 years, it has landmarked relatively few properties to date (38) and designated no local historic districts. Nor does the program yet offer the regulatory tools and incentives that communities with comparable historic resources typically employ.

As preservation questions surface more frequently within the community, Wilmette is seeking clarity on how to honor the places and narratives that define it. The Village has made it clear that the future of preservation must encompass both the physical fabric of historic properties and the cultural meaning they hold for residents. This Historic Preservation Plan is designed to reflect that vision by assessing the Village's current tools and conditions, listening to community priorities, and setting the foundation for a stronger and more responsive preservation approach.

A preservation plan for Wilmette serves as a shared framework for understanding how the Village's historic character can be sustained and strengthened over time. It brings stakeholders including local leadership, preservation partners, property owners, and community members into a single conversation about what matters most to Wilmette's identity and why. Through this process, the plan examines specific buildings and architectural forms, as well as the lived experiences, cultural traditions, and neighborhood stories that shape Wilmette's sense of place. By listening to residents and those who steward historic properties every day, the plan identifies where preservation can advance community goals, support thoughtful reinvestment, and guide decision-making about growth. It also clarifies the challenges that Wilmette faces and explores opportunities to align preservation with housing, economic development, placemaking, and cultural heritage priorities. Ultimately, the preservation plan becomes a tool that allows Wilmette to articulate its values, reinforce its identity, and build a more intentional and collaborative approach to protecting its resources.



Regional Context

Wilmette is situated on Chicago's North Shore, a corridor of lakefront communities known for their architectural richness, transit accessibility, and in many cases long-established preservation values. Located approximately 15 miles north of downtown Chicago, the Village is connected to the region by the Metra UP-North line, the CTA Purple Line, major bus routes, Sheridan Road, and the Edens Expressway (I-94). These connections have shaped Wilmette's historic development pattern, linking it to Chicago's growth while allowing it to evolve as a distinct, predominantly residential community.

The North Shore as a whole is characterized by stable, high-quality housing stock, highly-regarded school districts, and a demographic profile that reflects long-term residential investment. These patterns contribute to a regional culture that places high value on neighborhood character, architectural integrity, and community identity. Within this setting, many neighboring communities, including Evanston, Glencoe, Winnetka, Highland Park, and Lake Forest, have established robust preservation frameworks. Their programs typically include local landmark and district designation authority, demolition review, design guidelines, historic resource surveys, and incentives that encourage sensitive rehabilitation and compatible infill. Within this environment Wilmette has an equally significant architectural heritage.

Wilmette also benefits from a stable socioeconomic foundation that reinforces community interest in preserving neighborhood character. The Village is home to long-tenured residents, intergenerational households, excellent schools, and high levels of property reinvestment; factors that collectively support a community ethos centered on continuity, quality, and a strong sense of place. Demographically, Wilmette reflects a blend of long-established families, aging residents who wish to remain in their neighborhoods, and newer households drawn by its amenities and schools. Each of these groups brings distinct perspectives on what historic preservation should protect and how it can evolve to reflect the community's values. Wilmette's regional context highlights both the opportunity and importance of strengthening Wilmette's preservation framework.



15 MILES

from downtown Chicago



NORTH SHORE
Desirable Community

Planning Process & Project Timeline

The Wilmette Historic Preservation Plan was completed through a two-phase, community-driven process that spans one year. The project initiated in August of 2025 and concluded in the Fall of 2026.



Stakeholder
Listening Sessions



Community Events



Online Survey

Phase One: State of Preservation

The first phase provides an overview of existing conditions, or State of Preservation, which serves as a comprehensive snapshot of historic preservation in Wilmette today. This phase focuses on understanding how preservation has functioned within the community, the tools and regulations currently in place, and the issues most important to local stakeholders – those who live and work in Wilmette. This phase blends quantitative research, such as ordinance review, resource mapping, and development trends, with qualitative insights gathered through community engagement. Together, these analyses form the foundation of knowledge upon which the preservation plan is built. Phase One is intended to ground the planning process in community values and ensure that the plan reflects both lived experience and technical understanding.



Shared Vision & Goals



Recommendations
& Strategies



Final Plan

Phase Two: Plan Development

During the second phase, the project team – consisting of The Lakota Group and Benjamin Historic Certifications – translated the findings from Phase One into a set of goals, strategies, and implementation steps. These concepts were tested with community stakeholders, including Village leadership and the general public, ensuring that the recommendations align with community priorities and are both achievable and meaningful. The resulting Historic Preservation Plan provides Wilmette with a shared framework for sustaining and strengthening its historic character over time. Designed to be flexible and adaptable, the plan can be updated periodically by Village staff as priorities and resources evolve. It includes actionable initiatives that are realistic, measurable, and capable of guiding Wilmette's preservation efforts well into the next decade.



Wilmette Speaks: Community Engagement Summary

Community engagement provides opportunities to gather insights directly from Wilmette stakeholders about the historic, architectural, cultural, and community resources that contribute to the Village's character and identity, while also exploring broader issues related to housing, neighborhood change, sustainability, and economic development that both influence and are influenced by preservation.

Meaningful engagement also helps cultivate shared ownership of preservation outcomes, encouraging residents, property owners, business owners, institutions, and community organizations to gain a deeper understanding of preservation in Wilmette and see themselves as active participants in shaping and supporting preservation efforts over time.

As part of the development of this plan, the consultant team conducted a range of community engagement activities to explore key preservation issues in Wilmette, identify opportunities to expand and support preservation efforts, and better understand how historic preservation can continue to benefit the community. These community engagement efforts included:

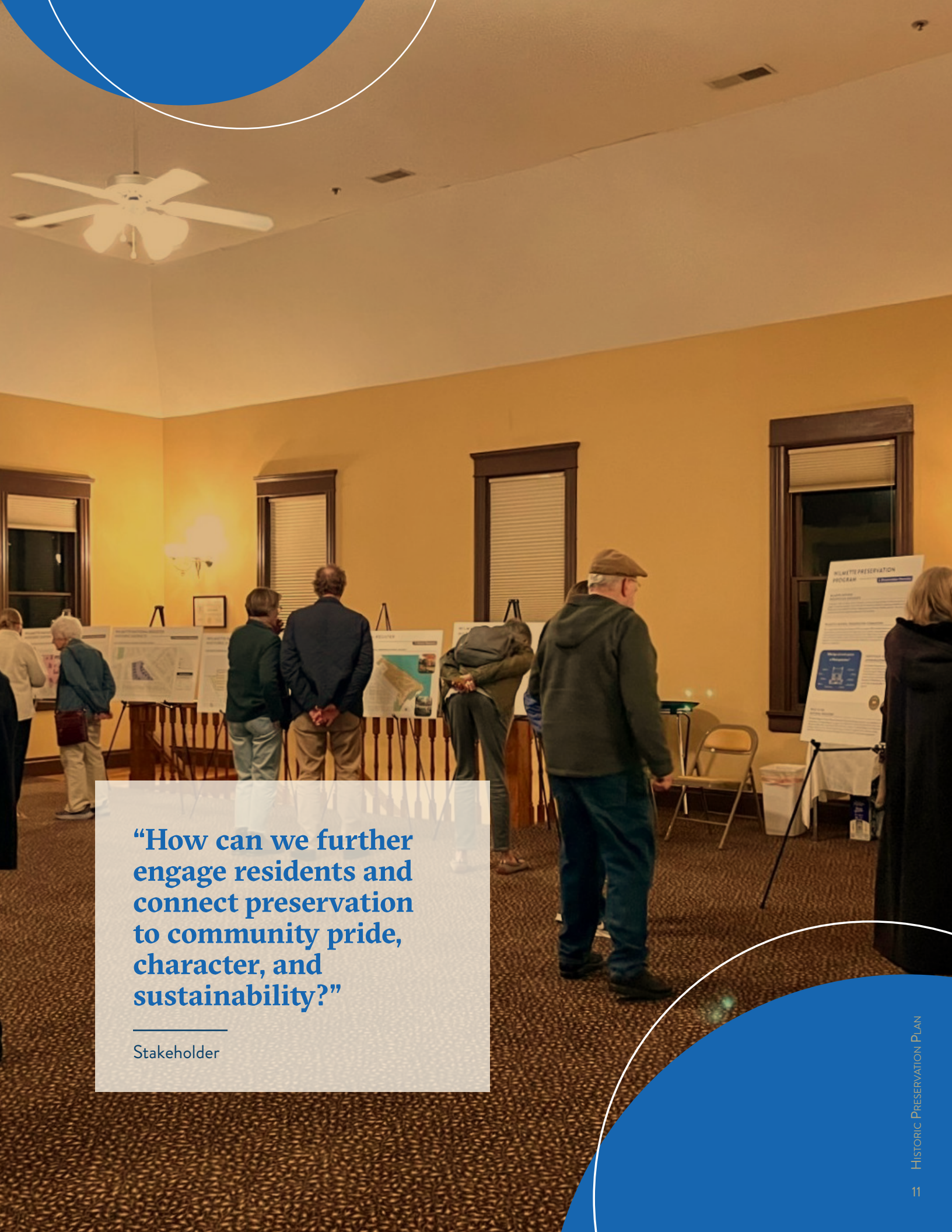
- Listening sessions and focus groups with more than 40 different stakeholders including residents, business owners, architects, real estate professionals, government officials, school officials, and local historians.
- Pop-up outreach events at the Wilmette Block Party and Wilmette French Market
- A Community Open House at the Wilmette History Museum
- A joint meeting of the Wilmette Housing Commission and the Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission
- A Community Open House at Village Hall

For more detail on the community engagement process, please see Appendix C: Wilmette Speaks.



**“Young residents say
Wilmette is the place to be.
Families will do anything
to buy a house here.”**

Community Member



**“How can we further
engage residents and
connect preservation
to community pride,
character, and
sustainability?”**

Stakeholder

Preservation & Its Benefits

Historic preservation is the practice of identifying, protecting, and celebrating the heritage resources – buildings and landscapes – that reflect a community’s history and identity. The modern preservation movement gained national momentum with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which established a comprehensive national framework for recognizing and protecting significant places and affirmed that historic preservation is a public responsibility. Since then, preservation has grown into a widely used planning tool that helps communities strengthen neighborhood identity, support local economic vitality, manage growth responsibly, and retain the everyday places that hold cultural meaning. For Wilmette, preservation provides a way to honor significant architecture, highlight modest and vernacular resources, and ensure that the stories and experiences connected to these places are not lost as the Village evolves.

Below are some of the key benefits of historic preservation:

Reinforces Retention of Existing Housing Stock

Historic preservation can promote the thoughtful retention and rehabilitation of a community’s existing housing stock, ensuring that older homes remain functional, safe, and desirable places to live. Preservation strengthens the character and longevity of Wilmette’s residential neighborhoods by encouraging reinvestment in the Village’s existing homes. Many of Wilmette’s 19th-through-mid-20th century houses were built with high-quality materials and thoughtful craftsmanship, making them durable and adaptable for modern living. Supporting their maintenance helps preserve neighborhood scale and character while stabilizing long-established residential areas.

By maintaining and reinvesting in these houses, neighborhoods can support a broader mix of housing styles, sizes, and types that meet the needs of many different households including single professionals, growing and established families, empty nesters, and seniors wanting to remain in their homes. Diverse housing supports residents at various stages of life, as well as enriches the visual character, identity, and social vibrancy of neighborhoods. A mix of architectural styles and home types can contribute to a more interesting building fabric and streetscape.



Housing

Older homes support naturally occurring housing diversity & helps meet resident needs of all ages.



Economic Development

Preservation strengthens local business districts and attracts investment & visitors.



Community Character

Historic places create walkable and memorable environments that foster community pride.



Adaptive Reuse

Reusing & repurposing older buildings gives new life to places already a part of the community.



Heritage & Identity

Historic resources tell the story of Wilmette. Honoring the past while planning for the future.



Community Well-Being

Preservation protects places that hold meaning for people and supports a strong sense of place.

Supports Local Economic Development

Historic preservation can stimulate place-based economic development by strengthening downtowns, reinvigorating commercial corridors, and encouraging the adaptive reuse of older buildings. When older and historic structures are preserved and rehabilitated, they help attract new real estate investment, support small business growth, and draw shoppers, visitors, and new residents into the community.

Adaptive reuse and rehabilitation projects can also deliver substantial direct economic benefits to communities. Once completed, rehabilitated buildings often house new businesses, multi-family residences, or updated homes, adding to the tax base, increasing consumer spending, and contributing to long-term economic stability. These improvements can raise surrounding property values, encourage further investment, and produce higher overall rates of economic return.

In Wilmette, reinvestment in older commercial buildings directly supports the vitality of Downtown Wilmette, including the Village Center National Register Historic District, an area that currently functions as a regional destination for North Shore communities. The district's historic character enhances the appeal of its diverse mix of restaurants, cafés, specialty retailers, and neighborhood-serving shops, drawing visitors who value authentic places and walkable environments. Preservation strengthens this economic engine by maintaining the charm and human scale that sets the district apart, while keeping spending local through the work of contractors, tradespeople, and small businesses invested in rehabilitation and maintenance.

Expands Attainable Housing

Historic preservation can expand access to attainable housing options for many, including essential workers who may be priced out of high-demand areas of communities. Older office, commercial, and manufacturing buildings can be transformed into apartments, condominiums, and mixed-income residences through adaptive reuse.

These projects bring new life to underused structures, as well as creating a diverse range of housing types within established neighborhoods.

Additionally, preservation-minded infill development can support gentle, incremental increases in density by encouraging development of “missing middle housing” such as duplexes, triplexes, and accessory dwelling units. These modest-scale additions blend seamlessly into historic areas while providing more attainable housing options for new and existing residents. In Wilmette, the most attainable housing stock is often found in its older, smaller homes, including cottages, bungalows, and postwar houses on the west side of the Village. These homes typically offer lower price points than new construction, yet many are vulnerable to teardowns due to high land value and limited regulatory tools.

Advances Tourism and Visitor Economy

Historic preservation can create vibrant and distinctive destinations that attract visitors seeking authentic experiences. By protecting historic buildings and neighborhoods, communities maintain their unique character, architecture, walkability, and overall sense of place that make them stand out from other locations. Historic preservation further strengthens tourism through adaptive reuse focused on transforming historic structures into lively shops and boutiques, inviting restaurants and cafés, art galleries, and museums. Beyond the built environment, preserved historic settings also provide ideal backdrops for cultural programming like festivals, concerts, art fairs, markets, heritage celebrations, and seasonal events.

Wilmette's architectural heritage includes its historic neighborhoods, its historic downtown, and the internationally significant Bahá'í House of Worship. Strengthening preservation can expand cultural, architectural, and heritage tourism opportunities. This brings new activity to local shops, restaurants, and services while reinforcing Wilmette's identity as a community with a rich sense of place.

Enhances Urban Form, Walkability, and Quality of Life

Historic preservation plays a critical role in shaping the physical structure and day-to-day experience of a community. In Wilmette, the Village's historic neighborhoods, including the Village Center National Register Historic District, the Oakmette North National Register Historic District, and other cohesive residential areas, exhibit a development pattern that is increasingly rare – areas that feature tree-lined streets, human-scaled homes, sidewalks on both sides of the block, and close proximity to transit, schools, parks, and shops. These amenities create a built environment that is inherently walkable and deeply connected to community life.

Preserving historic street patterns supports public health by encouraging walking and bicycle transportation, reduces reliance on automobiles, and fosters informal social interaction among neighbors. The architectural variety found within Wilmette's historic areas, mixing cottages, foursquares, bungalows, historic revival houses, and postwar houses, also enriches the visual experience of the urban fabric, contributing to an identity that feels both authentic and welcoming. Reinforcing these urban form qualities helps sustain the qualities residents value most, such as quiet streets, intimate scale, ease of circulation, and the strong sense of belonging that comes from living in a community with distinctive character.

Aligns with Sustainability, Resilience, and Resource Efficiency

Preservation is inherently sustainable, and Wilmette's historic buildings and districts embody many of the principles that modern resilience strategies seek to achieve. Reusing and adapting older structures reduces construction waste, conserves embodied energy, and lowers the environmental costs associated with demolition and new development. Many of Wilmette's historic homes and older neighborhoods incorporate durable materials, operable windows, deep eaves, and natural ventilation features that support energy efficiency without extensive mechanical systems.

Preservation also contributes to long-term climate resilience. Retaining existing buildings helps stabilize neighborhood identity, reduces carbon emissions associated with new construction, and supports compact, walkable development patterns that lower vehicle miles traveled. Additionally, older and historic buildings can readily be retrofitted to enhance their energy efficiency and comfort without diminishing their architectural character. Aligning historic preservation with the Village's sustainability aspirations – whether related to energy use, stormwater management, land conservation, or reducing carbon footprints – offers a practical and cost-effective pathway toward a more resilient future.



“A building’s story – its history – is part of its value – especially for the oldest buildings in the Village.”

Community Member

Preservation Successes

Wilmette's residents have long valued the community's historic character, a commitment reflected in the establishment of a local preservation ordinance, the designation of 38 local Wilmette Landmarks, and the listing of multiple buildings and districts on the National Register of Historic Places. Other notable preservation successes include:

- Village Center Revitalization – Comprised mainly of one-to-three story Main Street-style commercial and mixed-use buildings dating from the early 20th century, Wilmette's Village Center serves as the community's primary social and commercial hub. Years of intentional planning and investment have strengthened its urban design, improved walkability, introduced hundreds of new housing units, and attracted a wide range of new retail businesses and restaurants. Encompassing the core of downtown, the Wilmette Village Center Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2023.
- Commercial Investment and Adaptive Reuse – In addition to revitalizing its Village Center, Wilmette has also successfully leveraged the rehabilitation and repurposing of its built heritage to support new residential, commercial, and cultural investment in other parts of the community. Prime examples of commercial investment and adaptive reuse include:
 - Mallinckrodt, 1041 Ridge Road
 - Wilmette Masonic Temple, 1010 Central Avenue
 - Gross Point Village Hall, 609 Ridge Road
 - Plaza Del Lago, 1515 Sheridan Road

Preservation Issues & Opportunities

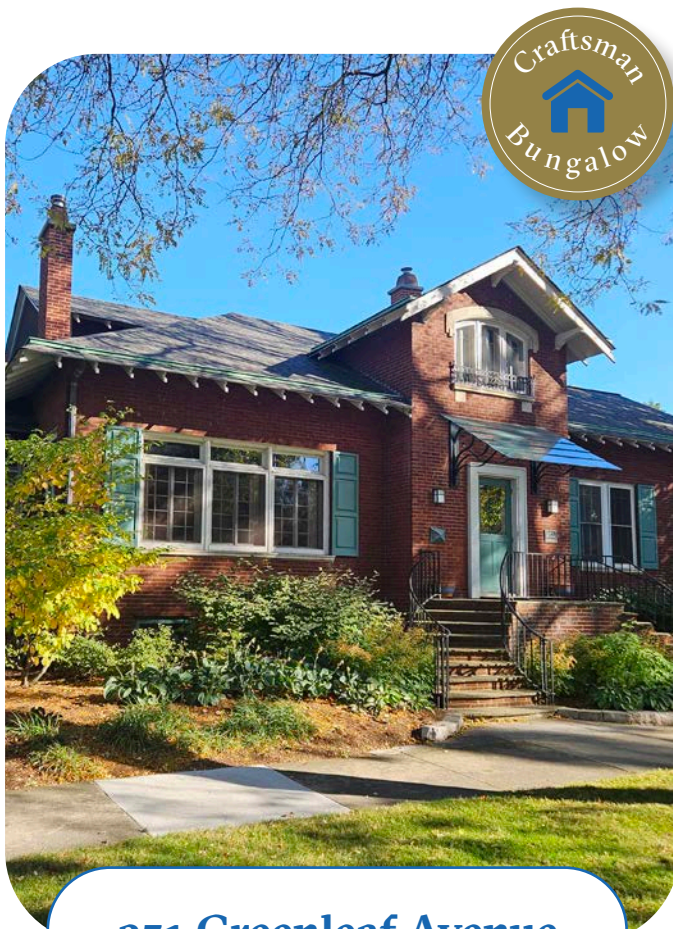
- Wilmette's preservation issues and opportunities are closely aligned with expanding awareness and understanding of the Village's historic resources, balancing preservation with ongoing market and neighborhood change, and expanding preservation program capacity.
- Survey and Documentation – Updating and expanding Wilmette's architectural and historic surveys would strengthen preservation planning by identifying newly eligible resources, documenting change over time, and improving public awareness of the Village's historic character. Education and Advocacy – Wilmette has an opportunity to deepen community understanding of historic preservation by clarifying designation processes and benefits, available incentives, and flexibility, while broadening participation in preservation education and advocacy.
- Local Historic Designations – Wilmette has an opportunity to expand the use of local historic districts by identifying and addressing procedural, educational, and policy related barriers that currently limit district designation, while maintaining meaningful community input.
- Preservation in a Changing Market – Wilmette has an opportunity to address redevelopment pressures by pairing preservation with incentives and regulatory flexibility that encourage voluntary participation and long-term stewardship of the Village's architectural heritage.
- Managing Neighborhood Change – Wilmette has an opportunity to reduce demolition and better protect neighborhood character by broadening its preservation approach to include district-based tools, design review, and the stewardship of everyday historic elements that define the Village's identity.
- Preservation Program Capacity – Wilmette has an opportunity to grow and sustain its preservation program by proactively seeking out grant and other funding support, strengthening and expanding partnerships, and exploring the establishment of a dedicated preservation fund.

Longstanding Preservation Practices in Wilmette

Wilmette has a long tradition of valuing its historic preservation and investing in efforts to document, interpret, and preserve the community's heritage. As early as the mid-20th century, residents, civic groups, and Village leaders actively collected photographs, papers, artifacts, and oral histories that captured Wilmette's evolving identity. This commitment led to the formation of the Wilmette Historical Commission in 1949, the establishment of the Wilmette Historical Society in 1965, and ultimately the preservation of the Gross Point Village Hall as the Wilmette History Museum – home of the Historical Society that stewards Wilmette's historic archive.

Public engagement has played a consistent role in building appreciation for local history. House walks, garden tours, local exhibitions, and publications have fostered awareness of Wilmette's architecture and important local residents. Community advocacy has, on several occasions, helped save key historic structures, namely the 1873 Chicago & North Western Depot, moved and restored in 1974, and the Gross Point Village Hall, both of which now serve as successful examples of adaptive reuse. The 1913 North Shore Line terminal has found new life as home to the Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce.

Together, these efforts reflect a deep and longstanding local interest in preserving Wilmette's history and architectural heritage. Its community-driven practices, volunteer leadership, and early examples of reuse demonstrate that preservation has long been part of Wilmette's civic identity and continues to inform its future direction.



251 Greenleaf Avenue



1138 Oakwood Avenue

Preservation Leaders in Wilmette

Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission

The seven-member Historic Preservation Commission is responsible for promoting the preservation of Wilmette's historic and architectural heritage. Commission members are appointed by the Village President with the advice and consent of the Board of Trustees, must be residents of Wilmette, and have a background or experience in historic preservation, architecture, history, landscape architecture, or urban planning. The Commission's responsibilities include designating individual Wilmette Landmarks and Historic Districts, reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA), and evaluating requests for Certificates of Economic Hardship when a COA has been denied. The Commission also supports outreach and education about historic preservation and the built environment and cultural heritage of Wilmette.

Wilmette History Museum

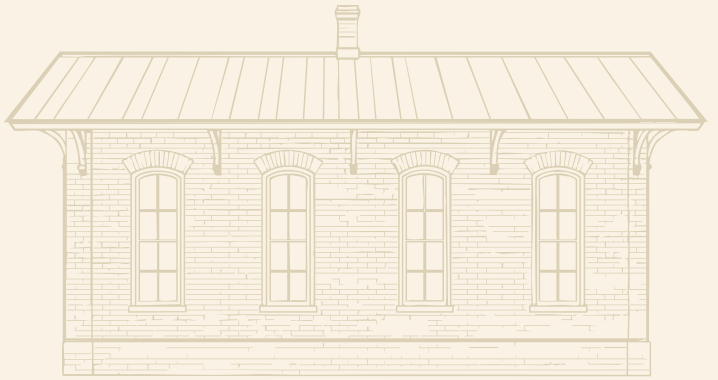
Founded in 1951 by the Village of Wilmette, the Wilmette History Museum is "dedicated to encouraging the appreciation of Wilmette's past." Now jointly managed by the Village and the non-profit Wilmette Historical Society, the museum maintains a substantial collection of photographs and movies, objects and artwork, clothing, and documents, including records on specific buildings and areas of development in the community. It also offers rotating history exhibits and maintains a Research Center where residents can, amongst other things, get help researching their home or neighborhood. The Wilmette History Museum occupies the former Gross Point Town Hall, designated a Wilmette Landmark in 1989 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.



SECTION 2

Wilmette Historic Resources

This section describes the timeline of Wilmette's development and an overview of existing historic resources within the Village.



Wilmette Theater, 1930 (Wilmette History Museum)

Wilmette Development History & Timeline

This section describes Wilmette's key historic development periods that define the Village's current form, architecture, and development patterns. They provide the context for understanding what historical, architectural, and cultural resources are significant and worthy of future preservation efforts and provide direction for future survey and documentation projects, landmark and district designations, and preservation planning initiatives.

The following section also provides an overview of the Village's existing historic resources, including those designated as Wilmette Landmarks, listed individually in the National Register or within National Register historic districts, and significant historic resources identified as worthy of preservation through past survey and documentation efforts. In addition, a timeline of Wilmette's development history highlights important buildings, places, people, and events in Wilmette prior to 1980.



Downtown Wilmette, 1940s (Wilmette History Museum)

Native Americans and Early Settlement (through 1840)

The Chicago region has been inhabited by Native Americans for 8,000 to 10,000 years. By the 16th century, the Potawatomi people joined the Miami and other tribes along the shores of Lake Michigan. The Potawatomi formed an alliance with the nearby Ottawa and Chippewa (Ojibwe) tribes to be known as the “Council of the Three Fires.”¹ During the 17th century French missionaries and explorers traveled through the area, often trading with the local native villages. The Miami and Potawatomi were the largest tribes along the North Shore, with a Potawatomi village located on the site of the present-day Indian Hill Golf Club in Winnetka.² What is now Chicago was initially settled by Jean Baptiste Point du Sable around 1788. He was followed soon after by several other families, including French-Canadian trader Antoine Ouilmette who settled in Chicago in 1790. By 1797, Antoine had married Archange Chevalier, the daughter of French trader Pierre Chevalier and his Potawatomi wife Chopa.³ Antoine, Archange and Jean Baptiste were Métis – mixed-race indigenous descendants of European and Native American people.

- 1 Potawatomi Casino/Hotel Milwaukee, “Forest County Potawatomi,” n.d., <https://www.potawatomi.com/business/forest-county-potawatomi>, accessed December 19, 2025.
- 2 Village of Wilmette, Illinois. Wilmette Preservation, Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission, 1999, 1.
- 3 Wilmette Historical Society. “The Mystery of Archange Ouilmette,” The Ouilmette Heritage, Vol. 36, No. 3, Winter 2013, 2.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the area of the country extending west to the Mississippi River, including Illinois, was known as the Northwest Territory. France held the territory during most of this period due to their fur trade and exploration and they constructed outposts as far west as the Mississippi River. France ceded the area to Great Britain in 1763 following their defeat in the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Most native tribes inhabiting the region traded with the French and English in addition to living off the land. The United States claimed the territory from Great Britain in 1783 following the Treaty of Paris ending the American Revolution.

In 1803, the United States built Fort Dearborn at the confluence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. Following a Potawatomi raid on behalf of Great Britain during the War of 1812, the fort was burned to the ground, not being rebuilt until 1816. During this period Antoine and Archange Ouilmette remained in Chicago as she was a member of the Potawatomi tribe. Following Illinois statehood in 1818, the expansion of Euro-American settlers continued westward, increasing conflicts with the native people. The Treaty of Prairie du Chien, signed in 1829, resulted in the Council of Three Fires (Chippewa [Ojibwe], Ottawa, and Potawatomi) ceding most of their lands in the region to the United States. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 allowed the federal government to forcibly relocate Native Americans to designated lands in what is now Oklahoma. The 1833 Treaty of Chicago required the Council of Three Fires to cede all remaining lands in the region, forcing them to move west of the Mississippi River.

The Algonquin people populated the western shores of Lake Michigan, including the Miami and later the Potawatomi

Photo: WBEZ Chicago

1841 survey map of Archange Ouilmette's 1,280 acres granted on July 29, 1829, by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien (WHM)

pre **1800**

1829

1830



Indian Removal Act forced Native Americans west of the Mississippi River



Archange Ouilmette

The 1829 Treaty of Prairie du Chien, in an unusual move for a treaty whose purpose was to remove Native people from their lands, granted 1,280 acres of land to Archange Ouilmette along Lake Michigan north of Chicago. This land would eventually become the heart of the future Village of Wilmette. The treaty stated:

*"To Archange Ouilmette, a Potawatomie woman, wife of Antoine, two sections for herself and her children on Lake Michigan, south of and adjoining the northern boundary of the cession herein made by the Indians aforesaid to the United States. The tracts of land herein stipulated to be granted shall never be leased or conveyed by the grantees, or their heirs, to any person whatever, without the permission of the President of the United States."*⁴



The Ouilmette family built a log cabin allowing travelers to stop. Dusham House on Michigan Ave in 1890



Antoine and Archange Ouilmette move to Council Bluffs, Iowa



1838 — 1840s

Immigrant farmers from the area around Trier, in what is now southwest Germany just east of Luxembourg, begin settling west of Ridge Road; the community is called Gross Point. Photo: WHM

⁴ Plan of Wilmette, Village of Wilmette, 1922, 9.

Following the receipt of land, the Ouilmette family built a log cabin on the property known as the Ouilmette Reserve. The cabin was located near the current intersection of Lake and Michigan Avenues in Wilmette. The land along Lake Michigan extended west to what is now 15th Street, north to the current Elmwood Avenue, and south to what is now Central Street in Evanston.⁵

Though relatively remote, the Green Bay Trail – an ancient Native American path extending north and south along Sheridan and Green Bay Roads – traversed the Ouilmette property, allowing travelers to stop at the Ouilmette cabin; one was Alexander McDaniel, who stopped there in 1836. McDaniel was a transplant from New York who later settled in Wilmette in 1853 and was one of the founders of the Village in 1872.⁶ During their time living in the cabin from 1829-1838, the Ouilmettes began to see white settlers moving into the area, including Charles Beaubien in 1837 from Chicago, Lombard Dusham from French-speaking Canada in 1837, and Mary Johnson Dennis in 1838 from Evanston.⁷

Antoine and Archange moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa, around 1838 to settle near the Potawatomi people who were relocated there from the Chicago area. Archange died on November 25, 1840.⁸ Following her death, her eight children inherited the 1,280 acres of land in Illinois. All but her youngest son Joseph wished to sell the property as they no longer lived in the area and area residents were illegally cutting timber from the property.⁹ Selling the property proved time-consuming as the 1829 Treaty required approval from the President of the United States for any lease or conveyance of the land. Following assistance from well-known Chicago residents such as John J. Kinzie, U. S. Representative Hon. John Wentworth, and Henry Clarke, the Ouilmette's received approval from U. S. President James K. Polk to sell the land in shares to real estate speculators between 1844 and 1847. Joseph Ouilmette sold his land in 1871.¹⁰

⁵ Village of Wilmette, Illinois. Wilmette Preservation, Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission, 1999, 1.

⁶ Hussey-Arntson, Kathy. "Early Wilmette Movers and Shakers," Museum News, The Newsletter of the Wilmette History Museum, 2022, 3.

⁷ Hussey-Arntson, Kathy. "Remembering Early Residents of Wilmette," Museum News, The Newsletter of the Wilmette History Museum, Winter 2021-2022, 3.

⁸ "The Mystery of Archange Ouilmette," The Ouilmette Heritage, Newsletter of the Wilmette Historical Society, Vol. 36, No. 3, Winter 2013, 2-3.

⁹ Hussey-Arntson, Kathy. "Remembering Early Residents of Wilmette," Museum News, The Newsletter of the Wilmette History Museum, Winter 2021-2022, 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

Tale of Two Villages: Wilmette and Gross Point (1841-1926)

The Ouilmette Reserve was situated on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan surrounded by dense forest lands west to a ridge running north and south. The ridge, now Ridge Road, served as a natural break between forest and agricultural land to the west which would develop as a community of farms known as Gross Point.

Wilmette

While there was a scattering of settlers near the Ouilmette Reserve in the 1840s, new settlers began purchasing sections of the former Ouilmette property and settling the area in the 1850s. New Trier Township was organized in 1850 and served as the local government for the area. Prominent early settlers included Alexander McDaniel, a wealthy New Yorker who had visited the Ouilmettes in 1836 but did not settle in Wilmette until 1853. McDaniel and his New York financial partner, Henry Dingee, made substantial investments in the early development of Wilmette, including street improvements, a school, a train station, and others.¹¹

¹¹ Hussey-Arntson, Kathy. "Early Wilmette Movers and Shakers," Museum News, The Newsletter of the Wilmette History Museum, 2022, 3.

John Gedney Westerfield and wife Rebecca Dingee Westerfield purchased 270 acres from the Ouilmettes that included the Ouilmette cabin and settled in Wilmette in 1857. Westerfield preserved the cabin until 1865 when it was demolished to avoid destruction from lakefront erosion. Westerfield created the first plat of "Wilmette Village" in 1869 using the anglicized spelling of Ouilmette and began laying out streets. This began an assertive campaign to attract families to move to Wilmette. Following the incorporation of the Village of Wilmette in 1872, Westerfield served as the first Village President.¹²

The Dingee family played an important role in the early development of Wilmette. In addition to Henry Dingee's real estate investments with Alexander McDaniel, Solomon Dingee purchased 200 acres along the lakefront. Squire Dingee purchased several hundred acres on which he and brother Samuel Dingee grew cucumbers to make pickles at their factory in Chicago.¹³

Another prominent New Yorker who settled in Wilmette was Asahel Gage. After moving to Chicago in 1836, Asahel's parents, John and Portia Gage, purchased the land north of Elmwood Avenue in Wilmette during the 1850s where their sons Asahel, Henry, and Augustus would settle beginning in the 1870s.¹⁴

¹² Bushnell, George D. Wilmette: A History. Wilmette: Village of Wilmette, 1997, 20, 44-46.

¹³ Village of Wilmette, Illinois. "Samuel Dingee House Local Landmark Nomination Report," Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission, 2004

¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

New Trier Township
Established

1843

St. Joseph Church established
in a log cabin at Lake and Ridge
for German-speaking Catholics
in Gross Point



1850



1869



First plat of Wilmette Village by
John G. Westerfield
Photo: Wilmette Public Library

Asahel platted the land purchased by his father in 1875 and promoted the development as “Gage’s Addition.” Early residents Benjamin Franklin Hill, arriving in 1872, and Hubbard Latham, arriving in 1874, were prominent in real estate and development. Hill and Latham partnered with Alexander McDaniel to develop subdivisions including the Hill & Latham and Hill & McDaniel subdivisions and the area known as Hillville near Maple Avenue between 3rd and 6th Streets. All three men served as Trustees on the Village Board.¹⁵

The earliest school buildings in the area were in the southeast section of what is now Wilmette. The first school, built in 1847, was a log building near Sheridan Road and Maple Avenue. A plaque commemorates the second school built at Sheridan Road and Canterbury Court in 1854. A frame school east of Green Bay Road near Isabella Street was built before 1863.¹⁶

Wilmette’s development as a community benefited enormously from the Chicago and North Western Railway agreeing to establish a stop in the Village Center at Wilmette Avenue and Railroad Avenue (Green Bay Road). Rail service began in 1871 following the building of a wood station by Alexander McDaniel and Henry Dingee. After a fire that destroyed the station, a group of prominent citizens collected subscriptions to construct a new brick depot which

was completed in 1873.¹⁷ This depot building was subsequently moved to Wilmette Avenue in 1974 and was designated a Wilmette Landmark in 1989.

At the time of the incorporation of the Village in 1872, the population was around 300 people. The streets were unpaved with wood plank sidewalks and water came from wells. The area remained heavily forested with homes scattered throughout the original platted settlement. There were no churches or schools. The Village Center included several stores, a post office, and railroad depot where the train from Chicago stopped once a day.

Wilmette remained a small village through the 19th century, reaching a population of 2,300 by 1900. Steady growth through the first two decades of the 20th century saw the population reach 7,814 by 1920. During this period train service increased with the Chicago & Milwaukee Electric Railway Company connecting with the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul line (replaced by the Northwestern Elevated Electric Railroad in 1910), allowing connections to Milwaukee or Chicago. The Elevated line extended to 4th Street and Linden Avenue in 1912, and a Prairie style station was constructed in 1913.¹⁸ A new station was constructed adjacent to this building and is the northernmost stop on the Chicago Elevated Purple Line.

¹⁵ Ibid., 3.
¹⁶ Bushnell, 21.

¹⁷ Ibid., 46.

¹⁸ McManus, Kate. “Wilmette Village Center Historic District”, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2023, 15.



Village of Wilmette
Incorporated

Gage House
Constructed. Gage’s Addition
expanded Wilmette from
Elmwood north to Chestnut

Village of Gross Point
Incorporated

1870

1872

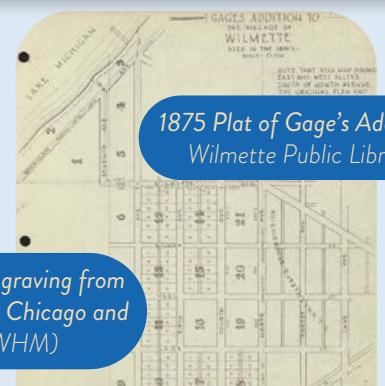
1873

1874

First Wilmette stop on
the Chicago and North
Western Railway
Photo: WHM



1874 Gage House engraving from
Everett Chamberlin’s Chicago and
Its Suburbs (WHM)



1875 Plat of Gage’s Addition.
Wilmette Public Library

During the period 1908-1910 the Chicago Sanitary District constructed the North Shore Channel with excavated fill from the channel creating an additional 22 acres of land along Lake Michigan which would become Washington Park, later renamed Gillson Park. The new channel would also require the construction of a bridge and pumping station at Sheridan Road as well as the realignment of Sheridan Road and Michigan Avenue.¹⁹ The newly created land sparked the creation of the Wilmette Park District in 1908 to administer the park land.

By the turn of the century, Village improvements included paved streets and a growing business district along Green Bay Road with additional businesses slowly replacing houses located to the east of the railroad tracks, including where Village Hall stands. Wilmette constructed its first Village Hall in 1890 on the site of the present Village Hall. The building served for twenty years until a larger Village Hall replaced it in 1910. The Village Center eventually transitioned to its current location east of the tracks and included clothing stores, tailor shops, drug stores, grocery stores, and theaters.²⁰ A few of the early commercial buildings remain on Green Bay Road and Wilmette Avenue.

¹⁹ Bachrach, Julia S. and Malcolm Cairns, FASLA. "Gillson Park and Wilmette Harbor Historic District", National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2023.

²⁰ McManus, 16.

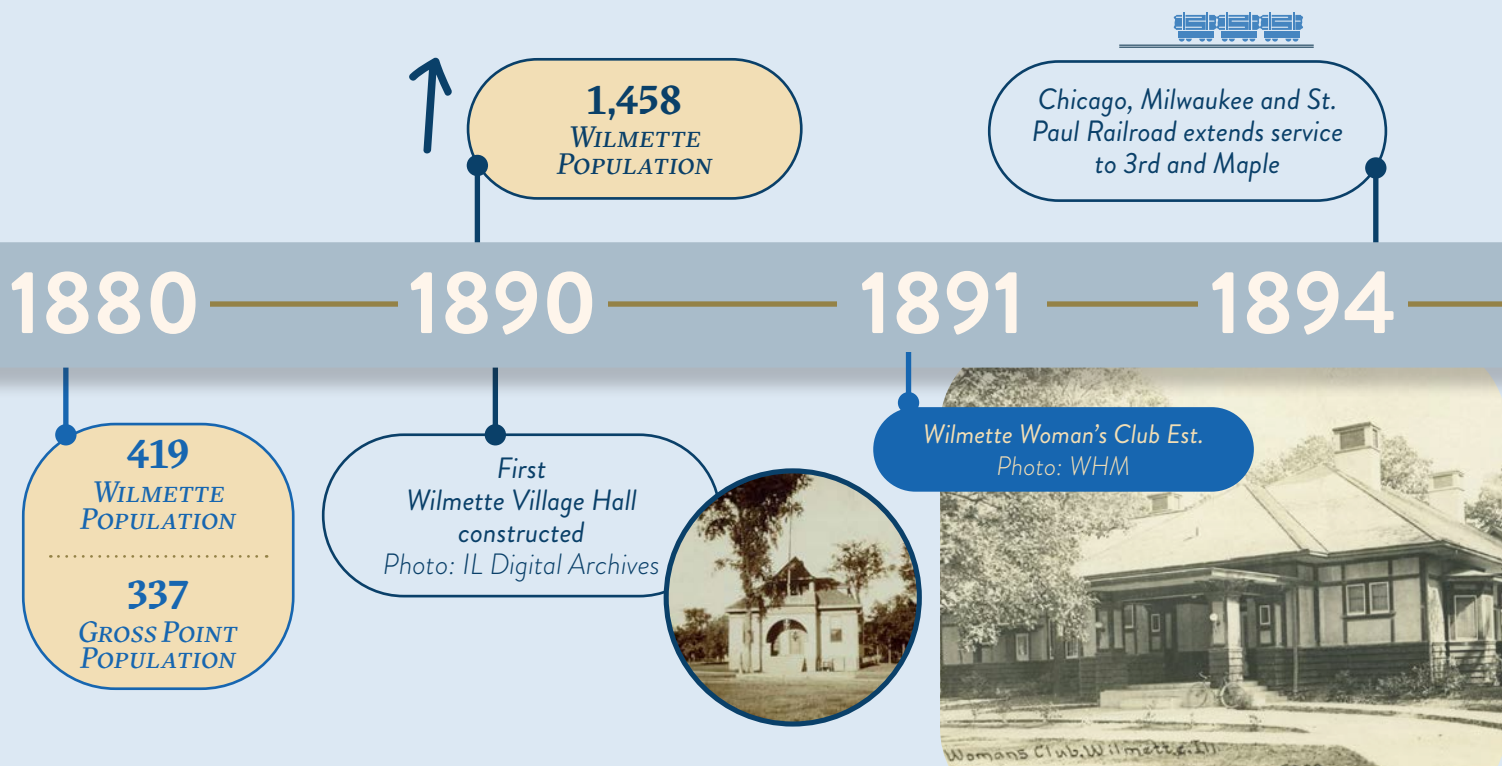
The Village Planning Commission published the Wilmette Plan of 1922 which laid the groundwork for future development in an ordered environment in terms of streets, utilities, parks, government buildings, and commercial development. The Plan contemplated future population growth, including its impact on the Village of Gross Point, which was annexed two years later.

On March 28, 1920, Palm Sunday, a tornado touched down along Wilmette Avenue near the Village Center damaging multiple buildings, including Village Hall, commercial buildings, churches, and homes. Fifteen houses were destroyed and 45 others severely damaged. The National Guard was brought in to assist in clean-up.²¹

By 1920, many of the Village's major institutions were established at their current sites, including the post office, the public library, and Village Hall. The Village of Wilmette's boundaries extended from Lake Michigan west to Ridge Road by 1916 due to several annexations. Larger residences, many architect-designed, were constructed east of the Village Center, brick streets were laid, and modest brick and frame houses were built east of Ridge Road.²² Developer Arthur Dickinson, who built many bungalows in Chicago, developed a block of 15 Craftsman houses and Craftsman bungalows on Oak Circle beginning in 1917. The development became the Oak Circle National Register Historic District in 2001.

²¹ Bushnell, 139.

²² McManus, 15.



Gross Point

During the 1840s, when the Ouilmette children were selling off shares of the Ouilmette Reserve to land speculators to the east, farmers from the Trier area of southwest Germany (then the Kingdom of Prussia) near Luxembourg were immigrating to the area west of what is now Ridge Road. They were fleeing a turbulent time in Europe which led to a revolution in 1848 across multiple countries, including the German Confederation states. They were attracted to the area due to the concentration of Germans who had settled in the Chicago region following their work constructing the Illinois & Michigan Canal.²³

The German community in Gross Point had grown to around 40 farms by 1845, with a business district along the west side of Ridge Road. A local German-language newspaper was printed, and the community formed the German Catholic St. Joseph Church in 1843.²⁴ Grosse Pointe originally extended over a large area from Evanston to Highland Park. When its first post office opened in 1846 in Evanston, the “e” was dropped from the name to become Gross Point.²⁵

One of the earliest and well-documented German immigrant families to settle in Gross Point was that of Bartholomew and Veronica Hoffmann. Arriving in 1844 from Denn, near Trier, in Prussia, the

²³Blanchard, Sec. 8, 3.

²⁴Ibid., Sec. 8, 4.

²⁵Bushnell, 26.

Hoffmanns and their eight children, ages 6 to 31, purchased 100 acres of farmland and built their house at 204 Ridge Road, today considered the oldest house in Wilmette and designated a Wilmette Landmark in 2018. The family also constructed a schoolhouse in 1846, where eldest son Franz Joseph taught for several years.²⁶ Descendents of the Hoffman family remain in Wilmette today. The Hoffman Brothers store and adjacent feed store were founded in 1888 by Philip and John Hoffman, grandsons of Bartholomew and Veronica. Their stores were located at the northeast corner of Ridge Road and Wilmette Avenue. Both businesses closed in 1959.²⁷ The Hoffmann brothers also opened Hoffmann Brothers Lumber at Central Avenue and 12th Street. The business closed in 1974. Philip Hoffmann was also one of the founders of Wilmette State Bank in 1905.²⁸

Rev. William Netsraeter was a prominent religious leader in Gross Point who served as the pastor of St. Joseph Church from 1868 to 1923. He was instrumental in building a new stone church in 1869 to replace the earlier frame church. He also was a prominent government and educational figure who served as the Wilmette Village President from 1886-1887 and 1890-1891. In addition, he served on the first board of New Trier High School, which opened in 1899.²⁹

²⁶Ibid., 26.

²⁷Village of Wilmette, Illinois. “Hoffman House Local Landmark Nomination Report,” Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission, 2018.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 30.

Gross Point Village Hall constructed
(now Wilmette History Museum)

Creation of Wilmette Free Public
Library. Building constructed in 1905
with funds from Andrew Carnegie
Photo: Wilmette Public Library



1896

1900

1901

1904



2,300
WILMETTE
POPULATION

669
GROSS POINT
POPULATION

St. Francis Xavier Church
constructed for English-
speaking Catholics
Photo: WHM



Gross Point was a farming community with a small commercial district centered along Ridge Road near Lake Avenue. The commercial district included several dry goods and grocery stores, a butcher, a funeral home, a post office, and multiple taverns, which were the main source of income for the Village. By 1903, it is estimated that there were 15 taverns in Gross Point.³⁰ While many of the early frame buildings are gone, several of the more prominent brick buildings remain.

By the 1870s, Village residents sought to create their own local government rather than continue under the leadership of New Trier Township officials. The Village of Gross Point was incorporated in 1874. With a population of around 300, the Village boundaries extended from Ridge Road west to Locust Road. Gross Point's population grew slowly into the early 20th century, with a population of 669 in 1900 and 1,008 residents in 1910. Following a growing movement for the prohibition of the sale of alcohol, as well as a rule in the Charter of Northwestern University that alcohol could not be sold within four miles of its campus, and a 1908 township referendum prohibiting the sale of alcohol, the economic future of Gross Point was in jeopardy.

The passage of the 18th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution prohibiting the sale of alcohol nationwide in 1920 meant the end of Gross Point's revenue.

³⁰ Blanchard, Sec. 8, 5.

Residents voted to dissolve the government in 1919, although it was not until 1923 that the Village's debts had been paid, that the dissolution was finalized leading to its annexation by Wilmette in 1924 and 1926.³¹

Greenhouses were common near Ridge Road in the early 20th century as florists used them to grow flowers to sell in Chicago. Located south of the Hoffmann House at 204 Ridge Avenue are remnants of greenhouses used by Hubert Hoffmann & Sons, Florists, founded in 1908. They are the last remaining greenhouses from that period.³² Only a portion of the north greenhouse is located within the Village's boundaries.

In 1916, the Sisters of Christian Charity purchased 26 acres of land at 1041 Ridge Road and constructed Mallinckrodt, their new Motherhouse and educational facility. The building served as a convent, high school for girls, Mallinckrodt College, and later the North Shore campus for Loyola University.³³ Loyola purchased the building in 1999. It was subsequently bought by the Village of Wilmette and the Park District in 2002 and was converted to senior housing, a senior center, and Park District facility in 2004. The grounds behind the building are now used as Mallinckrodt Park.

³¹ Blanchard, Sec. 8, 5.

³² Leary, Patrick. "Hubert Hoffman & Sons," Museum News, The Newsletter of the Wilmette History Museum, n.d.

³³ Wilmette History Museum. Historic Ridge Road Walking Tour, Neighborhood History Guide, 2016, 7.

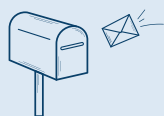
Northwestern Elevated Electric Railroad replaced the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul line, providing electric train service to Chicago and Milwaukee; Wilmette constructs second Village Hall

Prairie style train station constructed at 4th and Linden



1906 — 1910 — 1913 — 1916 — 1919

Gross Point post office constructed at 725-729 Ridge Road



4,943
WILMETTE
POPULATION

1,008
GROSS POINT
POPULATION

Sisters of Christian Charity construct Mallinckrodt



Village of Gross Point residents vote to dissolve municipal government

Becoming Wilmette: Growth and Expansion (1927-1945)

Following the annexation of Gross Point in 1924 and 1926, Village boundaries extended west of what is now the Edens Expressway to the Chicago and North Western Railway freight lines (no longer extant) and north of Lake Avenue west to the North Branch of the Chicago River. Wilmette's population more than doubled from 7,814 in 1920 to 17,226 in 1940. The 1920s would see another building boom with several new subdivisions constructed in Wilmette.

The first major development following the annexation of Gross Point was the 170-acre Indian Hill Estates subdivision in central Wilmette north of Lake Avenue, conceived and funded in part by Henry W. Drucker and created by Bills Realty. The subdivision featured curving streets, a departure from Wilmette's street grid system. With lots up to half an acre in size, the homes enjoyed deep setbacks. The subdivision was named Indian Hill Estates after the nearby Indian Hill Country Club with street names such as Mohawk, Iroquois, and Blackhawk.³⁴ Construction was slow through the 1930s with most homes constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. The initial subdivision included several later additions following annexations between 1962 and 1972.

³⁴Benjamin, Susan, Courtney Gray Resnick, and Gwen Sommers Yant. "Robert and Suzanne Drucker House", National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2013, Sec. 8, 27.

On the east side of the Village, Albert and Fannie Cross purchased the 1908 Philetus Gates House in 1923, including its five acres of land along Lake Michigan. In 1927 Cross subdivided the property to create nine large lots for development. Marketed as Canterbury Court, the subdivision attracted wealthy buyers and eight of the lots were purchased by 1932.³⁵

In 1939, the Village annexed a section of land east of Green Bay Road and north of Greenwood Avenue where developer Irvin A. Blietz proposed a subdivision comprised solely of homes designed in the Colonial Revival style. Marketed as Connecticut Village, the subdivision contains over 40 homes built between 1939 and 1942 on Richmond Lane and Ashland Avenue. Blietz would also develop Sprucewood Village, a subdivision of Ranch homes designed in the Colonial Revival style, along Illinois and Sprucewood Roads west of Hibbard Road in the 1950s.³⁶

The triangular section of land along Sheridan Road between Wilmette and Kenilworth known as No Man's Land – so nicknamed because the unincorporated area was under no local jurisdiction or police and fire protection – was developed in 1927 with a shopping center, theater, and ballroom.

³⁵Benjamin, Susan and Gwen Sommers Yant. "Craig and Estella Hazelwood House", National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2024, 17-18.
³⁶Kuhn, Rachel. "Connecticut Village," Museum News, The Newsletter of the Wilmette History Museum, 2009, 3.

Construction begins on the Baha'i House of Worship



Village of Wilmette annexes the former Village of Gross Point

1920

1922

1924

1926

Village of Wilmette adopts the first Plan of Wilmette



Indian Hill Estates subdivision platted. Indian Hill Estate Add.

DISTINCT—
As the Separate Notes of a Song—
Are the Homes in Indian Hill Estates

And like the cadence of music, the Estates homes harmonize with delightful order and dignity in the English Quadrangle plan—
Chateau, Tower, Brittany, Gothic, Tudor, are the names of some of the notes of the ever-increasing scores of distinctive homes. Only three houses of thirteen built by Bills Bros., Inc., remain unsold.
Yet you can build in Indian Hill Estates at less cost than you can buy in the older sections of the North Shore where land values have advanced to as much as \$100 per front foot more than in Estates.



Indian Hill Estates



SEE YOUR REALTOR

BILLS REALTY, INC.

Large Office: 111 E. La Salle Street
Indian Hill Estates Office: 11111 N. Lincoln Road
Oak Lake Office: 11111 N. Lincoln Road

The Spanish Court shopping center and Teatro del Lago were designed with a unified Spanish Revival appearance by Edwin Hill Clark, while the Miralago Ballroom featured an Art Deco design by George Fred Keck. The area suffered during the Great Depression. The Miralago was destroyed in a fire in 1932 and the lakefront developed with gas stations, car repair shops, and food stands. Throughout its history the area was maligned by neighbors, though neither Wilmette nor Kenilworth wanted jurisdiction. The area was finally annexed by the Village of Wilmette in 1942.³⁷

During the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration funded several projects in Wilmette, including the relaying of the brick streets on the east side of the Village, and a major expansion of Gillson Park following a 1936 plan by landscape architects Charles Dudley Wagstaff and Robert E. Everly that included the construction of an amphitheater, later renamed the Wallace Bowl.³⁸ The federal government also provided funding for the Village's Water Works plant in 1934 and the construction of a new post office in 1935.

³⁷ Bushnell, 168.

³⁸ Bachrach, Julia S. and Malcolm Cairns, FASLA. "Gillson Park and Wilmette Harbor Historic District", National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2023, 30.

The Park District's jurisdiction remained in the area east of Ridge Road until a public referendum in 1946 allowed its expansion west to Hibbard Road and encompassed the entire Village by 1956.³⁹ Several of the larger parks created during this period on the west side, including Community Park and Centennial Park, occupied former farmland.

Up until the Post World War II housing boom of the 1950s, much of the land in West Wilmette remained farmland. Greenhouses and roadside farm stands were common sights along Ridge Road and Old Glenview Road. Greenhouses were used to grow vegetables and flowers to be sold at the South Water Street Market in Chicago. Some farmers also sold their produce locally at farm stands set up beside the road in front of their farms; the Schneider and Rengel families built stands along Old Glenview Road. Village zoning permitted farm stands in residential neighborhoods until the 1960s.⁴⁰ The last remaining greenhouses are on the Hoffmann property at 204 Ridge Road.

³⁹ Wilmette Park District, "History of the Wilmette Park District," n.d., <https://wilmettepark.org/wilmette-park-district-history/>, accessed December 30, 2025.

⁴⁰ Hussey-Arntson, Kathy. "Looking Back at Wilmette's Farm Stands," Museum News, The Newsletter of the Wilmette History Museum, 2019, 3.

St. Joseph School constructed
Photo: WHM

15,233
WILMETTE
POPULATION

Spanish Court
(later Plaza del Lago) opens



1927 — 1930 — 1934 — 1935 —

Village adopts Council-
Manager form of
government

17,226
WILMETTE
POPULATION



Post-War Development (1946-1980)

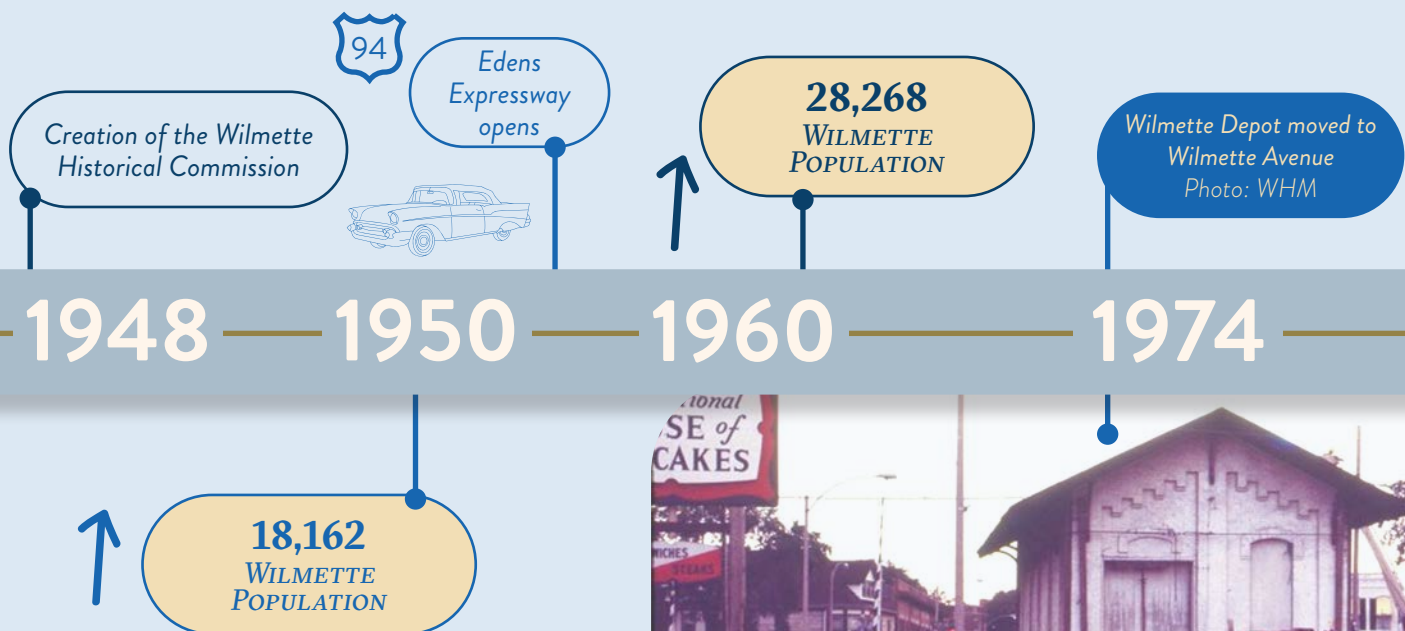
Following World War II, the national housing boom played a large part in the development of West Wilmette. The area was also impacted by the opening of the Edens Expressway in 1951. Housing shortages for returning servicemen encouraged residential developers to plat new subdivisions on farmland sold off by families from the former Village of Gross Point. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s new streets were laid out, and single-family houses were constructed at a rapid rate on both sides of the Skokie Highway (now Skokie Boulevard), which was built in the 1930s. Ranch and Split-Level houses prevailed, incorporating Modern and Contemporary design ideas, as well as references to Classical and Colonial Revival architecture. Most had garages or carports attached. Large developers such as Admiral Builders, Revere Builders, and Wilshire Estates worked with architects to create house plans that could be replicated throughout a subdivision providing affordable housing for young families.

A number of developers, including Hollywood Builders (owned by Jack Netchin), Margolin Builders and I. Simon, migrated their businesses to Wilmette to meet the housing demand.

During the 1950s and 1960s, several builders who lived on the north side of Chicago, primarily Rogers Park, established firms and purchased farmland in West Wilmette, which had previously been subdivided by the Village of Wilmette. Other builders included Spear Gaston (also in business as Spear Construction Company), owned by Harold Spear; Miller Construction Company owned by William Kagan, and Foremost Builders, owned by Hank Zamost.⁴¹

Rezoning in Wilmette took place in 1958, and the area known as No Man's Lane opened up for redevelopment. Beginning in the early 1960s, five high rise buildings were constructed east of Sheridan Road along the lakefront. Remnants of two Spanish style beach clubs were taken down and businesses including gas stations, car repair stores, and beer joints that grew up during the Depressions were removed – making way for high rise cooperative apartment buildings. South of Plaza del Lago, land was made available for 38 luxury townhouses. The Teatro del Lago was taken down in 1966 for future construction of a Jewel food store. Plans for redevelopment by Evanston attorney Plat Foufos and others were approved in 1966, fulfilling the intent of Bills Realty and architect Edwin Hill Clark to create an upscale multi-use residential and retail destination. Spanish Court shopping center was remodeled in 1967, renamed Plaza del Lago.

⁴¹ Village of Wilmette, Illinois. West Wilmette Historical Resource Survey, Phase 1A, 2025, 56.



Wilmette Historic Resources

Historic resources are associated with a particular historic context identified through National Register nominations, survey and documentation, or other historical research projects such as museum articles or published books. For example, historic resources located within the Oak Circle National Register Historic District relate to Wilmette's residential development in the early 20th century and the popularity of the Craftsman style and Bungalow house type during that period. Other resources may share relationships with a significant person(s) or event(s) in the Village's history, such as the residential home and commercial buildings associated with the Hoffmann family. A community's heritage may also include archaeological, architectural, and cultural resources.

Types of Historic Resources

The following categories define the different types of historic, architectural, and cultural resources:

- **Buildings:** examples include houses, garages, commercial buildings, theaters, and schools.
- **Structures:** examples include bridges and brick streets.
- **Sites:** examples include parks, gardens, and cemeteries.
- **Objects:** examples include statues and monuments.
- **Districts:** groups of buildings, structures, sites and/or objects within a defined boundary.

Archaeological Resources

Wilmette's built environment spans more than 180 years, and the area has been inhabited by Native American communities for thousands of years, highlighting the potential for significant archaeological resources within the Village.

The greatest potential lies within areas of early Village development in and around the Village Center, along Ridge Road, and near Lake Michigan and Sheridan Road. Renovations or new construction on previously developed sites may uncover important cultural information. In 1922, a Native American artifact, the fired clay model of a head, was discovered during excavations in the rear yard of the home at 738 11th Street. The object, broken from a larger vessel, was thought to date to the Mound-Builder culture approximately 600-800 year ago.⁴² While the Village does not require archaeological studies for ground disturbances - typically occurring during construction of new buildings or additions - such studies may be pursued for educational purposes.

Residential Buildings

Wilmette's residential architecture spans over 180 years representing various architectural styles and building types. The Village's oldest known home, the Hoffmann House at 204 Ridge Road, was built in 1847. Several other extant homes of frame construction from the 1850s include the Bell House (1856, 1611 Greenwood Avenue), the Alexander McDaniel House (1856, 301 Sheridan Road), and the Rengel House (1850s, 2648 Old Glenview Road). These homes, and others from the 1860s and 1870s, are found in the original settlement areas of Wilmette and Gross Point. These areas developed simultaneously as separate Villages although there are fewer houses in Gross Point from this period due because it was farmland. Other notable examples in Wilmette include the Samuel Dingee House (1869, 926 Lake Avenue), an asymmetrical frame house with Gothic Revival details, and the James Furman House (1869, 511 Maple Avenue), designed in the Folk Victorian style. Both houses are Wilmette Landmarks. Examples in Gross Point include the Schneider House (1879, 3127 Old Glenview Road), a brick gable front with paired brackets and arched windows designed in the Italianate style, 2100 Washington Avenue (1865), a simple frame gable front house - later clad in stucco - with arched windows, and the front gable frame houses at 1920 Schiller Avenue (1872) and 2000 Schiller Avenue (1870).

⁴² Bushnell, George D. Wilmette: A History. Wilmette: Village of Wilmette, 1997, 3.

Wilmette grew slowly and steadily following the 1869 Plat of “Wilmette Village,” the Village’s incorporation in 1872, and the introduction of passenger rail service with the construction of the Chicago and North Western Railway Depot in 1871, replaced by a brick depot in 1873 and later moved in 1974 to 1139 Wilmette Avenue. During the last decades of the 19th century, Wilmette’s popularity as a suburban community grew due to its bucolic, forested nature and its connection to Chicago. Some of Wilmette’s prominent citizens built larger homes reflective of the architectural styles of the day, including the William Panushka House (1873, 1041 Forest Avenue), a two-story frame house with arched windows and hoods designed in the Italianate style, and the Asahel Gage House (1873, 1134 Elmwood Avenue), a large two-story frame house with decorative brackets, narrow vertical windows with pedimented hoods, and a central tower with mansard roof and cast-iron cresting – all elements of the Second Empire style. The Gage House is considered one of Wilmette’s most recognizable landmarks.

Wilmette’s popularity continued to grow as a wealthy suburb, with larger homes built on tree-shaded lots often designed by architects. One example is the W. Mead Walter House (1893, 600 Central Avenue) that combines Queen Anne and Shingle style elements. Walter was an architect who worked at the firm of Walter and Goebel and designed the house for his family. The large arched porch entrance to the Rau House (1890s, 823 15th Street) reflects the Romanesque Revival style, and the house shows similarities to the Fort Sheridan Captain’s Quarters designed by Holabird and Roche, though there is no current evidence they built the house. Other architectural styles from the period include Colonial Revival (1880s, 1046 Elmwood Avenue; c. 1898, 706 Forest Avenue), Shingle Style (c. 1890, 519 Forest Avenue), Queen Anne (1889, 1204 Forest Avenue), and Georgian Revival (1908, 336 Sheridan Road). The Philetus and Philmelia Gates House designed by architect Robert C. Fletcher in the Georgian Revival style.

The first two decades of the 20th century were a time of growth in Wilmette as the Village expanded through annexation.

Much of the housing stock east of Ridge Road was constructed during this period. Prairie style architecture and its vernacular interpretations are highly concentrated here, with work by Frank Lloyd Wright, John S. Van Bergen, William Drummond, Tallmadge and Watson, and others. The Frank Baker House (1909, 507 Lake Avenue) by Wright, the C. Percy Skillin House (1914, 714 Ashland Avenue) by Van Bergen, and the Ralph Baker House (1914, 1226 Ashland Avenue) by Guenzel and Drummond are three outstanding examples of Prairie architecture. Other homes with Prairie influences include the brick American Foursquare at 724 Ashland Avenue (1924) and the two-story stucco homes at 601 Elmwood Avenue (1917) and 212 Woodbine Avenue (1915).

The Arts & Crafts movement also influenced the architectural character in Wilmette during this period, with many Craftsman homes and Craftsman Bungalows scattered throughout the Village. Examples of Craftsman houses include the two- and one-half-story stucco house at 717 Elmwood Avenue (c. 1915), and the Lyman and Jennie Drake House (1905, 933 Lake Avenue), a two- and one-half-story brick house designed by architect Myron Henry Church. One of the most recognized blocks in Wilmette is the 300 block of Oak Circle comprised of 12 Craftsman Bungalows, including three Airplane Bungalows so named for their distinctive upper-level rooms resembling cockpits, and three Craftsman houses. The homes, many with Prairie style elements including window bands and geometric glazing, were constructed between 1917 and 1924.

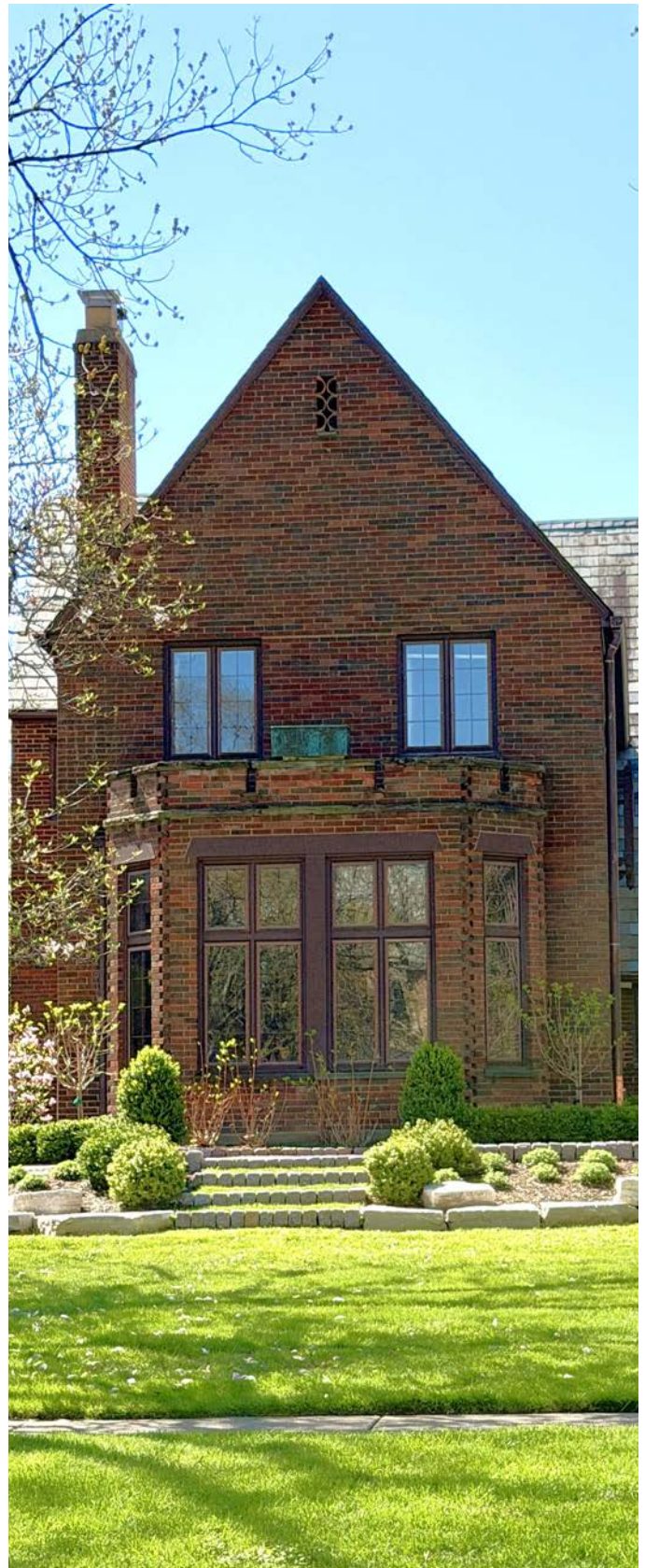


Drake House

Between 1920 and 1940, Wilmette's population more than doubled and its image as an affluent suburb continued to attract wealthy residents who built large homes, particularly on the east side. Popular styles during the period include Colonial Revival (1925, 830 Chestnut Avenue), a two-story brick house with wood entry portico designed by architect Monroe R. Sandel; Georgian Revival (1937, 832 Elmwood Avenue), a two-story brick house with a broken pediment entry surround designed by architect Ralph Stoetzel; and Mediterranean Revival (1922, 1000 Chestnut Avenue), a two-story stucco house designed by A. S. Alschuler. Italian Renaissance Revival was also a popular style for the wealthy and there is a concentration of 11 homes along Chestnut Avenue designed in the style, including two Wilmette Landmarks designed for two sisters by architect Philip Maher in 1923, the Schlager House (1040 Chestnut Avenue) and the Bichl House (1110 Chestnut Avenue).

The Craig and Estella Hazelwood House (1929, 16 Canterbury Court), listed on the National Register in 2024 and designed by architect Edwin Hill Clark in the French Eclectic style, is one of nine homes in the 1927 Canterbury Court Subdivision. The 1926 Indian Hill Estates Subdivision was developed by Bills Realty, three brothers who also built their homes in the subdivision. With many lots up to a half-acre in size, the homes built were large with deep setbacks and included popular architectural styles of the 1920s. Bills Realty constructed several speculative homes, with many designed by architects. Although most homes in the Indian Hill Estates subdivision were not built until after 1950, the subdivision includes many of Wilmette's grandest houses from the late 1920s and 1930s. Some examples include 2716 Blackhawk Road (1936), an outstanding example of International Style architecture designed by George Fred Keck; 946 Locust Road (1926), designed in the Tudor Revival style by Byron Jillson; 1116 Locust Road (1929), an example of the Spanish Revival style by Phillip A. Danielson; and 1163 Romona Road (1938), a grand Tudor Revival designed by Jerome Robert Cerny. The Connecticut Village subdivision, developed by Irvin A. Blietz, contains over 40 homes designed in the Colonial Revival style built between 1939 and 1942 along the 1300 blocks of Richmond Lane and Ashland Avenue.

Examples include 1307 Richmond Lane (1939) designed by architect C. C. Henderson, and 1412 Ashland Avenue (1940) designed by Frank J. Serpico.



While Wilmette has many large homes, there are also more modest working- and middle-class homes built throughout the late 19th and early 20th century in Gross Point and Wilmette. Some examples include the frame two-story cross gable house at 141 Prairie Avenue (1893); the frame two-and-one-half story front gable house at 230 Catalpa Place (1894); the two stucco-clad American Foursquare houses at 614 Maple Avenue (1903) and 618 Maple Avenue (1910), a popular house type in Wilmette and throughout the Midwest; the brick bungalow at 1927 Schiller Avenue (1926) designed by Robert Rae; and the brick and frame Dutch Colonial Revival style house at 1776 Washington Avenue (1922) designed by D. G. Wallace.

The post-World War II housing boom saw veterans and their families seeking affordable starter homes. To meet that demand, developers and builders constructed subdivisions of Contemporary Ranch and Split-Level houses, Massed Two-Story homes, and Colonial Revival-style homes on the Village's west side on former farmland. Many were designed by architects who provided multiple plans to allow architectural variations to the same building types. Builders Whalley and Gould constructed 25 Contemporary homes in 1955 along the 3100-3200 block of Hill Lane. There are many examples of the Split-Level house type from the mid-1950s, often with Contemporary or Colonial Revival details, on streets west of Skokie Boulevard such as Heather Lane, Hartzell Street, Millbrook Lane, and Valley View Drive. Lockerbee Lane includes a concentration of Ranch houses from the late 1940s and 1950s. The house at 512 Laverne Avenue (1967, Anovitz Associates) is an outstanding example of the International Style, which is not commonly found. Between 1948-1950, Lustron Homes built thousands of prefabricated houses clad with porcelain steel panels that were shipped to purchasers and assembled on-site. The Lustron house at 2545 Lake Avenue (1949) is Wilmette's only example.

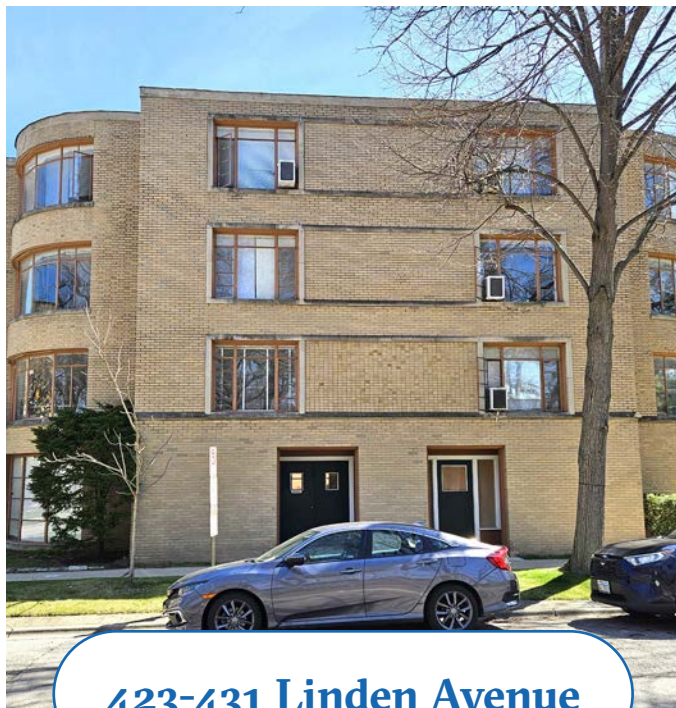
Most of Wilmette's housing stock comprises single-family dwellings, with a few multi-family buildings constructed prior to the mid-20th century. Several large apartment buildings are located at the corner of Linden Avenue and 5th Street near the Linden Avenue Elevated terminal at 4th Street and Linden Avenue. The three- and one-half-story brick courtyard building at 500-530 5th Street (1924) was designed by architect Roy F. France and includes Classical design elements such as stone quoins, curved bays, and entrance pillars. With a more streamlined design, the three- and one-half-story Art Moderne brick apartment building at 423-431 Linden Avenue (1947), designed by architect Joseph A. Nelson, includes a courtyard and curved bay at the corner.



2545 Lake Avenue

Examples of Contemporary style rowhouses include the three buildings at 622-628, 630-636, and 638-644 Hibbard Road, constructed in 1959 and 1960 and designed by architect Morton Balaban. Balaban also designed Contemporary rowhouses at 207-215 and 219-225 Skokie Boulevard in 1975. Architects Hausner and Macsai designed 18 Colonial-Revival style rowhouses at the southeast corner of Sheridan Road and Westerfield Drive in 1965 (809-819 Westerfield, 1415-1425, 1427-1437 Sheridan). Gates Manor (1976, 1135 Wilmette Avenue), designed by Dubin, Dubin, Black and Moutoussamy, is a four-story brick apartment building that served as the first senior housing in the Village. Several large apartment buildings along Ridge Road date to the 1960s; these include the four-story brick building at 627 Ridge Road (1966) designed by Jerome Soltan, as well as the two-story brick rowhouses at 501-519 Ridge Road (1953) and 527-541 Ridge Road (1955) designed by A. J. Del Bianco.

Unique in the Village, five high-rise apartment buildings along Sheridan Road, located in the former “No-Man’s Land”, were built in the 1960s as part of the area’s rejuvenation; they include 1410 Sheridan (1961) designed by Ralph D. Huszagh, 1660 Sheridan (1961) designed by A. Epstein & Son, 1440 Sheridan (1963), 1630 Sheridan (1963) designed by Hausner and Macsai, and 1500 Sheridan (1968) designed by Hausner and Macsai.



423-431 Linden Avenue

Commercial Buildings

Wilmette’s Village Center includes the Village’s most significant concentration of historic commercial buildings. Wilmette’s earliest commercial buildings developed along Green Bay Road in the 19th century across from the former location of the Chicago and North Western Railway Depot (1873). A few of these early storefront buildings remain clustered near Wilmette Avenue: these include the two-story brick Max Mueller Grocery Store (1885, 601 Green Bay Road), the two-story frame building at 605 Green Bay Road, and the two-story frame building at 1225 Wilmette Avenue (1893). As the Village grew in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the commercial district expanded east of the railroad tracks, replacing houses with commercial buildings and becoming the center of downtown Wilmette.

The Village Center includes a range of building styles and types from 1893 to 1971 with most buildings built in the first two decades of the 20th century. The Schultz Building (1893/1928, 1152-54 Central Avenue/708 12 Street) is the oldest building downtown, though its 1928 remodeling in the Tudor Style is indicative of many of the buildings in the Village Center. The Baker Building (1914/1928, 1148-52 Wilmette Avenue) was originally the Village Theater, designed by Henry Schlacks. The two-story terra cotta Italian Renaissance Revival style building was remodeled by Hamilton, Fellows & Wilkinson into an office building in 1928.



The McGuire & Orr Block (1905, 1138-48 Central Avenue/1160-68 Wilmette Avenue), with its multiple storefronts wrapping the corner, is one of the few one-story brick buildings in the Village Center. The Brown Building (1912, 1159-63 Wilmette Avenue) is a three-story brick office building with retail along the street designed in the 20th Century Commercial style. The Wolff Hardware Building (1928, 1119-21 Central Avenue) is a two-story brick and limestone building designed in the Classical Revival style by Howard Bowen. The Nelson Building (1922, 1129-37 Central Avenue) is typical of the Classical Revival style; the building has a heavily ornamented terra cotta façade.

The Gold Medal Cleaners building (c. 1916/1950, 1123 Central Avenue) has a Modern façade because of an exterior remodel in 1950. While meant to be a department store, it has housed a cleaning business since the 1950s and retains its 1950/1958 neon sign. The Chase Bank Building (1971, 1200 Central Avenue) is a stark contrast to the early 20th century buildings downtown. It was designed in the Brutalist style – defined as such because of its concrete construction. The architect was Perkins & Will.



During the growth of downtown several buildings were constructed along Green Bay Road and Wilmette Avenue replacing earlier structures. Examples include the one-story brick store at 619 Green Bay Road (1927), designed by Jean B. Rohms and Son, and the two-story brick commercial building at 621-637 Green Bay Road, constructed prior to 1926. The design of the Nott's Ice Cream building – now the Walker Bros. Original Pancake House (1945, 153 Green Bay Road), with its curving brick walls, front tower, and original neon sign reflects post-war commercial architecture and is a recognizable landmark in Wilmette. On Wilmette Avenue, other early 20th century commercial structures include the Jones Building (c. 1905, 1211-17 Wilmette Avenue), a two-story brick building with cast iron storefronts, a metal cornice, and decorative brickwork, and the Millen Hardware building (1923, 1219 Wilmette Avenue), designed by architect Harold Bowen with Tudor Revival details and its mid-century neon sign.



Ridge Road was the main commercial district for the Village of Gross Point that once housed numerous stores and taverns. Only a handful of buildings remain that serve as a reminder of Ridge Road's importance as a commercial district. The Mick Tavern (c. 1878/1907, 901-907 Ridge Road) was originally designed in the Italianate style and was remodeled in 1907 to its current Queen Anne appearance with the addition of a corner turret, limestone façade, and bracketed cornice. The Klinge & White Grocery Store (1895, 821 Ridge Road) is a three-story brick building with a rusticated limestone front façade that retains its elaborate metal cornice and pedimented parapet. The John Schaefer Tavern (1870s, 801 Ridge Road) is considered the earliest extant commercial building in Wilmette. Designed in the Italianate style with limestone window hoods with keystones, the building was later remodeled, and the metal cornice removed. The two-story brick commercial building at 721-725 Ridge Road (1906) once housed the Gross Point post office, a barber shop, and a dry goods store.⁴³ An addition to the south was added soon after and the rear addition in the 1920s. The building retains its limestone details, bracketed cornice, and corner entrance.

Bleser's Grocery Store (1893, 543-545 Ridge Road) is a two-and-one-half-story frame building with a false front bracketed parapet that retains much of its integrity despite the addition of artificial siding. The Kempe Store (1903, 418 Ridge Road) is a two-story brick building with limestone cladding on the first floor and a corbeled parapet. The Hoffmann Brothers Feed Store (c. 1893, 412-414 Ridge Road) is a two-story brick building with a false parapet and brick corbels. It, too, retains much of its integrity although several entrances have been enclosed. The building is attached to the Hoffmann Brothers General Store (1910, 400-410 Ridge Road), a simple one-story brick building that retains its corbeled parapet and "Hoffmann Brothers" sign on the façade. While several openings have been enclosed and the corner covered with vertical wood siding, the building serves as an important reminder of the Hoffmann family's importance in Gross Point.

The 4th Street and Linden Avenue commercial district developed following the new elevated line extension in

1912 and the construction of a new station (1913, 351 Linden Avenue) at the intersection. The Prairie style station was listed on the National Register in 1983. The one-story commercial building at the southwest corner (1922, 401-407 Linden Avenue/415-425 4th Street), designed by architect Rissenan, Herschfeld Company, includes a terra cotta façade with Classical ornamental blue glazed panels. The one-story brick commercial building at 409-413 Linden Avenue (1928), designed by W. O. Mann, contains decorative brickwork and Classical limestone pilasters. Storefronts have been replaced. The one-story commercial building at 415 Linden Avenue (1920s) includes a limestone façade with fluted pilasters and storefronts that have been altered. The one-story commercial building at 402-412 Linden Avenue (1917-1931) is a series of four buildings which were later remodeled into one exterior façade that includes angled storefronts with a Lannon stone façade.

When the Spanish Court shopping center (1927, 1515 Sheridan Road) was constructed, the surrounding area was an unincorporated section of Cook County known as "No Man's Land." The shopping center was designed in a Spanish Revival motif by architect Edwin Hill Clark, a popular style during the period which provided a cohesive shopping experience. The shopping center provided parking for its customers, making it one of the oldest open-air car-centric shopping centers in the country. Later renamed Plaza del Lago, the center's theater was demolished in 1965 and some modernization has occurred; however, several of the original buildings remain and the shopping center retains its original stylistic intent.

In the post-war era and the rise of the automobile, commercial shopping centers grew from local business districts to regional centers with multiple stores and large parking lots. Following the opening of the Edens Expressway in 1951, the Edens Plaza shopping center opened on Lake Avenue and Skokie Boulevard (1956, 3232 Lake Avenue). This important regional shopping center was anchored by the Carson, Pirie, Scott department store. Designed by the Los Angeles architectural firm of Welton Beckett and Associates and Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, the original configuration of Carsons has not been altered, although it has been significantly remodeled several times over the years. The remaining store buildings were replaced in 1994.

⁴³ Wilmette History Museum. *Historic Ridge Road Walking Tour, Neighborhood History Guide*, 2016, 10, 15, 19.

Civic and Religious Buildings

As Wilmette was once two separate Villages joined together when Gross Point was annexed to Wilmette in 1924 and 1926, it includes the current Wilmette Village Hall and the former Gross Point Village Hall. Wilmette Village Hall (1974, 1200 Wilmette Avenue) is the third Village Hall on the site, designed by architect D. Coder Taylor. The two-story brick building includes vertical limestone openings, concrete panels along the cornice, and a flat roof. The two-story brick Gross Point Village Hall (1896, 609 Ridge Road) was designed by architect Albert Fischer with decorative elements that include rusticated limestone headers, sills, and banding, and two front gables with dentils and metal cornices with returns that flank a central bay with corbels and a dentilled cornice.

The Wilmette Public Library (1951, 1242 Wilmette Avenue) is the Village's second library building, replacing the 1905 Carnegie Library. The 1951 building was designed by architects Holabird, Root, and Burgee. The three-story brick building had multiple additions in 1965, 1967, 1979, 1988, 1994, and 1998. The Wilmette Post Office (1935, 1241 Central Avenue) is designed in the Colonial Revival style, a popular style used for many federal government buildings. The one-story brick building has a central entry bay with an arched opening, fluted columns, and cornice returns in the gable. The Wilmette Water Works (1934, 200 Lake Avenue) is a two-story brick building with Art Deco elements such as the entry surround with limestone panels, vertical light fixtures, and limestone band at the second floor. The building has seen multiple additions but retains much of its historic character.



Wilmette's faith communities have been an important part of the community since its earliest days. Representing various architectural styles and building forms, Wilmette's religious buildings reflect the Village's development history. St. Joseph Church (1939, 1747 Lake Avenue) served Gross Point's German Catholic community since its founding in 1843. The current church is the fourth to be built and commands an imposing presence on the corner of Lake Avenue and Ridge Road. The brick and limestone church was designed with abstracted Romanesque Revival arches incorporating Art Deco detailing by the firm of McCarthy, Smith & Eppig. Major design elements include the arched front inset, multiple vertical stained-glass windows, and a bell tower. The firm also designed St. Francis Xavier Church (1939, 524 9th Street) in the English Gothic Revival style. The stone church includes massive buttresses, front circular window, and a low sloping roof.

While the German farming community in Gross Point was strictly Catholic, Wilmette was decidedly a Protestant community. In its earliest days several denominations came together to share a worship space. As Wilmette and its congregations grew, they expanded by constructing their own houses of worship. Due to expansions or fires, many of the early churches were replaced with larger edifices in the 1920s. One of the earliest remaining churches in Wilmette is the First Congregational Church (1905, 1125 Wilmette Avenue). The brick and stucco church has design influences from the Arts and Crafts movement and the Tudor Revival style. A school addition was constructed in 1950 designed by Childs and Smith.



The Gothic Revival style was a popular style for schools and churches in the early 20th century. Several of Wilmette's churches utilized the style in the design of their new church, including St. Augustine's Episcopal Church (1911, 1140 Wilmette Avenue), constructed a brick and stucco church with limestone trim and a large, arched front stained-glass window. The one-story front addition, chapel, and school wing were built in 1959 designed by W. Lindsay Suter. Community Church of Wilmette (1920, 1020 Forest Avenue), designed by Howard Bowen with a stone façade and front arched stained-glass window, was originally the Wilmette Baptist Church until the name was changed in 1970. Bowen also designed a classroom addition for the church in 1923. St. John's Lutheran Church (1923, 1235 Wilmette Avenue) is a brick church with limestone trim and arched openings. Trinity United Methodist Church (1929, 1024 Lake Avenue), designed by Granger and Bollenbacher, is an imposing stone building with a large, arched stained-glass window above the arched entrance and Gothic bell tower. First Presbyterian Church (1933, 600 9th Street) is a large stone church and school with vertical arched stained-glass windows and arched entrance; a 1950 addition was designed by architects Childs and Smith.

The Baha'i Temple, also known as the Baha'i House of Worship (1920-1952, 100 Linden Avenue) was designed by architect Louis Bourgeois and is Wilmette's most recognizable landmark. Taking over 30 years to build and constructed with pre-cast concrete, the Temple is a blend of architectural styles – Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, Renaissance Revival, Romanesque Revival – and includes arabesque designs along its nine sides. The Baha'i Temple was listed in the National Register in 1978 and designated a Wilmette Landmark in 1989.



Among the Post-World War II religious buildings constructed in Wilmette, the Congregation Sukkat Shalom (1962, 1001 Central Avenue) is one of the few on the Village's east side. Originally the First Church of Christ Scientist, the brick and Lannon stone building includes Contemporary details small horizontal windows within large vertical window openings and a modern interpretation of a bell tower on the roof ridge. Skokie Valley Baptist Church (1959, 1050 Skokie Boulevard), designed in the Contemporary style by architects Walton and Walton, features a tall A-frame sanctuary clad in Lannon stone with colored glazing and a one-story brick wing. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (1962, 2727 Lake Avenue) is a Contemporary design clad in multi-colored Lannon stone with two large inset entries and a curved-wall sanctuary. Its most defining feature is a tall, thin tower clad in Lannon stone.

Constructed by the Sisters of Christian Charity, Mallinckrodt (1916, 1041 Ridge Road) originally served as a convent and was converted to senior housing, a senior center, and Park District facility in 2004. The imposing five-story brick and limestone building, designed by architect Hermann J. Gaul, contains Italian Renaissance Revival elements such as an arched limestone entry with Classical columns, arched window openings, brick corbeling, and a slender central tower. Following the sale of the building to Loyola University in 1999, the Sisters of Christian Charity moved to the Sacred Heart Convent (1937, 2221 Elmwood Avenue), designed by Hermann J. Gaul and Son, originally constructed to house elderly Sisters in need of health care.

Cultural, Fraternal, and Institutional Buildings

Wilmette's cultural, fraternal and institutional facilities encompass theaters, community centers and buildings constructed for social and fraternal organizations. The Wilmette Theatre (1914/1948, 1120-22 Central Avenue), located in the Village Center, is a 20th Century Commercial design with white glazed brick façade. Originally named the Central Theatre, the marquee was replaced and the first floor remodeled with enamel panels in 1948. It was converted to retail and back to a theater several times.

The four-story Wilmette Masonic Lodge (1925, 1010 Central Avenue) was designed in the Classical Revival style by Arthur Knox for the Wilmette Park Lodge No. 931 and features a brick façade, decorative limestone panels, banding, and fluted columns within a three-story inset. Classical pediments with bracket supports are set over the two former entrances which have been enclosed with windows. The building has been converted into senior apartments.

The Community Recreation Center and Early Childhood Center (1964, 3000 Glenview Road) is an excellent and intact example of the Contemporary style design by McCoy, Erickson and Stillwaugh. Originally Bell School, the building includes low-pitched gable roofs, deep eaves with projecting rafter tails, a brick veneer with multiple patterns, concrete posts and beams, aluminum windows, and brick sills.

The Michigan Shores Club (1929, 911 Michigan Avenue), designed by architects D. H. Burnham and Company, is an elaborate mix of Gothic and Tudor Revival elements. The two-and-one-half-story building is clad in limestone, with decorative limestone panels, and stucco and half-timbering in the front gable. The building was constructed for the Shawnee Country Club (originally the Ouilmette Country Club) and was renamed in 1943.

Educational Facilities

Formal education in Wilmette dates to 1846 when Benjamin Hoffmann opened a small school in Gross Point. In Wilmette, the first public school was Central School constructed in 1871. In the 1890s, additional schools were constructed in Gross Point and Wilmette. Wilmette has never had a high school as its students attend New Trier High School in Winnetka. Of its seven public schools, only two were constructed before World War II. Highcrest Middle School (1930, 569 Hunter Road) is the oldest school in Wilmette. The one-story brick school, designed in a restrained Colonial Revival style, was closed in the 1970s and used by the Park District until it reopened in 1995. Harper Elementary School (1941, 1101 Dartmouth Street) is one of four schools in Wilmette designed by architects Childs and Smith. The one-story brick school is designed in the Colonial Revival style with a pedimented portico with wood columns.

The decades following World War II saw the construction of several new school facilities, including Central Elementary School (1949, 910 Central Avenue), located on the site of the original 1871 school. It was designed by architects Childs and Smith. The two-story brick school features elements such as horizontal bands of windows, a flat entry canopy, and flat roof. McKenzie Elementary School (1949, 649 Prairie Avenue), also designed by Childs and Smith, is a two-story brick building with flat roof and horizontal bands of windows – a design similar to Central School. Marie Murphy Middle School, (1950, 2921 Illinois Road) another design by Childs and Smith, is a one-and-two-story brick school with limestone cladding above the entry, brick quoins, and a flat roof.



Romona Elementary School (1957, 600 Romona Road) is a one-story brick school with a two-story section designed by architects Ganster and Hennighausen. The school features horizontal bands of windows, geometric brickwork, and a flat roof. Wilmette Junior High School (1961, 620 Locust Road) is an outstanding example of a Contemporary school design. The two-story brick school with one-story wings, also designed by Childs and Smith, features vertical window openings and an asymmetrical roof.

Wilmette is also home to several religious schools, the oldest of which is St. Joseph School (1934, 1740 Lake Avenue) designed by architect Herman J. Gaul in the Gothic Revival style. The Y-shaped two-story brick and limestone building features three prominent two-story limestone bays with arched entries, limestone cladding and trim, and decorative brickwork. Loyola Academy (1957, 1100 Laramie Avenue), designed by Naess and Murphy, is a two-story brick school with limestone banding, and a flat roof. The building had multiple additions in 1961, 1980, and 1993. Regina Dominican High School (1958, 701 Locust Road) is a two-story brick school designed by Barry and Kay in the Contemporary style, featuring curved facades and asymmetrical sloping roofs. Beth Hillel School (1964, 3220 Big Tree Lane) is a Contemporary design by Perkins and Will that features a flat roof with pre-cast concrete (aggregate) and stone fascia panels.



Parks and Cultural Landscapes

Construction of the North Shore Channel from 1907-1911 by the Sanitary District of Chicago (now the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago) resulted in 22 acres of new land including a harbor along Lake Michigan. This resulted from the dredging of the channel. At the same time, in 1908, the Wilmette Park District was founded. The new land became Washington Park – renamed Gillson Park in 1955 – and includes Wilmette Harbor. In 1915, landscape architect Benjamin Gage created a plan to improve the land into a park, including a curvilinear drive pattern, new entrances from Michigan Avenue, and harbor improvements. Landscape architects Charles Dudley Wagstaff and Robert E. Everly created a plan in 1936 to expand and improve the park utilizing funds from the Works Progress Administration. The Harbor was expanded and additional land was created to the north and east resulting in a 59-acre park. Prairie landscape elements were added including council rings (associated with the Prairie landscape architect Jens Jensen), limestone hardscape, and native plant material. An amphitheater, the Wallace Bowl (1936-1937), was built. The park contains two historic buildings: the U. S. Coast Guard Station (1931, 10 Harbor Drive), a two-story brick building with front and side gables that provided living quarters for the station's crew, and the Sheridan Shore Yacht Club (1937, 20 Harbor Drive), designed by Walter T. Stockton in the Colonial Revival style. The park includes several additional modern structures and buildings, including the Lakeview Center (1989) and Beach House (2019).



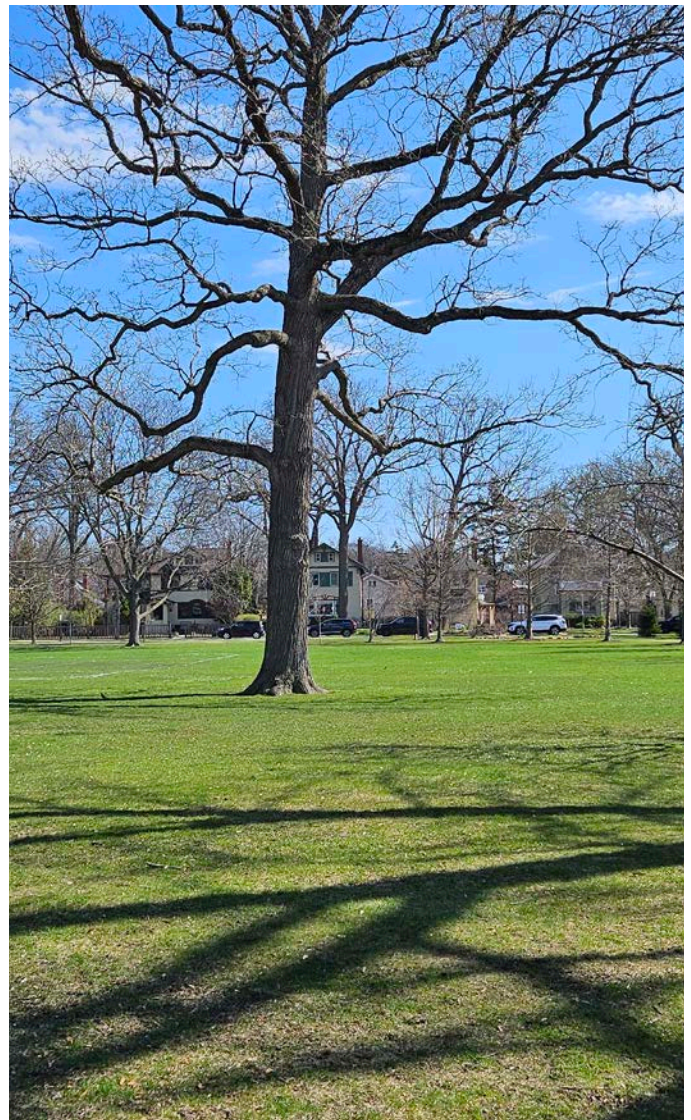
The creation of the North Shore Channel also necessitated the realignment of Sheridan Road and Michigan Avenue and the construction of a new Sheridan Road Bridge and Pumping Station (1911, 593 Sheridan Road), located within Gillson Park. The construction of a water pumping station and locks helped to create a flow in the channel and separate it from the harbor. The project was designed by architect Frederick Barrett and engineers George Monroe Wisner and Carlton Rollin Dart, all of whom worked for the Sanitary District of Chicago. The channel flows into the Chicago River system.

Following its creation in 1908, the Wilmette Park District focused its attention on the improvements to Gillson Park while seeking out new parkland in the Village. Vattmann Park (1911-1914, 1461 Lake Avenue), originally known as West Side Park, is a 4.1-acre park and was the first new parkland created after the acquisition of Gillson Park. The triangular parcel at the intersection of 11th Street, Lake Avenue, and Wilmette Avenue, known as the Church Triangle, was acquired by the Park District in 1916. Bateman Park (1916, 801 Michigan Avenue) is a half-acre park across the street from Gillson Park and is leased from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. In 1917, the Park District opened the first municipal beach started by the Woman's Club a year earlier (now the Wilmette Sailing Beach).

Roemer Park (1953, 2716 Old Glenview Road) is a small baseball field with stands that is owned by the Wilmette Baseball Association. Following its formation in 1951, the association sought to create their own field rather than play in Washington Park (Gillson Park). The Roemer family sold a portion of their farm for the new field, and the field was named for them.

St. Joseph Cemetery (1843, Northeast corner of Ridge Road and Lake Avenue) is a one-acre cemetery consecrated in 1843 for use as a burial ground for St. Joseph Church. Its first burial occurred in 1846, and it contains approximately 500 markers and stone statuary. Brick and limestone walls and pillars with wrought-iron gates flank the entrance located on Ridge Road. The cemetery is adjacent to St. Joseph School.

Wilmette's brick streets date back to the early 20th century and are concentrated in the original Village of Wilmette boundaries. Elmwood Avenue was the first street to have brick in 1905, followed by Greenwood Avenue in 1906, 8th Street in 1907, Ashland Avenue in 1908, and Chestnut Avenue in 1914. A Works Progress Administration project between 1934 and 1937 turned the bricks over to increase their longevity. The Village maintains an ongoing brick street program to reconstruct brick streets covered in asphalt, relay existing bricks following street repair, repair damaged bricks, and provide ongoing maintenance. Electric street lamps were erected in 1925 with the cast iron columns refurbished in 1999 and rewired in 2003.⁴⁴



⁴⁴ Peters, Linda. "Ouilmette North Historic District", National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Washington, DD: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2005, Sec. 7, 3.

Wilmette Designated Landmarks & Districts

The following summarizes the individual buildings, sites, and historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places or locally designated by the Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission and the Wilmette Village Board.

Wilmette Local Designations

The Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance, found in Chapter 2, Article XXXVI of the Wilmette Municipal Code, empowers the Historic Preservation Commission to recommend the designation of Local Landmarks and Local Historic Districts to the Village Board. A Certificate of Appropriateness application is reviewed by the Commission for any proposed exterior alterations to or demolition of Local Landmark properties and those located within Local Historic Districts. Locally designated properties may also be eligible for significant financial benefits, including the federal and Illinois historic preservation tax credit programs, Cook County Class L designation, as well as the Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze for owner-occupied historic homes.

As of December 2025, Wilmette has 38 individual Local Landmarks and no Local Historic Districts. Six of these Local Landmarks, [highlighted in blue](#), are also individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Local Landmarks

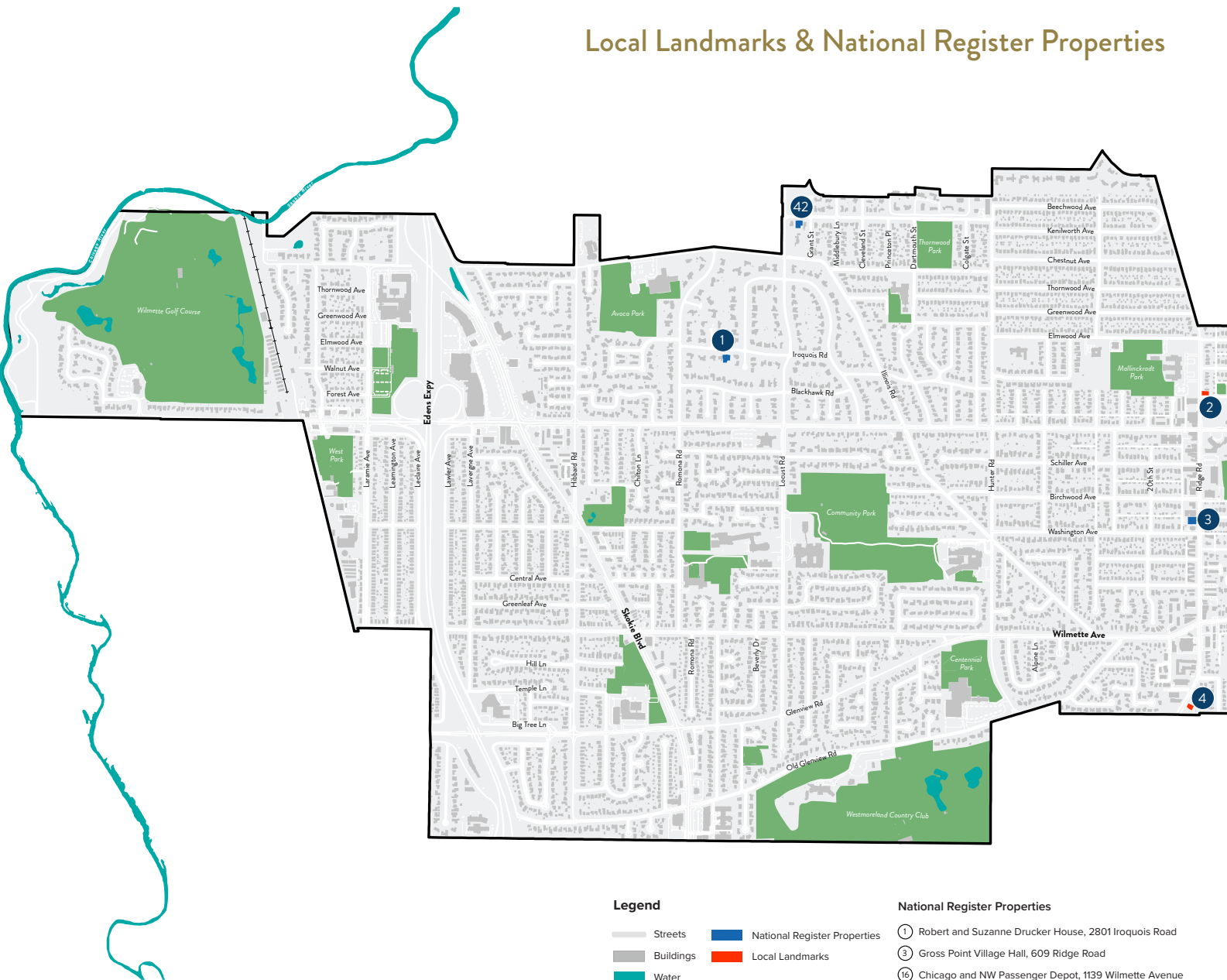
1. **Asahel Gage House**, 1134 Elmwood Avenue, designated 1989
2. **Baha'i Temple**, 100 Linden Avenue, designated 1989
3. **Chicago and North Western Depot**, 1139 Wilmette Avenue, designated 1989

4. **Gross Point Village Hall**, 609 Ridge Road, designated 1989
5. **Ralph S. Baker House**, 1226 Ashland Avenue, designated 1990
6. **Latham House**, 219 6th Street, designated 1995
7. **Bichl House**, 1110 Chestnut Avenue, designated 2000
8. **Schager House**, 1040 Chestnut Avenue, designated 2000
9. **Drake House**, 933 Lake Avenue, designated 2001
10. **Jones House**, 1423 Gregory Avenue, designated 2001
11. **Albert Bersbach House**, 1120 Michigan Avenue, designated 2002
12. **James H. Furman House**, 511 Maple Avenue, designated 2002
13. **W. Mead Walter House**, 600 Central Avenue, designated 2002
14. **Brooks House**, 922 Forest Avenue, designated 2003
15. **Dr. Karst House**, 1215 Forest Avenue, designated 2003
16. **Stoddard House**, 524 Lake Avenue, designated 2003
17. **Wischmeyer House**, 810 Forest Avenue, designated 2003
18. **Alexander McDaniel House**, 301 Sheridan Road, designated 2004
19. **Samuel Merritt Dingee House**, 926 Lake Avenue, designated 2004
20. **Skinner House**, 1220 Ashland Avenue, designated 2004
21. **John P. Doig House**, 634 Prairie Avenue, designated 2005
22. **Morris House**, 824 Lake Avenue, designated 2005

23. **Rau House**, 823 15th Street, designated 2005
24. **Michael Griffin House**, 1000 Ridge Road, designated 2006
25. **John Stut House**, 1136 Sheridan Road, designated 2007
26. **Frank J. Baker House (1909)**, 507 Lake Avenue, Architect Frank Lloyd Wright, designated 2008
27. **Savage House**, 737 Park Avenue, designated 2008
28. **Mary Becker House**, 203 Woodbine Avenue, designated 2009
29. **Robert and Suzanne Drucker House**, 2801 Iroquois Road, designated 2012
30. **Snow, Ice and Permafrost Research Establishment (SIPRE)**, 1215 Washington Avenue, designated 2012
31. **Arthur and Ida Southworth House**, 1010 Elmwood Avenue, designated 2018
32. **Bartholomew and Veronica Hoffmann House**, 204 Ridge Road, designated 2018
33. **Leyman Rosenheimer House**, 1001 Oakwood Avenue, designated 2019
34. **Philetus Warren Gates House**, 336 Sheridan Road, designated 2020
35. **Bateman House**, 735 Michigan Avenue, designated 2021
36. **Myers House**, 832 Elmwood Avenue, designated 2023
37. **Max H. Hurd House**, 769 Michigan Avenue, designated 2025
38. **KixMiller House**, 789 Michigan Avenue, designated 2025
39. **Levy House**, 700 Greenwood Avenue, currently undergoing designation process 2026



Local Landmarks & National Register Properties



Legend

- Streets
- Buildings
- Water
- Parks
- National Register Properties
- Local Landmarks

Historic Districts

- Ouilmette North National Register District
- Village Center National Register Historic District
- Oak Circle National Register Historic District
- Gillson Park Wilmette Harbor National Register Historic District

National Register Properties

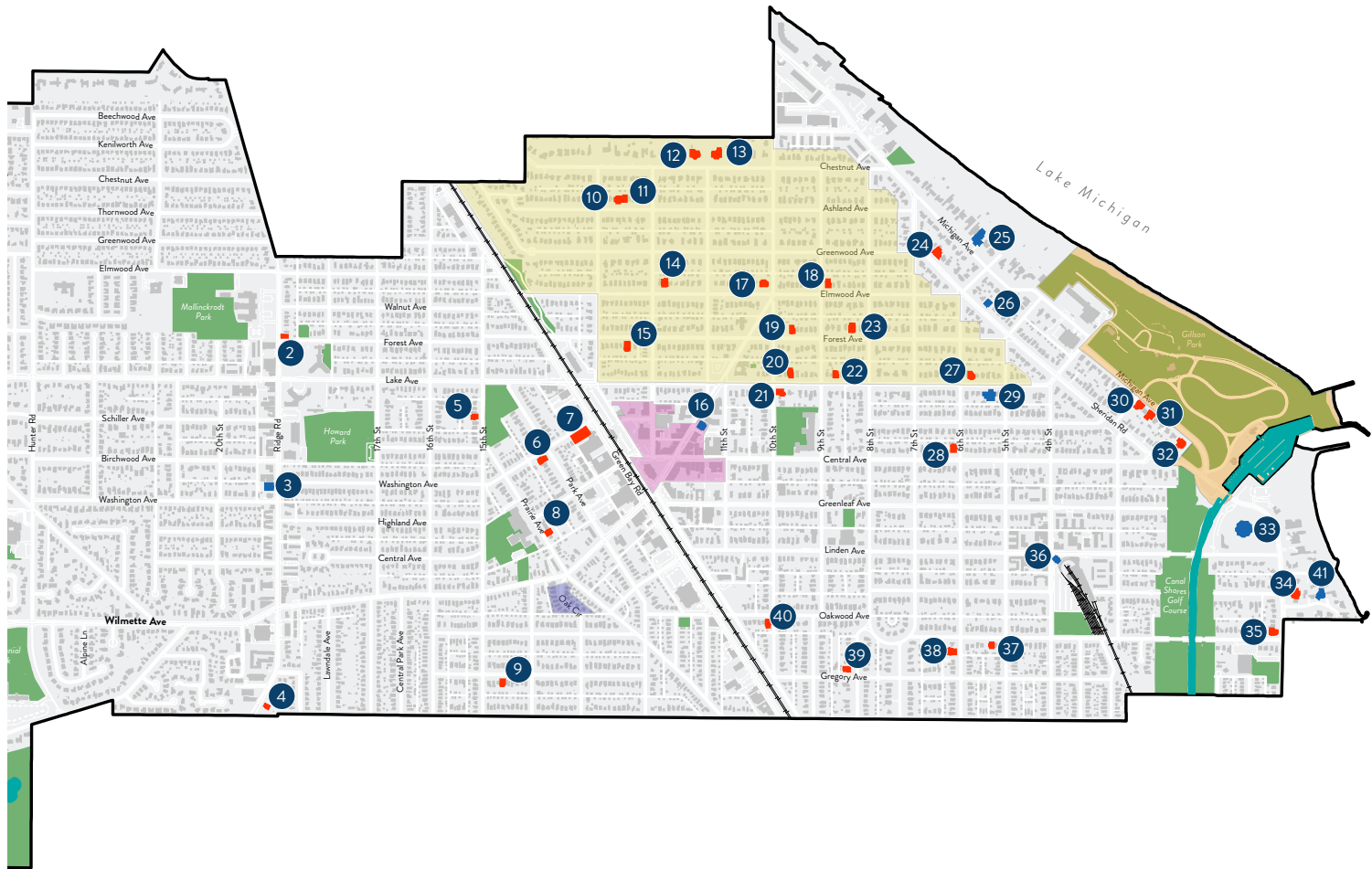
- Robert and Suzanne Drucker House, 2801 Iroquois Road
- Gross Point Village Hall, 609 Ridge Road
- Chicago and NW Passenger Depot, 1139 Wilmette Avenue
- Albert Bersbach House, 1120 Michigan Avenue
- Frank J. Baker House, 507 Lake Avenue
- Baha'i House of Worship, 100 Linden Avenue
- Bailey-Michelet House, 1028 Sheridan Road
- Linden Avenue CTA Station, 351 Linden Avenue
- Craig and Estella Hazelwood House, 16 Canterbury Court
- Eli and Jeanne Lipman House, 2633 Kenilworth Avenue

Local Landmarks

- Robert and Suzanne Drucker House, 2801 Iroquois Road
- Michael Griffin House, 1000 Ridge Road
- Gross Point Village Hall, 609 Ridge Road
- Bartholomew and Veronica Hoffmann House, 204 Ridge Road
- Rau House, 823 15th Street
- Savage House, 737 Park Avenue
- Snow, Ice and Permafrost Research Establishment (SIPRE), 1215 Washington Avenue
- John P. Dolg, 634 Prairie Avenue
- Jones House, 1423 Gregory Avenue
- Ralph S. Baker House, 1226 Ashland Avenue
- Skinner House, 1220 Ashland Avenue
- Bichl House, 1110 Chestnut Avenue
- Schager House, 1040 Chestnut Avenue
- Asahel Gage House, 1134 Elmwood Avenue
- Dr. Karst House, 1215 Forest Avenue
- Chicago and NW Passenger Depot, 1139 Wilmette Avenue
- Arthur and Ida Southworth House, 1010 Elmwood Avenue
- Myers House, 832 Elmwood Avenue
- Brooks House, 922 Forest Avenue
- Samuel Merritt Dingee House, 926 Lake Avenue
- Drake House, 933 Lake Avenue
- Morris House, 824 Lake Avenue
- Wischmeyer House, 810 Forest Avenue
- John Stut House, 1136 Sheridan Road

- Albert Bersbach House, 1120 Michigan Avenue
- Bailey-Michelet House, 1028 Sheridan Road
- Stoddard House, 524 Lake Avenue
- W. Mead Walter House, 600 Central Avenue
- Frank J. Baker House, 507 Lake Avenue
- Kix Miller House, 789 Michigan Avenue
- Max H. Hurd House, 769 Michigan Avenue
- Bateman House, 735 Michigan Avenue
- Baha'i House of Worship, 100 Linden Avenue
- Philetus Warren Gates House, 336 Sheridan Road
- Alexander McDaniel House, 301 Sheridan Road
- Linden Avenue CTA Station, 351 Linden Avenue
- James H. Furman House, 511 Maple Avenue
- Latham House, 219 6th Street
- Mary Becker House, 203 Woodbine Avenue
- Leyman Rosenheimer House, 1001 Oakwood Avenue
- Craig and Estella Hazelwood House, 16 Canterbury Court
- Eli and Jeanne Lipman House, 2633 Kenilworth Avenue

Local Landmarks & National Register Properties Continued



Legend

- Streets
- National Register Properties
- Buildings
- Local Landmarks
- Water
- Parks

Historic Districts

- Ouilmette North National Register District
- Village Center National Register Historic District
- Oak Circle National Register Historic District
- Gillson Park Wilmette Harbor National Register Historic District

National Register Properties

- ① Robert and Suzanne Drucker House, 2801 Iroquois Road
- ③ Gross Point Village Hall, 609 Ridge Road
- ⑬ Chicago and NW Passenger Depot, 1139 Wilmette Avenue
- ⑮ Albert Bersbach House, 1120 Michigan Avenue
- ⑲ Frank J. Baker House, 507 Lake Avenue
- ⑳ Baha'i House of Worship, 100 Linden Avenue
- ㉔ Bailey-Michelet House, 1028 Sheridan Road
- ㉖ Linden Avenue CTA Station, 351 Linden Avenue
- ㉘ Craig and Estella Hazelwood House, 16 Canterbury Court
- ㉚ Eli and Jeanne Lipman House, 2633 Kenilworth Avenue

Local Landmarks

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| ① Robert and Suzanne Drucker House, 2801 Iroquois Road | ⑬ Schager House, 1040 Chestnut Avenue | ⑮ Albert Bersbach House, 1120 Michigan Avenue | ⑳ James H. Furman House, 511 Maple Avenue |
| ② Michael Griffin House, 1000 Ridge Road | ⑭ Asahel Gage House, 1134 Elmwood Avenue | ㉔ Bailey-Michelet House, 1028 Sheridan Road | ㉘ Latham House, 219 6th Street |
| ③ Gross Point Village Hall, 609 Ridge Road | ⑮ Dr. Karst House, 1215 Forest Avenue | ㉖ Stoddard House, 524 Lake Avenue | ㉚ Mary Becker House, 203 Woodbine Avenue |
| ④ Bartholomew and Veronica Hoffmann House, 204 Ridge Road | ⑯ Chicago and NW Passenger Depot, 1139 Wilmette Avenue | ㉘ W. Mead Walter House, 600 Central Avenue | ㉜ Leyman Rosenheimer House, 1001 Oakwood Avenue |
| ⑤ Rau House, 823 15th Street | ⑰ Arthur and Ida Southworth House, 1010 Elmwood Avenue | ㉚ Frank J. Baker House, 507 Lake Avenue | ㉘ Craig and Estella Hazelwood House, 16 Canterbury Court |
| ⑥ Savage House, 737 Park Avenue | ⑱ Myers House, 832 Elmwood Avenue | ㉜ KixMiller House, 789 Michigan Avenue | ㉚ Eli and Jeanne Lipman House, 2633 Kenilworth Avenue |
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| ⑩ Ralph S. Baker House, 1226 Ashland Avenue | ㉖ Morris House, 824 Lake Avenue | ㉜ Philletus Warren Gates House, 336 Sheridan Road | |
| ⑪ Skinner House, 1220 Ashland Avenue | ㉚ Wischmeyer House, 810 Forest Avenue | ㉜ Alexander McDaniel House, 301 Sheridan Road | |
| ⑫ Bichi House, 1110 Chestnut Avenue | ㉔ John Stut House, 1136 Sheridan Road | ㉜ Linden Avenue CTA Station, 351 Linden Avenue | |

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's official list of buildings, structures, sites and objects worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is a program of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. In Illinois, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, headquartered in Springfield, administers the National Register program. The Historic Preservation Division serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Listing in the National Register recognizes historic resources that are significant at the local, state or national levels. National Register designation is also honorary and imposes no restrictions on the use, alteration and disposition of property; however, National Register listing makes available significant financial benefits, including eligibility for the federal and Illinois historic preservation tax credit programs, as well as the Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze for owners of historic homes.

National Register listings may include individual buildings or properties within a historic district. National Register districts may also include accessory buildings, such as garages and coach houses; structures such as fences and bridges; objects such as monuments, fountains and statues; and sites, including parks, cemeteries and designed landscapes. In most cases, National Register listing requires an evaluation and a formal recommendation to the National Park Service for listing places in Illinois on the Register. Any person or organization can prepare and submit a National Register nomination through the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office.

National Register Properties

As of December 2025, there are 10 properties individually listed in the National Register. Six of these properties, highlighted in blue, are also designated as Wilmette Local Landmarks.

1. **Frank J. Baker House**, 507 Lake Avenue (NRHP #74000759, listed 1974)
2. **Chicago and North Western Depot**, 1139 Wilmette Avenue (NRHP #75000658, listed 1975)
3. **Baha'i Temple**, 100 Linden Avenue (NRHP #78001140, listed 1978)
4. **Bailey-Michelet House**, 1028 Sheridan Road (NRHP #82002533, listed 1982)
5. **Linden Avenue Terminal (CTA)**, 351 Linden Avenue (NRHP #84001002, listed 1984)
6. **Gross Point Village Hall**, 609 Ridge Road (NRHP #91001001, listed 1991)
7. **Albert Bersbach House**, 1120 Michigan Avenue (NRHP #03000941, listed 2003)
8. **Robert and Suzanne Drucker House**, 2801 Iroquois Road (NRHP #13000715, listed 2013)
9. **Craig and Estella Hazelwood House**, 16 Canterbury Court (NRHP #100010216, listed 2024)
10. **Eli and Jeanne Lipman House**, 2633 Kenilworth Avenue (NRHP #100011691, listed 2025)

National Register Historic Districts

As of December 2025, there are four historic districts listed in the National Register.

Oak Circle National Register Historic District

The Oak Circle Historic District is bounded by Wilmette Avenue on the north and the alley to north of Maple Avenue on the south. The district is comprised of 15 houses and 11 detached garages. The one-block curvilinear brick street is flanked by a grass carriage walk with mature street trees, concrete sidewalks, reproductions of historic streetlights, and narrow lots with small setbacks. All of the homes are 1 and 1-1/2 story bungalows or houses designed in the Craftsman style with some including details from the Prairie style. The district's lots were platted in Joseph Woodruff's Addition to Wilmette in 1907 and resubdivided by A. W. Dickinson in 1920.

26
Buildings

National Register
Historic District:
Listed 2001, NRHP
#1000668

85%
Contributing

C. 1917-1924
Period of Significance

15%
Non-Contributing



Ouilmette North National Register Historic District

The Ouilmette North Historic District is bounded by the Village boundary on the north, Sheridan Road on the east, Lake Avenue and Elmwood Avenue on the south, and 13th Street and Metra railroad tracks on the west. The district is comprised of a rectilinear street grid apart from two diagonal streets – Wilmette Avenue and Richmond Lane – within a 46-block area that includes brick streets flanked by wide grass carriage walks, mature street trees, concrete sidewalks, historic streetlights, and a variety of lot sizes and setbacks. The streetlamps and brick streets contribute to the character of the district. All of the streets are serviced by rear alleys except for several blocks in the northeast corner of the district.

Buildings within the district include single-family homes, most with detached garages, and two churches – Trinity United Methodist Church and Community Church of Wilmette. The homes date from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century with the majority constructed between 1900-1925. The district includes a range of architectural styles including Queen Anne, Italianate, Colonial Revival, Italian Renaissance Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Craftsman, and Prairie. Houses were frequently architect-designed.

1,190
Buildings

National Register
Historic District:
Listed 2005, NRHP
#5001370

77%
Contributing

1869-1945
Period of Significance

23%
Non-Contributing



Village Center National Register Historic District

The Village Center Historic District incorporates most of the central business district of Wilmette, including portions of Wilmette Avenue, Central Avenue, 12th Street, Washington Court, and Poplar Drive. The Union Pacific railway line defines the western boundary. Wilmette Avenue is a diagonal street bisecting the rectilinear street grid. The commercial district is defined by concrete sidewalks, carriage walks – both concrete and grass – street trees, street lamps, and landscaping. The buildings range in height from one- to-three stories with brick or limestone facades, many with flat roofs and parapets. The district includes Wilmette Village Hall and Veterans Park, as well as the Chicago and North Western Railway Depot, moved to its current location in 1974. The district's architectural styles include Commercial Vernacular, Italianate, Tudor Revival, Classical Revival, Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival, and Brutalist.

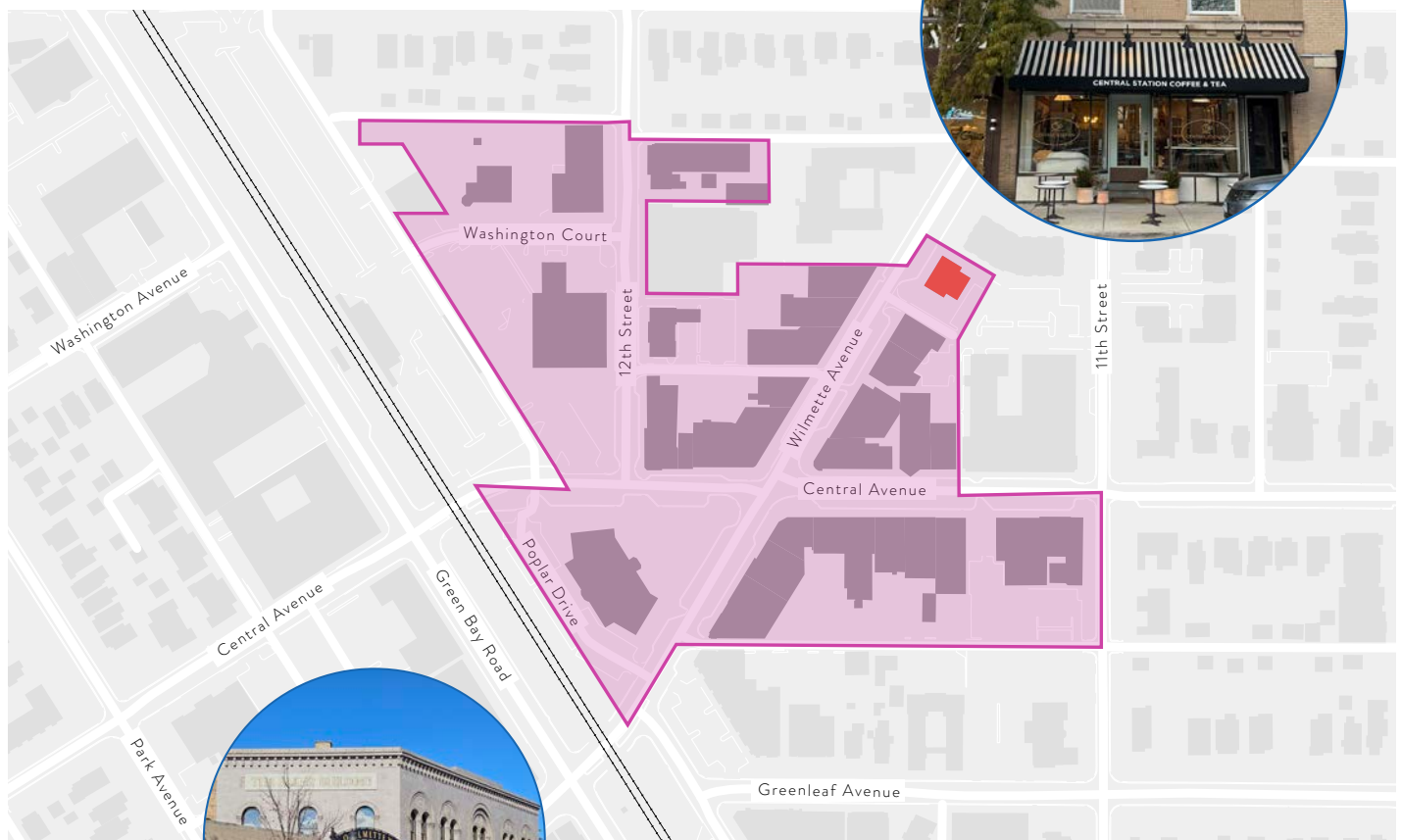


National Register
Historic District:
Listed 2023, NRHP
#10008874

89%
Contributing

1874-1974
Period of Significance

11%
Non-Contributing



Gillson Park and Wilmette Harbor Historic District

The Gillson Park and Wilmette Harbor Historic District is a 59.2-acre park situated along Lake Michigan and the entrance to the North Shore Channel. The channel's construction between 1907-1911 led to the creation of a 22-acre park and harbor c. 1915 designed by landscape architect Benjamin Gage. Originally called Washington Park, the park was expanded in 1936 using funding from the Works Progress Administration with design by landscape architects Charles Dudley Wagstaff and Robert E. Everly. The cultural landscape includes a variety of contributing resources including the Coast Guard Station, Sheridan Shore Yacht Club, Wilmette Harbor, Sheridan Road Bridge and Pumping Station, a picnic shelter, drives, historic stone structures, and the park's landscape. The park is bounded by the Michigan Shores Club and the Wilmette Water Treatment Facility on the north, Lake Michigan on the east, Wilmette Harbor on the south, and Michigan Avenue on the west.



National Register
Historic District:
Listed 2024, NRHP
#100009684

74%
Contributing

1907-1973
Period of Significance

26%
Non-Contributing



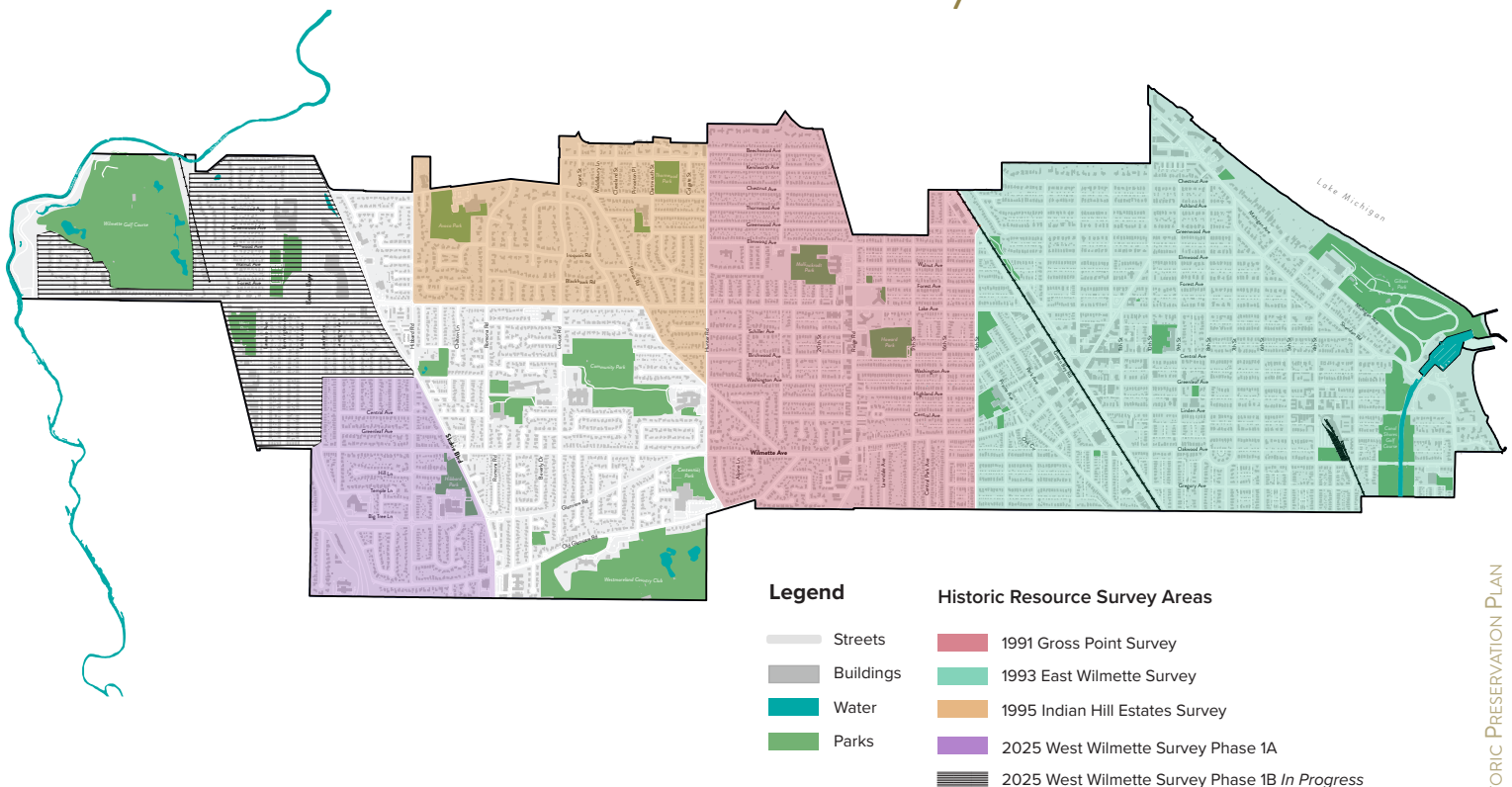
Survey and Documentation

Architectural and historical Surveys are a planning tool used to identify significant properties that may be eligible for listing in the National Register individually or as part of a historic district or designated as Local Landmarks or Historic Districts. Surveys also provide an educational opportunity to increase public awareness and appreciation for Wilmette's significant heritage as well as the Village's historic preservation program. The results of a survey can be valuable to the Village's future planning efforts, to the Historic Preservation Commission's review of Certificate of Appropriateness applications, and to individual property owners looking to research and preserve their property. In addition, Certified Local Government (CLG) communities are required to maintain an ongoing survey and documentation program; Wilmette was designated as a CLG in 1990.

Illinois Historic Structures Survey – Interim Report (1972)

The State of Illinois conducted the Illinois Historic Structures Survey, which identified and inventoried resources of architectural or technological interest, between 1971-1975. The survey, conducted in all Illinois towns and cities with a population of at least 500, documented basic property information, such as resource type, ownership, integrity, present use, and architect, when known, and noted resources potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. The Wilmette Interim Report was meant to be a first step for identifying important resources in the community, providing the opportunity for the local preservation community to update and add to the inventory. The Illinois State Historic Preservation Office has since incorporated survey information in an online database known as the Historic Architectural Resources Geographic Information System (HARGIS).

Wilmette Historic Resource Survey Areas



The Illinois Historic Structures Survey identified 117 buildings in Wilmette of architectural and/or technological merit, with an additional nine properties added to the inventory by the local preservation community. The survey inventory includes residences, commercial and institutional buildings, and churches. The inventory includes property address, resource type and, in some cases, the original construction date, original owner, and architect.

Historical and Architectural Survey: Gross Point Area (1991)

In 1991, the Village of Wilmette completed a survey of an area that included the original Village of Gross Point, incorporated in 1874 and annexed to the Village of Wilmette in 1924. The survey area encompassed all properties between 15th Street on the east, Hunter Road on the west, and the Village's northern and southern boundaries. A total of 2,360 resources were documented, including a mix of residences, churches, schools, and commercial buildings and sites, the majority constructed prior to 1940. The survey identified the following preservation planning priorities:

- The survey identified 3 buildings as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.
- The survey identified 37 buildings as significant and potentially eligible for Local Landmark designation.

Historical and Architectural Survey: East Wilmette (1993)

In 1993, the Village of Wilmette completed a survey of East Wilmette, which encompassed all properties east of 15th Street bounded by Lake Michigan and the Village's northern and southern boundaries. A total of 2,744 resources were documented, including a mix of residences, churches, schools, and commercial buildings and sites, the majority constructed prior to 1945.

The survey identified the following preservation planning priorities:

- The survey identified 16 buildings as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.
- The survey identified 144 buildings as significant and potentially eligible for Local Landmark designation.
- The survey identified 1,749 buildings as contributing to two potential historic districts:
 - Properties east of Green Bay Road on the west, Lake Michigan on the east, Wilmette's southern boundary, and Chestnut Avenue on the north (including houses along the north side of Chestnut and excluding Richmond Lane and the western section of Ashland Avenue).
 - Properties along the one-block section of Oak Circle.

Historical and Architectural Survey: Indian Hill Estates and Environs (1995)

In 1995, the Village of Wilmette completed a survey of an area that included the Indian Hill Estates subdivision developed by the Bills Realty Syndicate beginning in 1926, which encompassed all properties east of 15th Street on the east, portions of Illinois Road and Hibbard Road on the west, Lake Avenue on the south, and the Village boundary on the north. A total of 830 resources were documented, including mostly residences constructed through the 1950s. The survey identified the following preservation planning priorities:

- The survey identified 3 houses as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.
- The survey identified 42 houses as significant and potentially eligible for Local Landmark designation.
- The survey identified a potential Indian Hill Estates Historic Districts bounded by Hibbard Road on the west, Hunter Road on the east, Lake Avenue on the south, and the Village boundaries on the north.

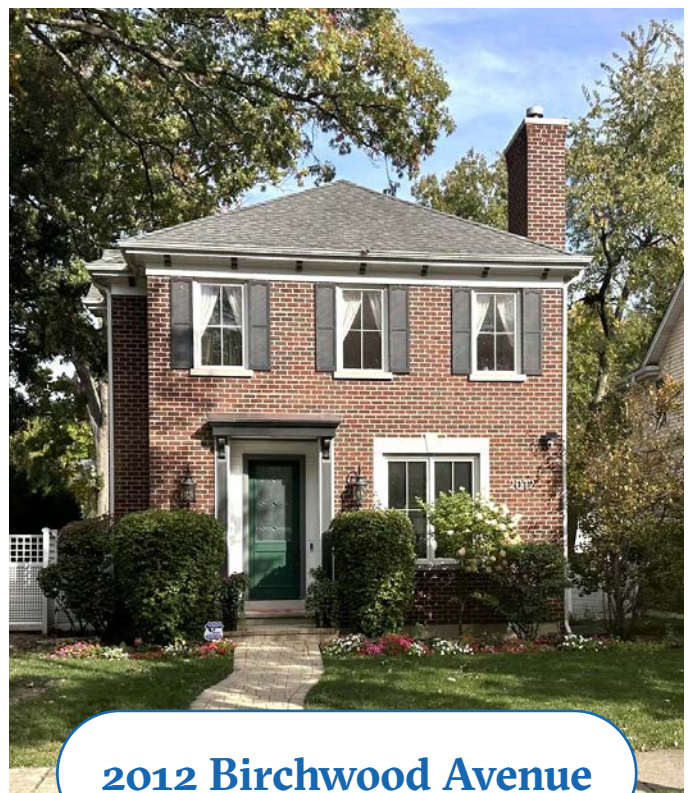
West Wilmette Historical Resource Survey: Phase 1A (2025)

In 2025, the Village of Wilmette completed the first phase of a survey of post-WWII subdivisions, including some remnants of an earlier farming community, which encompassed all properties west of Skokie Boulevard, south of Washington Avenue, east of the I-94 expressway and the Village boundaries on the west and south. A total of 712 resources were documented, including a mix of commercial buildings and residences constructed through the 1970s. Phase 1B of the survey is planned for completion in 2026. The survey identified the following preservation planning priorities:

- The survey identified 4 properties as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.
- The survey identified 18 houses as significant and potentially eligible for Local Landmark designation.
- The survey identified three potential historic districts:
 - Lockerbie Lane District: The potential district includes 28 homes constructed between 1927-1964 on Lockerbie Lane, a street that extends south of Old Glenview Road ending in a cul-de-sac.
 - Hill Lane District: The potential district includes 35 homes constructed in 1955 and 1956 on Hill Lane, a street that extends west from Hibbard Road ending in a cul-de-sac
 - Thelin Court District: The potential district includes 33 homes constructed between 1956-1960 on Thelin Court, a street that extends north from Old Glenview Road ending in a cul-de-sac.

Summary of Wilmette Architectural Styles and Building Types

For a village its size, Wilmette has a broad spectrum of significant buildings designed in a wide variety of styles ranging from a unique Second Empire house to a noteworthy Prairie Style house by Frank Lloyd Wright to an International Style house by Keck and Keck that incorporates passive solar technology. In addition, there are several Prairie houses designed by Wright's followers including William Drummond, John Van Bergen and Tallmadge and Watson. Blocks of houses inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement and numerous homes derived from Colonial, Tudor, French and Italian precedents line the streets, many architect-designed. Post World War II development created subdivisions of Minimal Traditional, Ranch, and Contemporary houses. Although demolition remains a threat, the architectural fabric of Wilmette remains largely intact. See *Appendix A: Wilmette Historic Architectural Styles and Building Types* for further detail on the characteristics of the many architectural styles and building types found in Wilmette.



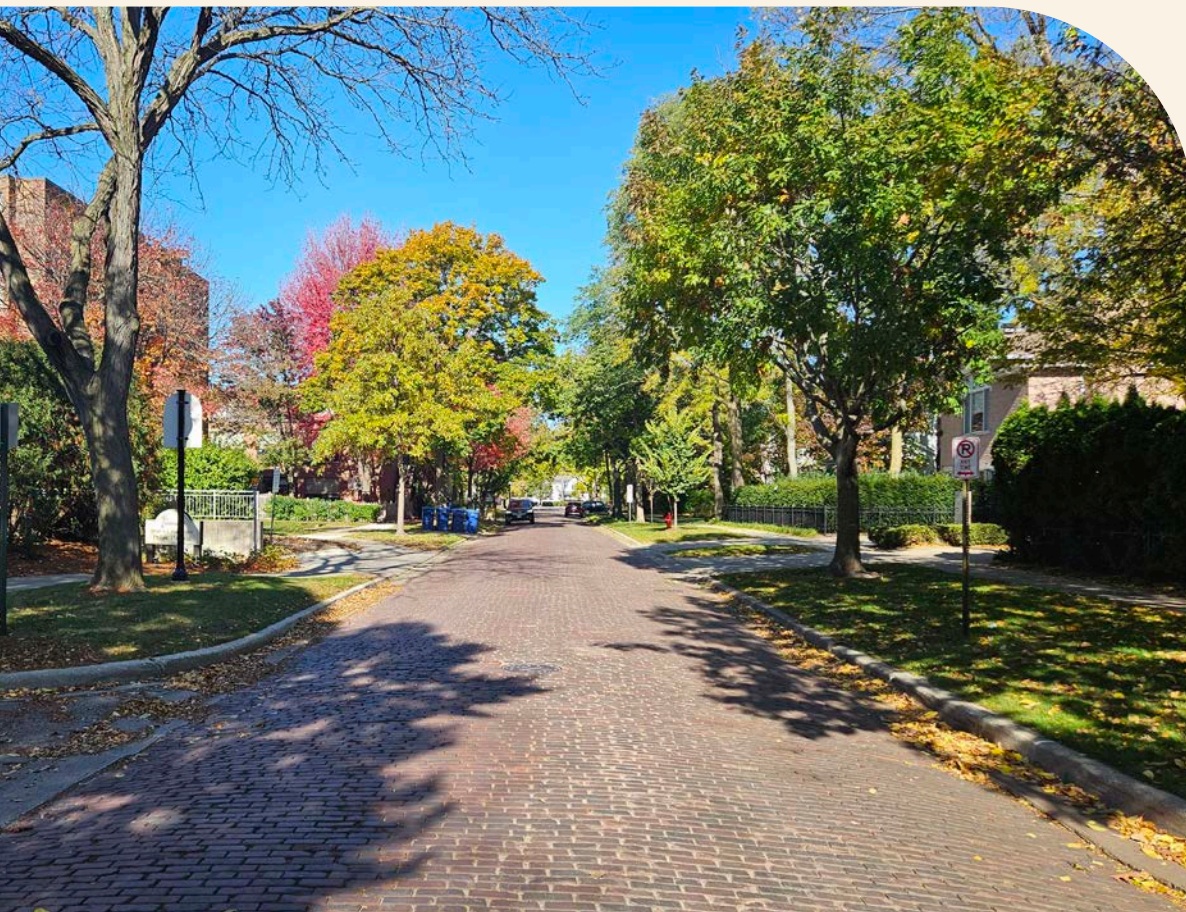
2012 Birchwood Avenue



SECTION 3

Planning & Program Administration

Historic preservation in Wilmette is informed by a combination of local, state, and federal policies that enable the Village to actively preserve and protect its distinctive historic and architectural character.



This section outlines the key planning policies, legal frameworks, programs, and regulatory tools that support preservation efforts in Wilmette, with particular emphasis on the historic preservation ordinance and the role of the Historic Preservation Commission. This also includes current programs, partnerships, and resources that help guide, support, and strengthen historic preservation activities throughout the Village.

State & Local Planning Context

Illinois planning law recognizes historic preservation as an important consideration in comprehensive planning and allows communities to adopt preservation plans based on local needs. In Wilmette, this Historic Preservation Plan functions as a supporting element of the Village's broader planning framework, ensuring that preservation informs land use, design, and long-term development decisions.

Illinois Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2024 – 2034

The Illinois State Historic Preservation Office prepares a state-wide plan that defines how historic preservation can benefit Illinois. Following extensive surveys and outreach activities to gather feedback from Illinois stakeholders, The Historic Preservation Plan provides a goal framework for statewide preservation action, including:

- Strengthening local historic preservation programs through efforts in education, networking, and outreach.
- Fostering partnerships that enhance the work and capabilities of preservation entities across Illinois.

- Promoting historic preservation locally and regionally as an effective means of achieving vibrant and resilient communities.
- Undertaking wide-ranging educational, communication, and engagement initiatives that promote preservation's benefits across the state.

Promoting state and local initiatives that document, interpret, and celebrate the places and traditions associated with the state's diverse communities.

Village of Wilmette Housing Plan (2026 In-Process)

The Village of Wilmette, with support from the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus, is preparing a new Housing Plan to better understand and respond to the housing needs of Wilmette residents and workers. The plan will assess local and regional trends influencing Wilmette's housing supply, review regional best practices for meeting community needs and market demand, and develop recommendations related to zoning, financing, and other regulations affecting the Village's existing and future housing stock. The plan will also help inform residents and Village officials as they make future land use and housing decisions.

In coordination with the Housing and Historic Preservation Commissions, the Village is identifying opportunities to align the new Housing Plan with the Historic Preservation Plan—an especially important effort given that much of Wilmette's housing stock is more than 50 years old. The Wilmette Housing Plan is expected to be completed at the end of 2026.

Village of Wilmette Affordable Housing Plan (2025)

Developed in accordance with the requirement of the State of Illinois Affordable Housing and Appeal Act (AHPAA), the Affordable Housing Plan outlines sites suitable for new affordable housing, rehabilitation or conversion, developer-led affordable projects, and publicly owned properties. The plan identifies 16 potential sites for future affordable housing opportunities. Most of the identified sites require redevelopment to provide new housing, while others, such as the Baha'i Home at Greenleaf Avenue and 4th Street and the Sisters of Christian Charity convent at 2221 Elmwood Avenue, are well suited for adaptive reuse. A 2023 Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act (AHPAA) review found that 501 of the Village's 10,331 housing units are considered affordable.

Village of Wilmette Comprehensive Plan – Ready Set Wilmette (2024)

In 2021, the Village of Wilmette embarked on a multiyear process to document Wilmette's existing conditions, conduct extensive community outreach, and prepare a new comprehensive plan – *Ready Set Wilmette*. The Comprehensive Plan is organized around 10 overarching themes: community character; arts, culture, and entertainment; health, safety, and wellness; community institutions; sustainability; activity transportation; diversity and inclusion; housing; business and commerce; and land use and sub-areas. As Wilmette is largely physically built out, significant emphasis is given to new infill development, increasing affordable and attainable housing options, improving transportation and connectivity, enhancing local sustainability, and expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Historic preservation is directly addressed under the community character theme noting that “preserving and highlighting the historic elements of the built environment are always front of mind in Wilmette, and will continue to be (Wilmette Comprehensive Plan, p. 36).”

Recommendations focus on promoting the diverse history of Wilmette, expanding documentation of the community's historic resources, raising awareness of local preservation programs and benefits, identifying new preservation incentives, and creating the Villages first historic preservation plan.

Wilmette Park District Comprehensive Plan 2024 - 2033

In 2024, the Wilmette Park District created a new 10-year Comprehensive Plan to guide and inform investment in enhanced park facilities and programming in Wilmette. Following an extensive public engagement process, the Comprehensive Plan outlines goals and strategies for five strategic priorities: community health and wellbeing; exceptional and inclusive opportunities; organizational strength; remarkable facilities; and vibrant open spaces. While historic preservation is not directly addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, there is a strong emphasis on enhancing the look and functionality of existing park district facilities, such as the Community Recreation Center, originally built as a school in 1965, and the need to identify space for additional parks, trails, play fields, etc.

Wilmette Park District Strategic Plan 2024 – 2029 – Project Parks and Play

Project Parks and Play is the first strategic plan undertaken by the Wilmette Park District. Guided by an Advisory Panel and informed by a series of open houses, pop-up events, focus groups, and surveys, the strategic plan outlines new mission and vision statements for the Wilmette Park District, as well as establishing guiding principles by which it will operate. Like the 2024 Wilmette Park District Comprehensive Plan, key priorities in the Strategic Plan include: community health and well-being; exceptional and inclusive opportunities; organizational strength; remarkable facilities; and vibrant open spaces. The Strategic Plan does not address historic preservation, but facility maintenance, repair, and replacement are emphasized under Remarkable Facilities.

Village of Wilmette Sustainable Communities Strategic Plan (2021)

Developed by the Wilmette Environmental and Energy Commission as part of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' 2018 Greenest Region Compact, the Sustainable Communities Strategic Plan outlines goals and priorities for enhancing the Village's overall environmental performance. Topics pertinent to older and historic properties include efforts to improve the energy performance of existing homes, businesses, and community facilities, as well as the need to preserve and adapt existing residences to help maintain local housing diversity.

Village Center Master Plan (2011)

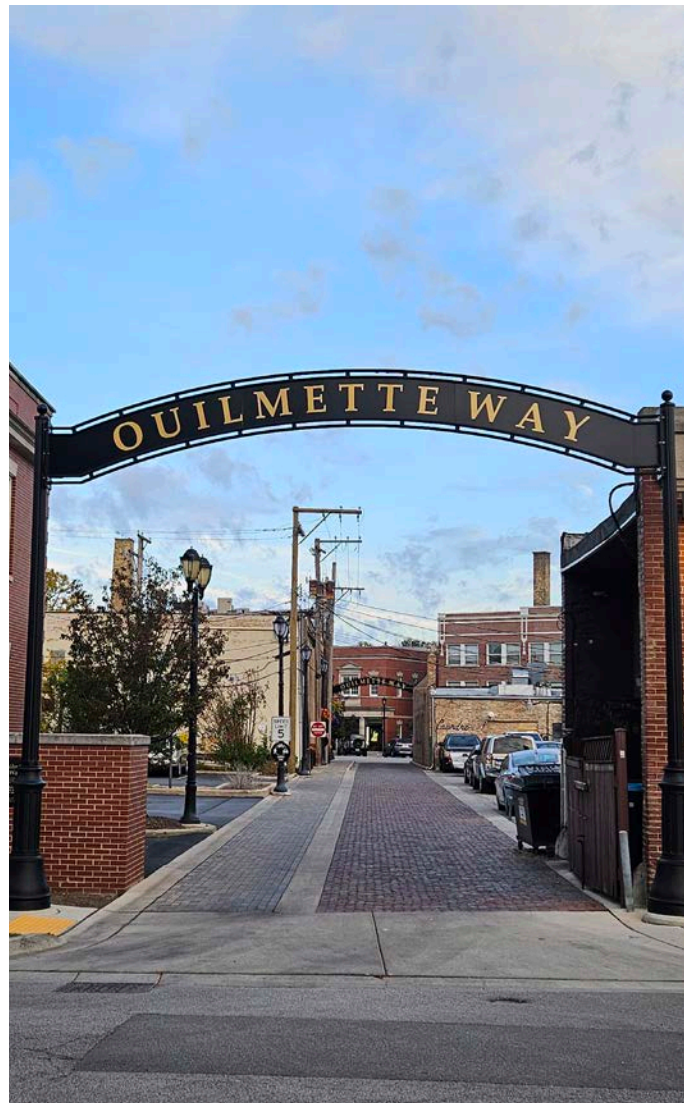
Developed by the Lakota Group, the Village Center Master Plan outlines strategies for improving Wilmette's traditional downtown and train station area. In addition to expanding housing opportunities downtown, the plan identifies inefficient commercial buildings and frames key shopping streets with new building street walls. It also recommends mixed-use development along Green Bay Road to transform the auto-oriented character of the roadway into a pedestrian-friendly shopping district. Other key elements include enhancing the central village green, adding a new walkway along the METRA tracks, and creating a large open space for community events.



Legal Context

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended (16 U.S.C. 470) is the nation's primary historic preservation law. The act created the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of properties significant in the history, architecture, archeology and culture of the United States. The act also called for the creation of State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) to administer the national program at the state level.



Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

In 1980, Congress amended the National Historic Preservation Act to implement the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, which allows for local communities to participate in statewide preservation planning activities, including access to grants and resources allocated by the U.S. Congress. The central purpose of the CLG Program, administered between the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the designated CLGs is developing a strong, effective historic preservation program at the local level.

To become a CLG in Illinois, a local community must establish a Historic Preservation Commission, adopt a historic preservation ordinance and enforce applicable state and local laws, maintain an adequate and qualified Historic Preservation Commission, maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties, and provide for public participation in the local historic preservation program. Local CLGs also play a role in National Register nominations by reviewing and commenting on nominations before submission to the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Committee and may be eligible to receive planning, survey, and National Register grants. Wilmette became a Certified Local Government in 1990.



Village Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2: Administration, Article 36: Historic Preservation Commission

An essential part of any municipal preservation program is a community's ability to safeguard its historic resources, designate local historic landmarks and districts, and evaluate how rehabilitation, demolition, or new construction will affect those historic resources. Article 36 establishes the Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission with the purpose of "preserving the character of community life by recognizing, preserving and acknowledging the significance of those structures, sites, geographic features, and trees which exemplify or reflect the cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history of the village in accordance with the provisions of this division." The ordinance further codifies the Commission's membership and appointment process, creates a Certificate of Appropriateness (COAs) for reviewing the impact of public and private projects on historic resources, and assigns the Village Board of Trustees with final authority to review and approve. The Commission's recommendations on landmark designations and COAs.

The work of the Historic Preservation Commission is further guided and informed by the *Historic Preservation Commission Handbook* (Revised April 8, 2019). The Handbook outlines detailed rules and procedures for Commission processes including application requirements, public notifications and meetings, and review procedures for local historic landmarks and district nominations, COAs, and Certificates of Economic Hardship.

See Appendix B for Additional Legal Context and Wilmette.Gov/HistoricPreservation for Chapter 2, Article 36, Historic Preservation Ordinance, and for the Historic Preservation Commission Handbook.

Local Designation Procedures

The designation of individual local landmarks and landmark districts is one of the most important historic preservation tools available to the Village of Wilmette and a core responsibility of the Historic Preservation Commission. Per *The Historic Preservation Commission Handbook*, the Historic Preservation Commission or any person may nominate “any artifacts, structures, sites, geographic features, and trees” as a Wilmette Landmark or Historic District. Houses of worship are exempt from local landmarking unless they voluntarily choose to participate in the process. There are currently 38 individual Wilmette Landmarks and no Historic Districts in Wilmette.

The landmark designation process begins when a completed Village of Wilmette Local Landmark or Historic District Nomination Form is submitted to the Commission. After reviewing the form, the Village will contact the owners of all properties proposed for designation by phone and mail to gather their feedback. Although owner consent is not required for designation as an individual local landmark, at least 75% of property owners must support the creation of a historic district.

Next, the Historic Preservation Commission will hold a public pre-hearing meeting to explain the designation process, rules, and benefits, followed by a formal public hearing on the nomination. During the hearing, anyone may provide oral or written comments or submit other evidence.

After the hearing(s) conclude, the Commission will prepare a formal report recommending approval or denial of the proposed local landmark or historic district to the Village Board of Trustees. This report may include a draft ordinance designating the property as a Wilmette Local Landmark or, for a Historic District, establishing the district boundaries and identifying contributing and non-contributing properties.

Certificate of Appropriateness Review

The Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) review process ensures that any changes to a locally designated historic property are compatible with its historic character. As outlined in *The Historic Preservation Commission Handbook*, a COA is required for any alteration, addition, or demolition request involving a Wilmette Local Landmark or a contributing property within a Historic District, as well as for new infill construction in a Historic District. Because Wilmette does not have its own design guidelines, the Historic Preservation Commission relies on the U.S. Department of the Interior’s *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*, a set of ten nationally recognized preservation principles for evaluating how changes may affect a historic resource.

See *Historic Preservation Commission Handbook* at wilmette.gov/HistoricPreservation to review the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*.



To obtain a COA, applicants must submit a complete application to the Historic Preservation Commission. Depending on the scope of the proposed work, COA review may be conducted by staff, a Historic Preservation Commission subcommittee, or by the full Commission:

- **Staff Review.** The Department of Community Development may review projects that do not affect the historic features of contributing properties in a local historic district. Examples include sidewalks, fences, decks, demolition of non-contributing structures within a district, and any alterations to contributing properties that are not visible from a public right-of-way. Additionally, staff reviews in kind repairs or replacement, landscaping, driveways, sidewalks, and removal of non-historical materials for individually listed Wilmette Local Landmarks.
- **Subcommittee Review.** A subcommittee of the Historic Preservation Commission, consisting of the Chairperson and at least one additional member, may review projects involving restoration of historic features on contributing properties in a local historic district. These typically include restoration of architectural details, windows, porches, and other changes visible from the street or other public right-of-way.
- **Full HPC Review.** Review by the full Commission is required for all additions, demolitions, or new construction within a historic district, as well as for any changes to individually designated Wilmette Landmarks.

Projects reviewed and approved by staff or by an HPC subcommittee receive an Administrative Approval Certificate, allowing the applicant to proceed with the building permit process or, if no permit is required, to begin work on their historic property. Projects requiring review by the full Historic Preservation Commission advance to a public hearing, where Commissioners evaluate the proposed work using the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Members of the public may provide oral or written comments and submit other relevant evidence. After the hearing, the Commission prepares a report recommending approval or denial of the COA to the Village Board of Trustees.

If the Village Board approves the recommendation by a simple majority, the project may move forward with the building permit process.

Applicants who are denied a COA for alteration or demolition of their property may request a Certificate of Economic Hardship from the Historic Preservation Commission. According to *The Historic Preservation Commission Handbook*, this certificate will only be issued when the applicant demonstrates that lack of a COA “has resulted in the denial of all reasonable use and return from the property.” To request a Certificate of Economic Hardship, property owners must apply to the Historic Preservation Commission and submit evidence showing why the Commission’s recommendations for obtaining a COA are not feasible.

Once the application is received, the HPC will hold a public hearing to consider the request and will prepare a report to the Village Board of Trustees recommending approval or denial. The Village Board then votes on the recommendation and may approve or deny the Certificate of Economic Hardship by a simple majority.



Village Boards & Commissions

This section highlights the Village of Wilmette's boards and commissions that influence historic preservation in the community. Their work may involve designating historic properties, reviewing repairs or alterations to older buildings, guiding planning and zoning policies, or shaping broader public policy priorities. It also outlines key partner organizations involved in preservation, including government agencies and advocacy groups.

Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission is comprised of seven members and is responsible for promoting the preservation of Wilmette's historic and architectural heritage. Its responsibilities include designating individual Wilmette Landmarks and Historic Districts, reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA), and evaluating requests for Certificates of Economic Hardship when a COA has been denied.

Appearance Review Commission

The Appearance Review Commission is comprised of seven members and is responsible for reviewing the exterior rehabilitation or new construction of commercial and multifamily residential buildings, signage and awnings, off-street parking areas, fencing, and wireless telecommunications equipment in Wilmette. They are also responsible for making recommendations to the Village Board for variations to local sign regulations and on plans that do not meet the landscaping or Village Center design standards established in the Zoning Ordinance.

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission is comprised of seven members who help prepare and implement the Village's Comprehensive Plan and reviews matters such as land subdivisions, new development proposals, and rezoning or other land-use changes. Ready Set Wilmette, the Village's most recent comprehensive plan, addresses historic preservation within its Community Character theme, emphasizing that "preserving and highlighting the historic elements of the built environment are always front of mind in Wilmette, and will continue to be" (Wilmette Comprehensive Plan, p. 36)

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals is comprised of seven members who review applications and conduct public hearings for variances, special uses, and zoning code text and map amendments.



Preservation Partners & Advocates

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

The Historic Preservation Division (Illinois SHPO) within the Illinois Department of Natural Resources serves as the state's lead agency for historic preservation. It works with local governments, organizations, and residents to protect Illinois's architectural, archaeological, cultural, and historic resources. The Illinois SHPO administers several major preservation programs including the National Register of Historic Places, the Certified Local Government program, Section 106 reviews, the Property Tax Assessment Freeze, and statewide archaeology protection initiatives. The Division also evaluates applications for both federal and Illinois historic tax credits.

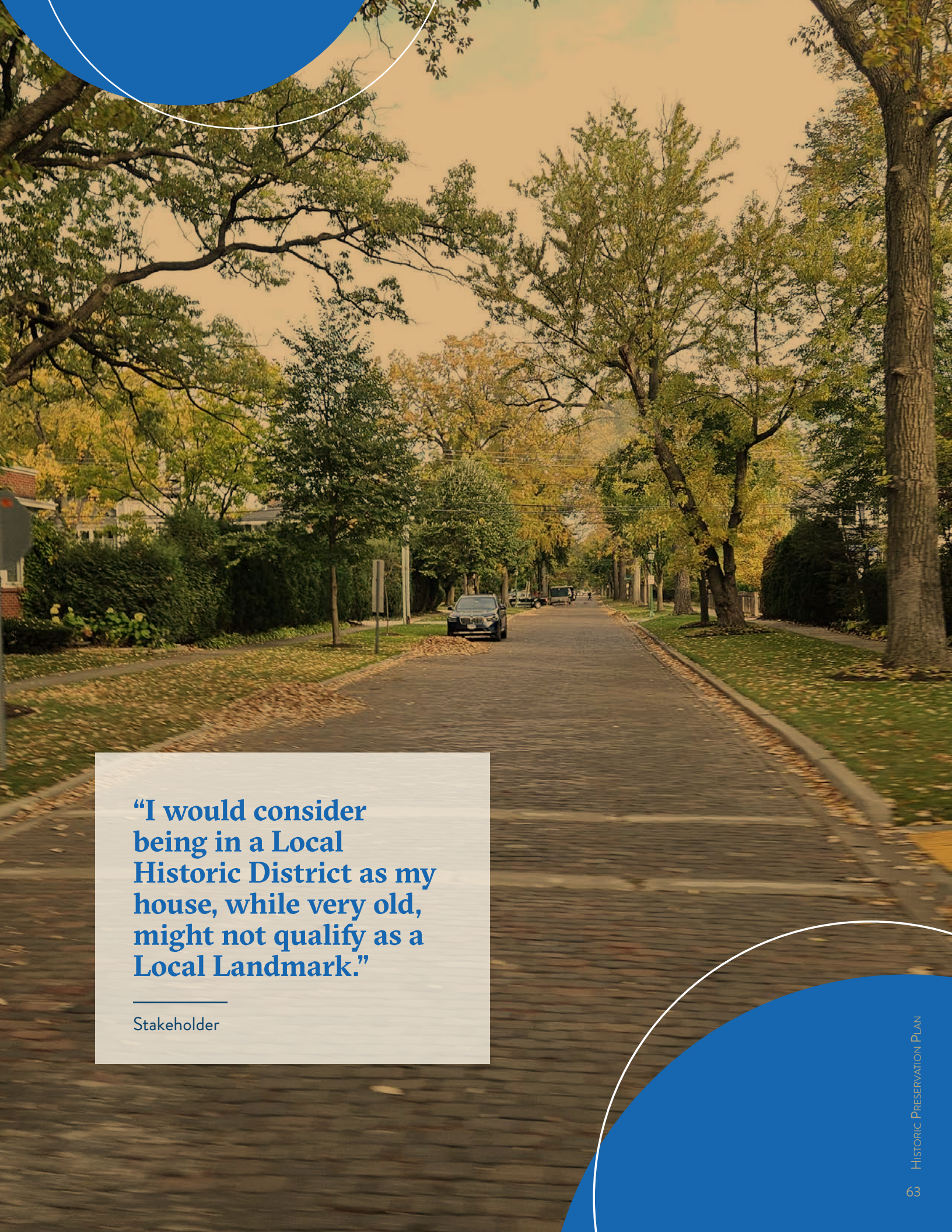
Landmarks Illinois

Landmarks Illinois is the statewide historic preservation advocacy organization in Illinois. The organization manages several programs including an annual most endangered places list, an annual awards program, an easement program, a reinvestment (lending) program, and three small grant programs: the Preservation Heritage Fund Grant, the Barbara C. and Thomas E. Donnelley II Preservation Fund Grant, and Landmarks Illinois Timuel D. Black, Jr. Grant Fund for Chicago's South Side. Landmarks Illinois is also active in policy and legislative advocacy at the state and local level.

Chicago's North Shore Convention & Visitor's Bureau

Certified by the Illinois Office of Tourism, Chicago's North Shore Convention & Visitor Bureau is the primary destination marketing hub for Evanston, Glencoe, Glenview, Lincolnwood, Northbrook, Prospect Heights, Skokie, Wilmette, and Winnetka.



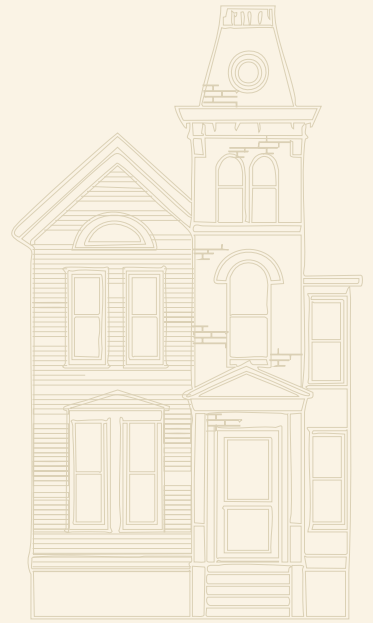


**“I would consider
being in a Local
Historic District as my
house, while very old,
might not qualify as a
Local Landmark.”**

Stakeholder

SECTION 4

Historic Preservation Plan



04

This Historic Preservation Plan begins with a vision that defines Wilmette's long-term direction for preservation. This vision is translated through a structured framework around four overarching themes, each representing a major area of focus for the Village's preservation efforts. Within each theme are a series of goals that describe the long-term outcomes the Village hopes to achieve, followed by actions that outline the specific steps, tools, initiatives, and process improvements that can help move those goals forward.

To help make the plan more practical and easier to navigate, each action is also assigned an implementation type. Policies establish regulatory direction and may involve updates to ordinances, zoning tools, or other formal Village requirements. The Village Board sets policy decisions based on community input, and Village Staff implements those policies. Programs provide ongoing services, incentives, partnerships, or educational efforts that support preservation over time. Projects are defined efforts with a clear scope and completion point, such as surveys, studies, or the development of new guidance materials. Administrative Practices focus on improving internal coordination, review processes, communication, and day-to-day delivery. These categories are intended to clarify the role each action plays and the type of effort that may be required to carry it out.

Case studies are included throughout the chapter to show how other communities have addressed similar preservation issues, ranging from survey programs and designation strategies to incentives, design review tools, and educational initiatives. These examples are not meant to be replicated exactly but instead serve as reference points that help illustrate what certain approaches can look like in practice and how they might be adapted to fit Wilmette's context.

The plan is designed to guide implementation over the next decade, recognizing that not every action is expected to occur immediately or in sequence. Some actions may be early priorities, while others may depend on future funding, staff capacity, community support, or coordination with partners.

Wilmette Preservation Vision

Over the coming decade, Wilmette builds upon its longstanding stewardship to ensure that the rich history, historic architecture, vibrant neighborhoods, and thriving commercial areas continue to create a special sense of place and valued quality of life for its residents. The Village and its Historic Preservation Commission expand educational opportunities and partnerships to residents, property owners, developers, real estate professionals, and investors regarding the benefits of historic preservation. Wilmette continues to identify, document, and preserve its significant historic resources through ongoing survey initiatives and historic designations. The Village supports property owners in maintaining and adapting their homes and commercial buildings through practical tools, policies, and guidance that allow properties to meet modern needs while retaining their historic character. Residential demolition has slowed as more property owners choose reinvestment and sensitive rehabilitation, maintaining neighborhood character while allowing homes to evolve. New residential construction respects established neighborhood patterns of scale, design, and landscape, contributing to community character while accommodating a range of housing needs. Wilmette's Village Center and other commercial districts are strengthened through rehabilitation and adaptive use that support local businesses and contribute to the Village's continued economic vitality. Wilmette remains a welcoming community for diverse cultures and experiences where historic preservation is valued as an investment in cultural and physical continuity, as well as economic long-term resilience.

THEME 1

Protecting Wilmette's Historic Resources.

Wilmette's historic resources, its buildings, sites, objects, and structures, provide a sense of place that gives Wilmette its special character. Identifying and preserving these historic resources, including historic homes, commercial buildings, churches, schools, parks, and tree-lined brick streets, will ensure that Wilmette's significant architectural and historic character remains. The Village's currently designated Local Landmarks and National Register properties and historic districts highlight only a small part of Wilmette's significant history and architecture.

Ongoing survey and inventory initiatives are key to the success of Wilmette's local preservation planning program. The purpose of a survey is to identify, evaluate, and document potential historic resources in Wilmette. Surveys include initial research related to original building permits, historic photographs, and other historical documentation to determine the area's architectural and development history, as well as identify significant owners, builders, architects, and developers. A survey also includes field work to visually evaluate and photograph properties, recording specific information on a form approved by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office. Recorded information includes the date of construction, original owner, architect, builder, developer, architectural style and building form, materials, condition, and any evident alterations over time. Each property is evaluated for significance individually or as part of a potential historic district.

Surveys typically cover a specific area or neighborhood with a defined boundary determined to have a high potential for historic resources or where increased alterations or demolition has occurred due to development pressure. A survey can also focus on a Village-wide theme, such as educational facilities, religious buildings, historic signage, or other landscape or public realm features that are significant to Wilmette's character. The results of each survey are combined to create an official inventory of historic places that can inform Wilmette's future planning and designation initiatives.

Utilizing the official inventory of historic resources, the Village can prioritize buildings and areas for potential local designation and listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is an honorary designation that identifies significant buildings or areas that are worthy of preservation and that tells the story of Wilmette's architectural and development history. Listing in the National Register does not protect properties from unsympathetic alterations or demolition. The designation of Local Landmarks and Historic Districts is the strongest form of protection in Wilmette, providing a review process through the Historic Preservation Commission that manages change and deters demolition. In most cases, financial incentives for rehabilitation are available for both National Register and locally designated properties.

Goal 1.1: Wilmette's future Landmarks and Historic Districts are comprehensively identified, documented, and evaluated through ongoing survey efforts.

Action 1.1.1: Survey residential neighborhoods not previously surveyed.

Type: Project

While much of the Village has been surveyed in the past, the areas directly east of Skokie Boulevard have not yet been documented. These neighborhoods largely developed in the post-World War II period on former farmland and are likely to contain resources significant to Wilmette's history and 20th century development patterns.

- **Survey Area 1: Old Glenview Road.**
Post World War II neighborhood bounded by Wilmette Avenue on the north, Skokie Boulevard on the west, Village boundary on the south, and Hunter Road on the east.
- **Survey Area 2: Romona Road/Locust Road.**
Post World War II neighborhood bounded by Wilmette Avenue on the south, Skokie Boulevard on the west, Lake Avenue on the north, and Hunter Road/Illinois Road on the east.
- **Survey Area 3: Hibbard Road Cul-de-Sacs.**
Post World War II neighborhood bounded by Illinois Road on the north, Hibbard Road on the east, Skokie Boulevard on the west, and Lake Avenue on the south.

Action 1.1.2: Survey neighborhoods previously surveyed to update architectural information, document demolished properties, and identify newly eligible historic resources.

Type: Project

During the 1990s, Wilmette undertook an extensive historic survey effort that resulted in three large surveys encompassing much of the Village. Best practices recommend that such surveys be updated every 5-10 years using current digital documentation technology, identify newly eligible resources, and document underrepresented resources.

- **Survey Area: Gross Point.**
Surveyed in 1991 and including 2,360 properties, the survey area is bounded by 15th Street on the east, Hunter Road on the west, and the Village's northern and southern boundaries. Due to the size of the survey area, it is recommended that the survey be conducted in three phases:
 - **Survey Area 4:** The area includes Kenilworth Gardens and is bounded by the Village's northern boundary (Indian Hill Road), Lake Avenue on the south, Ridge Road on the east, and Illinois Road on the west.
 - **Survey Area 5:** The area bounded by Lake Avenue on the north, Ridge Road on the east, Illinois and Hunter Roads on the west, and the Village's southern boundary.
 - **Survey Area 6:** The area bounded by the Village's northern and southern boundaries, Ridge Road on the west, and 15th Street on the east.
- **Survey Area: East Wilmette.**
Surveyed in 1993 and including 2,744 properties, the survey area is bounded by 15th Street on the west, Lake Michigan on the east, and the Village's northern and southern boundaries. Due to the size of the survey area, it is recommended that the survey be conducted in three phases:

- o **Survey Area 7:** The area bounded by Elmwood Avenue and the intersection of Green Bay Road and 15th Street on the north, the Village's southern boundary, Green Bay Road on the east, and 15th Street on the west. The survey area includes the Oak Circle National Register Historic District, which can be removed from the survey.
- o **Survey Area 8:** The area bounded by Lake and Elmwood Avenues on the north, 6th Street on the east, Green Bay Road on the west, and the Village's southern boundary. The survey area includes the Village Center National Register Historic District, which can be removed from the survey.
- o **Survey Area 9:** The area bounded by Lake Avenue and the Village's northern boundary on the north, 6th Street and Sheridan Road on the west, and Michigan Avenue and the Village's eastern boundary on the east. The survey area includes all of Michigan Avenue and Sheridan Road, as well as Westerfield Drive and Plaza del Lago. Gillson Park can be removed from the survey as it was surveyed in 2024.

SPECIAL SURVEY PRIORITIES

During the preservation planning process, Wilmette citizens were clear that they valued the historic significance of the Ridge Road commercial district and the Plaza del Lago shopping center. Both Ridge Road and Plaza del Lago may be eligible for listing in the National Register or included as Significant Properties within a potential Historic Zoning Overlay District recommended in this plan. Although these properties are located within larger future survey areas recommended by the plan (see Action 1.1.2, Survey Areas 4, 5, 6 and 9), special consideration should be given to Ridge Road and Plaza del Lago when prioritizing historic resource surveys. Celebrating the historical significance of these important community areas through educational programing and information sharing is another appropriate path to recognizing these unique areas of the community.

- o **Survey Area 10:** The boundary matches that of the Oakmette North National Register Historic District – the Village's northern boundary and Chestnut Avenue on the north, Lake and Elmwood Avenues on the south, Green Bay Road on the west, and Sheridan Road on the east.
- **Survey Area 11: Indian Hills Estates and Environs.** Surveyed in 1995, the survey area is bounded by Lake Avenue on the south, Illinois Road on the east, Hibbard Road on the west, and the Village's northern boundary (Indian Hill Road).
- **Survey Area 12: West Wilmette.** The survey of West Wilmette, including everything west of Skokie Boulevard, was recently completed in 2026.

CASE STUDY

Rural Historic Structural Surveys Project

Will County, Illinois

The Rural Historic Structural Surveys Project conducted by Will County between 1999 and 2019 is an excellent example of a local government prioritizing a long-term survey program conducted in phases. While the purpose of the survey is to document unincorporated rural areas, it serves as an example that Wilmette could follow when planning for future surveys. Beginning in 1999, the Will County Land Use Department, acting as a liaison for the Will County Historic Preservation Commission, engaged a consultant to update an earlier county-wide survey by performing intensive surveys of rural historical structures. Organized by townships and conducted in phases, the initial survey took place in an area undergoing rapid development. In addition to documenting the County's development history, the surveys identified properties and districts eligible for local designation or listing in the National Register. The surveys also served as a public education tool and a resource for County planning initiatives. Identified as a priority by the Will County Board, many of the surveys were funded through Certified Local Government grants and a Preserve America Grant.

Action 1.1.3: Survey and inventory historic resources associated with key building types or historic contexts in Wilmette's development history, including early- and mid-20th-century institutional, civic, educational, and religious resources.

Type: Project

Wilmette's development history includes important institutional influences, particularly in education and religion. Documenting resources associated with these themes can deepen understanding of their role in shaping the Village's development, as well as identify resources worthy of recognition and preservation.

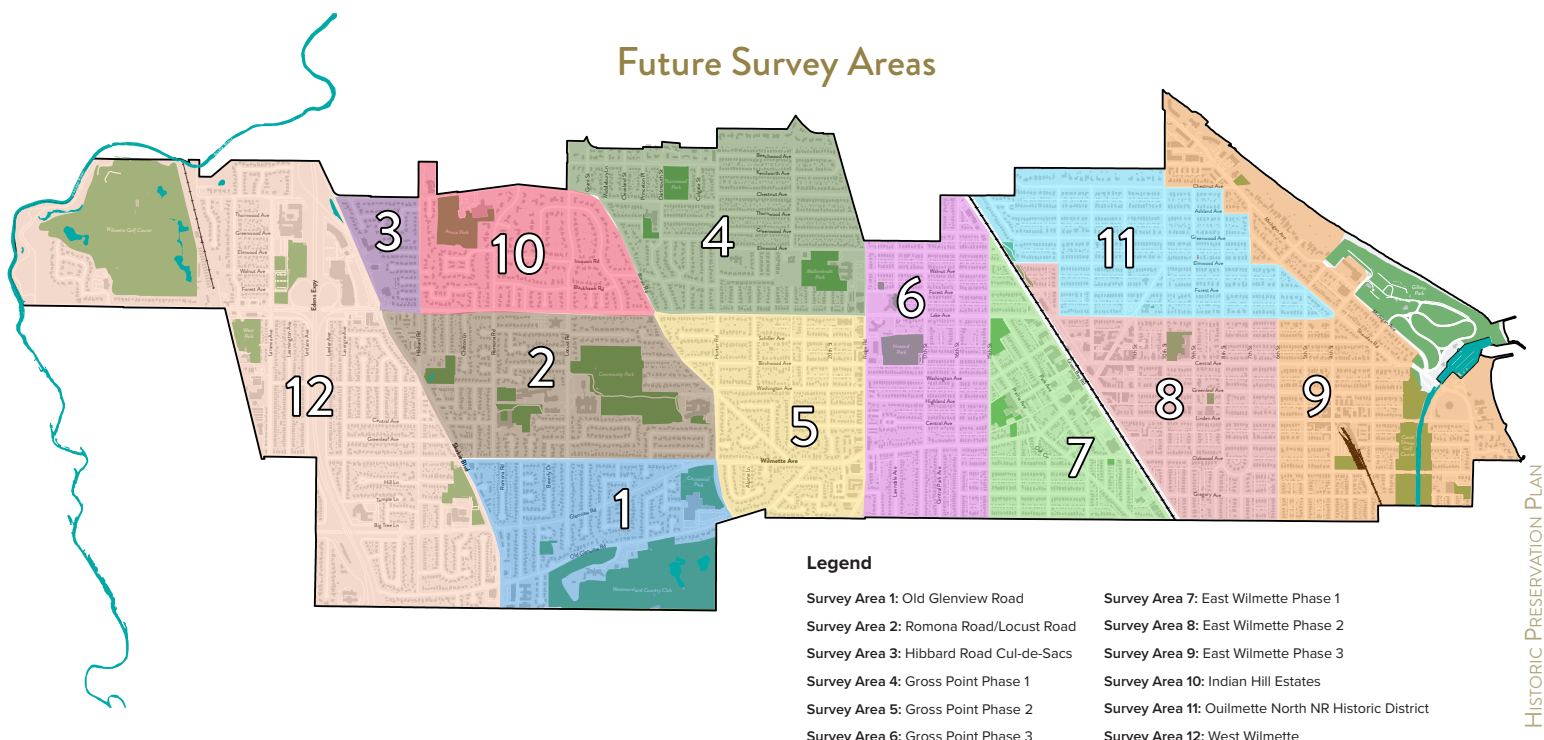
- Survey Wilmette's early- and mid-20th century educational institutions.
- Survey Wilmette's early- and mid-20th century religious facilities.

CASE STUDY

Bloomington Commercial and Industrial Historic Resources Survey

Bloomington, Illinois

The Commercial and Industrial Historic Resources Survey conducted by the City of Bloomington in 2017-2018 is a relevant example of a municipal government prioritizing a themed survey of a specific resource type. While the purpose of the survey was to document industrial buildings, a theme that does not exist in Wilmette, it serves as an example and framework to follow when planning for future themed surveys. As a former manufacturing center, the City of Bloomington hired a consultant in 2017 to evaluate its historic industrial building stock for preservation planning purposes, identifying buildings or areas with the potential for future local and National Register landmark designation. The potential use of historic contexts and development themes to assist the City in rebranding and revitalizing these areas was another goal, with common architectural characteristics used in future efforts to develop appropriate guidelines for new development within these areas. The survey identified three modest potential landmark districts and thirteen potential landmarks. The project was funded by the City of Bloomington.



Goal 1.2: Wilmette's historic resources are formally recognized and protected through Local and National Register designation.

Action 1.2.1: Create and maintain a centralized inventory of significant properties based on past and ongoing historic surveys to identify future Landmark and Historic District designations.

Type: Program

Intensive-level surveys identify buildings, objects, structures, sites, and districts that may be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places or as Local Landmarks. A significant property inventory would synthesize findings and recommendations from past surveys, subsequent building documentation and research, and properties that meet the Village's Criteria for Landmark Designation, to provide a practical tool for Village staff and the Historic Preservation Commission when prioritizing future planning and designation efforts, promoting the benefits of preservation and designation, and providing education and technical assistance to property owners designating their properties. The inventory should remain dynamic, expanding as additional survey work is completed or as other research and building documentation becomes available. The inventory may also be tied to the creation of any future Historic Zoning Overlay District.

Action 1.2.2: Designate existing National Register properties and districts as Local Landmarks and Local Historic Districts to provide meaningful local protection.

Type: Policy

Wilmette's existing National Register properties and districts include architectural and historical resources that are central to the Village's heritage and character. Local designation of these resources can strengthen preservation and long-term stewardship of Wilmette's historic character by providing a framework for managing change, encouraging sensitive alterations and helping prevent the loss of important resources and character-defining features. Numerous studies on the economic impact of historic preservation show that residential property values in local historic districts are likely to increase over time, outperforming National Register historic districts and other non-designated residential neighborhoods. Additional benefits include increased public awareness, community pride, and access to preservation-related incentives. Successful local designation relies on clear communication and early stakeholder engagement. Community meetings and digital access to information are equally important in educating stakeholders on the benefits of designation and assessing support.



Potential Local Historic Districts include the following four National Register historic districts:

- Oak Circle National Register Historic District
- Oakliffe North National Register Historic District: Due to the size of the existing National Register Historic District, one or more smaller areas may be identified as potential local districts.
- Village Center National Register Historic District
- Gillson Park and Wilmette Harbor National Register Historic District

Potential Local Landmarks include the following four National Register properties:

- Bailey-Michelet House, 1028 Sheridan Road
- Linden Avenue Terminal-CTA, 351 Linden Avenue
- Craig and Estella Hazelwood House, 16 Canterbury Court
- Eli and Jeanne Lipman House, 2633 Kenilworth Avenue

Action 1.2.3: Pursue new National Register listings for eligible properties and districts identified through historic surveys.

Type: Program

Past surveys have identified individual properties and areas with architectural or historic importance that may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a historic district. Education and outreach to property owners is key to building understanding of the process and its benefits.

Listing in the National Register provides an increased awareness of the community's heritage, fosters pride in the ownership of a historic building, and, in certain instances, provides access to financial incentives for rehabilitation. Coordination with the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office is recommended to obtain an official determination of eligibility prior to preparing a nomination.

Potential National Register Properties:

- The 2025 West Wilmette Phase 1A Survey identified four buildings as significant and potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.
- The 1995 Indian Hill Estates Survey identified three homes as significant and potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.
- The 1993 East Wilmette Survey identified 16 buildings as significant and potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.
- The 1991 Gross Point Survey identified three buildings as significant and potentially eligible for listing in the National Register.

Potential National Register Districts

- The East Wilmette Survey identified Oak Circle and the entire area east of Green Bay Road as potential historic districts. The Oak Circle Historic District was listed in 2001. The entire area east of Green Bay Road was not listed as one district but resulted in the listing of two smaller districts - Oakliffe North District in 2005, and the Village Center Historic District in 2023. The remaining area east of Green Bay Road not currently listed may include one or more smaller potential historic districts.
- The Indian Hill Estates Survey identified the area bounded by Lake Avenue on the south, the Village's northern boundary, Hunter Road on the east, and Hibbard Road on the west as a potential historic district.
- The West Wilmette Phase 1A Survey identified three potential historic districts:

- o Lockerbie Lane District: The potential district includes 28 homes constructed between 1927-1964 on Lockerbie Lane, a street that extends south of Old Glenview Road ending in a cul-de-sac.
- o Hill Lane District: The potential district includes 35 homes constructed in 1955 and 1956 on Hill Lane, a street that extends west from Hibbard Road ending in a cul-de-sac.
- o Thelin Court District: The potential district includes 33 homes constructed between 1956-1960 on Thelin Court, a street that extends north from Old Glenview Road ending in a cul-de-sac.

Action 1.2.4: Expand the designation of Local Landmarks based on survey findings to recognize and protect resources significant to Wilmette’s architectural and development history.

Type: Policy

Past surveys have also identified individual properties that may qualify as potential Local Landmarks due to their architectural or historical significance. Education and outreach to individual property owners is key to a successful local designation program. See Action 1.2.5. for additional information on education and outreach recommendations.

Potential Local Landmarks:

- The 2025 West Wilmette Phase 1A Survey identified 18 buildings as significant and potentially eligible for designation as Local Landmarks.
- The 1995 Indian Hill Estates Survey identified 42 buildings as significant and potentially eligible for designation as Local Landmarks.
- The 1993 East Wilmette Survey identified 144 buildings as significant and potentially eligible for designation as Local Landmarks.
- The 1991 Gross Point Survey identified 37 buildings as significant and potentially eligible for designation as Local Landmarks.
- The 1972 Illinois Historic Structures Survey identified 128 buildings as significant and worthy of preservation.

Action 1.2.5: Consider designating new Local Historic Districts where survey findings demonstrate significant architectural character or historical development patterns and community support.

Type: Policy

Prior survey work has identified several areas that retain strong architectural cohesion and reflect distinct periods of Wilmette’s residential development. Where these characteristics remain intact and community interest is present, local historic district designation may be considered as a tool to help guide future change and recognize the collective significance of these neighborhoods.

Local Historic District designation is a powerful tool for protecting architectural, historical, and cultural resources. While there are currently no Local Historic Districts in Wilmette, past surveys have identified areas of potential eligibility for designation.

Local designation provides the ability to collectively manage change within a neighborhood through a design review process, ensuring that alterations are compatible with the building and the surrounding historic district. Local Historic Districts can also provide access to financial incentives and protect significant resources from demolition.

Community outreach is essential when planning to designate a Local Historic District and can include the following:

- Provide digital access to information relevant to property owners such as the designation process, design review process, and access to financial incentives.
- Identify local preservation advocates and supportive property owners within the neighborhood to assist in gathering support for a local district.
- Consider creating a task force that includes key stakeholders and district residents to research and share information on the benefits of preservation. Ensure that property owners have the opportunity for engagement through workshops, community meetings, and other public forums.
- Build support for designation by publicizing the architectural and historical significance of the district to Wilmette's heritage and how designation can provide a positive impact on a neighborhood. Utilize marketing strategies such as online videos and presentations, information flyers, and social media to build awareness.

Potential Local Historic Districts

- The Indian Hill Estates Survey identified the area bounded by Lake Avenue on the south, the Village's northern boundary, Hunter Road on the east, and Hibbard Road on the west as a potential historic district.
- The West Wilmette Phase 1A Survey identified three potential historic districts:
 - o Lockerbie Lane District: The potential district includes 28 homes constructed between 1927-1964 on Lockerbie Lane, a street that extends south of Old Glenview Road ending in a cul-de-sac.
 - o Hill Lane District: The potential district includes 35 homes constructed in 1955 and 1956 on Hill Lane, a street that extends west from Hibbard Road ending in a cul-de-sac.
 - o Thelin Court District: The potential district includes 33 homes constructed between 1956-1960 on Thelin Court, a street that extends north from Old Glenview Road ending in a cul-de-sac.

“Ridge Road is an important historic corridor and should be a historic district.”

Stakeholder

Goal 1.3: Character-defining features of Wilmette's built environment, including streetscapes, signage, and landscape elements, are identified and preserved as contributors to neighborhood identity.

Action 1.3.1: Survey and inventory historic neon and other signs in Wilmette.

Type: Project

Historic signage can play a significant role in defining community character. In addition to identifying a business, over time these features often become enduring elements of the built environment that help establish a particular block or neighborhood, creating a sense of place and community identity.

Potential historic signs include:

- Millen Hardware, 1219 Wilmette Avenue
- Gold Medal Cleaners, 1123 Central Avenue
- Walker Bros. Original Pancake House, 153 Green Bay Road

Action 1.3.2: Survey and inventory significant streetscape and public realm features.

Type: Project

In addition to historic signage, streetscape elements and special features such as streetlamps, fences, and walls can also contribute to the visual identity of the public realm and help maintain a sense of place and community identity.

Potential streetscape and special features include:

- Historic streetlamps (1925 electric streetlamps with cast iron columns)
- Brick streets (early 20th century brick streets)
- Historic fences, gates, and walls (Indian Hill Estates stone entry pillars and walls; Mallinckrodt brick entry gate, wall, and fence; St. Joseph Cemetery brick and limestone entry gate and pillars)

CASE STUDY

A Historic Resource Survey of Historic Signs of Casa Grande

Casa Grande, Arizona

The Historic Resource Survey of Historic Signs of Casa Grande conducted internally by City staff in 2016 is a great example of a municipal government prioritizing and conducting a themed survey of historic signage. The City along with the Historic Preservation Commission initiated an effort to identify and protect historic signs to prevent their removal or destruction. The City prepared a preliminary inventory of remaining signs of interest and hired a consultant to finalize the inventory, evaluate the signs, identify potential eligibility for local designation, and provide designation criteria for signage. The survey identified 75 signs, including ghost signs, vintage wall signs, neon signs, endangered signs, and signs stored at the Casa Grande Historical Museum. The project was funded through a Certified Local Government grant.



**“I would support a
historic preservation
zoning overlay district
for the Ouilmette
Historic District
restricting demolition.”**

Stakeholder

THEME 2

Increasing Preservation Education and Awareness.

To be broadly successful, historic preservation must be an inherently community-based effort. For this to occur, residents, property owners, and other stakeholders must appreciate the value of historic preservation in their daily lives as part of the broader well-being of Wilmette. They must also clearly understand how preservation programs and regulations directly impact their properties and how to navigate these processes to properly maintain, repair, or rehabilitate their homes and businesses. Education and outreach will be key to strengthening and expanding Wilmette's historic preservation program over the next decade.

Preservation-related education and outreach can take several forms in Wilmette. The Village can offer targeted workshops on the repair and maintenance of older and historic homes, as well as offer tours of properties that have undertaken historically sensitive rehabilitation projects. Staff can also offer seminars for realtors, developers, contractors, and bankers on historic preservation-related regulations and incentives to improve their understanding of local resources and requirements. Efforts can also be made to ensure that preservation processes, from historic designation to permit review, are clear and easy to understand by all Wilmette residents. A key focus group for testing the potential accessibility of historic preservation programs could be owners of the Village's 38 existing individual Local Landmarks.

In collaboration with partners like the Wilmette History Museum, Wilmette can also take additional steps to raise public awareness of the Village's built and historic heritage. This could include storytelling through historic markers at significant homes, businesses, and related locations, as well as supporting local architectural or neighborhood tours. Wilmette can also leverage public art, from murals to sculpture to historic district signage, to more informally share or interpret community stories.

Goal 2.1: Residents, property owners, and professionals clearly understand historic preservation processes, benefits, and available resources.

Action 2.1.1: Engage with owners of Wilmette Local Landmarks as partners in preservation, meeting regularly to better understand the benefits, needs, and opportunities of owning and maintaining a Landmark building.

Type: Program

As the group with the most direct experience owning and maintaining historic properties in the Village, owners of Wilmette Landmarks can offer valuable insight into the motivations, benefits, and challenges associated with designation. Their perspective can help the Village better understand how property owners navigate the review process for building permits and Certificate of Appropriateness applications, and what additional technical and financial assistance would make the experience appeal to a broader audience.

Regular meetings with Landmark owners, held annually, can provide an opportunity to share experiences, identify recurring issues, and build an ongoing dialogue. Meetings could be virtual, in-person, or arranged as a special event in a historic venue such as the Wilmette History Museum, the Mallinckrodt Center, or others.

Action 2.1.2: Offer targeted educational workshops on historic preservation tax incentives for residents, realtors, developers, contractors, and bankers, to improve awareness of available tools and reduce financial barriers to preservation.

Type: Program

Existing financial incentives for historic preservation, such as the Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze, preservation easements, and federal and state Historic Tax Credit programs, can be vital to providing a financial bridge that makes a rehabilitation project successful. Owners of Wilmette Landmarks and properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places should be well informed of such programs and what benefits they provide prior to initiating a rehabilitation project. Developers, contractors, and architects should also understand program requirements to ensure success for their clients. Bankers require a full knowledge of the benefits of the tax incentive programs when making financial decisions. Educating real estate professionals on the available incentive programs, their benefits, and eligibility requirements, can help them promote the sale and retention of historic properties in Wilmette. Future local incentives should also be included in such educational workshops as they become available to property owners.

The Village could explore partnering with the North Shore-Barrington Association of Realtors, local financial institutions, developers, contractors, and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office to provide educational opportunities and potential continuing education credits for professionals.

Action 2.1.3: Develop and maintain digitally accessible materials that explain Wilmette’s historic preservation program, process, and resources in plain language.

Type: Program

Utilizing digital technology to relay important educational materials and information about historic preservation is crucial to reaching a broader audience and ensure that preservation guidance is readily available. Online resources can explain processes, outline available tools, and direct users to technical information through the Village website, publications, social media, and through partner organizations.

Materials can include:

- How to research the history of your house
- Guide to local designation
- How to nominate properties to the National Register
- Certificate of Appropriateness application and design review process
- Wilmette Local Landmarks
- Wilmette National Register properties and districts
- Historic wood window repair
- Historic Preservation tax incentives

Action 2.1.4: Host hands-on preservation seminars and workshops focused on practical maintenance, rehabilitation, and energy efficiency for historic structures.

Type: Program

Practical workshops can demonstrate appropriate methods for material maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation, as well as ways to improve energy efficiency. Collaboration with local professionals and subject-matter experts can help illustrate best practices and provide property owners confidence in understanding preservation-related work.

Some examples include:

- Historic wood window repair
- Historic masonry and stucco repair
- Historic wood siding repair and replacement
- Energy efficiency for historic buildings (storm windows and doors, weatherstripping, insulation, solar panels, and others)

Action 2.1.5: Expand and formalize the Historic Preservation Awards Program to recognize exemplary preservation efforts.

Type: Program

The Village has managed a successful awards program for many years, though challenges can occur due to limited nominations or staff and administrative capacity. Maintaining an annual awards program provides an opportunity to recognize exemplary projects, highlight good stewardship, and reinforce preservation as a community value.

Expanding nomination sources, broadening award categories, and promoting the program through Village communications can help sustain visibility and participation.

Some ideas for maintaining a successful annual awards program can include:

- Allow property owners, local organizations, residents, Village staff, elected officials, the Historic Preservation Commission, and other Village commissions to nominate a completed project or program based on a set of defined criteria.
- Expand the award categories to include commercial and multi-family properties, adaptive use projects, sensitive new construction, block awards, local preservation leadership, and successful preservation programs or initiatives implemented by local companies, organizations, or other Village commissions. Explore partnering with the Environmental & Energy Commission to create a joint Sustainability and Preservation Award.
- Village staff and the Historic Preservation Commission could consider flagging successful projects for future nomination.
- Advertise the awards program in Village publications and through local partners including the Wilmette History Museum.
- Host the awards at a historic venue and publicize the event as a Village celebration. Provide a presentation on how each award winner meets the nomination criteria. Consider budgeting for refreshments and programs to create a celebratory atmosphere.

Action 2.1.6: Promote peer-to-peer learning through home and commercial renovation tours that showcase successful preservation projects and demonstrate the feasibility of rehabilitating older buildings.

Type: Program

Rehabilitating a historic building can present numerous challenges and complex decision-making, but they also demonstrate how older buildings can be successfully adapted for continued use, resulting in immense satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. The Village could consider partnering with local property owners, architects, developers, and contractors who have completed a successful rehabilitation project to host a renovation tour, showcasing the process, costs involved, incentives utilized, and ultimate achievement. Showcasing project outcomes, including before-and-after documentation, as well as highlighting the construction and rehabilitation process provide added value to the experience and practical insight into preservation approaches.

CASE STUDY

Beams & Brews, Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans (PRCNO)

PRCNO's Beams & Brews events, formerly known as Renovator's Happy Hour, offers exclusive tours of residential and commercial properties undergoing ongoing rehabilitation. To be eligible, participating properties must be at least 50 years old and safe for entry by the public. Tours of each property are informal, but property owners, architects, contractors, and PRCNO staff are on hand to answer questions about the work being performed.

Action 2.1.7: Develop a clear, user-friendly “Preservation Roadmap” that explains when preservation review applies, what flexibility exists, and how applicants can seek early guidance before submitting formal applications.

Type: Administrative Practice

The Village could consider creating a clearly organized guidance document, or “Preservation Roadmap,” that explains the historic preservation program and related processes for property owners, developers, architects, and contractors. Such guidance would help applicants understand when preservation review applies, what flexibility exists, and how to navigate application, review, and approval procedures. Clear expectations and accessible information can support more informed project planning, whether the work involves restoration, rehabilitation, or additions.



Goal 2.2: Wilmette's heritage and cultural history are visible, accessible, and actively interpreted for the community.

Action 2.2.1: Partner with the Wilmette History Museum to establish a historic marker program that recognizes significant people, places, and events in Wilmette's history.

Type: Program

Creating a historic marker program will help identify and interpret places associated with Wilmette's development, including buildings, objects, and sites that tell the broader story and highlight the Village's unique heritage. Markers provide a visible way to share local stories within the public realm while promoting awareness of the Village's heritage. Establishing clear criteria for marker selection, design standards, and interpretive content can ensure consistency and historical accuracy. Historic markers can also identify important themes associated with the Village's development history, such as the site of former schools, the Ouilmette Reserve, or former taverns along Ridge Road. Digital components, such as QR codes linking to additional information, can expand interpretive opportunities without adding visual clutter.

Action 2.2.2: Support heritage-based public art initiatives developed in collaboration with community stakeholders to interpret Wilmette's history in creative and contemporary ways.

Type: Program

Public art informed by local history can offer an additional way to interpret Wilmette's heritage within everyday settings. Integrating heritage-based art into public spaces, such as the Village Center, historic neighborhoods, parks, or key sites, allows historical themes to be communicated in contemporary formats while reinforcing the Village's identity. The Village could consider collaborating with the Wilmette Park District, local artists, arts and social organizations, the Wilmette-Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce, and others to develop heritage-based public art initiatives.

Examples may include:

- Murals
- Sculpture
- Sidewalk Art
- Site-Specific Art
- Historic District Signage or Gateway Signs

CASE STUDY

City of San Antonio History Here Local Markers Program

A program of the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation, the History Here local markers program seeks to share under told and geographically diverse stories. Residents can nominate a site based on its association with a person or event and the nomination can be substantiated by either traditional historic documentation or based on community knowledge, oral traditions, and other non-traditional sources. Marker nominations are reviewed by a Community Review Committee comprised of community members representing organizations and neighborhoods across San Antonio. Program applications are free, but if a proposal is accepted the nominator must pay \$250 to cover the cost of producing and installing the marker.

Action 2.2.3: Organize neighborhood architecture and history tours and house walks to highlight Wilmette's diverse architectural heritage and foster community pride and engagement.

Type: Program

Organized walking tours and house walks can highlight architectural styles, neighborhood development, and historical themes while encouraging community engagement. Collaboration with local institutions and organizations like the Wilmette History Museum can support programming that connects residents and visitors to Wilmette's built environment.

CASE STUDY

City of Chillicothe, MO Downtown Murals Program

The City of Chillicothe, MO – where pre-sliced bread was invented – hosts a mural program depicting events from the city's history and heritage. Located on buildings throughout downtown, the murals depict trains, automobiles, a brick factory, a business college, a retailer, a bank, a fire brigade, a dairy, and multiple streetscapes. Collectively, the murals provide a pictorial record of Chillicothe. Each mural also includes a short narrative explaining its connection to the community. A committee consisting of members of Main Street Chillicothe, the Rotary Foundation, the Grand River Historical Society, and members of the public are responsible for choosing mural projects.





**“The high costs of
labor and materials
is an impediment to
preserving my home.”**

Stakeholder

THEME 3

Preserving and Celebrating Wilmette's Neighborhoods

Wilmette's historic homes and neighborhoods are central to the Village's identity, reflecting its architectural legacy and shaping the character of its tree-lined streets. Many of these homes, often smaller and more modest than new construction, contribute to both the visual fabric of the community and a broader range of housing options.

However, increasing land values and redevelopment pressure are accelerating the teardown of older and historic homes in favor of larger new residences. Over time, these incremental changes can erode neighborhood character and reduce the availability of more attainable housing, challenging both preservation goals and long-term community diversity.

In response, Wilmette can take a more proactive and layered approach to preservation. Expanding the use of historic designation, alongside tools such as Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts, can help manage change while maintaining neighborhood character. Additional measures, such as demolition fees or reinvestment programs, can encourage rehabilitation over replacement and support ongoing stewardship of existing homes. Partnerships with housing organizations and the exploration of context-sensitive multi-unit conversions may also provide opportunities to retain historic structures while expanding housing choice.

Preserving and reusing existing buildings also carries environmental benefits. Rehabilitation extends the life of existing materials, reduces construction waste, and retains the embodied energy within these structures, aligning preservation efforts with broader sustainability goals.

Goal 3.1: Existing housing is reinvested in and maintained to support long-term neighborhood stability, sustainability, and attainability.

Action 3.1.1: Partner with Community Partners for Affordable Housing to explore how their community land trust model may support both preservation and long-term housing affordability.

Type: Program

Community land trusts (CLTs) are an important tool for preserving long-term housing affordability in communities experiencing high demand and rising housing costs. CLTs typically build, acquire, or rehabilitate homes and sell them to income-qualified buyers while retaining ownership of the land. The land is leased to the homeowner through a long-term, renewable ground lease (often 99 years). Because the homeowner purchases only the home and not the land, the upfront cost is significantly reduced. When the homeowner decides to sell, the home must be sold to another income-qualified buyer (or sometimes back to the CLT) at a formula-based price that allows the seller to retain a portion of the equity gained while ensuring the home remains affordable for future buyers.

The Village of Wilmette currently partners with Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH) to develop or acquire homes using a community land trust (CLT) model. Funding for these efforts has at times come from developer contributions tied to large, market-rate multifamily projects. The Village may have additional opportunities to collaborate with CPAH to acquire and rehabilitate historically significant homes that might otherwise face demolition, preserving them for long-term affordable resale. Such collaboration could be best suited in areas where modestly sized housing is under redevelopment pressure.

Action 3.1.2: Establish a Historic Preservation Fund dedicated to preserving and reinvesting in Wilmette's existing residential building stock.

Type: Program

Establishing a preservation fund could provide the Village of Wilmette with a dedicated source of financial support for initiatives that maintain and reinvest in the community's existing housing stock and significant architectural and historic assets. The fund could be capitalized through an annual municipal budget allocation, increased demolition fees, or the creation of a demolition impact fee. Revenues generated by the fund could be used to conduct new or updated historic resource surveys, particularly in areas of Wilmette that have not yet been surveyed, or to establish a matching grant program that encourages homeowners to voluntarily designate their properties as Local Landmarks.

CASE STUDY

Townsite Community Land Trust

Flagstaff, an Arizona-based Townsite Community Land Trust, purchases historic properties and rehabilitates them to meet contemporary living and energy-efficiency needs while preserving the historic character that makes each home unique. TCLT resells these homes at affordable rates to income-eligible residents who have lived in Flagstaff for at least a year by separating purchase of the home from the cost of the land it sits upon via a long-term (usually 99 years) ground lease. Homes are also subsidized using donations to 20% below appraised value, which allows buyers to skip private mortgage insurance. Due to their historically sensitive rehabilitation, owners of TCLT homes may also be eligible for state property tax rebate for historic residences.

Action 3.1.3: Evaluate the sensitive conversion of large single-family homes into multi-unit residences where compatible with neighborhood character and zoning.

Type: Policy

Rising property values and the real and perceived cost of rehabbing older single-family homes are contributing to ongoing demolition. Some larger homes at risk of demolition may be good candidates for conversion to multifamily rental or ownership properties where rents or sale proceeds make rehabilitation more feasible. Current zoning only allows conversion up to four units in R2 districts which are largely limited to areas adjacent to major commercial corridors and the Village Center. The Village could explore community support for converting larger single-family homes in R1 zoning districts into multi-family housing up to four units as a special use to preserve older and historic homes and to increase access to diverse, attainable housing.

CASE STUDY

Village of Hinsdale Historic Preservation Fund

Established in 2022, the purpose of the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is to encourage and support historic preservation efforts in the Village of Hinsdale. The HPF is capitalized annually through the Village's budget process. Additionally, the Village engages in fundraising to support the HPF and can accept gifts and donations from private or public sources. HPF resources can be used to provide matching grants and property tax rebates to incentivize rehabilitation projects for eligible residential historic properties, as well as further activities that support the Village's historic preservation ordinance.

Action 3.1.4: Evaluate adjustments to demolition permit fees to discourage unnecessary teardowns and support preservation and housing initiatives.

Type: Policy

Raising demolition permit fees could help discourage the teardown of older or potentially historic homes. The Village could identify a fee structure that meaningfully encourages rehabilitation while not creating unintended barriers to appropriate new housing development. Given Wilmette's wide range of housing types, from lakeside mansions to modest ranch homes, a flat demolition fee may not be equitable. Instead, the Village could consider a sliding fee structure based on building size. Properties deemed structurally unsound or hazardous could be exempt from demolition fees, provided the condition was not the result of demolition by neglect. When demolition does occur, permit fee revenues could be directed to capitalize a historic preservation fund (see Action 3.1.2)

Action 3.1.5: Explore establishment of a demolition impact fee to discourage unnecessary teardowns and support preservation and housing initiatives.

Type: Policy

Demolition impact fees can be structured to address the teardown and loss of older homes in Wilmette. These fees are generally structured as one-time charges assessed when a property owner applies for a permit to demolish an existing structure. Depending on their design, demolition fees can offset public costs associated with redevelopment and generate funding to support historic preservation or housing-related initiatives.

The Village could study potential fee structures to identify an approach that promotes housing rehabilitation while not unnecessarily constraining the development of needed new housing. When demolition does occur, fee revenue could be allocated to capitalize a historic preservation fund (see Action 3.1.2).

Action 3.1.6: Encourage aging-in-place and gentle density in historic neighborhoods, including sensitive additions, conversions, and context-appropriate accessory dwelling units, where feasible.

Type: Policy

Encouraging reinvestment in existing homes can support aging in place, allow modest increases in housing flexibility, and help sustain long-established neighborhood patterns while accommodating changing household needs. The Village could approve the conversion of unfinished basements into “mother-in-law” units, as well as the construction of modern coach houses, backyard cottages, and other forms of accessory development units (ADUs).



CASE STUDY

City of Highland Park Affordable Housing Demolition Tax

Highland Park’s Affordable Housing Demolition Tax Program was established in 2002 in response to rising land and housing costs and the ongoing demolition of older, more affordable homes. This Demolition Tax, which applies to all residential demolitions involving 50% or more of a structure, is \$10,000 for a single-family home and either \$10,000 or \$3,000 per unit, whichever is greater, for multi-family buildings. Two-thirds of tax proceeds are allocated to the City’s affordable housing trust fund and the remainder funds the City Street and Bridge Fund. Allocations from the Affordable Housing Trust fund can, in turn, be used to support property acquisition, new housing construction, rehabilitation of existing housing, and adaptive reuse.

CASE STUDY

A.D. You: Evanston’s Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units

In 2020, the City of Evanston updated its zoning regulations to make it easier to develop accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Evanston’s ADUs include detached units, interior units, garage conversions, and units attached to a garage or main house. These ADUs are permitted in Historic Districts and on individual Landmark Properties subject to issuance of a certificate of appropriateness by the Evanston Historic Commission. To help educate residents about developing an ADU, Evanston published an easy-to-understand guidebook that outlines the types of ADUs allowed, minimum zoning requirements, permitting and review costs, and financing. Production of the booklet was funded by the American Association of Retired People (AARP).

Goal 3.2: The established scale, character, and development patterns of Wilmette's neighborhoods are respected and reinforced over time.

Action 3.2.1: Evaluate a Neighborhood Conservation District Program.

Type: Policy

Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts (NCODs) are zoning tools designed to preserve and reinforce the distinctive character, architectural patterns, and scale of established residential neighborhoods. An NCOD is applied in addition to the underlying base zoning and introduces supplemental development standards that apply to new construction, additions, and major alterations to existing structures. Although NCODs do not prohibit demolition or new construction, they offer residents, property owners, and developers clear expectations about the form and type of development that aligns with community priorities.

The Village could consider establishing NCODs in areas experiencing ongoing development pressure, but where there may not be sufficient community support or physical integrity to pursue formal historic district designation. NCOD development standards are typically tailored to protect the distinctive scale, character, and context of a specific neighborhood. These standards may address elements such as lot size, building height, massing, setbacks, streetscape patterns, and overall architectural character, among other factors. The standards can be developed through a collaborative planning process with neighborhood residents to help ensure meaningful public input and community support. Project review and approval authority may be assigned to the Historic Preservation Commission.

Action 3.2.2: Evaluate the creation of a voluntary advisory design review process for new single-family homes to encourage design that is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Type: Administrative Practice

Wilmette's desirability as a place to live has grown, resulting in an influx of new homes replacing older, historic housing. While there is a need to replace some older homes that cannot be adapted to modern needs, there is concern that incompatible new development could lead to the erosion of Wilmette's special character and sense of place. The Village could provide voluntary advisory review for new residential construction following the submittal of a building permit. This review could provide guidance on issues like scale, height, massing, lot coverage, and architectural character.

Alternatively, review of new residential construction could be required for Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts based on community-informed standards for each district (see Action 3.2.1).

Additionally, the Village could also consider creating and adopting Advisory Guidelines for New Residential Construction to encourage compatibility of design for new homes with the Village's historic character without hindering residential growth. Partnering with local realtors could provide an opportunity to disseminate the new guidelines as a resource to new property owners at time of purchase.

Goal 3.3: The preservation and rehabilitation of older and historic residential and commercial buildings contribute to Wilmette's environmental sustainability and resilience.

Action 3.3.1: Align preservation messaging with new and ongoing Village sustainability initiatives to encourage reuse and retrofit of existing buildings to reduce demolition.

Type: Project

Historic preservation and environmental sustainability are often closely aligned. For example, the Village's *2021 Sustainable Communities Strategic Plan* calls for educating the public about local landmark buildings, maintaining an architecturally, historically, and economically diverse housing stock, and reducing the demolition of single-family homes. Wilmette could build on these goals by connecting property owners with technical assistance and financial incentives that support improved comfort and energy performance. Additionally, the Village could also emphasize the environmental advantages of rehabilitation over demolition to reinforce how preservation advances both sustainability and community character.

Action 3.3.2: Develop guidance that informs and supports residents' efforts to increase the energy efficiency of older and historic homes.

Type: Project

The Village of Wilmette could support residents and property owners by providing practical guidance on enhancing energy efficiency in older homes.

Guidance may range from simple weatherization improvements to comprehensive energy retrofits and home electrification, among other improvements, without compromising a home's architectural character. The Village could also collaborate with local utility providers, such as ComEd and Nicor Gas, to help ensure residents are informed about available energy rebates and related incentive programs.

Action 3.3.3: Promote the rehabilitation and reuse of residential and commercial buildings as a climate strategy, not just a method for preserving historic and cultural heritage.

Type: Program

Encouraging the rehabilitation of existing buildings can reduce community-wide carbon impacts. Rehabilitating existing residential and commercial properties helps retain their embodied carbon, the emissions generated during the extraction, and the manufacturing, transport, and assembly of building materials. When a structure is demolished, those materials are often sent to landfills, releasing additional carbon through the demolition and new construction process. Reusing buildings retains embodied energy and avoids the material and emission costs of demolition and replacement.

CASE STUDY

Village of Arlington Heights Single-Family Design Guidelines

In response to rising teardowns and redevelopment of single-family homes, the Village of Arlington Heights instituted a design review process to ensure that new construction fits within the existing neighborhood character. To help inform the process, the Village created single family residential design guidelines as an educational resource for architects, developers, builders, and property owners. The design guidelines address new construction and its relationship to the overall neighborhood, block, and site including visual compatibility; mass bulk, and volume; roof form and height; garages; and landscaping.

CASE STUDY

Concord's Sustainability Guide for Historic and Older Homes

The Town of Concord, MA is seeking to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. Accomplishing this goal will require improving the energy efficiency and performance of the town's older and historic homes. To help make this a reality, Concord partnered with the University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute Fellowship program to develop a guidebook to help residents plan energy retrofits that respect the historic character of their homes. The Sustainability Guide provides practical, accessible information on air sealing, insulation, windows and doors, mechanical system upgrades, solar and green roof installations, and landscaping and site improvements.





“The Wilmette History Museum should be a full partner in the landmarking and preservation process.”

Stakeholder

THEME 4

Strengthening Wilmette's Historic Preservation Program

Wilmette's local historic preservation program is guided by its municipal code, the legal mechanism for the operation and function of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The code includes provisions for the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) review process for locally designated properties as well as criteria for Certificate of Economic Hardship (COEH) applications. The Historic Preservation Commission Handbook, a Village policy document, includes the criteria and procedures for the designation of local landmarks and districts, the application and review procedures for COA and COEH applications, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and the COA and Local Landmark designation forms. While both the municipal code and Handbook together include all the relevant information necessary for a functioning preservation program, much of the information in the Handbook is typically codified within the municipal code for legal purposes and preservation best practices.

The HPC currently relies on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to conduct its reviews of COA applications. These ten standards are broad in their scope and may be used in any community across the country. While it is not uncommon for a commission to rely solely on these standards, many municipalities develop a more locally specific set of design guidelines tailored to the community's architecture and character, including materials, height, building orientation, porches, dormers, and other architectural features, as well as mid-20th century development, additions, new construction, and demolition. The guidelines may also be tailored to address a wide range of architecture and development, ensuring they can apply to future locally designated properties and districts. Adopting a comprehensive set of design guidelines is a preservation best practice.

Many communities are turning to zoning overlay districts to help regulate historic preservation activities. Zoning overlays provide an additional layer of administrative function that allows a community to tailor the overlay to specific needs or processes. Financial and other regulatory incentives can be tied to the zoning overlay, such as eligibility for rehabilitation grants, property tax rebates, expedited review of applications, zoning bonuses, and others.

A successful municipal preservation program will ensure that existing preservation policies and data, such as an official survey inventory, are considered when implementing community planning initiatives, integrating, preserving, and reusing its historic resources in future projects to maintain community character. In addition, maintaining an annual education and training program for the HPC and staff, such as commission orientation, online educational sessions, workshops, and conferences, ensures they can address and implement current preservation best practices.

Goal 4.1: Wilmette’s preservation framework is clear, consistent, and aligned with best practices in ordinance structure, administration, and review.

The following Actions (4.1.1 – 4.1.6) summarize the relevant portions of Wilmette’s historic preservation ordinance as it compares with the Illinois Sample Historic Preservation Ordinance developed by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). See Wilmette.Gov/HistoricPreservation for the complete Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Action 4.1.1: Review and update the duties and functions of the Historic Preservation Commission in Section 2-1009 - Duties and Functions of the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.

Type: Policy

Clearly defined duties help ensure consistent administration of the preservation program. The ordinance currently refers to Section 2-1009, which defines the duties assigned to the Historic Preservation Commission in Section 2-1008 and Article XXIX of Chapter 8, which does not reference commission duties. The Village could consider amending Section 2-1009 of Article XXIX to provide the following powers and duties of the Historic Preservation Commission as recommended by the Illinois Sample Historic Preservation Ordinance as best practices for a Historic Preservation Commission:

Section 2-1009 – Duties and Functions.

1. To adopt its own procedural regulations.
2. To conduct an ongoing survey to identify historically and architecturally significant properties, structures and areas.
3. To investigate and recommend to the Village Board the adoption of ordinances designating properties or structures having special historic, community, or architectural value as “landmarks”.
4. To investigate and recommend to the Village Board the adoption of ordinances designating properties or structures having special historic, community or architectural value as “historic districts”.
5. To keep a register of all properties and structures that have been designated as landmarks or historic districts, including all information required for each designation.
6. To determine an appropriate system of markers and make recommendations for the design and implementation of specific markings of the streets and routes leading from one landmark or historic district to another.
7. To advise owners of landmarks and property or structures within historic districts on physical and financial aspects of preservation, renovation, rehabilitation, and reuse, and on procedures for inclusion on the Local or National Register of Historic Places.
8. To inform and educate citizens concerning the historic and architectural heritage of the village by publishing appropriate maps, newsletters, brochures, and pamphlets, and by holding programs and seminars.

9. To hold public hearings and review applications for construction, alteration, removal, or demolition affecting proposed or designated landmarks or structures or historic districts and issue or deny Certificates of Appropriateness for such actions. Applicants shall be required to submit plans, drawings, elevations, specifications, and other information as may be necessary to make decisions.
10. To develop specific guidelines for the alteration, demolition, construction, or removal of landmarks or property and structures within historic districts.
11. To review proposed zoning amendments, applications for special use permits or variances that affect proposed or designated landmarks and historic districts. Such review shall be made prior to the date of the hearing by the Village Plan Commission or the Zoning Board of Appeals.
12. To call upon available village staff members as well as other experts for technical advise.
13. To testify before all boards and commissions, including the Village Plan Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals, on any matter affecting historically and architecturally significant property and landmarks.
14. To periodically review the Zoning Ordinance and to recommend to the Village Plan Commission and the Village Board any amendments appropriate for the protection and continued use of landmarks or property and structures within historic districts.

Action 4.1.2: Provide additional definitions to Section 2-1010 – Definitions of the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.

Type: Policy

Refining definitions can improve predictability for applicants and reduce ambiguity in interpretation and enforcement. The Village could consider amending Section 2-1010 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance to provide the following additional definitions as recommended by the Illinois Sample Historic Preservation Ordinance as best practices for a Historic Preservation Commission:

Section 2-1010 – Definitions.

- **Area.** A specific geographic division of the Village of Wilmette.
- **Addition.** Any act or process which changes one or more of the “exterior architectural features” of a structure designated for preservation by adding to, joining with or increasing the size or capacity of the structure.
- **Alteration.** A change in the exterior appearance of a Wilmette Landmark or a contributing structure within a Wilmette Historic District that requires a permit or as specified in the designation ordinance.
- **Building.** Any structure created for the support, shelter or enclosure of persons, animals or property of any kind and which is permanently affixed to the land.
- **Commission.** Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission
- **Commissioners.** Voting members of the Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission.

- **Construction.** The act of altering or adding an addition to an existing structure or the erection of a new principal or accessory structure on a lot or property.
- **Demolition.** Any act or process that destroys in part or in whole a landmark or building, structure, object, or site within a historic district.
- **Design Guideline.** A standard of appropriate activity that will preserve the historic and architectural character of a structure or area.
- **Owner of Record.** The person, corporation, or other legal entity listed as owner on the records of the County Recorder of Deeds.
- **Rehabilitation.** The process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair, restoration, or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values.
- **Repair.** Any change that does not require a building permit or that is not construction, relocation, or alteration.
- **Structural Change.** Any change or repair in the supporting members of a building, structure, roof, or exterior walls which would expand the building in height, width or bulk.

In addition, the following terms within the ordinance can be perceived as vague and the Village could consider providing the proposed definitions within Section 2-1010:

- **Economically Practical.** When the benefits of a real estate project or investment outweigh the costs or financial risks. An economically practical project will be financially viable, cost effective, and provide a reasonable return on investment.
- **Visually Compatible.** Alterations, additions, or new construction that are sympathetic in scale, form, and materials with the existing architectural character of a Historic Landmark or surrounding contributing properties within a Historic District.

Action 4.1.3: Codify the Certificate of Appropriateness application requirements, review procedures, and review criteria within the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.

Type: Policy

It is important that the Certificate of Appropriateness application requirements, review procedures, and review criteria be consolidated and codified in one section within the ordinance rather than be divided between the ordinance and a policy document such as the Historic Preservation Commission Handbook. The Village could consider codifying Section 3 of the Historic Preservation Commission Handbook – Rules Pertaining to Review of Applications to Alter or Demolish Landmarks or structures within a Historic District or to Construct a New Single-Family Residence on a Vacant Lot or Subdivision of a Lot of Record within a Historic District – within the Historic Preservation Ordinance and incorporate the text with Sections 2-1011, 2-1012, 2-1013, 2-1014, and 2-1015. This follows best practices and the recommendations of the Illinois Sample Historic Preservation Ordinance.



Action 4.1.4: Codify the Certificate of Economic Hardship application requirements, review procedures, and review criteria within the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.

Type: Policy

It is important that the Certificate of Economic Hardship application requirements, review procedures, and review criteria be consolidated and codified in one section within the ordinance rather than be divided between the ordinance and a policy document such as the Historic Preservation Commission Handbook. The Village could consider codifying Section 4 of the Historic Preservation Commission Handbook – Certificate of Economic Hardship – within the Historic Preservation Ordinance and incorporate the text with Section 2-1016. This follows best practices and the recommendations of the Illinois Sample Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Action 4.1.5: Research how to codify the criteria for Local Landmark and Historic District designation, application requirements, and review procedures within the historic preservation ordinance.

Type: Policy

The current historic preservation ordinance does not include application requirements or review procedures for designating local landmarks and historic districts, which are located within the Historic Preservation Commission Handbook along with the criteria for designation found at Wilmette.Gov/HistoricPreservation.

Designating landmarks and historic districts is a legal process where the Village Board approves the designations by ordinance. The Village could consider codifying the criteria for designation, application requirements, and review procedures within the historic preservation ordinance. See Wilmette.Gov/HistoricPreservation for sample historic designation criteria, application requirements, and review procedures from the Illinois Sample Historic Preservation Ordinance. This follows best practices and the recommendations of the Illinois Sample Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Action 4.1.6: Consider revising the approval requirement for the designation of Local Historic Districts in Section 2-1017(a) – Consideration by the Village Board of Trustees of the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.

Type: Policy

This section authorizes the Village Board of Trustees to approve or deny applications for Certificates of Appropriateness, Landmarks, and Historic Districts. Of interest in this section is the specific mention that the written consent of 75 percent of owners within a proposed historic district is required for approval by the Board. Historically, this percentage has proven to be extremely difficult to reach in many communities due to various factors such as lack of response from property owners or lack of information regarding the benefits of preservation. Although Illinois enabling legislation does not require owner consent, when including an approval requirement, best practices recommend – as is shown in the Illinois Sample Historic Preservation Ordinance – that 51 percent is a more reasonable threshold for approval, is sufficient to demonstrate consensus, and practical to achieve when coordinating responses across a large group of property owners.

The Village could consider amending Section 2-1017(a) to revise the 75 percent owner consent requirement for a Local Historic District approval to 51 percent to align with best practices.

Action 4.1.7: Revise the Historic Preservation Commission Handbook to reflect administrative, procedural, and educational information as a companion document to the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Type: Policy

The Historic Preservation Commission Handbook has the opportunity to serve as an excellent companion document to the Historic Preservation Ordinance that can provide information to residents and applicants regarding the Historic Preservation Commission, their composition and rules of procedure for conducting meetings, COA and Local Landmark and Historic District designation forms, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation used by the Commission as guidelines for reviewing alterations and additions. In addition, the Handbook can provide information on the Village's historic preservation program, financial incentives, and other preservation resources. As noted in the Action items above, any legal process should be codified within the Historic Preservation Ordinance rather than housed within the Handbook.

Action 4.1.8: Develop comprehensive historic preservation design guidelines for locally designated landmarks and historic districts that provide advisory best practices for property owners.

Type: Program

Section 2-1014 – Criteria for Review of Certificates of Appropriateness states that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) should give due consideration to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and "the standards of review adopted by the commission." The HPC currently uses the 10 Standards to review Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications. The language provided indicates that the Commission may adopt additional Design Guidelines in addition to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are broad statements that allow for interpretation in multiple situations and are required for all federal incentives and programs. Design Guidelines, as defined here, include standards (both advisory and regulatory) that apply to specific situations and can be an important educational tool for property owners, Village residents, staff, and the HPC. Design Guidelines that are illustrated provide best practices on material maintenance, repair, and preservation, as well as rehabilitation, additions, accessory structures, new construction, demolition, and other topics such as alternative materials, energy efficiency, climate resilience, post-World War II resources, adaptive use, and others. Creating a Design Guidelines document for Wilmette that aid in the interpretation of the Standards would serve multiple purposes, including providing a comprehensive guide for owners of locally designated properties and a best practices tool for the HPC and Village staff when reviewing COA applications. It would also serve as an educational resource for owners of older and historic properties in Wilmette.

Action 4.1.9: Provide ongoing training and orientation for Village staff and the Historic Preservation Commission.

Type: Program

Ongoing training sessions, courses, or conferences help staff and commission members to stay abreast of current topics and apply evolving preservation best practices. Orientation for new commissioners can strengthen institutional knowledge and continuity on the Village's historic preservation program, heritage, and architectural resources. Landmarks Illinois, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the American Planning Association, and the Association for Preservation Technology are a few of the organizations that provide historic preservation educational opportunities.

CASE STUDY

Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP)

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC). NAPC's mission is to build strong local preservation programs and leaders through education, training, and advocacy. The Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) provides training for preservation-related boards and commissions through presentations, hands-on exercises, group discussions, networking, and mentoring via in-person or virtual training. Each CAMP is customized to provide education and training in subjects most relevant to each community. CAMP trainers include commissioners, local, state, and federal staff members, attorneys, consultants, planners, and preservation partners.



Goal 4.2: Village processes support and encourage the ongoing stewardship and reinvestment of historic properties.

Action 4.2.1: Explore the establishment of an Historic Zoning Overlay Zone where significant properties can opt into an Advisory or Landmark review tier to receive access to potential historic preservation incentives.

Type: Policy

The Village could consider creating a Historic Zoning Overlay District (HZO) within the Village Zoning Ordinance that could be applied to specific areas within the Village deemed worthy of preservation. The HZO regulations could include stipulations that properties identified on the Village's Significant Property Inventory (see Action 1.2.1) could opt-in to one of two historic review tiers – the Advisory Tier or Landmark Tier – to access the Village's array of preservation and zoning financial incentives. The Advisory Tier may not require review or approval by the Historic Preservation Commission for designation or for exterior modifications. Instead, an expedited administrative or committee review and approval may be appropriate for this tier. The Advisory tier may allow property owners access to permit fee waivers (see Action 4.2.3), and expedited review of permits and applications (see Action 4.2.4). Landmark Tier property owners would have access to the Advisory Tier incentives as well as matching rehabilitation grant funds (see Action 4.2.2), zoning bonuses (see Action 4.2.5), and property tax rebates (see Action 4.2.6). Existing Local Landmarks would automatically be included within the HZO Landmark Tier upon its adoption. The Village should complete further research and public outreach to determine which incentives and restrictions are appropriate to the Advisory and Landmark tiers.

Action 4.2.2: Establish a matching historic rehabilitation grant program to support historically appropriate rehabilitation to the exterior of locally designated properties.

Type: Program

Wilmette's historic residential neighborhoods are significant in defining the Village's character and identity, and the rehabilitation of historic houses is essential to maintaining that character. Creating a rehabilitation grant program for locally designated properties will provide additional support to property owners seeking to invest in their buildings. The Village could consider creating a matching grant program that assists in the rehabilitation of exterior architectural features or compliance with Village code requirements. The Historic Preservation Commission would review grant projects that require a Certificate of Appropriateness; all other applications could be reviewed and approved administratively by Village staff.

The grant program could consider some of the following requirements:

- Projects must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Provide clarity on eligibility requirements.
- Define eligible and ineligible expenses.
- Define work that requires a Certificate of Appropriateness and work that is eligible for administrative review.

Action 4.2.3: Consider building permit fee waivers for properties determined eligible through local designation or within a historic zoning overlay district.

Type: Policy

Depending on the scope and scale of a rehabilitation project, building permit fees can be a substantial project cost. Wilmette could explore reducing or eliminating building permit fees for owners of historic properties. Such a policy could encourage more residents to pursue landmarking for their properties, reward owners who invest in historically sensitive rehabilitation work, and modestly offset the potentially high cost of preservation-minded repairs and materials. While likely to be limited in scale and use in the near term given Wilmette's modest number of historically designated properties, a permit fee waiver program will need to be evaluated for its potential impact on annual Village revenues.

CASE STUDY

City of Aurora Historic Preservation Grant Program

The City of Aurora offers residential property owners a reimbursement grant of up to \$30,000 to support exterior repairs to their homes. Eligible properties must contribute to a local historic district or be a locally designated landmark. The grant is open to both owner-occupied and rental properties with up to five units. Grants up to \$15,000 do not require matching funds but grants above \$15,000 require a dollar-for-dollar match of City funds. Grants may be used to pay contractors or to cover the cost of materials if the property owner completes the repairs themselves. The Historic Preservation Grant is competitive, with higher scores going to projects that are owner-occupied and that have significant impact on the physical appearance and integrity of a residence. All repairs require a Historic Certificate of Appropriateness from the Aurora Preservation Commission.

Action 4.2.4: Consider expedited processing of building permits, COA applications, applications for landmark and historic district designation, etc. for properties determined eligible through local designation or within a historic zoning overlay district.

Type: Administrative Practice

Historic preservation processes may be perceived as time consuming and overly regulatory, discouraging property owners from participating in local preservation efforts. The Village should explore opportunities to offer expedited permitting and review processes to encourage residents to historically designate and sensitively rehabilitate their properties. Ideally, the review of building permits and COA applications could be made comparable or faster than standard reviews, allowing property owners to move more quickly to construction and reducing project completion timeframes and costs. Expedited review processes can be paired with fee waivers as an incentive package (see Action 4.2.3).

CASE STUDY

Village of Lake Bluff Building Permit Fee Waivers

The Village of Lake Bluff offers a range of incentives to support the preservation of its historic resources through a voluntary, incentive-based partnership with property owners. As part of this program, the Village provides a full waiver of building permit fees for improvements made to any of its 28 locally designated Landmark properties, helping to reduce the cost of rehabilitation and encourage ongoing investment in these historic assets.

Action 4.2.5: Explore creation of zoning bonuses for the construction of additions to properties determined eligible through local designation or within a historic zoning overlay district.

Type: Policy

The floor plans of older and historic homes are reflective of the lifestyles and needs of their original period of construction. They may not immediately meet the spatial and living requirements of contemporary homebuyers. Historically sensitive additions can be a cost-effective way to add space and reconfigure the interior layout of an older property. Zoning may complicate the ability of historic homeowners to make additions to their homes due to height, bulk, floor area ratio (FAR), setback, and lot coverage requirements. The Village should explore the creation of alternative zoning regulations that provide the flexibility needed by homeowners to update their homes while maintaining the property's historic character. Alternative zoning could be administered through a traditional variance process, or an expedited review process available just to owners of locally designated residences.

Action 4.2.6: Explore creation of a local property tax rebate program for properties determined eligible through local designation or within a historic zoning overlay district.

Type: Program

Rising property values in Wilmette can contribute to rising tax bills for homeowners. This can especially be true when a property's value is reassessed following a substantial home rehabilitation project. Wilmette could consider establishing a local property tax rebate program to help offset the cost of rising assessments and encourage exterior improvements to historically

designated homes. The tax rebate would apply to the Village's portion of the homeowner's annual property tax bill. Eligible projects would need to comply with all Village historic preservation standards and be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission for any projects that require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The property tax rebate program could consider some of the following requirements:

- Projects must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Provide clarity on project eligibility requirements
- Establish minimum cost of eligible projects
- Define eligible and ineligible expenses
- Define number of years property owners are eligible for the tax rebate and process for requesting the rebate annually

CASE STUDY

Local Property Tax Rebate Programs

Some Chicago-area communities have begun offering local property tax rebates to encourage and support the landmarking and rehabilitation of historic residential properties. The Village of Hinsdale, for example, offers a property tax rebate for the Village's portion of a property tax bill for up to five years. To be eligible for the rebate, a home must be listed on the Historically Significant Properties List for the Village's Historic Overlay District, and the property owner must spend at least \$50,000 on the substantial exterior alternation, rehabilitation, or restoration of their residence. The Village of Lake Bluff also offers a rebate of 50% of the Village's share of property taxes, up to \$2,000 annually, for eight years for newly landmarked homes. Unlike Hinsdale, Lake Bluff does not require a minimum rehabilitation expenditure to qualify. In both communities, these rebates are transferable to future homeowners, helping to sustain long-term preservation value.

Action 4.2.7: Evaluate modifications to the Village's substantial demolition provisions for historic properties.

Type: Policy

Like many communities across the country, Wilmette requires buildings in which 50% or more of the structure is demolished to comply with code requirements for new construction. This calculation compares the existing foundation, exterior walls, interior walls, and roof with the portions of the building proposed for demolition. The Village's current method for calculating demolition, along with the code requirements it can trigger, may discourage the reuse and rehabilitation of older and historic buildings by increasing project costs. In some cases, property owners may also pursue unpermitted repairs or alterations to avoid additional expenses, review processes, and regulatory requirements.

The Village should evaluate alternative models for both calculating substantial demolition and when it triggers more stringent code requirements for historic properties, especially designated Local Landmarks. Alternatively, the Village could provide regulatory relief from changes in code requirements for historic property owners where, for example, substantial demolition is the result of the necessary removal of interior and non-historic exterior finish materials rather than structural changes or alternations to the building.

Action 4.2.8: Integrate historic preservation policies and initiatives into routine Village planning, permitting, and capital project processes.

Type: Administrative Practice

The Village could consider historic preservation policies, historic resource survey data – recommendations for Local and National Register Landmarks and Districts – historic landscape and special features, historic signage, and other preservation-related topics when initiating community planning and historic preservation processes, Village plans and guidelines, and budgeting for capital projects. These efforts may identify priorities for future preservation initiatives that could include housing or sustainability policies, heritage-based public art, building code amendments, planned developments, transportation initiatives, and Local Landmark and District designations.





**“Make it harder for
developers to demolish
a house by making
it easier for them to
rehabilitate it.”**

Stakeholder

SECTION 5

Implementation

This section provides a framework for completion of the goals and actions within the plan.



Overview

The Wilmette Historic Preservation Plan establishes a 10-year framework for enhancing historic preservation efforts throughout the Village and fostering greater community involvement in safeguarding Wilmette's unique heritage and character. Successful implementation of the Plan will require collaboration between the Village of Wilmette, its Historic Preservation Commission, and a diverse range of preservation stakeholders. Implementation of the Plan will take place over time, with some action items presenting near-term opportunities and others requiring a longer-term commitment, all building upon the foundation created by prior policies, programs, and initiatives.

As the Village moves forward, it will need to thoughtfully consider how to best prioritize the Plan's menu of options. This process will require balancing a range of considerations, including further evaluation and community input, managing staff capacity, identifying additional funding sources, and strengthening the policies and procedures that guide Wilmette's preservation program. Community Development Department staff, Historic Preservation Commission members, and the Village Board of Trustees should regularly evaluate Plan priorities and implementation timeframes. Doing so will enable the Village to effectively respond to evolving preservation priorities, opportunities, and available resources within the community.

The Village will also need to consider how its preservation priorities align with broader community goals. For example, efforts to establish new local landmark districts or create neighborhood conservation districts may both support and, at times, compete with initiatives aimed at expanding housing diversity and affordability in Wilmette. Similarly, dedicating funding to a preservation rehabilitation grant program or establishing a preservation-based local property tax rebate program could affect the resources available for other Village initiatives and services. Thoughtfully balancing these potential tradeoffs will be critical to achieving long-term success.

Preservation Partners	
ADP	Architecture and Design Professionals
AO	Arts Organizations
BFI	Banks and Financial Institutions
CCA	Cook County Assessors Office
CE	ComED
CPAH	Community Partners for Affordable Housing
CTP	Construction and Trade Professionals
HPO	Historic Property Owners
ILSHPO	Illinois State Historic Preservation Office
LI	Landmarks Illinois
LPO	Local Property Owners
LRI	Local Religious Institutions
NSCVB	Chicago's North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau
NAO	Neighborhood Associations and Organizations
NTT	New Trier Township
NPSD203	New Trier Public School District #203
NG	Nicor Gas
NSBAR	North Shore-Barrington Association of Realtors

Preservation Partners	
SSO	Senior Services Organizations
WARC	Wilmette Appearance Review Commission
WCDD	Wilmette Community Development Department
WEPWD	Wilmette Engineering & Public Works Department
WEEC	Wilmette Environmental & Energy Commission
WHPC	Wilmette Historic Preservation Commission
WHM	Wilmette History Museum
WHC	Wilmette Housing Commission
WPC	Wilmette Plan Commission
WZBA	Wilmette Zoning Board of Appeals
WKCC	Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce
WPD	Wilmette Park District
WPSD37	Wilmette Public Schools District #37
WPSD39	Wilmette Public Schools District #39

Funding Sources

Federal Incentives

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HTC)

Tax credits are a valuable tool for encouraging the rehabilitation and continued use of historic properties. The Federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC), administered by the National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service, provides developers and investors with an income tax credit equal to 20 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenses. The federal credit may also be combined with the Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit, creating additional financial support for eligible projects.

To qualify for the HTC, projects must meet several requirements, including:

- The building must be individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, contribute to a National Register Historic District, or be determined eligible for listing on the National Register.
- The property must be used for income-producing purposes, such as commercial, industrial, agricultural, rental residential, or apartment use. Private single-family residences are not eligible.
- The rehabilitation work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- The rehabilitation investment must exceed the building's calculated value, or "adjusted basis."

During fiscal year 2024, Illinois recorded 10 approved HTC projects representing nearly \$166 million in qualified rehabilitation expenditures. Although no projects in Wilmette have yet utilized the HTC, the program remains available for properties individually listed on the National Register or contributing to a National Register historic district.

In particular, the credit could support the rehabilitation of commercial buildings and residential rental properties within the Wilmette Village Center Historic District.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is the federal government's primary program for encouraging the development and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing. Created through the U.S. Tax Reform Act of 1986, the program provides developers and investors with a dollar-for-dollar reduction in federal tax liability in exchange for reserving a portion of housing units for income-qualified households at restricted rent levels. In most cases, developers syndicate or sell the tax credits to investors to generate equity for project financing. Developers may pair LIHTC with the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit for the rehabilitation of certified historic residential structures or buildings adapted to housing purposes. In Illinois, the program is administered by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), which allocates tax credits through a competitive application process.

Preservation Easements

A preservation easement donation allows a property owner to claim a one-time federal charitable income tax deduction based on the appraised value of the easement. Through the easement, the owner grants a qualified nonprofit organization the right to review and approve future alterations to the property to ensure its long-term preservation. To qualify, the property must be a certified historic structure that is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, located within a National Register historic district, or contributing to a locally designated landmark district. In Illinois, Landmarks Illinois is the principal recipient of preservation easements.

STATE INCENTIVES

Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (ILHTC)

The State of Illinois offers a dollar-for-dollar state income tax credit to developers and investors equal to 25 percent of qualified rehabilitation costs, up to a maximum credit of \$3 million per project. The Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit (ILHTC) must be used in conjunction with the Federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC). As with the federal program, eligible projects must involve a building that is either individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places or contributes to a National Register Historic District, and have qualified rehabilitation expenses that exceed the building's adjusted basis or value. The ILHTC is administered by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) within the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.



Applications meeting one or more of the following criteria receive priority consideration for tax credit allocations:

- The qualified historic structure is in a county bordering a state that offers a property rehabilitation tax credit.
- The building was formerly owned by a federal, state, or local government entity.
- The building is located within a census tract where median family income is at or below the state median family income.
- The project includes a development partnership with a Community Development Entity, low-profit organization, or nonprofit organization.
- The building is in an area designated under an Emergency Declaration or Major Disaster Declaration pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act

Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program

The Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze (Tax Freeze) is available to residential properties that complete historically appropriate rehabilitation projects. The program freezes the assessed value of an eligible rehabilitated property for eight years, followed by a four-year phase-in period during which the assessment gradually increases to its current level. The Tax Freeze program is administered by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) within the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

To qualify for the Tax Freeze program, a property must meet the following requirements:

- The property must be owner-occupied and serve as the owner's primary residence. Eligible property types include single-family homes, residential buildings with up to six units, condominiums, and cooperatives.
- The building must be individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, contribute to a National Register Historic District, or be designated as a local landmark or contributing property within a local landmark district in a participating community.

Residents of Wilmette are eligible to participate in the program.

- The rehabilitation project must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Qualified rehabilitation expenses must exceed 25 percent of the property's pre-rehabilitation fair cash value, as determined by the local assessor's office.

Illinois Certified Local Government Matching Grants

Administered by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) within the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Certified Local Government (CLG) Matching Grants are available to the 81 Certified Local Governments in Illinois, including the Village of Wilmette. CLG grants support a variety of preservation activities, including historic resource surveys, National Register of Historic Places nominations, public education and outreach, and preservation planning projects. CLG grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis and require a 30 percent local match. The Village utilized CLG grants to conduct surveys of West Wilmette in 2025 and 2026.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation, provides funding for community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation system through the preservation of cultural, historic, aesthetic, and environmental resources. Eligible projects include streetscape improvements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, trails, and the historic preservation or rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities. ITEP is a competitive reimbursement-based grant program that requires matching funds from the sponsoring entity. The program operates on a biannual cycle, with application periods opening in even-numbered years. The Village has received ITEP funding to support local projects.

Other Incentives and Grant Programs

Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation

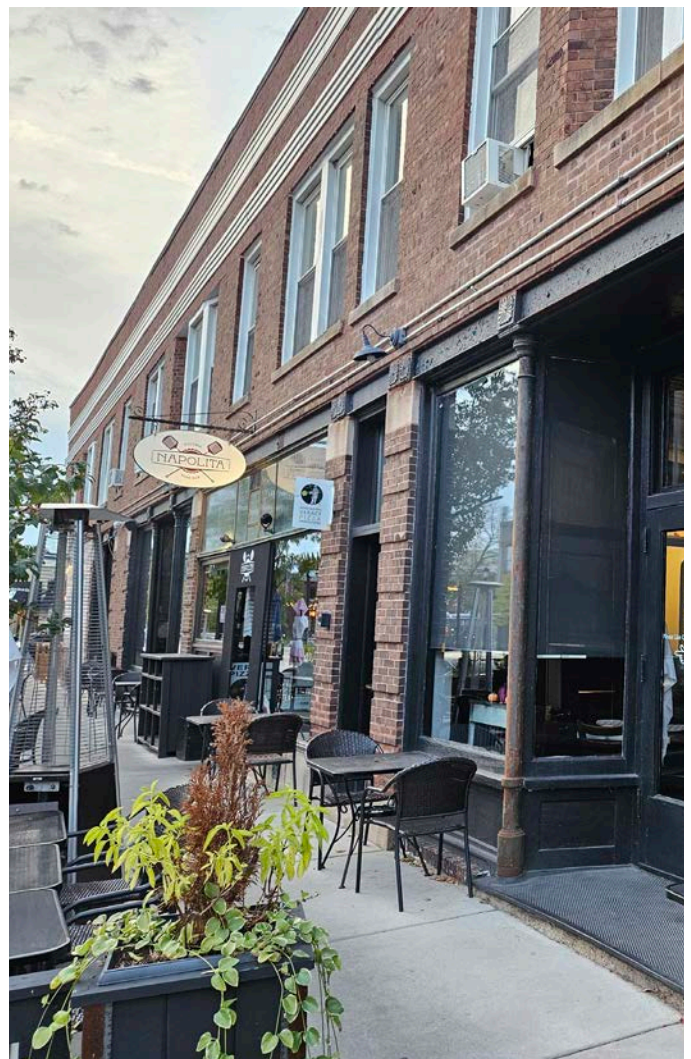
Administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation seeks to save historic environments to foster an appreciation of our diverse cultural heritage and to revitalize livability of the nation's communities. Eligible grant activities include applicable architecture, planning, or economic consulting services; professional guidance to strengthen program management; design and production of print and video communications materials; sponsoring preservation conferences or workshops; designing and implementing preservation programs; and restoration or rehabilitation of designated historic sites and structures. Grants range from \$2,500 - \$15,000 and require a one-to-one funding match.

Preservation Heritage Fund Grant Program

Landmarks Illinois' Preservation Heritage Fund Grant Program provides financial assistance to preserve or protect significant historic resources in Illinois. Projects must involve historic resources in Illinois that are under threat of demolition, imminent deterioration, or are of such architectural quality that their preservation would benefit the public. Eligible grant activities include engineering, architectural, and feasibility studies; stabilization; rehabilitation; legal services; surveys and National Register nominations; and preservation ordinance support. Grant funding ranges from \$500 - \$5,000 and requires a dollar-for-dollar match or in-kind volunteer labor or services equal to the value of the grant.

Barbara C. and Thomas E. Donnelley II Preservation Fund Grant

Also administered by Landmarks Illinois, the Barbara C. and Thomas E. Donnelley II Preservation Fund Grant providing funding to planning and education activities focused on preservation. Projects must focus on significant structures or sites in Illinois that are under threat of demolition, at risk of imminent deterioration, need stabilization, require structural or re-use evaluation, or need to be evaluated for landmark eligibility. Funding may be used to support historic structure reports or historic landscape plans, production of historic design guidelines, economic feasibility studies, and innovative preservation education activities, amongst other initiatives. Grant funding ranges from \$500 - \$2,500 and requires a dollar-for-dollar match or in-kind volunteer labor or services equal to the value of the grant.



INTRO

Implementation

The recommendations contained throughout this Plan are organized into a comprehensive Implementation Matrix that serves as a roadmap for turning the Plan's vision into action. Rather than functioning as a static list of recommendations, the Matrix is intended to guide decision-making, assign responsibilities, and measure progress over time. Implementation priorities were intentionally not established as part of the planning process, allowing the Historic Preservation Commission and its partners to remain flexible in responding to emerging opportunities, changing community needs, available funding, and organizational capacity as implementation progresses.

The Matrix is organized in a hierarchical format beginning with Themes, which represent the Plan's broad focus areas. Each Theme contains one or more Goals that describe the desired long-term outcomes for the community. Goals are supported by a series of Actions that identify the specific initiatives needed to achieve each outcome. To assist with implementation, every Action includes several attributes that help communicate how it should be carried out. The Action describes the specific initiative or recommendation to be undertaken. Collectively, the Actions represent the work program for implementing the Plan. Each Action is assigned an implementation category that reflects the primary method through which it is expected to be accomplished.

Timeframe (1-5 Years)

Each Action is assigned an anticipated implementation timeframe.

- 1-5 Years identifies near-term priorities that should begin soon after Plan adoption.
- Beyond 5 Years identifies longer-term initiatives that may require additional funding, partnerships, or preceding actions before implementation.

These timeframes represent anticipated sequencing rather than rigid deadlines and should be revisited periodically as community priorities evolve.

Partners

Implementation will require collaboration among numerous organizations. The Partners column identifies the agencies, organizations, institutions, and community stakeholders expected to play a meaningful role in implementing each Action. While one organization may lead an initiative, successful implementation will often depend upon continued coordination among multiple partners.

Performance Metrics

Each Action includes measurable indicators intended to track implementation progress and evaluate success over time. Performance Metrics are not intended to measure whether a recommendation was merely completed, but whether meaningful progress has been achieved toward the Goal. These measures provide accountability, assist with annual reporting, and help identify when strategies should be adjusted as conditions change.

The Matrix is intended to be a living document. As initiatives are completed, funding opportunities emerge, community priorities evolve, and new challenges arise, the Matrix should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure that implementation remains responsive, coordinated, and achievable.

Theme 1: Protecting Wilmette's Historic Resources

Goal 1.1: Wilmette's future Landmarks and Historic Districts are comprehensively identified, documented, and evaluated through ongoing survey efforts.

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 1.1.1: Survey residential neighborhoods not previously surveyed.	Project					
<i>Survey Area 1: Old Glenview Road. Post World War II neighborhood bounded by Wilmette Avenue on the north, Skokie Boulevard on the west, Village boundary on the south, and Hunter Road on the east.</i>		X		WHPC, ILSHPO, NAO	CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of potentially eligible landmarks identified; Number of potentially eligible districts identified
<i>Survey Area 2: Romana Road/Locust Road. Post World War II neighborhood bounded by Wilmette Avenue on the south, Skokie Boulevard on the west, Lake Avenue on the north, and Hunter Road/ Illinois Road on the east.</i>		X		WHPC, ILSHPO	CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of potentially eligible landmarks identified; Number of potentially eligible districts identified
<i>Survey Area 3: Hibbard Road Cul-de-Sacs. Post World War II neighborhood bounded by Illinois Road on the north, Hibbard Road on the east, Skokie Boulevard on the west, and Lake Avenue on the south.</i>		X		WHPC, ILSHPO	CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of potentially eligible landmarks identified; Number of potentially eligible districts identified
Action 1.1.2: Survey neighborhoods previously surveyed to update architectural information, document demolished properties, and identify newly eligible historic resources.	Project					

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Survey Area: Gross Point. Surveyed in 1991 and including 2,360 properties, the survey area is bounded by 15th Street on the east, Hunter Road on the west, and the Village's northern and southern boundaries. Due to the size of the survey area, it is recommended that the survey be conducted in three phases:		X		WHPC, ILSHPO	CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of potentially eligible landmarks identified; Number of potentially eligible districts identified
Survey Area 4: The area includes Kenilworth Gardens and is bounded by the Village's northern boundary (Indian Hill Road), Lake Avenue on the south, Ridge Road on the east, and Illinois Road on the west.			X	WHPC, ILSHPO		
Survey Area 5: The area bounded by Lake Avenue on the north, Ridge Road on the east, Illinois and Hunter Roads on the west, and the Village's southern boundary.			X	WHPC, ILSHPO		
Survey Area 6: The area bounded by the Village's northern and southern boundaries, Ridge Road on the west, and 15th Street on the east.			X	WHPC, ILSHPO		
Survey Area: East Wilmette. Surveyed in 1993 and including 2,744 properties, the survey area is bounded by 15th Street on the west, Lake Michigan on the east, and the Village's northern and southern boundaries. Due to the size of the survey area, it is recommended that the survey be conducted in three phases:					CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of potentially eligible landmarks identified; Number of potentially eligible districts identified
Survey Area 7: The area bounded by Elmwood Avenue and the intersection of Green Bay Road and 15th Street on the north, the Village's southern boundary, Green Bay Road on the east, and 15th Street on the west. The survey area includes the Oak Circle National Register Historic District, which can be removed from the survey.			X	WHPC, ILSHPO		
Survey Area 8: The area bounded by Lake and Elmwood Avenues on the north, 6th Street on the east, Green Bay Road on the west, and the Village's southern boundary. The survey area includes the Village Center National Register Historic District, which can be removed from the survey.			X	WHPC, ILSHPO		

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Survey Area 9: The area bounded by Lake Avenue and the Village's northern boundary on the north, 6th Street and Sheridan Road on the west, and Michigan Avenue and the Village's eastern boundary on the east. The survey area includes all of Michigan Avenue and Sheridan Road, as well as Westerfield Drive and Plaza del Lago. Gillson Park can be removed from the survey as it was surveyed in 2024.			X	WHPC, ILSHPO		
Survey Area 10: The boundary matches that of the Ouilmette North National Register Historic District – the Village's northern boundary and Chestnut Avenue on the north, Lake and Elmwood Avenues on the south, Green Bay Road on the west, and Sheridan Road on the east.			X	WHPC, ILSHPO		
Survey Area 11: Indian Hill Estates and Environs. Surveyed in 1995, the survey area is bounded by Lake Avenue on the south, Illinois Road on the east, Hibbard Road on the west, and the Village's northern boundary (Indian Hill Road).			X	WHPC, ILSHPO	CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of potentially eligible landmarks identified; Number of potentially eligible districts identified
Survey Area 12: West Wilmette. The survey of West Wilmette, including everything west of Skokie Boulevard, was recently completed in 2026.			X	WHPC, ILSHPO		

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 1.1.3: Survey and inventory historic resources associated with key building types or historic contexts in Wilmette's development history, including early- and mid-20th-century institutional, civic, educational, and religious resources.	Project					
<i>Survey Wilmette's early- and mid-20th century educational institutions.</i>			X	WHPC, ILSHPO, WPSD39, NTD39, LRI	CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of potentially eligible landmarks identified
<i>Survey Wilmette's early- and mid-20th century religious facilities.</i>			X	WHPC, ILSHPO	CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of potentially eligible landmarks identified

Goal 1.2: Wilmette's historic resources are formally recognized and protected through Local and National Register designation.

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 1.2.1: Create and maintain a centralized inventory of significant properties based on past and ongoing historic surveys to identify future Landmark and Historic District designations.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Significant properties inventory created; Inventory updated on a annual or semi-annual basis; Number of Landmark and Historic Districts designations initiated; Number of additional resources in inventory
Action 1.2.2: Designate existing National Register properties and districts as Local Landmarks and Local Historic Districts to provide meaningful local protection.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD; LPO; NAO	VOW	Number of National Register properties and districts designated as Local Landmarks and Local Historic Districts; Number of outreach meetings; Number of nominations initiated
Action 1.2.3: Pursue new National Register listings for eligible properties and districts identified through historic surveys	Program		X	WHPC, WCDD, ILSHPO	CLG	Number of nominations prepared; Number of nominations submitted; Number of properties and districts listed on the National Register
Action 1.2.4: Expand the designation of Local Landmarks based on survey findings to recognize and protect resources significant to Wilmette's architectural and development history.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Number of Local Landmarks designated based on prior historic surveys; Number and type of direct outreach made to property owners
Action 1.2.5: Consider designating new Local Historic Districts where survey findings demonstrate significant architectural character or historical development patterns and community support.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD, NAO	VOW	Number of Local Historic Districts designated based on prior historic surveys; Number and type of direct outreach made to property owners

Goal 1.3: Character-defining features of Wilmette's built environment, including streetscapes, signage, and landscape elements, are identified and preserved as contributors to neighborhood identity.

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 1.3.1: Survey and inventory historic neon and other signs in Wilmette.	Project		X	WHPC, WCDD, WKCC, WHM	CLG	Funding for survey secured; Survey completed; Number of signs inventoried; Number identified as significant
Action 1.3.2: Survey and inventory significant streetscape and public realm features.	Project		X	WHPC, WCDD, WEPWD, WHM	CLG	Funding for survey(s) secured; survey(s) completed; Number of features inventoried; Number of priority preservation features identified

Theme 2: Increasing Preservation Education and Awareness

Goal 2.1: Residents, property owners, and professionals clearly understand historic preservation processes, benefits, and available resources.

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 2.1.1: Engage with owners of Wilmette Local Landmarks as partners in preservation, meeting regularly to better understand the benefits, needs, and opportunities of owning and maintaining a Landmark building.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD, HPO	VOW	Advisory committee of Local Landmark owners established; Number of meetings held annually with advisory committee; Number of participating Landmark owners, Number of recommendations generated, Satisfaction survey from participants
Action 2.1.2: Offer targeted educational workshops on historic preservation tax incentives for residents, realtors, developers, contractors, and bankers, to improve awareness of available tools and reduce financial barriers to preservation.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD, NSBAR, ILSHPO, BFI, LI	CLG, Favrot	Number of educational workshops held annually; Type of educational workshops offered; Attendance at educational workshops; Education workshop partners or sponsors; Number of post-workshop inquiries received
Action 2.1.3: Develop and maintain digitally accessible materials that explain Wilmette's historic preservation program, process, and resources in plain language.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Work plan to review and update historic preservation materials; Updated materials placed on Village website; Number of times promoted in e-news and social media; Annual review complete

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 2.1.4: Host hands-on preservation seminars and workshops focused on practical maintenance, rehabilitation, and energy efficiency for historic structures.	Program	X		WHPC, WHM, WHC, WEEC, ADP, CTP	CLG, Favrot	Number of hands-on seminars held annually; Number of workshops completed; Type of hands-on seminars held annually; Attendance at hands-on seminars; Hands-on seminar partners or sponsors
Action 2.1.5: Expand and formalize the Historic Preservation Awards Program to recognize exemplary preservation efforts.	Program	X		WKCC	VOW, CLG, Favrot	Historic Preservation Awards Program held annually; Expansion of award program categories; Number of award program applicants; Attendance at awards program; Awards program partnerships or sponsors
Action 2.1.6: Promote peer-to-peer learning through home and commercial renovation tours that showcase successful preservation projects and demonstrate the feasibility of rehabilitating older buildings.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD, NSBAR	CLG, Favrot	Number of renovation tours offered annually; Type of renovation tours offered annually; Number of participating properties; Attendance at renovation tours; Renovation tour partnerships or sponsors
Action 2.1.7: Develop a clear, user-friendly “Preservation Roadmap” that explains when preservation review applies, what flexibility exists, and how applicants can seek early guidance before submitting formal applications.	Admin. Practice	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Preservation review process outlined and assessed; “Preservation Roadmap” developed; “Preservation Roadmap” published on Village website, included with COA application, and promoted in e-news and social media.

Goal 2.2: Wilmette's heritage and cultural history are visible, accessible, and actively interpreted for the community.

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 2.2.1: Partner with the Wilmette History Museum to establish a historic marker program that recognizes significant people, places, and events in Wilmette's history.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD, WHM, WPD	VOW, CLG	Historic marker program established; Number of historic markers requested annually; Number of historic markers installed annually; Historic marker program partners or sponsors; Geographic distribution of markers
Action 2.2.2: Support heritage-based public art initiatives developed in collaboration with community stakeholders to interpret Wilmette's history in creative and contemporary ways.	Program		X	WHPC, WCDD, WHRC, NAO, AO		Heritage-based art initiative established; Number of art initiative programs, Exhibits, or installations annually; Art initiative partners and sponsors
Action 2.2.3: Organize neighborhood architecture and history tours and house walks to highlight Wilmette's diverse architectural heritage and foster community pride and engagement.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD, WHM, NAO	VOW, CLG	Number of participating neighborhoods; Neighborhood tours and house walks established; number of neighborhood tours and house walks annually; Attendance at neighborhood tours and house walks; Neighborhood tours and house walks partners and sponsors

Theme 3: Preserving and Celebrating Wilmette's Neighborhoods

Goal 3.1: Existing housing is reinvested in and maintained to support long-term neighborhood stability, sustainability, and attainability.

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 3.1.1: Partner with Community Partners for Affordable Housing to explore how their community land trust model may support both preservation and long-term housing affordability.	Program	X		CPAH, WHPC, WCDD, WHC	VOW	Partnership opportunities with CPAH to preserve older and historic homes evaluated; Number of meetings held with CPAH; Feasibility assessment completed; Number of properties identified as potential candidates
Action 3.1.2: Establish a Historic Preservation Fund dedicated to preserving and reinvesting in Wilmette's existing residential building stock.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Historic Preservation Fund established via ordinance; Funding sources identified; Amount of funding secured; Amount of funding allocated annually; Programs or activities supported by funding; Number of projects assisted annually; Geographic distribution of funding
Action 3.1.3: Evaluate the sensitive conversion of large single-family homes into multi-unit residences where compatible with neighborhood character and zoning.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD, WHC		Regulatory considerations identified and evaluated; Number of candidate properties identified

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 3.1.4: Evaluate adjustments to demolition permit fees to discourage unnecessary teardowns and support preservation and housing initiatives.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Demolition fee models and amounts evaluated; Demolition fees increased to encourage rehabilitation and support Village programs; Annual demolition permits issued; Portion of demolition fee revenue allocated to capitalizing a Historic Preservation Fund
Action 3.1.5: Explore establishment of a demolition impact fee to discourage unnecessary teardowns and support preservation and housing initiatives.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Demolition impact fee models and amounts evaluated; Impact fee established to encourage rehabilitation and support Village programs; portion of impact fee revenue used to capitalize a Historic Preservation Fund; Number of preservation projects funded through fee revenue
Action 3.1.6: Encourage aging-in-place and gentle density in historic neighborhoods, including sensitive additions, conversions, and context-appropriate accessory dwelling units, where feasible.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD, WHC	VOW	Opportunities to legalize and reduce regulatory considerations identified and evaluated to ADUs evaluated; ADU ordinance approved and implemented; Number of ADUs approved; Number of aging-in-place modifications completed; Number of homeowners utilizing program resources

Goal 3.2: The established scale, character, and development patterns of Wilmette's neighborhoods are respected and reinforced over time.

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 3.2.1: Evaluate a Neighborhood Conservation District Program.	Policy		X	WHPC, WCDD, NAO	VOW	NCD program models explored and evaluated; Number of community residents and stakeholders engaged about NCDs; Number of neighborhoods evaluated; NCD program established; Number of NCDs established
Action 3.2.2: Evaluate the creation of a voluntary advisory design review process for new single-family homes to encourage design that is compatible with the character of the neighborhood.	Admin. Practice		X	WHPC, WCDD, WHC, WARC	VOW	Advisory design review models explored and evaluated; Public engagement completed; Recommendation report completed

Goal 3.3: The preservation and rehabilitation of older and historic residential and commercial buildings contribute to Wilmette's environmental sustainability and resilience.

<i>ACTION</i>	<i>ACTION TYPE</i>	<i>1-5 YEARS</i>	<i>BEYOND 5 YEARS</i>	<i>PARTNERS</i>	<i>POTENTIAL FUNDING</i>	<i>PERFORMANCE METRICS</i>
Action 3.3.1: Align preservation messaging with new and ongoing Village sustainability initiatives to encourage reuse and retrofit of existing buildings to reduce demolition.	Project	X		WHPC, WCDD, WEEC	VOW	Number of sustainability materials incorporating preservation messaging; Number of outreach campaigns completed; Number of collaborative initiatives between WEEC and WHPC
Action 3.3.2: Develop guidance that informs and supports residents' efforts to increase the energy efficiency of older and historic homes.	Project	X		WHPC, WCDD, WEEC, CE, NG	VOW, CLG	Guidance document completed; How often promoted in e-news and social media; Number of workshops utilizing guidance
Action 3.3.3: Promote the rehabilitation and reuse of residential and commercial buildings as a climate strategy, not just a method for preserving historic and cultural heritage.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD, WEEC, CE, NG	VOW, CLG	Number of educational campaigns; Number of rehabilitation case studies highlighted; Number of preservation-related sustainability events

Theme 4: Strengthening Wilmette's Historic Preservation Program

Goal 4.1: Wilmette's preservation framework is clear, consistent, and aligned with best practices in ordinance structure, administration, and review.

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 4.1.1: Review and update the duties and functions of the Historic Preservation Commission in Section 2-1009 - Duties and Functions of the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Ordinance amendments drafted; Public engagement completed; Ordinance amendments adopted
Action 4.1.2: Provide additional definitions to Section 2-1010 – Definitions of the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Ordinance amendments drafted; Public engagement completed; Ordinance amendments adopted
Action 4.1.3: Codify the Certificate of Appropriateness application requirements, review procedures, and review criteria within the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Ordinance amendments drafted; Public engagement completed; Ordinance amendments adopted
Action 4.1.4: Codify the Certificate of Economic Hardship application requirements, review procedures, and review criteria within the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Ordinance amendments drafted; Public engagement completed; Ordinance amendments adopted

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 4.1.5: Research how to codify the criteria for Local Landmark and Historic District designation, application requirements, and review procedures within the historic preservation ordinance.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Ordinance amendments drafted; Public engagement completed; Ordinance amendments adopted
Action 4.1.6: Consider revising the approval requirement for the designation of Local Historic Districts in Section 2-1017(a) – Consideration by the Village Board of Trustees of the Wilmette Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 2, Article 36 of the Municipal Code) to reflect best practices.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Ordinance amendments drafted; Public engagement completed; Ordinance amendments adopted
Action 4.1.7: Revise the Historic Preservation Commission Handbook to reflect administrative, procedural, and educational information as a companion document to the Historic Preservation Ordinance	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Historic Preservation Commission Handbook revised and updated; Handbook distributed; Annual review schedule established
Action 4.1.8: Develop comprehensive historic preservation design guidelines for locally designated landmarks and historic districts that provide advisory best practices for property owners.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD, ADP, CTP, HPO, LPO	VOW, CLG, Donnelley	Funding secured; Public engagement completed; Design guidelines adopted; Number of times promoted in e-news and social media; Number of educational sessions held following adoption
Action 4.1.9: Provide ongoing training and orientation for Village staff and the Historic Preservation Commission.	Program	X		WHPC, WCDD, ILSHPO	VOW, CLG, Favrot	Orientation materials for Village staff and HPC members developed; Training schedule and list of training topics established; Funding for ongoing training allocated or secured

Goal 4.2: Village processes support and encourage the ongoing stewardship and reinvestment of historic properties.

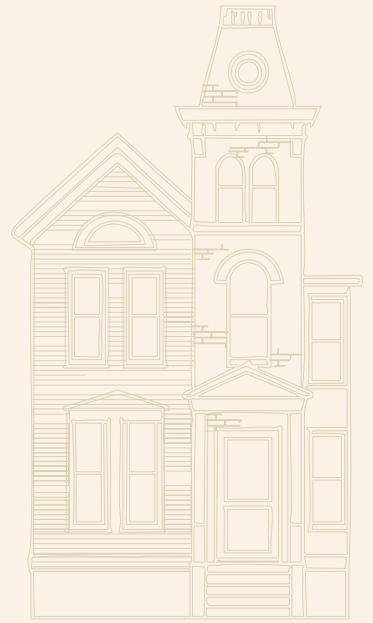
ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 4.2.1: Explore the establishment of an Historic Zoning Overlay Zone where significant properties can opt into an Advisory or Landmark review tier to receive access to potential historic preservation incentives.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Utility of historic preservation overlays evaluated; Historic preservation overlay developed and approved; Historic preservation overlay established
Action 4.2.2: Establish a matching historic rehabilitation grant program to support historically appropriate rehabilitation to the exterior of locally designated properties.	Program		X	WHPC, WCDD, LI	VOW	Rehabilitation grant needs and costs evaluated; Funding sources identified; funding sources secured or allocated; Grant program and guidelines established; Number and type of grants allocated annually; Value of grants allocated annually
Action 4.2.3: Consider building permit fee waivers for properties determined eligible through local designation or within a historic zoning overlay district.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Permit fee waiver program for local landmarks established; Number of fee waivers granted annually; Type of permit fee waivers granted annually; Value of permit fee waivers granted annually
Action 4.2.4: Consider expedited processing of building permits, COA applications, applications for landmark and historic district designation, etc. for properties determined eligible through local designation or within a historic zoning overlay district.	Admin. Practice	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Expedited application and permit review process for local landmarks established; Number of expedited permits and applications processed annually; Average time saved through expedited review process

ACTION	ACTION TYPE	1-5 YEARS	BEYOND 5 YEARS	PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE METRICS
Action 4.2.5: Explore creation of zoning bonuses for the construction of additions to properties determined eligible through local designation or within a historic zoning overlay district.	Policy	X		WHPC, WCDD, WZBA	VOW	Opportunities to support historic rehabilitation projects through zoning bonuses/relief evaluated; Zoning bonuses/relief for local landmarks established; Policies and procedures for zoning bonuses/relief developed; Type of zoning bonuses/relief granted annually
Action 4.2.6: Explore creation of a local property tax rebate program for properties determined eligible through local designation or within a historic zoning overlay district.	Program		X	WHPC, WCDD, CCA	VOW	Benefit and cost of local property tax rebate program evaluated; Local property tax rebate program established; Policies and procedures for local property tax rebate program established; Number of local property tax rebates processed annually; Value of local property tax rebates annually
Action 4.2.7: Evaluate modifications to the Village's substantial demolition provisions for historic properties.	Policy	X		WCDD, WCDD	VOW, CLG	Ordinance amendments drafted; Public engagement completed; Ordinance amendments adopted
Action 4.2.8: Integrate historic preservation policies and initiatives into routine Village planning, permitting, and capital project processes.	Admin. Practice	X		WHPC, WCDD	VOW	Policies/initiatives integrated

SECTION 6

Appendices

This section highlights key characteristics of existing architectural styles that exist in Wilmette.



Appendix A

Wilmette Historic Architectural Styles and Building Types

The following is a summary of the architectural styles and building types found in Wilmette, including important characteristics that define them.

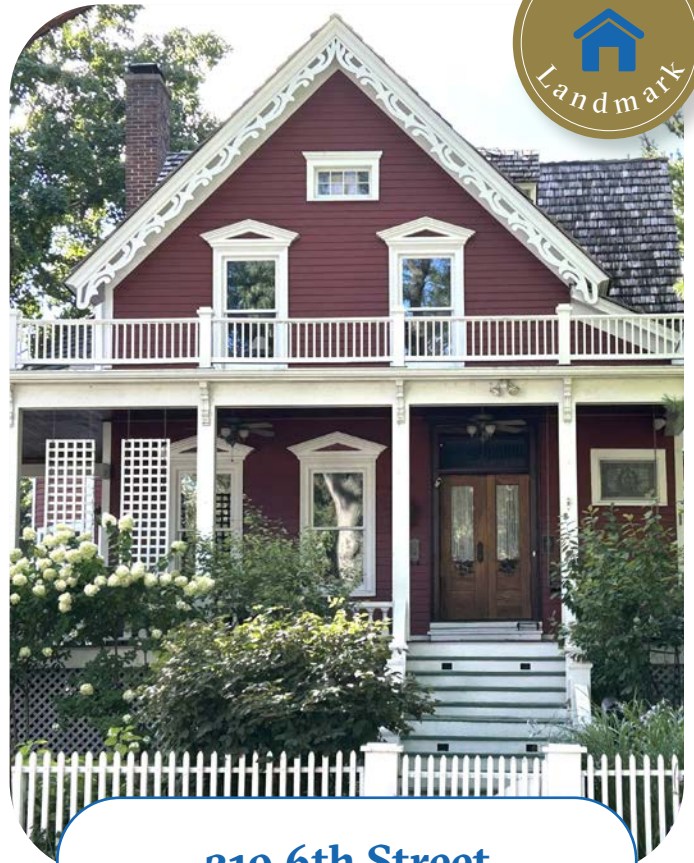
Wilmette Architectural Styles

Folk Victorian (1870-1910)

The style of Folk Victorian architecture is defined by the presence of Victorian era decorative detailing on simple vernacular folk forms. Houses designed in the style resemble Queen Anne houses but tend to be considerably less elaborate. Most ornamentation is located on the porch or at the cornice line. Spindle work and lacelike spandrels are common. Wall surfaces are not textured as they are in Queen Anne houses. Railroads made the style possible as they were used to transport heavy woodworking machinery and provide local lumber yards with precut design elements.

Characteristics:

- Porches with spindle work, lacelike designs or simple slender geometric detailing, square posts.
- Symmetrical façade: Gable front and wing, gable front, side gable, with or without porch.
- Clapboard walls, shingled gables
- Detailing borrowed from Italianate, Gothic Revival or Queen Anne houses but less elaborate and complicated
- Ornamental detailing on porch or cornice line
- 1-2 stories



219 6th Street



830 Central Avenue

Italianate (1865-1885)

The Italianate style was popular in England during the 1820s and spread to the United States about ten years later. Italianate architecture was a more Romantic style than the formal, Classical-inspired styles like Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival that preceded it. It was a featured style both for commercial buildings and houses. The buildings were romanticized versions of Italian palazzos and villas, not literal interpretations of Italian architecture.

Characteristics:

- 1-1/2-3 stories
- Wood or brick
- Bargeboard
- Tall, narrow windows – sometimes paired; taller on first floor. Configuration 2/2 or 1/1.
- Segmental arch or elaborate hoodmolds
- Bay windows on side
- Gable or low-pitched hipped roofs with wide eaves and paired brackets
- Three bays wide
- Square tower



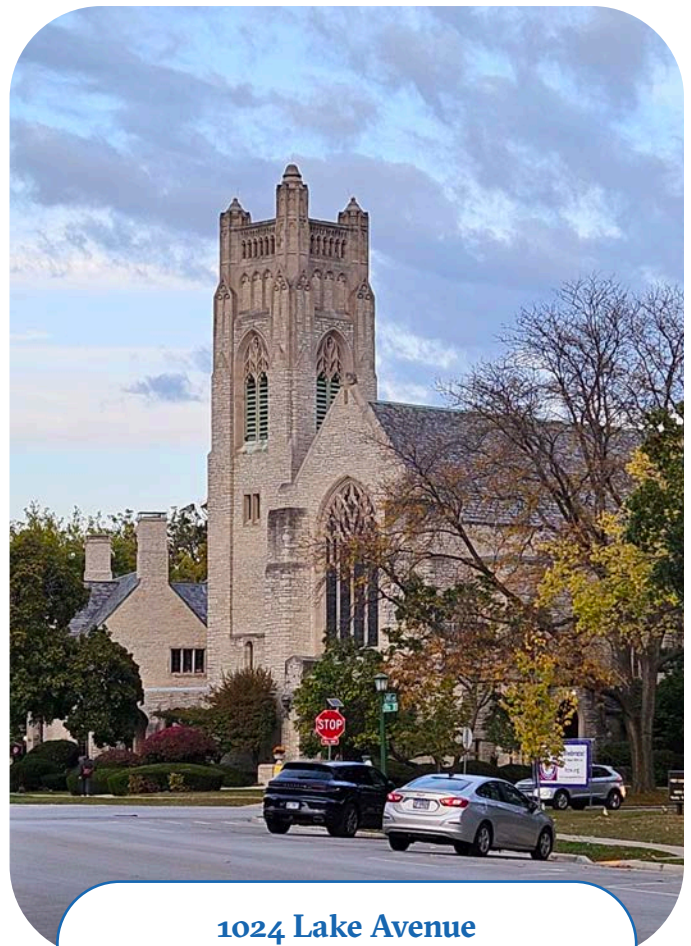
3127 Old Glenview Rd

Gothic Revival (1860-1930)

Gothic revival architecture was part of a picturesque movement in architecture. Gothic Revival houses were a romanticized version of the style. Churches, with towers, buttresses and other features were derived from European precedents and embraced a more literal interpretation of Gothic architecture.

Characteristics:

- Style favored for churches and combined with Tudor influences, also favored for schools
- Brick masonry construction with stone trim, stone
- Steeply pitched roofs
- Openings topped by pointed arches
- Tracery, quatrefoil and trefoil openings, stained glass windows, buttresses, towers in churches



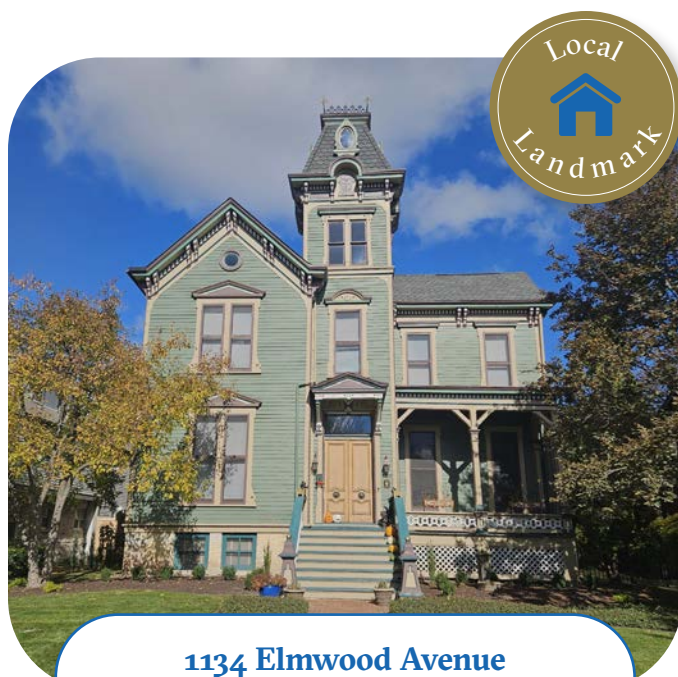
**1024 Lake Avenue
Trinity United Methodist Church**

Second Empire (1865-1890)

Second Empire architecture is characterized by dual-pitched mansard roofs with dormer windows on the lower slope and elaborate ornament including paired brackets at the roofline resembling those on Italianate houses. The style was most fashionable in the 1870s and was widespread on the east coast and in the Midwest. It was popular at the same time as Italianate and Gothic Revival houses were built. The distinctive roof was named for the 17th Century French architect Francois Mansart. It was revived in the middle of the 19th Century during the reign of Napoleon III between 1852-1870. Adding a Mansard roof was to incorporate a floor of rentable space along Paris boulevards. The style was regularly published in American pattern books including *Villas and Cottages* (1857) by Calvert Vaux.

Characteristics:

- Mansard roof
- Tall, paired windows
- Porches
- Decorative brackets at the eaves
- Ornamental roof top railings
- Central or off-center towers or turrets



1134 Elmwood Avenue
Asahel Gage House

Romanesque Revival

The Romanesque Revival style was made popular by Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson, who designed the Glessner House at 1800 South Prairie Avenue in Chicago. They were massive stone buildings with prominent arched openings. Romanesque Revival structures were typically commercial buildings or churches.

Characteristics:

- Rusticated stonework
- Arched door and window openings
- Square and cylindrical towers of different heights
- Foliate ornament inspired by Medieval Romanesque architecture.



823 15th Street
Rau House

Queen Anne (1885-1910)

Queen Anne is a picturesque Victorian-era style characterized by a multitude of details that can be quite elaborate. It is generally a residential style although examples include commercial buildings. Both are characterized by gables, towers, porches and bays. Queen Anne architecture was named and popularized by a group of 19th Century English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912), whose sprawling manor houses were well known to American architects. The term “Queen Anne” is a misnomer since it has no relationship to buildings constructed during the reign of Queen Anne (1702 – 1714) or the formal Renaissance architecture that was popular when she ruled. No better word describes the style than eclectic.

The style became popular in the United States after the 1876 Centennial Exposition. By the 1880s, the Queen Anne style spread throughout the country in pattern books and in *The American Architect and Building News*. Precut parts, including a variety of shingles (made possible by the perfection of the bandsaw after the Civil War) and turned spindles, were readily available and distributed easily by the country’s expanding railroad network. Queen Anne houses were favored by leading citizens in villages and residential neighborhoods of cities and may be found on prominent corners.

Characteristics:

- Asymmetrical facades, walls are brick, clapboard, shingled or combination
- Vertical orientation
- Partial, full-width or wrap-around porches
- Elaborate detailing including spindle work
- Square or rounded towers
- Elaborate chimneys
- Irregular massing
- Bay windows, some with beveled or stained glass
- Surface treatment rich and varied, combining clapboards and shingles



Queen Anne Example



1941 Wilmette Avenue

Shingle Style (1880-1910)

The Shingle Style was named by architectural historian Vincent Scully to refer to wood frame houses that were entirely sheathed in wood shingles. Scully described and named the style in his book *The Stick Style and the Shingle Style*, published by Yale University Press in 1955. Numerous examples were built on the east coast in seaside resort towns like Newport, Rhode Island, or Nantucket, Massachusetts. They were less frequently built in the Midwest although there are some built in suburban areas, including the North Shore. They typically resemble Queen Anne houses in form but are simpler and more informal, with fewer ornamental details. The Shingle Style borrowed its use of wide porches, shingled surfaces, and asymmetrical forms from Queen Anne architecture.

Characteristics:

- Wood frame, with walls sheathed in shingles.
- Simple form
- May resemble other styles including Queen Anne and Colonial Revival
- Features less elaborate detailing than Queen Anne house



600 Central Avenue
W. Mead Walter House

Classical Revival (1895-1940)

Classical Revival architecture borrowed from Greek or Roman sources. Generally, Classical Revival was reserved for substantial institutional, commercial, educational, and municipal buildings – specifically museums, banks, schools, city/village halls, and court houses. Occasionally the style was used on houses that were imposing, standing two stories with full height columns. Classical details were characteristic of Colonial Revival homes, especially the Georgian Revival subtype. Classical Revival architecture became particularly popular after the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Dominated by monumental Classical buildings, the fair was widely photographed and attended by hundreds of thousands of people.

Characteristics:

- Symmetrical facades
- Two stories in height for residences; taller for non-residential structures
- Full height columns, fluted with Doric, Ionic or Corinthian Capitals
- White clapboarding on houses; brick or stone for non-residential buildings
- Pediments supported by columns; pediments over windows
- Numerous classical details include pilasters, columned front porticos
- Entablatures
- Classical cornices with dentils



1010 Central Avenue
Masonic Temple converted to condos

Colonial Revival (1880-1955)

The Colonial Revival style became America's most popular 20th Century architectural style. Colonial Revival architecture became popular after the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, evolving into a kind of national style. The country's 1876 centennial celebrations awakened an interest in America's Colonial architectural heritage. Even before 1876, the demolition of the celebrated John Hancock House in 1863 shocked the country. The nationalism and patriotism that grew out of these events created a movement that had a profound effect on all aspects of American architecture. The interest in Colonial architecture was reinforced by the Classical architecture of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. The White City, as this world's fair was known, was largely composed of monumental Classical buildings that were visited by thousands of people and photographed. Several smaller state pavilions, built on a more domestic scale, were based on Colonial precedent. The Colonial Revival style changed over time and took different forms. Later Colonial Revival residences, those designed in the 1920s after World War I, resembled their prototypes more closely in proportion and detail than earlier examples. The style persisted after World War II, into the 1950, 1960s and beyond, with Colonial detailing incorporated into the ranch and split-level forms. A wave of nostalgia for America's Colonial past was consistently reflected in architecture.

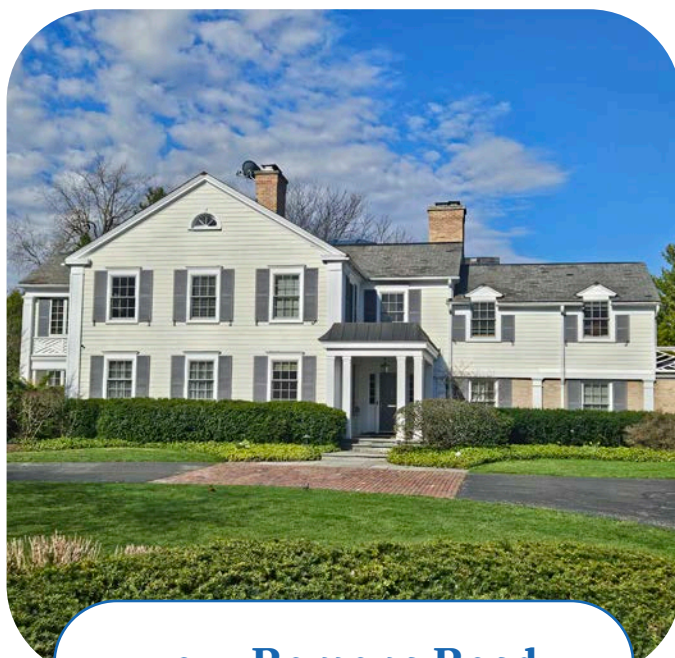
Characteristics:

- 2-2-1/2 stories
- Double hung (often multipaned) windows with paneled or louvered shutters
- Facades wood clapboard or brick
- Rectangular, symmetrical
- Classical detailing
- Center entrance topped by transom (often in the form of a fanlight), flanked by sidelights
- Includes front entrance porch, occasionally porch across front of house.

- Gabled dormers
- Post World War II houses early on took the shape of Cape Cods, designed in the form of Minimal Traditional. They were clad with wood clapboards, stood 1-1/2 stories and sometimes had dormers. Ranches and Split-Levels often incorporated Colonial detailing.



**336 Sheridan Road
Gates House**



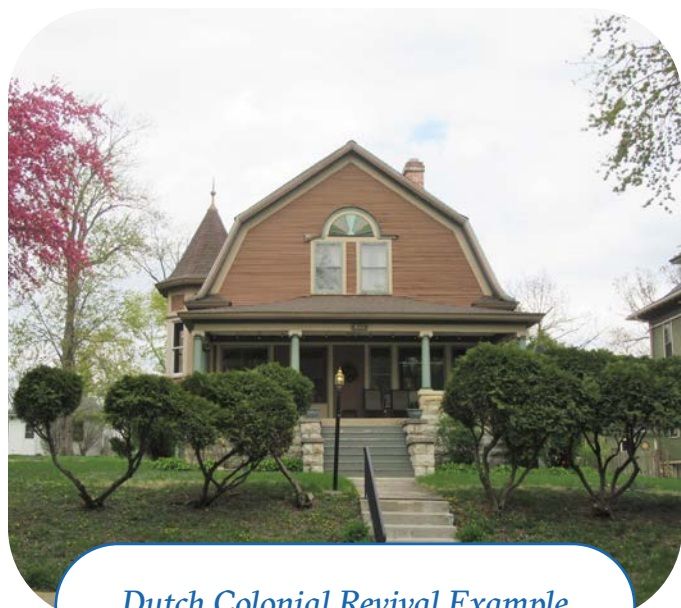
1051 Romona Road

Dutch Colonial Revival (1895-1930)

The Dutch Colonial style (a sub-category of the Colonial Revival style) developed during the mid-17th Century with the arrival of Dutch colonists to New Amsterdam (now New York) and the Hudson River valley. Based on these Colonial homes the characteristic feature of the Dutch Colonial style is the gambrel roof. Early examples, built between the 1880s and 1910s, have front-facing gambrels. Those built in the 1920s and later have side-facing gambrels, sometimes with lunettes in the gambrel end, and a large, shed dormer (or two small dormers) across the front. The dormer or dormers and gambrel ends are frequently shingled.

Characteristics:

- Two stories with a gambrel double-pitched roof
- Earlier examples had a front facing gambrel; later examples featured side facing gambrels with dormers at the front
- Double hung windows
- Dormers
- Wood frame with clapboards, sometimes shingles in gambrel



Dutch Colonial Revival Example

Georgian Revival (1895-1960)

Georgian Revival is a subtype of Colonial Revival architecture, stylistically derived from imposing brick Georgian houses and public buildings constructed during the Colonial period. Georgian Revival houses are typically red brick or stone masonry and almost always have a front portico with columns – either one or two stories. Roofs are usually side gabled but hipped roofs were also common, and symmetrical chimneys are often prominent. Georgian Revival houses tend to be grand and closely resemble their Georgian precedents. Georgian houses tended to be grand and symbolized wealth and power, or their owner's aspiration to be, because of their stately qualities.

Characteristics:

- 2-3 stories
- Generally red brick; sometimes clapboard
- Rectangular center block with single-story wings
- Double hung windows with shutters
- Classical details
- Center entrance with one-story front portico
- Symmetrical chimneys
- Classical details including pediments and Palladian windows



789 Michigan Avenue
Kixmiller House



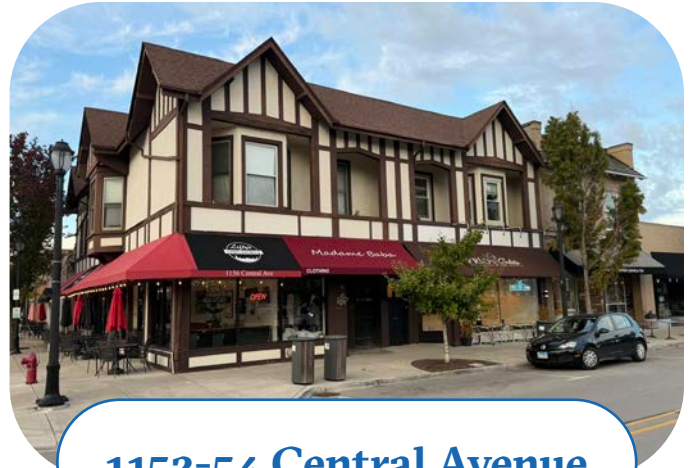
Tudor Revival (1890-1940)

The Tudor Revival was second in popularity after the Colonial Revival in residential architecture inspired by traditional historical styles. Houses designed in the style were sometimes large, resembling English manor houses and sometimes small, resembling English cottages. They were based on Medieval and Elizabethan era precedents. Sometimes Tudor Revival Houses were also influenced by the English Arts & Crafts movement. The style was particularly popular with homeowners wishing an association with America's English roots and wanting to convey the image of lineage and respectability.

The Tudor Revival style became popular after the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and remained so through the 1930s and occasionally into the 1940s. A considerable number of Tudor Revival houses were built in the 1920s in suburbia when North Shore communities enjoyed a significant growth in population. With their common language and sometimes common heritage, Americans were likely to feel more comfortable living with influences from England than from other European nations. Soldiers returning from World War I would have seen English Tudor architecture and wished to have homes that mimicked it.

Characteristics:

- Generally, 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 stories
- Steeply pitched gable roofs with one or two front-facing gables
- Tall, narrow windows with multiple panes, generally casements, often lead. Sometimes windows are grouped in bands.
- Picturesque massing
- Large brick chimneys with clay chimney pots
- Ornamental half-timbering.
- Contain bay or oriel windows
- Clad in brick or stucco or a combination, with limestone or wood trim.



1152-54 Central Avenue



2615 Blackhawk Road

French Eclectic (1915-1945)

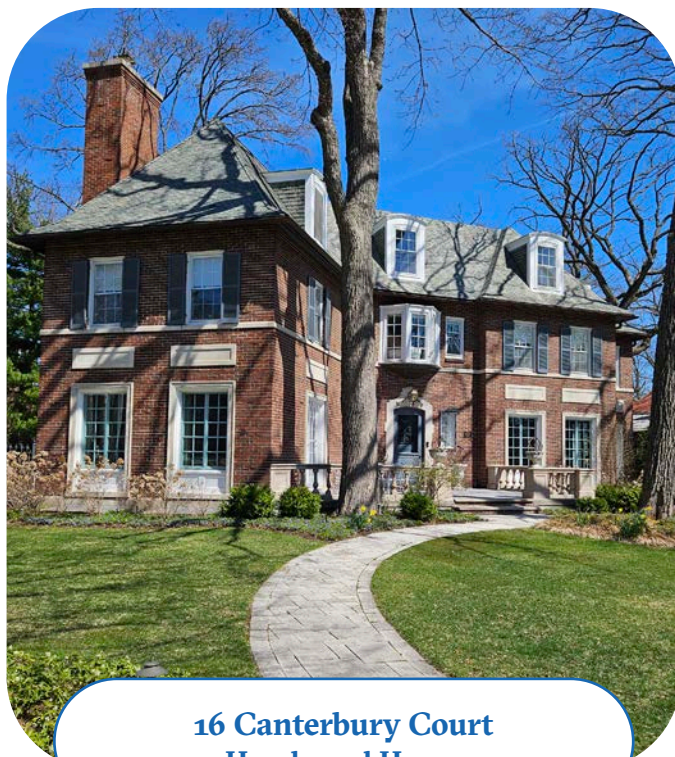
French Eclectic architecture was a formal style based on precedents provided by many centuries of French architecture. The American architects who designed these houses often trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. The style's rise in popularity during the 1920s coincides with American exposure to French architecture after World War I. American soldiers served in France during the war (1914-1918) where they encountered French chateaux and manor houses first-hand. During the 1920s, several books were published and circulated in the United States on French domestic country architecture, including the 1924 *French Provincial Architecture as Shown in Various Examples of Town and Country Houses, Shops and Public Places Adaptable to American Conditions* by Henry Oothort Milliken and Philip Lippincott Goodwin.¹ Filled with photos and measured drawings of 16th to 19th Century French manor houses, Goodwin's book lauds French design. Magazine articles praising French architecture also were plentiful. An item in the 1926 issue of *House and Garden* praised French design, stating "It has integrity, elegance and tradition, and it is designed for comfortable living."² French Eclectic houses were almost always architect designed.

Characteristics:

- Steeply pitched mansard or flared hip roofs
- Windows and doors topped by segmental arches
- French doors
- Through-the-roof dormers
- Brick, stone or stucco walls
- Rectangular forms: Some symmetrical, some with a rounded tower.

¹ Philip Lippincott Goodwin, who served as Chairman of the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design at New York's Museum of Modern Art between 1935 and 1940, is best known for his striking glass front 1938 design, created with Edward Durrell Stone, for the building. Prior to 1930, however, he was much enamored with French architecture, designing his own house in Long Island in the French Renaissance Revival style, in 1919.

² "A French Chateau for Illinois," *House and Garden*, 50, September 1926, p. 104. This article is about the Oswald Douglas House in Lake Forest, designed by Russell S. Walcott.



**16 Canterbury Court
Hazelwood House**



French Eclectic Example

Italian Renaissance Revival (1890-1935)

The Italian Renaissance Revival style was less common than Colonial or Tudor Revival on the North Shore but there are many examples in Wilmette. From the late 19th Century through the 1930s, numerous American architects and their clients visited Italy so had first-hand familiarity with Italian villas and palazzos. Italian Renaissance structures designed by these architects mimicked their Italian predecessors quite closely. The close resemblance was also possible because improved printing technology made photos of these buildings easily accessible to the reading public. This authenticity distinguishes Italian Renaissance Revival buildings from the Italianate buildings that preceded them. Italianate buildings were based on pattern book drawings by builders who had no first-hand visual experience with Italian buildings.

Characteristics:

- Low pitched, hipped or flat roofs of green or red tile
- Long, low profile
- Prominent cornice, sometimes with balustrade
- Arched windows or doors on the first floor; smaller windows above
- String course
- Symmetrical
- Classical details including columns, pilasters and Palladian windows
- Stone, brick or stucco



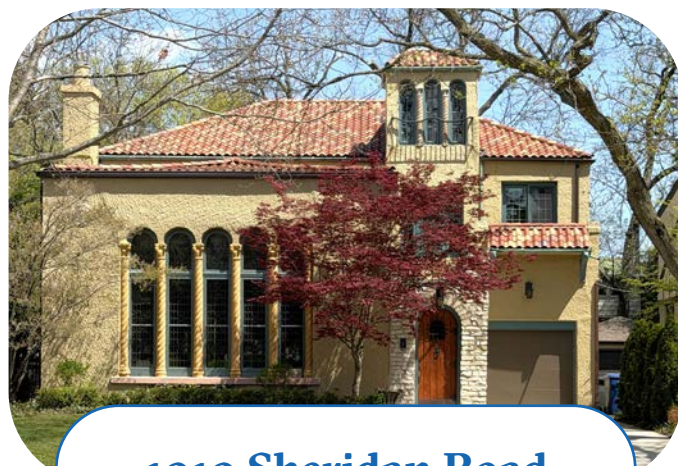
**1041 Ridge Road
Mallinckrodt**

Spanish Revival (1915-1940)

Spanish Revival architecture was popular in California and Florida, states that were settled by the Spanish, although examples are found throughout the country. California architects turned to the southwest's Spanish past for inspiration. The style is characterized by ceramic tile roofs and parapets, walls topped by curves and counter curves and arched openings. Other characteristic features include stucco wall surfaces, wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends and large open porches. Mission-like bell towers are sometimes incorporated into Mission Revival houses. Spanish Revival architecture was published in popular builders' magazines. The Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads adopted the style for their stations and resort hotels. It was featured at the Panama California Exposition in San Diego in 1915, which was attended by thousands of visitors.

Characteristics:

- Stucco or light-colored stone walls
- Low pitched red or brown tile roof
- Two stories
- Some that are Mission style had bell towers, wide front porches
- Double hung windows, sometimes in groups
- Arched doors and openings
- Decorative tile work
- Towers



1010 Sheridan Road

Arts & Crafts (1895-1925)

The Arts & Crafts movement originated in the mid-to-late 19th Century as a reaction to the negative effects of industrialization. It stressed simple designs, natural materials and fine craftsmanship, developing as a reaction against the complicated massing and elaborate detailing of the Victorian era styles (Italianate, Queen Anne, Shingle Style, etc.) and the formalism of the Classical Revival and the Colonial Revival styles that borrowed Classical elements from Greek and Roman architecture. The Arts and Crafts movement in America is linked to Gustav Stickley and his magazine *The Craftsman*, which was published between 1901 and 1916.

Characteristics:

- Red brick
- Gable roofs
- Dormers
- Brackets and exposed rafter ends
- Leaded windows
- Sparse ornamentation



2012 Chestnut Avenue

Craftsman (1900-1930)

Craftsman houses and bungalows championed by Gustav Stickley, were first built in California and popularized through pattern books during the first decades of the 20th Century. They reflected the tenets of the Arts & Crafts movement that stressed simplicity, comfort and craftsmanship in construction. Craftsman homes received extensive publicity. Publications such as the *Western Architect*, *The Architect*, *House Beautiful*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Architectural Record*, *Country Life in America* and *Ladies' Home Journal* familiarized the nation with the style. As a result, pattern books offering plans for Craftsman homes flooded the market; some even offered completely pre-cut packages of lumber and detailing to be assembled by local craftsmen. Craftsman two-story houses were built, but Craftsman bungalows were particularly popular. The Craftsman house seldom referenced historical styles. It became a distinctly American style that was comparable in its approach, using natural materials and geometric detailing, to the more artistically developed Prairie architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and his followers. There is a collection of Craftsman bungalows and houses built between 1917 and 1925 on Oak Circle.

Characteristics:

- Full or partial width porches with tapered or simple square columns
- Wood frame buildings, using shingles, clapboard, stucco, and stone
- Deep eaves
- Exposed brackets and rafter ends; knee braces set under gables
- Gabled roofs



1424 Gregory Avenue

Prairie Style (1900-1920)

The Prairie Style originated with Frank Lloyd Wright in the early 1890s. At the same time George Maher (who along with Wright worked for Joseph Lyman Sillsbee) designed homes that like Wright's had few if any references to historic sources. Wright's work is more complex in the relationship of geometric volumes and features whereas Maher's buildings are generally symmetrical, and incorporated ornament based on a particular theme like the segmental arch, poppy or tulip. Both Wright's and Maher's designs were considerably simpler than the exuberant Queen Anne style houses that preceded it.

Wright inspired many architects, followers who were known as members of the Prairie School. Members included William Drummond, Tallmadge & Watson, John Van Bergen and other practitioners who are less well known. Inspiration for the style came from the Midwest's most characteristic natural feature, the prairie. Horizontal architectural details that reflected the flat terrain of the prairie defined the style. Many of Wright's houses built before 1900 contain remnants of Queen Anne, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and other influences. The Prairie Style did not begin to reach its fullest expression until the early 1900s, when the B. Harley Bradley House (Kankakee, Illinois, 1900), the Warren Hickox House (Kankakee, Illinois, 1900), and the Ward W. Willits House (Highland Park, Illinois, 1903) were built.

Characteristics:

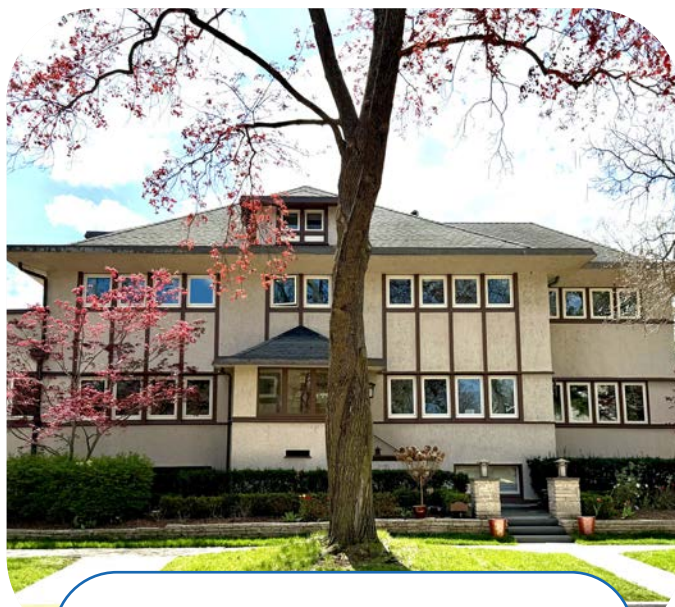
- 1-1/2-2 stories with horizontal emphasis
- Low pitched hipped or flat roofs
- Wide eaves
- Horizontal string courses
- Bands of windows, some leaded in geometric patterns
- Spare if any applied ornamentation
- Stucco or brick
- Geometric massing and detailing



351 Linden Avenue



1010 Elmwood Avenue



635 Maple Avenue

Art Deco (1925-1940)

The Art Deco style took its name from the Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes, a world's fair held in Paris in 1925 that highlighted modern decorative art and architecture. It was given the name Art Deco in 1966. The style became popular for post offices, schools and other government buildings as well as churches, commercial and apartment buildings. Occasionally it was applied to residential architecture.

Characteristics:

- Geometric elements, including zig zags, chevrons and stylized floral patterns
- Polychrome detailing in terra cotta
- Stylized classical detailing
- Simple geometric massing



1747 Lake Avenue
St. Joseph Church

Art Moderne (1935-1945)

Art Moderne glorified streamlining through the reflection of movement and became popular at a time when the speed associated with cars, airplanes and ships was embraced by the public. Characteristics associated with them symbolizing motion were applied to inanimate objects from toasters and cigarette lighters to buildings.

Characteristics:

- Smooth rounded corners suggesting streamlining
- Stucco or brick painted white
- Flat roofs
- Bands of windows, some with Glass brick
- Horizontal design elements emulating racing stripes.
- Stainless steel rounded canopy



1910 Greenwood Avenue

Modern (1930-1975)

Modern buildings are typically high style and were architect designed. They were generally based on geometry, with no reference to historic precedent. Traditional roofs were typically abandoned in favor of those that were flat. The modern houses had no applied ornamentation; visual interest was based on the manipulation of materials, whether brick, wood, stone or concrete. Exterior materials were often used on the interior of Modern buildings. The Modern house was sometimes spatially complex, but it wasn't ostentatious. Modern houses were functional and rational, featuring clean lines; they were designed to meet the functional needs of a family and were conducive to informal entertaining. The first Modern houses in the Chicago area were built in the late 1930s; the style remained popular into the mid-1970s when Post-Modernism evolved as a reaction to the simple geometric forms of modernism and there was a resurgence of interest in historical architecture.³ Most Modern houses were built in the 1950s and 1960s. These houses tended to combine International Style and Wrightian characteristics. The term "Mid-Century Modern" is often used today to describe the architecture, furniture and consumer goods of the period.

Modern Wilmette buildings reflect a broad range of building types and stylistic influences — including the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Some were designed by well-known architects like Harry Weese, some by lesser-known architects like Louis Huebner.

Characteristics:

- Geometric massing
- No applied ornament; ornamental features based on manipulation of materials
- Large expanses of windows, some corner windows
- Some designed in the manner of Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, or Frank Lloyd Wright
- Brick or wood walls



Modern Examples

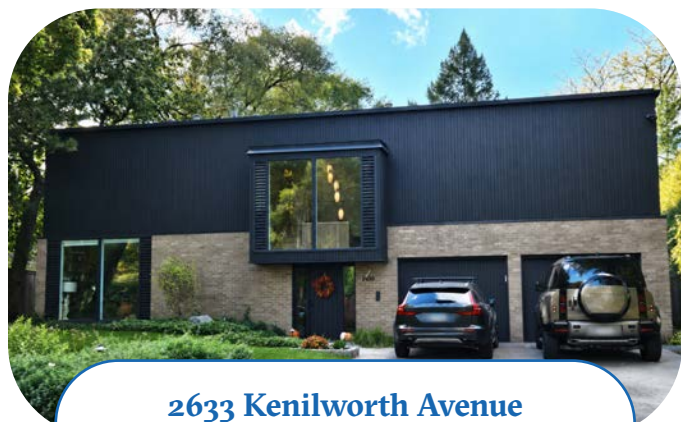
³ In their book *Modern in the Middle: Chicago Houses 1929-1975*, Susan Benjamin and Michelangelo Sabatino discuss the first Chicago-area Modern houses. They are the homes of Walter T. Fisher and his wife Katharine Dummer Fisher in Winnetka (1929) and that of architect Henry Dubin and his wife Anne Green Dubin in Highland Park (1930).

International Style (1925-1970)

The International Style developed in Europe in the years after World War I, initially at the Bauhaus. It was a school of industrial design, established in Weimar, Germany, in 1919, with a holistic approach to industrial design that set the stage for the development of Modern architecture. The principles being developed there were functionalism, clarity of form and abandonment of features associated with historical styles. The school was closed by the Nazis in 1933. In 1932, the Museum of Modern Art assembled an exhibition on modernist buildings that were constructed in the 1920s and early 1930s all over the world, with the title *The International Style*, organized by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson. The exhibit incorporated images of buildings from fifteen countries that illustrated the similarities of buildings around the world with shared characteristics. Concrete, steel, and glass were the most commonly used materials; occasionally wood was selected. Hallmarks included bands of glass, corner windows, and solid planes emphasizing horizontality, balance and regularity (not axial symmetry).

Characteristics:

- Rectangular geometric forms
- Planar wall surfaces, typically white
- Flat roofs
- Characterized by regularity not symmetry
- No applied ornamentation
- Glass brick



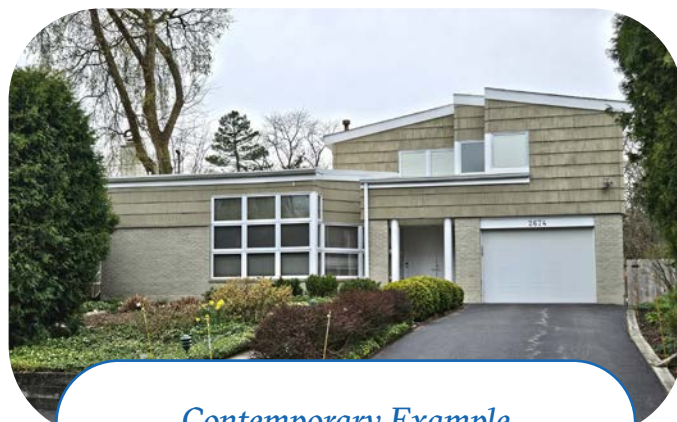
**2633 Kenilworth Avenue
Lipman House**

Contemporary Style (1940-1980)

Contemporary architecture merged several modern innovations, it eschewed historical forms and often incorporated features from the International Style as well as from the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Contemporary house sometimes was long and low with a connection to nature like Wright's Prairie Style houses of the early 20th Century and his Usonian houses built between 1936 and 1959 in wood, brick and Chicago common brick. The Contemporary house also took full advantage of modern materials such as plate glass, aluminum, concrete block, and glass block. Sometimes called "California Contemporary," the Contemporary promised a Southern California lifestyle with large panes of glass, modern forms and a focus on outdoor living. The Contemporary style was typically applied to the Ranch and Split-Level form.

Characteristics:

- Asymmetrical
- Roofs are sometimes slanted or flat, sometimes with offset eaves; often eaves are deep
- Walls with large expanses of glass featuring sliding glass doors
- A variety of surface materials — brick, stone, vertical wood siding
- Stacked bond brick masonry
- Concrete block, glass block, patterned breezeblock



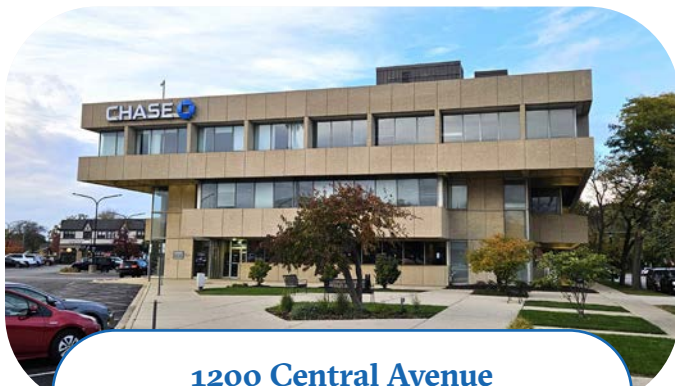
Contemporary Example

Brutalism (1950-1980)

Brutalism is a descendant of Modernism, generally used for educational, commercial and municipal buildings like the Boston City Hall, which is a Boston Landmark. The style grew up as a reaction against nostalgia for traditional styles after World War II. It is a much-maligned style that takes its name from “baton brut”, French for “raw concrete” not from intentionally looking brutal. Brutalism is said to have originated in Great Britain but was popularized by the French/Swiss architect Le Corbusier, who designed iconic apartment buildings (including the Unite d’Habitation in Marseille) and by the American architect Louis Kahn, well known for his British Art Gallery in New Haven and buildings on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. Paul Rudolph’s Yale Art & Architecture Building is highly acclaimed. Marcel Breuer designed several Brutalist buildings in the United States. Walter Netsch, a partner at Skidmore Owings & Merrill, designed Brutalist buildings in Chicago, including the University of Illinois’ Chicago campus. The style is characterized by blocky sculptural forms, the use of raw concrete and rough textures.

Characteristics:

- Bold, blocklike geometric forms
- Reinforced concrete with exposed texture from the structural forms
- Monumental scale, imposing
- Monochromatic palette
- Rare use of applied ornament



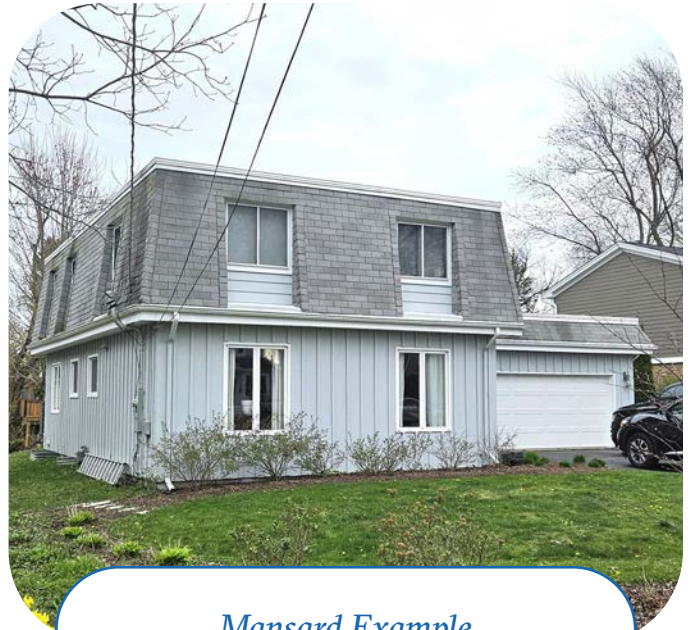
**1200 Central Avenue
Chase Bank**

Mansard (1955-1980)

The Mansard Style was a variation of the French Eclectic style that was based on precedents provided by many centuries of French architecture and was popular in the 1920s and 1930s. It provided a formal alternative to the more informal Contemporary designs of the 1950s and 1960s. The double-pitched Mansard roof, the style’s hallmark, provided a full story of living space in a home that reads as a single story. Often these houses project a sense of drama. The style was promoted in shelter magazines like House Beautiful.

Characteristics:

- Double-pitched full story Mansard roof, sometimes with dormers
- Window and door openings (sometimes two stories) topped by segmental or round headed arches
- Ground floor typically brick
- Exaggerated features
- Often symmetrical



Mansard Example

Shed Style (1960-)

The Shed Style is not as common as the Mansard Style, but it is also named for its roof type. Shed Style houses were composed of several sections that were each topped by an angled roof. They may be brick, wood or a combination of the two. The roofs are generally multi-directional. Sometimes the shed roof sections are coupled by a section with a gable roof. The style is more related to Contemporary than traditional architecture. The Shed Style was launched by the development of Sea Ranch and the Hedgerow Houses; two developments located 125 miles north of San Francisco. They were built of unpainted wood set into their native landscape inspired by structures found on old farms and western mines. Charles Moore (Moore Lyndon Turnbull Whitaker) designed the Sea Ranch Condominiums and Joseph Esherick (Joseph Esherick and Associates) designed the Hedgerow Houses. The style is not as ubiquitous as the formal stylistically derivative Mansard style houses.

Characteristics:

- Slanted wood roofs, sometimes combined with gable roofs
- Unpainted wood walls, sometimes combined with brick
- No applied ornament
- Windows with vertical orientation.



Shed Style Example

Neo-Traditional, Neo-Craftsman and Neo-Prairie (1980-2025)

Neo-Traditional references residential architecture that mimicked the past and was built beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, after interest in Modernism faded. Tastes shifted so that Postmodernism (with its historical references and exaggerated scale) became popular in non-residential architecture, and Neo-Traditional styles were built throughout the country in the design of houses. The renewed interest in earlier architectural styles was nurtured by the country's celebration of the U. S. Bicentennial in 1976, as well as the burgeoning national interest in the historic preservation movement. Unlike houses that were built in revival styles between 1900 and the early 1940s, early European and American prototypes were rarely literally interpreted. In the design of Neo-traditional houses features from a specific style were borrowed but consistency of scale and historic accuracy was not very important. Details may be under-scaled, exaggerated or missing altogether.

The style took many different forms, ranging from Neo-Colonial and Neo-Shingle-style for those wishing a connection to early American architecture, Neo-French for those desiring a more formal look, Neo-Tudor, for those who favored designs based on the country's British heritage, and Neo-Craftsman or Neo-Prairie for clients wishing a connection to the Arts & Crafts movement or Frank Lloyd Wright and the Midwest's progressive Prairie School architecture.

Characteristics:

- Historic details not accurate
- No consistency of scale: details under- or over-scaled
- Mixing of historical references
- Wood, brick or stone
- Sometimes builder-designed; sometimes architect-designed

Wilmette Building Types

Gable Front cottages and houses (1870-1920)

Gable Front cottages were popular throughout the Chicago area, both in the city and in suburbs. They were sometimes farmhouses and sometimes built as workers housing in the vicinity of factories. Gable Front cottages, with the gable end facing the street, were simple buildings, frequently with little ornamental features. Occasionally they incorporated Gothic or Classical details.

Characteristics:

- Front facing gable roof; shingles often in gable
- Cottages are 1-1/2 stories; houses are 2 stories
- Wood frame buildings with clapboarding, occasionally brick
- 2-3 bays wide
- Front porches



824 Lake Avenue
Morris House

Bungalows (1900-1935)

Bungalows were modest houses that were comparable in size to cottages that were built earlier. They were built throughout the country in large and small communities. Typically, they stand 1-1/2 stories and embody stylistic features. The most common bungalows in California and other parts of the west were Craftsman. They were also built in the Midwest, but not as frequently. Other bungalows were characterized by Prairie, Colonial, Classical, Tudor, Spanish and Mission features. There are entire neighborhoods of bungalows in Chicago and one in Wilmette that is listed on the National Register. The term "bungalow" is derived from a type of travelers' shelter that was popular in Eighteenth-Century British-occupied India. Located along India's roads, these "bungalos" or "bangalloas" were low-roofed cottages built of unbaked brick, surrounded by a wide porch or verandah and covered with a tile or thatch roof. The term migrated to the United States in 1880. The bungalow house type began in California, with the design of Craftsman bungalows, although it became popular throughout the country and began to embody various stylistic features.

Characteristics:

- Raised, wood frame or brick
- 1-1/2 stories
- Porches or sunrooms at front
- Arts and Crafts features, including stained glass
- Low pitched roof; broad overhangs



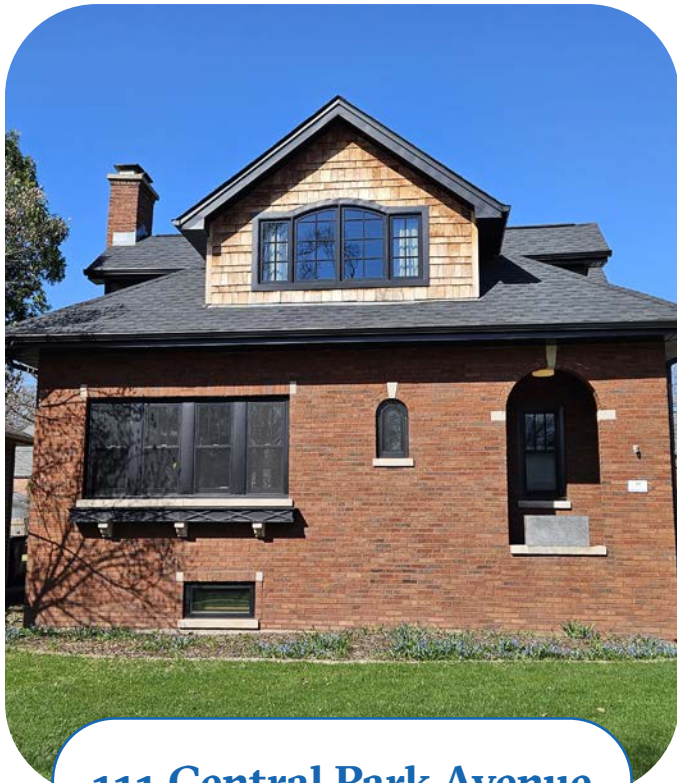
340 Oak Circle

Chicago Bungalows

The Chicago Bungalow is a particular type of bungalow, built of brick, standing 1-1/2 stories with broad eaves and a front-facing dormer. Many have Arts & Crafts leaded-glass windows, projecting bays, flower boxes and incorporate ornamental brickwork. There are over 80,000 Chicago Bungalows in Chicago neighborhoods with some located in the suburbs surrounding Chicago.

Characteristics:

- Red or cream-colored brick
- 1-1/2 stories, bands of windows
- Side porch
- Dormers
- Low-pitched hipped roof



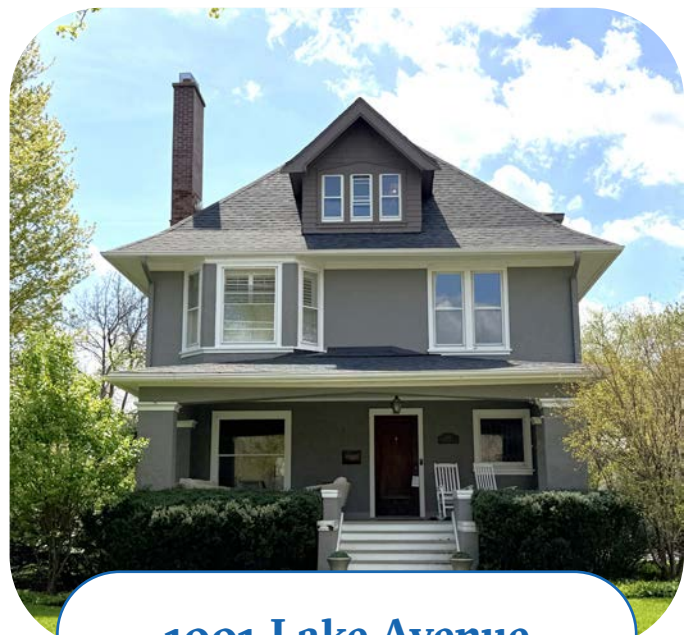
111 Central Park Avenue

American Foursquare (1895-1930)

The American Foursquare was a popular building type constructed in working class and middle-class neighborhoods throughout the United States. It takes its name from its square shape and floor plan, which consisted of four rooms on each floor. The American Foursquare was a simple building type that accommodated various stylistic treatments including Arts & Crafts, Prairie, Queen Anne and Colonial features. Some were designed by prominent architects; others were by builders or kit homes produced by Sears and other catalog houses that could be assembled by the homeowner or a local carpenter.

Characteristics:

- 2-1/2 stories,
- Clapboard, brick or stucco
- Wide front porch, generally open, extending across the front of the house; balusters often made up of square slats
- Topped by a low pitched or hipped or pyramidal roof
- Dormers on each side of house



1001 Lake Avenue

Minimal Traditional (1935-1955)

The Minimal Traditional house originated in the 1930s as a practical response to housing affordability during the Great Depression. Bank failures and restrictive loan policies prevented potential homebuyers from getting traditional mortgages, so the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was formed to guarantee financing. Material and housing shortages in the immediate Post-War years meant many Minimal Traditional houses were built well into the early 1950s, especially in subdivisions.

Characteristics:

- Compact rectangular floor plan
- Colonial detailing such as multi-paned double-hung windows with shutters
- Small simple house
- Low-pitched side gable or hip roof
- Sometimes Classical entrances
- Little or no overhang
- 1-and-1-1/2 stories
- Some have bay windows, scalloped trim



Minimal Traditional Example

Ranch (1935-1980)

The Ranch house was essentially an American building type. Ranch houses were built by developers just before and after World War II. In the early 1950s, when the Ranch house began to be especially popular, it was considered “cutting edge, progressive, informal and Californian.”⁴ The architecture of the Ranch house traces its origins back to the early 1930s, when California architects including Cliff May, a San Diego architect, developed the California Ranch house. This house was meant to be a contemporary family home based on early Spanish haciendas, or “ranchos,” as they were sometimes called. It also owes its origins, particularly in the Midwest, to Frank Lloyd Wright’s early 20th Century Prairie Style homes. Despite its early roots, the Depression and World War II delayed the introduction and subsequent popularity of the Ranch house until the late 1940s and 1950s, when they were built all over suburbia. Examples were published in architectural journals and shelter magazines. This house type sometimes had traditional features like gabled or hipped roofs, and double-hung windows with shutters, embodying Colonial features. Other Ranch houses were Contemporary with flat or angled roofs, walls of windows and geometric details.

Characteristics:

- Long, low ground-hugging
- Asymmetrical
- Brick or wood clapboards or a combination
- Carport or garage facing the street
- Chicago style windows with large fixed pane of glass flanked by smaller double-hung or casement windows.
- Breezeblock
- Carport or attached garage

⁴ Diane Boucher. *The 1950s American Home*. Oxford, Great Britain: Shire Publications Ltd. Midland House, West Way, Botley, Oxford OX2 0PH, United Kingdom: 2013, 17.

Split-Level (1950-1980)

Split-Level houses have many of the same characteristics as Ranch houses; they tend to have a horizontal orientation. The design of some were Contemporary, others had more traditional detailing, especially Colonial. They embodied an informal way of living. They differ from Ranches in function, with rooms based on three or more levels. Typically, the Split-Level is entered at a ground level wing with communal living areas. Next to the ground level is a wing with bedrooms upstairs a half-level, and a rumpus or rec room at the lower level beneath the bedrooms. The garage or carport might be attached as an extension of the ground level wing or incorporated into the lower half-level. The Split-Level is built on a narrow lot with the length of the house extending toward the rear lot line. In such cases, the upper and lower levels are at the rear of the house; the front might look like a Ranch house. Sometimes Split-Levels were referred to as Bi-Levels.

Characteristics:

- Contemporary or traditional, with Colonial features
- At least three levels
- Gable or slanted roofs
- Front-facing garage or carport or garage at rear of lot
- Brick walls
- Large expanses of glass or Chicago windows at front. Smaller windows where bedrooms are located



2544 Wilmette Avenue

Chicago Raised Ranch (1945-1960)

The Chicago Raised Ranch is an urban form of the Ranch house adapted for the narrow urban lots in Chicago. While typically a Ranch house is oriented on a wide lot that allows a wide rectangular or rambling plan, a narrow lot required the narrow end to face the street. The Chicago Raised Ranch was a one-story home set atop a raised basement and oriented with the narrow end facing the street. The Chicago Raised Ranch is generally of the same plan layout but incorporating Contemporary style features.

Characteristics:

- Brick, sometimes with stone trim
- Raised basement
- Low-pitched hip roof
- Chicago Window at front
- Entrance at front or side

Examples: 605 Hibbard Road, 645 Hibbard Road.

Massed Two-Story 1945-1975)

Although Ranch and Split-Level houses were ubiquitous in the Post-War era, two-story houses were commonly built, too. The Massed Two-Story home is essentially a two-story version of a traditional Ranch or Split-Level. It has a long rectangular plan with the wide side facing the street. Bedrooms are situated on the second floor. What sets the Massed Two-Story apart from pre-War houses is the addition of a one-story garage wing attached to the side or front of the mass. It was a building form to which stylistic features could be added.

Characteristics:

- Two-story with a garage at the front
- Stylistic features minimal but including Classical and Colonial Revival
- Gable or hipped roof
- Contemporary features are less common but could include sliding doors at rear of house

Appendix B

Additional Legal Context

(65 ILCS) Illinois Municipal Code, Division 12: Plan Commission

Under the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS) 5/11-12-5(1)), a municipal plan commission is responsible for preparing and recommending a “comprehensive plan for the present and future development or redevelopment of the municipality.” Furthermore, a comprehensive land-use plan must reflect local conditions, concerns, and goals. A comprehensive plan is typically composed of several interrelated elements and chapters defined within the Illinois Local Planning Technical Assistance Act (Public Act 92-0768). Section 25 (a) (10) of the Act further defines what elements to include in local comprehensive plans, including “...agriculture and forest preservation; human services; community design; historic preservation; and the adoption of sub plans, as needed.” Although both acts do not explicitly require the development and adoption of historic preservation plans as elements to a municipal comprehensive plan, local communities are free to do so “...based on the needs of the particular unit of local government.” Therefore, under Public Act 92-0768, this Historic Preservation Plan may serve as an element of any revised or updated community comprehensive plan.

(65 ILCS 5/11-13) Illinois Zoning Enabling Act

The Illinois Zoning Enabling Act (65 ILCS 5/11-13) includes a provision that allows municipalities “to insure and facilitate the preservation of sites, areas, and structures of historical, architectural, and aesthetic importance.” This Act provides further legal grounds for local Illinois communities to enact preservation ordinances and historic district overlays within zoning ordinances.

(65 ILCS 5/11-48.2) Illinois Historic Areas Protection Act

Under the Illinois Historic Areas Protection Act (65 ILCS 5/11-48.2) the State of Illinois allows local municipalities “to have the power to provide for official landmark designation by ordinance of areas, places, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects having a special historical value,” and allows for the regulation of those designated properties. This act provides the basis for local Illinois communities to enact local historic preservation ordinances. Under the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision *Penn Central Transportation Company versus City of New York* (1978), local Historic preservation ordinances are a valid constitutional exercise of the municipal police power as granted under the 10th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Illinois State Constitution, Article VII, Local Government, Section 6(A) Power of Home Rule Units

Communities in Illinois over 25,000 in population automatically receive “home rule” status, and therefore, have the power to perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs including, but not limited to, the power to regulate for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and welfare “...including enacting zoning and historic preservation ordinances.”

Appendix C: Wilmette Speaks

Guided by Community

Engagement helps provide insight into housing, community, and economic development concerns that can impact and be supported by historic preservation. Through engagement, preservation planning becomes a collaborative effort, ensuring the plan is informed and guided by local needs and perspectives.

Meaningful engagement also helps to cultivate shared ownership of preservation outcomes, encouraging stakeholders to gain awareness of preservation efforts in Wilmette and see themselves as active participants in shaping and supporting preservation efforts over time. As part of the development of this plan, the consultant team conducted a range of community engagement activities to explore key preservation issues in Wilmette, identify opportunities to expand and support preservation efforts, and better understand how historic preservation can continue to benefit the community.

Stakeholder Listening Sessions

Stakeholder listening sessions provide an opportunity to directly hear from residents, business owners, real estate professionals, civic organizations, and others about preservation-related issues and opportunities in the community. They can help shed light on important historic and cultural resources, barriers to preservation, and how preservation may support or conflict with local needs. Over 40 Stakeholders participated in listening session discussions throughout multiple days in October and November 2025. These listening sessions lasted for a duration of one hour and covered a variety of topics including preservation incentives & processes, economic development, community character, housing affordability, education & outreach, and the vision for the future of Wilmette.

A variety of stakeholders were interviewed including:

- Village President: Senta Plunkett
- Village Manager: Michael Braiman
- Village Board of Trustees: Justin Sheperd
- Community Development Department: Emily Egan, Director; Adam Beaver, Planner III
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Housing Commission: Kaine Osburn, Chair
- Environmental & Energy Commission: Julie Wolf, Chair
- Wilmette School District 39: Superintendent
- St. Joseph and St. Francis Xavier School: Operations Manager
- Wilmette Park District: Superintendent and Executive Director
- Illinois State Historic Preservation Office: Staff
- Landmarks Illinois: Kendra Parzen, Advocacy Manager
- Business Owners, Developers, Architects & Realtors
- Wilmette History Museum Staff & Local Historians
- Wilmette Public Library
- Property Owners

“In 10 years we want to see more pride, more landmarked homes, fewer demolitions, and easier incentives for preservation.”

Stakeholder

Wilmette Block Party

On September 6th, 2025, the consultant team along with Village staff hosted a pop-up booth at the annual Wilmette Block Party. This popular community event provided an opportunity to connect with a broad and diverse group of residents. Attendees were engaged in conversation about the beginning of the preservation planning process, informed about the project website, and encouraged to participate in upcoming engagement opportunities. Conversations at the booth helped raise awareness of the plan, answer initial questions, and invite ongoing community involvement as the planning process moved forward.

Wilmette French Market

Another pop-up booth was held at the Wilmette French Market on October 25th, 2025. The consultant team and Village staff facilitated conversations with residents about the preservation planning process and its goals. Interactive exhibits were stationed at the booth to encourage participation and gather input about the Village's community character, its valued historic resources, and priorities for the future of preservation. This event was successful in increasing awareness about the preservation plan, providing accessible opportunity for public input, and promoting upcoming engagement events open to the broader community.



Community participation at the 2025 Wilmette French Market

Housing Commission & Historic Preservation Commission Joint Meeting

The Village of Wilmette Housing Commission and Historic Preservation Commission convened a joint meeting on January 15, 2026, at Village Hall. The meeting provided an opportunity for commissioners to receive updates on Wilmette's ongoing efforts to develop new Housing and Historic Preservation Plans, as outlined in the 2024 Ready Set Wilmette Comprehensive Plan. Commissioners heard a presentation on the purpose and objectives of the Historic Preservation Plan, along with potential strategies to strengthen the Village's preservation efforts, including zoning overlay districts, zoning incentives, demolition fees or taxes, a demolition delay ordinance, and other tools. Discussion among commissioners centered on aligning recommendations across the Housing and Historic Preservation Plans, exploring the relationship between preservation and naturally occurring affordable housing, and considering additional preservation incentives such as property tax rebates.

Community Open House & Virtual Survey

The first community open house was held on October 29, 2025, at the Wilmette History Museum. The community open house provided an opportunity for residents to learn about the Village's historic resources and share input on preservation priorities, challenges, and opportunities. The event featured multiple interactive stations, including an overview of historic preservation in Wilmette, maps of local Wilmette Landmarks and National Register listed resources, information on existing and potential financial incentives, and exercises focused on preservation visioning for the future. Participants identified a wide range of culturally and historically significant places, expressed concerns about demolition and incompatible new development, and discussed barriers to preservation such as cost, awareness, and limited access to incentives.

Feedback from the community also highlighted interest in potential preservation overlay districts, and stronger tools to encourage rehabilitation over demolition, helping to inform the future direction of preservation planning in Wilmette. To help gather additional input from residents and stakeholders unable to attend the open house in person, a virtual version of the workshop was offered through an online survey.

The survey was available to the public from November 13 through December 31, 2025, and garnered 199 responses. Input received through the virtual community survey indicates a strong shared value for Wilmette's historic character, architectural diversity, and small-town identity. Respondents consistently identified key landmarks, districts, and corridors such as the Wilmette Theatre, Bahá'í House of Worship, Gillson Park and the lakefront, Plaza del Lago, the Linden/4th Street area, the Ridge Road corridor, and Village Center as important cultural and historic assets worthy of continued recognition and care. Many residents also expressed support for adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings as a means of preserving character while accommodating change.

At the same time, participants raised significant concern about the impact of residential teardowns and replacement construction, particularly related to building scale, the standardized architectural style of new construction, loss of mature trees, and erosion of neighborhood character.

Survey participants also noted a lack of understanding around existing preservation incentives and whether their homes qualify for the support available. Residents voiced a desire for clearer preservation policies, incentives, and communication tools to better support preservation efforts and guide future development in a manner that reflects community values.

Community Open House #2

The second community open house was held on June 24, 2026 at Village Hall. Here, participants had the opportunity to provide their input on the plan's goals and action steps through interactive stations. Feedback from residents highlighted the importance of preservation in Wilmette and specifically called out the desire to preserve the character of small housing in the community through reusing old materials after homes have been demolished. All attendees at the open house commented that every goal in the plan is important.



What We Heard

Community input helps shape future priorities and recommendations.



Protect & preserve
neighborhood character



Limit demolitions &
modern farmhouses



Preserve mature trees
& tree canopy



Encourage diverse
housing options

Appendix D

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Preservation Successes

- Village Center Revitalization – Comprised mainly of one-to-three story Main Street-style commercial and mixed-use buildings dating from the early 20th century, Wilmette’s Village Center serves as the community’s primary social and commercial hub. Years of intentional planning and investment have strengthened urban design, improved walkability, introduced hundreds of new housing units, and attracted a wide range of new retail businesses and restaurants. Encompassing the core of downtown, the Wilmette Village Center Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2023.
- Commercial Investment and Adaptive Reuse – In addition to revitalizing its Village Center, Wilmette has also successfully leveraged the rehabilitation and repurposing of its built heritage to support new residential, commercial, and cultural investment in other parts of the community. Notable examples include:
 - Mallinckrodt, 1041 Ridge Road – Originally built in 1918, this five-story Italian Renaissance Revival-style building served both religious and education uses before being converted to senior housing and a Wilmette Park District facility in 2024.
 - Wilmette Masonic Temple, 1010 Central Avenue: Constructed in 1925, this Classical Revival-style building was home to Wilmette Park Lodge No. 93 for nearly 95 years before being converted into condominiums in 2022.
 - Gross Point Village Hall, 609 Ridge Road – Built in 1896, this Victorian-style building served as the administrative center for the Village of Gross Point into the 1920s before becoming home to a series of local businesses. Following the building’s purchase by the Wilmette Historical Society and the Village of Wilmette in the early 1990s, it reopened as the Wilmette History Museum in 1995.
 - Plaza Del Lago, 1515 Sheridan Road -Developed in 1927 in a then unincorporated area between Wilmette and Kenilworth known as “No Mans Land”, the Spanish Revival-style Plaza Del Lago is noteworthy as an early shopping center that accommodated shopping by car. Plaza Del Lago underwent extensive structural improvements and façade restorations in 2025.



**“There are still
important stories to
be told in Wilmette.”**

Stakeholder

