



# 15 Most Historic Structures & Districts

## East Chicago, Indiana

### June 2006

Prepared for the Office of Mayor George Pabey

Much has been said about the proud, ethnically diverse and industrial history of the City of East Chicago, Indiana. Even more has been written about our early pioneer days and the industrial heritage that once made this city great. Most unfortunately for those who reside in East Chicago today, few if any remnants of our early years exist except in the archives and record books of this city. These items are but shadows of the greatness of what this city once was. It is most fortunate however, that much of our historic past has been preserved in the bricks and mortar of more than 1000 buildings that date back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. Some, like City Hall, the First National Bank Building in Indiana Harbor and the Inland Steel Office Building are in outstanding condition, while others are in need of extensive restoration and renovation.

The concept of razing entire sections of this city has been brought to the forefront by the previous administration. Ignoring our historic past as it is presented in the residential, commercial and industrial landmarks would do a disservice not only to our heritage, but more importantly would leave our future but a hollow shadow by ignoring our past and our heritage.

While this listing of ten individual properties and five historic districts is an important beginning, we must work to prepare a comprehensive plan that would include the restoration and renovation of entire neighborhoods. This concept can best be fostered through educational efforts and the establishment of a Historic Review Board Commission, whose primary focus would be the preservation of our architectural heritage, not for those who came before us, but more importantly for those who will follow for generations to come.

Paul A. Myers, Architectural Historian



*The Indiana Theater and an entire two block area of buildings on Michigan Avenue were razed in the 1970s to make way for business development that never occurred. The Hoosier Theater in Whiting, Indiana, which was designed by the same architectural firm sat vacant for more than two decades before it was restored and returned to use as a theater. It has once again become a social focal point for commercial and residential redevelopment and reinvestment of that city.*

# Defining Historic Preservation And How It Works

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

## Setting the Record Straight!

In 2003 when developers announced their plan to raze (bulldoze) the First National Bank building on the corner of Indianapolis Boulevard and Chicago Avenue, the prior administration did relatively nothing to stop the wreckers ball. A draft copy of a proposed Historic Review Board Ordinance that has withstood the test of the Indiana Supreme Court was approved by the East Chicago Planning Commission in 2004. It was then presented to the East Chicago Common Council for consideration on June 28 of that year and was sent to committee for review. To this day that ordinance has never been taken out of committee.

Just who would be members of the Commission? Your guess is as good as mine. But this is what the ordinance calls for. There will be more than three members but no more than nine members. All of the members will be appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Common Council of East Chicago. All of the voting members of the Commission must be residents of East Chicago.

## Preservation & Property Values

Does official designation as a local historic district hurt or help property values in those districts? A study conducted by the Historic Landmarks Foun-

ation of Indiana confirms what preservationists have long suspected: historic district regulations improve the quality of neighborhoods, in turn boosting property values. In a nutshell, the study found:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

suitable contractors.

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

## Local Historic District Designation

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

### Local designations will:

- protect unique architectural and historical features of a property, neighborhood, or local downtown.
- create preservation guidelines based on the historic character of the designated area.
- offer the public an educational resource for information on rehabilitating historic buildings.
- provide for a local level of control of historic resources.
- offer a positive planning tool to allow historic architectural resources to be integrated into long-range plans for the community.
- improve the quality of life for designated neighborhoods through economic reinvestment and increased property values...

### Local designations will not:

- require owners of historic property to automatically make repairs to their houses.
- require owners of historic property to undo past changes.
- create funds for preserving historic properties.
- increase property taxes.
- be as restrictive as most new subdivision deed restrictions (which are also concerned with the protection of investments and aesthetics).

## Steps in Creating a Local Historic District

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

**1.** Proposed building or area identified as potential

district.

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

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

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

**5.** Commission holds public hearing to review historic district designation and hears comments from the public.

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

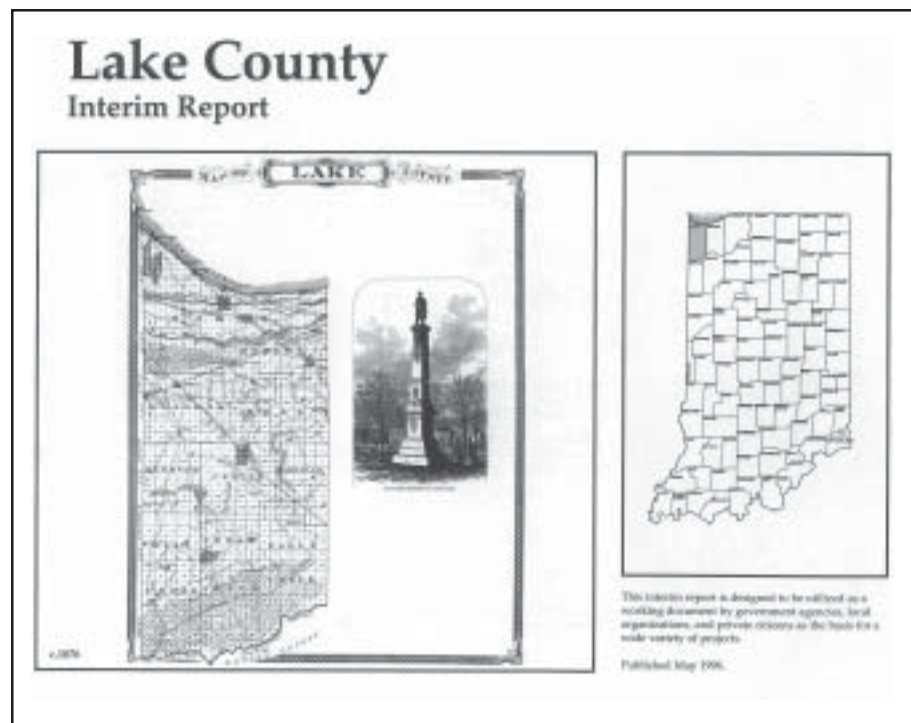
You see, there's nothing to fear in Historic Preservation, but there is everything to gain if it is approved and moves forward. Together, all things are possible!



The wreckers ball claimed the First National Bank Building in the fall of 2005 because East Chicago was powerless to stop it. The passage of a Historic Review Board Ordinance could have saved this and other building in East Chicago these past 30 years. Photo courtesy of Steve Zabrowski.



# Restoring East Chicago's Historic Past



*The interim report is designed to be utilized as a working document by government agencies, local organizations, and private citizens as the basis for a wide variety of projects. It was first published in 1996 and is scheduled for revision in the next few years. When it was first published 675 building in East Chicago were included in the report. Exactly how many have been lost is unknown at this time.*

## Lake County Interim Report: Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory

The major impetus for a comprehensive inventory of Indiana's cultural resources came from the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Act declared it the policy of the federal government to foster the preservation of our cultural resources in partnership with the states, local governments, and the private sector. In order to implement this policy, the Act created the National Register of Historic Places, composed of buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. It also established a partnership between the federal government and the states, whereby each state developed a state historic preservation program to be approved by the U.S. Secretary of Interior. To gain approval, the governor of the state must appoint a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and a State Review Board must be appointed. One of the responsibilities of the SHPO is to conduct a comprehensive state-wide survey of historic properties and maintain inventories of such properties for the purpose of locating, identifying, and evaluating cultural resources. Another responsibility is to ensure that historic properties are taken into consideration in planning and development through the environmental review process.

In 1971, the Indiana State Legislature authorized creation of a state preservation program within the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department's director was designated as the SHPO. The first full-time staff was hired in 1973, and the comprehensive survey program began in earnest in 1975. In 1978, an initial five-county survey project was completed by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana utilizing federal grants-in-aid administered by the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. An average of three counties has been inventoried by the Foundation each year.

## About Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana

In 1960, alarmed by the loss of defining historic buildings in the capital city, a group of Indianapolis civic leaders created Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. The organization established by those volunteers now ranks as the largest private statewide preservation group in the United States, with an Indianapolis headquarters and nine regional offices staffed by professionals who help Hoosiers save and restore old buildings. The Calumet Region Office in the Miller section of Gary serves all of Northwest Indiana.

## About This Report

After four decades of razing entire sectors of East Chicago for redevelopment project that did not materialize, the decision was made to begin the process of celebrating our historic past through the restoration and preservation of our architectural heritage. While there are more than 600 historic properties that merit our attention, we have been asked to limit this first report to but fifteen properties. In doing so, we have identified five districts and ten individual structures as listed herein.

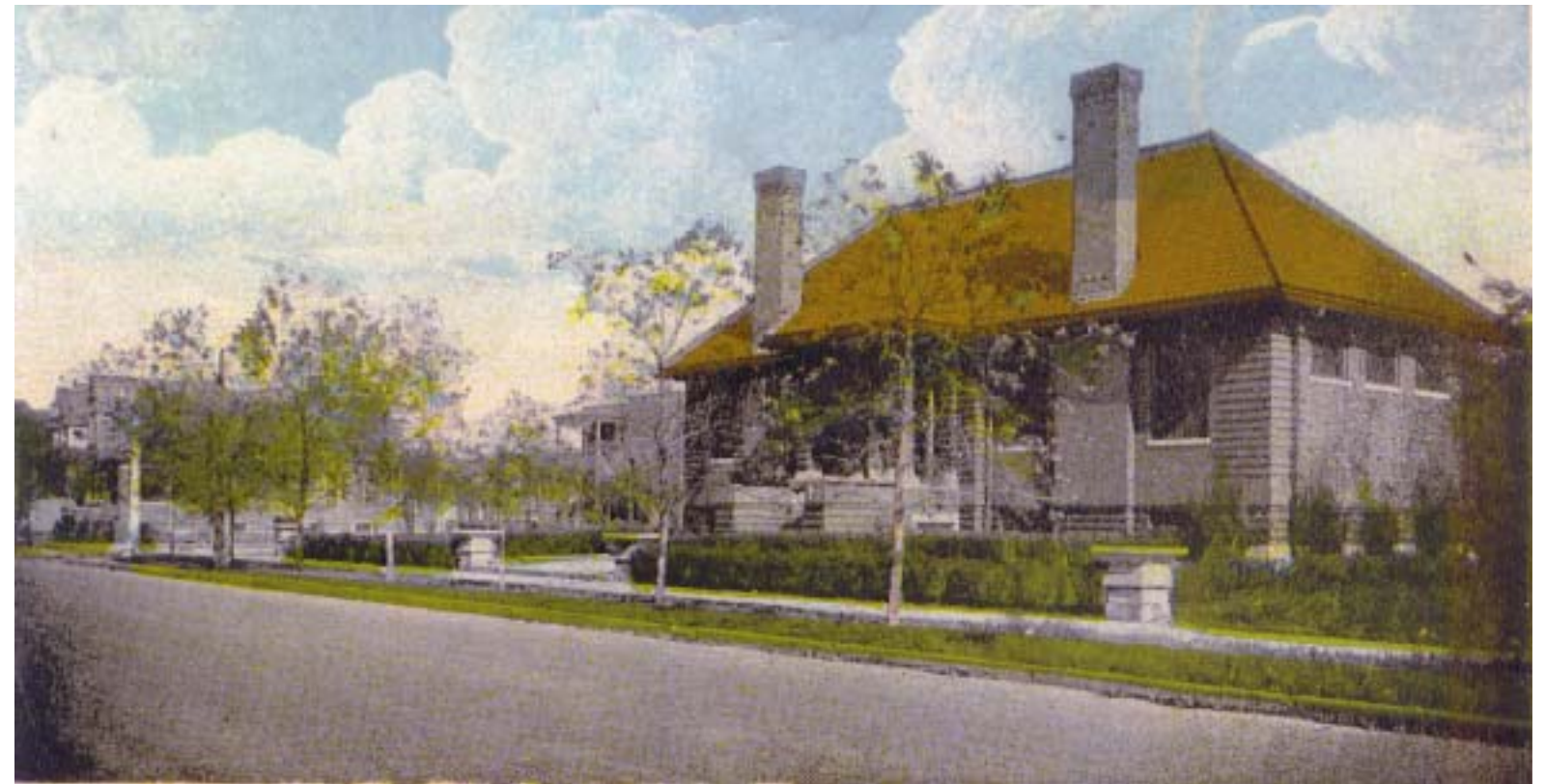
## 15 Most Historic Structures & Districts in East Chicago, Indiana

1. Carnegie Library
2. Lake County Superior Court Building
3. Riley Bank Building
4. Washington Park Historic District
5. Block Stadium
6. Euclid Avenue Chicago Three-Flats
7. Alder Street Classic Two-Flats
8. Main Street Historic District
9. St. George Serbian Orthodox Church
10. Wickey House
11. First Congregational Church
12. City Hall
13. Main Post Office
14. Inland Steel Office Building
15. Marktown Historic District

This list was compiled by Paul A. Myers in cooperation with Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana Erica Taylor, Director Calumet Region Office 563 South Lake Street Gary, Indiana 46407 (219) 938-2200



# Carnegie Library



The movement in East Chicago to establish a library started in 1908. Mr. Andrew Carnegie made a generous gift of \$40,000 which was expended for the construction of two library buildings: one at the junction of Baring and Chicago Avenues, in the western section of the city, and the other at the corner of 136th Street and Grapevine, now Grand Bou-

levard. The Baring Avenue building was dedicated, with extended ceremonies, on Friday evening, May 16, 1913, and the Indiana Harbor Branch Building the following evening.

Since the closure of this branch in the 1980s the building has changed hands at least three times. Today it is owned by the City of East Chi-

cago. While a nonprofit organization has been established with the purpose of restoring the building for future use as a center for visual and performing arts, the estimated cost for the renovation is between two and four million dollars. If this one building can be restored it will set an example for all of East Chicago and the Calumet Region.



*Left: An early photograph of the main reading room shows the attention to detail. Note that the fireplace on the right was designed more for aesthetics that warmth as is obvious with the newspaper rack mounted from the mantle.*

*Above: The building as it stands today. Deferred maintenance, weather, vandalism and a lack of direction and purpose have all taken their toll.*



# Riley Bank Building



Above and center: The first part of the last century found postcards to be one of the most popular forms of cross country communications. Shown here are two illustrations from early postcards of what we know refer to as the Riley Building.



Since the interior of the Riley Building is no longer viable, the exterior can and should be restored to reflect the original intention of the architect while the interior can be modernized for any purpose what so ever.

Several years ago the building was considered for the home of a Historic Preservation & Cultural Affairs organizations. Since then several businesses have expressed interest in the building. It is now being considered for use as a home and training facility for the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) program.

With a little hard work and research we hope to place this building on the National Register of Historic Places within a year.



LEFT: Important people from around the world came to see for themselves the phenomenon that was the Twin City. On May 22, 1929, Dr. Rudolph Krohne, minister of transportation for the German republic, inspected the harbor facilities of the Twin City. He arrived with Dr. Werner Schuller, acting German Consul-General of Chicago, and H.N Roeser, an official of the North German Lloyd Steamship Lines. Alfred Jones (third from right) received them, and H.R. Packard (left), secretary-manager of the Chamber and J.C. Forbes, superintendent of the O.F. Jordan Company, accompanied the visitors. The group is shown here in front of the Calumet Trust and Savings Bank.



Above: The Riley Building as it stands today.

Below: A bank located on 119th Street in Whiting, Indiana. Note the similarities in design. It is obvious that both banks were designed by either the same architect or at least the same architectural firm. While the Riley Bank has not been in use for over thirty years, the Whiting facility is not only still in use but the interior is in outstanding original condition. The original vaults are still in service and stand as outstanding examples of early 20th Century bank security facilities.

How do we move forward with the restoration of this building? First we find a practical use for the building. The next step is to acquire the services of an architectural firm to at least develop preliminary designs for the building. The last step is the most difficult: funding the project. Other cities and towns do it. Why can't we?





# Lake County Superior Court Building



Built in 1927, this three story 20,000 square foot building originally served as the East Chicago branch of the Lake County Superior court. When the new court facility was constructed on Main Street just several blocks to the east the building was sold to a local steelworkers union. Due to the size and age of the building the union soon sought property where they could construct a more economical facility.

While the building is structurally sound it will require a total rebuild starting with the roof, windows, electrical, mechanical and interior spaces and finishes. Two assets that the building does have are an adjacent parking lot and durable construction.

The building is clad in Bedford Stone as is the U.S. Post Office on Chicago Avenue and the First

National Bank Building on the corner of Main Street and Broadway. The lower portions of the first floor are finished in red granite. This Neoclassical structure has a full steel frame beneath the stone and brick work which permitted the first floor offices to be designed in the glass curtain style.

What use could this have in the future? Since the interior spaces of the building is no longer salvageable they can be remodeled for virtually any purpose. One concept presented included having the building made handicapped accessible on the east elevation. The top floor could be used for state welfare office. The second floor for the North Township offices and the first floor could serve as a business incubator facility for East Chicago.





# Washington Park Historic District

The Washington Park Historic District is located in the southwest section of Indiana Harbor. This small, residential district developed around a city park during the 1920s and was home to many of Inland Steel's management personnel. The district's large period revival style homes are sited on spacious, treed lots with a uniform setback. The area presents a quite, parklike character in a city with predominately working-class neighborhoods.

The 1920s was a period of great prosperity for Indiana Harbor. The steel industry was booming, and the city entered into a golden ear of growth. Although Inland Steel was by far the area's largest employer, other smaller manufacturing interests were also established in Indiana Harbor. While most of the factory workers lived north of Columbus Drive, closer to the mills, the plants' managers and other professionals settled to the south.

The streets around Washington park developed as a popular residential area for the town's upper middle class. Grandly scaled, period revival style houses line two sides of Washington Park. The third side was occupied by St. Catherine's Hospital, built in 1926 on land donated by Inland Steel.

The Colonial Revival style is well represented in the district. The houses at 1616 and 1716 142nd Street are the district's finest examples of the style. Both houses are similar in design and exhibit a refined interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. The houses at 4312 and 4210 Parrish Avenue are more modest examples of the style.

The Tudor Revival style is illustrated by the houses at 1704 and 1710 142nd Street. Although they represent two different interpretations of the style, both exhibit the stucco and half timbering, and casement windows common to the Tudor Revival style.

Washington Park forms the heart of the district. Plans for the park were submitted c. 1903 by noted Chicago landscape architect Jens Jensen, although it is not known if his plans were utilized. The several acre urban park includes a craftsman style Park Administration Building and several greenhouses. At one time the park also included a zoo which has since closed.

Today, the Washington Park neighborhood has remained as a stable residential area. The gracious, well kept homes serve as a reminder of an important period in Indiana Harbor's history.

While the need for a Historic Review Board ordinance is not readily apparent, what will happen to this wonderful neighborhood if just one front yard fence is erected, or the traditional front yard offset is disturbed by an inappropriate building addition?

16 EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA October, 1925

## Housing Situation Is Simplified by Building of Fine Homes and Development of Parks

"East Chicago a City of Homes" is a slogan that was adopted here many years ago and fulfillment of that slogan and program has now begun to bear fruit in no uncertain manner with the result that in every section of the city, except directly under the very eaves of the industrial plants, there are springing into existence beautiful homes, apartments and parks that are a delight to the citizens and a surprise to visitors.

The name East Chicago has long stood as a synonym for industry but within recent years it has begun to mean more than mere mills and mill workers. It has now taken on the added significance of better housing, more comfortable homes, more contented workers and phenomenal business and social growth.

In the transforming of a waste of sand into an industrial center and the development of giant industries whose products are sent to every quarter of the globe, a remarkable development of residential property has been effected with the result that comfortable places of abode fill the various sections of the city and continued adornment of lawns and streets and parks has converted the waste places into domiciles of beauty and convenience.

Home building in East Chicago was not the easy matter it has been in other sections of the country. After

of the great mills here who have long lived in suburban Chicago, have come here to make their homes.

Although development has been rapid it could not keep pace with the industrial expansion of the city and several surveys have been conducted by the Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of inducing more home building here and bringing more of the employees of local concerns, now residing in other cities, here to live.

Under the guidance of the Chamber, which maintains a clearing bureau for the rental of apartments and rooms to those desiring to locate here, many employees have found places in which to live and the population of the city has been swelled to some 55,000 persons, who only represent, however, a fraction of the population, destined eventually to locate here.

A photograph of the A. H. Sambor home and a corner of Washington park, shown herewith, will give the reader some idea of the type of development that has been going on in East Chicago. The City Plan Commission, acting upon a survey of housing that is being prepared by a firm of consulting engineers, is expected to do much toward increasing housing facilities of the city.



RESIDENCE OF A. H. SAMBOR.  
A sample of the fine type of homes in East Chicago

the house had been built it was necessary to haul in black dirt to make a lawn, and trees had to be fertilized and cared for until they were able to take root in the substrata underlying the sand of the region

Some sections, which serve as the homes of the more wealthy, are actually beautiful and Nature and man, working in harmony, have produced such charming spots that executives



A PEEP INTO THE CORNER OF WASHINGTON PARK, SHOWING PRETTY HOMES AND FOLIAGE













# E. J. Block Athletic Field



Block Stadium as it is known today was dedicated on Memorial Day 1942 and was donated by the Block family to the City of East Chicago. The grandstands, score board, lights and art deco admissions and concession building made this the premier baseball field in Northwest Indiana for the first three decades after it first opened.

The largest crowd ever to witness a baseball game at Block Stadium assembled during World War II when a group of Twin City all stars played Great Lakes, a Navy team made up entirely of major leaguers. Although Block Stadium normally seats thirty-five hundred, with extra bleachers that extended down both foul lines the capacity was increased



temporarily to hold ten thousand. Shown below are Mickey Cochrane, Great Lakes manager and legendary catcher and manager of the Detroit Tigers, shakes hands with George Sufak prior to the game. Park of the overflow crowd can be seen in the background.

What needs to be done to make this the premier baseball field that it once was? The admissions and concession building needs to be fully restored, not razed and replaced, but restored. The grandstands, score board and dugouts all need to be restored. Add to this a drainage system, and what do you have? Play Ball heard once again at the No. 1 Ball Park in the Region!





# Euclid Avenue Chicago Three-Flats

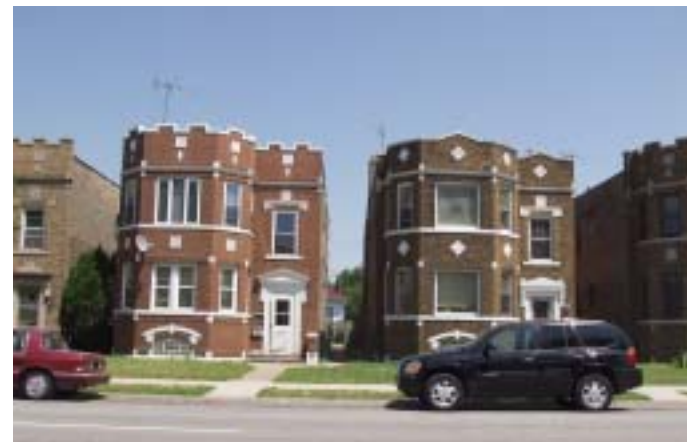


Located just west of Washington Park, this one block area of classic Chicago Three-flats was developed in the early 1920s to provide affordable, quality housing opportunities for both property owners and renters alike. While one building has been lost to fire a number of years ago, the remaining properties are in varied states of maintenance.

Made popular in Chicago at this same time in history, the style and construction technique found its way into Northwest Indiana and East Chicago. It is obvious that this one block was developed with continuity in mind. This style of home can be found elsewhere in East Chicago at scattered sites on both sides of town.

With lots as narrow as they are on this block, the only in fill design that would be appropriate would be to duplicate the original design, a costly approach to say the least. As with the Washington Park Historic District, the continuity of design must be maintained if this neighborhood is to be revitalized and returned to its former standing in the community.

If applied properly, the concepts of historic preservation could become the foundation for a revitalized and rejuvenated Euclid Avenue.





# Alder Street Classic Two-Flats



While there are numerous examples of this classic two-flat through East Chicago, this one block of Alder Street just north of Columbus Drive in the Indiana Harbor sector of the city provides us with a view into the working class neighborhoods of the early part of the last century.

Here, hedges take precedent over fences and lawns are generally preferred over excess concrete applications. But the free will of one or two neighbors could destroy the continuity and quality of life of the entire neighborhood. One property has added more concrete than is necessary and maintenance is not always what it once was.

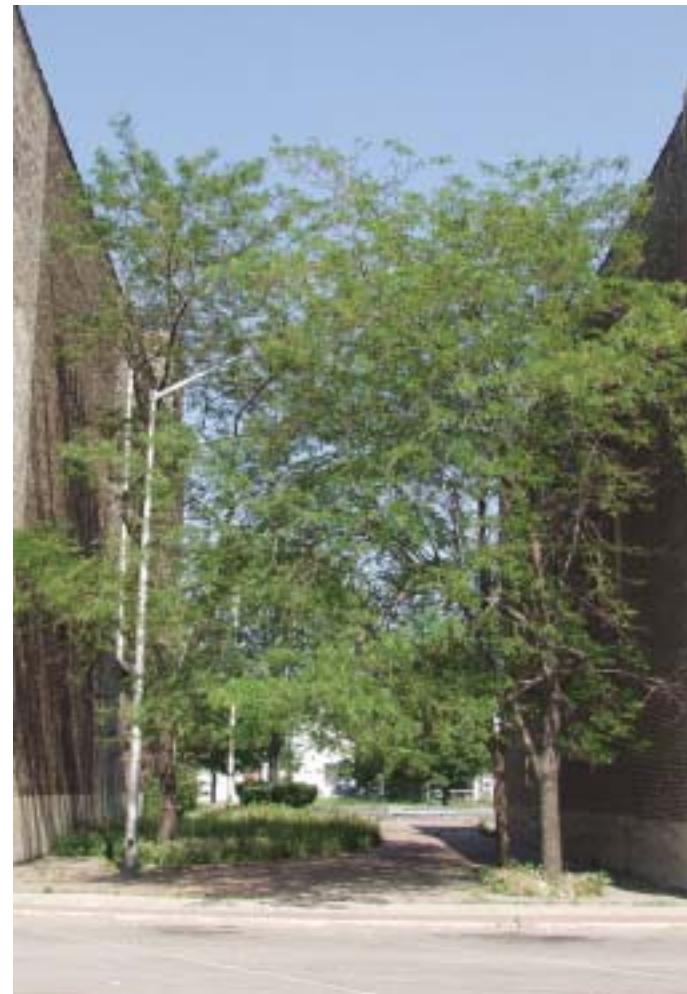
Fortunately, parkways are still parkways as opposed to optional parking. The front porches are all still open and viable. While some of the residents have added hedges, they are by all means a welcomed addition to the neighborhood. For the most part, community/neighborhood/block pride still exist in this small enclave of homes.

A historic facade renovation program, if applied properly could assist homeowners in the renovation and restoration of this most unique of neighborhoods in Indiana Harbor.





# Main Street Commercial District



*Four lots, thee building? When one of the commercial structures was razed by fire decades ago a park area replaced the building. Deferred maintenance from the last administration has taken its toll.*



Once one of the busiest shopping district in the greater Calumet Region, the Main Street area is but a shadow of its former glory. Just twenty years ago nearly all of the buildings were intact. Now, entire blocks of what had been stores and shops is vacant land awaiting redevelopment.

That does not mean that we cannot leverage our historic past to guarantee a brighter future for retain expansion in East Chicago. Thirty years ago, Crown Point considered razing the historic court house. Instead, they restored the building and saved their down town area. They have now included all of the building in the square under their historic preservation ordinance.

Whiting has followed the example and still has an active and vibrant commercial district. If we do nothing else, we can save and celebrate our historic commercial buildings on Main Street. To do so, we need to work with the property owners and develop a plan that would incorporate the old with the new.





# The New United States National Bank

## East Chicago's First Skyscraper

The opening of the new seven story home of the of the United States National Bank of Indiana Harbor at East Chicago on Saturday, November 12, was featured by two unusual occurrences.

First the crowd that came to visit and inspect the bank's new home is said to have been the largest ever assembled under one roof in Lake County. Fifteen thousand people visited the bank that day, and had school children unaccompanied by their parents been admitted, the attendance, as estimated, would have exceeded 25,000.

Second, the quality of flowers received from local and out-of-city banks and businesses houses is said to have been the largest number of floral pieces ever assembled under one roof in the county. More than 250 baskets of flowers testified to good wished for the day. So abundant were these flowers that they were distributed among 26 Protestant, Catholic and Jewish churches in the city, the Carmelite Orphanage, the Catholic hospital in Hammond, and the Catholic and Methodist hospitals



U. S. NATIONAL BANK BUILDING in Gary.

The new home of the United States National Bank is the tallest building in the city of East Chicago, and is owned by Colonel Walter J. Riley, founder and president of the United States Bank. It replaces the original banking home, which was erected in 1915 when the institution was founded as the First State Trust and Savings Bank.

The original capital and surplus were \$50,000. Today the capital and surplus and

earnings are in excess of \$250,000, or more than five times the original figure. All of the increased capital and surplus has come out of the earnings.

The exterior of the bank is of Indiana Bedford limestone, which gives it a striking appearance, especially at night when the building is illuminated by powerful flood lights.

Three floor are devoted to banking purposes -- the main floor, which housed the banking room and office quarters, the basement, and the mezzanine floor. The five upper floors of the building are devoted to modern office suites, which have the advantage of OTIS high-speed elevator service.

Designed by Joseph Scheitler, architect and bank specialist, the new banking home presents many unusual features, both as a beauty and utility. Imported Italian marble is used for the walls, and the floors are of terrazza with brass strips. The decorated ceilings are of Celotex, making for sound absorption qualities. Massive bronze chandeliers illuminate the banking room.

### THREE INTERIOR VIEWS OF THE NEW BANK



SAFE DEPOSIT VAULTS

MAIN BANKING ROOM

CASH VAULT



As the 1927 article to the left states, just the opening of the Main Street banking facility drew massive crowds. The way in which we bank has changed drastically over the past eight years, and yet we are still privileged to have this outstanding building serve as the social and architectural anchor for our Indiana Harbor Business District.

With the loss of the various professional offices on the upper floors, the decision was made to remove the top four floors of the facility. What many may not know is that when the building was first designed, it was but a two story structure. Hopefully, the now vacant second floor can be restored and put to good use as an art gallery or public space.





# St. George Serbian Orthodox Church



Built in 1911, St. George Serbian Orthodox Church serves a monument to the generations of Serbians who have worshiped here. In the late 1980s early 1990s the church underwent an extensive interior and exterior restoration. The electrical and mechanical systems were brought up to code. New stained glass windows were commissioned and installed. The altar of the church was restored to its original 1922 beauty by artisans brought over from Serbia. This type of restoration is unique to churches, but when it occurs, it revitalizes not only the building, but more importantly the neighborhood that surrounds it.

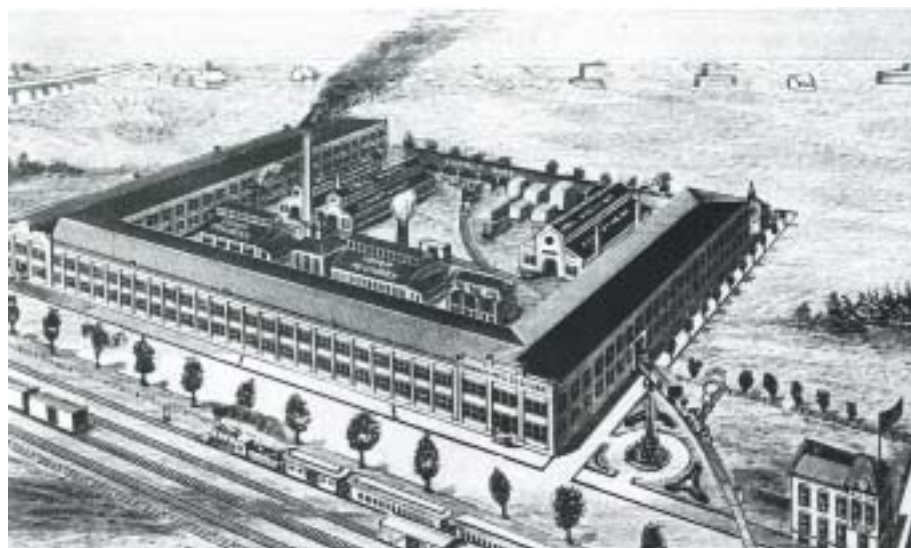
СРПСКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦРКВА  
АД СВ. ГЕОРГИЈЕ 1912.



# Wickey House



*Below: The Famous manufacturing Company was established in East Chicago in 18899 by German-born Andrew Wickey. It produced hay bailers and other farm equipment, producing mre pressess than any other factory in theworld. This plant also served as East Chicago's first electric light power plant. Famous later also produced the only automobiles ever made in East Chicago, high-wheel roadsters favored by physicians, farmers, or anyone else who did most of their driving on the rutty, muddy, rural roads of the earty twentieth century.*



If ever there were a single home in East Chicago that should serve as the poster child for historic preservation it is the Andrew Wickey home located just north of Veteran's Park. This classic two story frame home is the largest, oldest and most complete home built in the Queen Ann style. It is set back from the southwest corner of 145th and Olcott Avenue on a spacious lot which provides a large back yard and a front yard that was once graced by gardens.

Andrew Wickey, an inventor and manufacturer of farm machinery, decided one day to electrify his home. So he installed a generator at his plant, the Famous Manufacturing Company, and ran wires to his house a few bocks away at 145th and Olcott. When his makeshift system worked, Wickey's house at first became a community amusement but ultimately the envy of his neighbors. In an act of consummate public service, Wickey added enough generators to light the whole town, and the denizens demonstrated a pioneer willingness to tolerate inconvenience so as to be in step with the march of progress.

The home was last renovated in the early 1990s. The contractor/owner did little if any research into the home or the proper techniques needed to restore it properly. As a result, most of the work done just fifteen years ago will have to be repeated by the present owner.

The house suffered a foreclosure several years ago and has a new owner who is intent upon making this his home in the near future. Adding this building to the National Register of Historic Places should become a priority.





# First Congregational Church



Standing as a monument to time, the First Congregational Church on 140th Street now serves a Latino congregation. This Neoclassical structure was built in 1913 and designed by East Chicago architect Carl D. Norris. Mr. Norris also designed Roosevelt High School, the Masonic Lodge buildings and was responsible for the 1931 wing added to the Indiana Harbor Carnegie Library.

The First Congregational Church is best known for the outstanding stained glass windows that flank the eastern and southern facades and rotunda. The massive Bedford Limestone church is one of the best maintained churches in East Chicago.

It should be noted that for the first half of the last century, East Chicago was home to more than fifty ethnic groups, each with their own church. While many of the original church buildings have been lost to time, those remaining deserve our attentions.

While funding the renovation and restituit of churches should not be considered, placing them on the National Register of Historic Places would help to guarantee their future for generations to come. How many historic churches do you know of in E.C.?



*Below: The stained glass windows on the eastern elevation of the church are considered to be some of the best in the Calumet Region.*





# City Hall



Built in 1907 to serve as a City Hall for the relatively newly incorporated City of East Chicago, this grand old building has served its citizens well, and will hopefully continue to do so for generations to come. When it was first constructed, virtually all of the city officers worked at City Hall. The Office of the Mayor, City Clerk, Police Department, Common Council and the City Court were all in this one building.

With the passage of the American Disabilities Act the building was closed for an eighteen month period, during which an annex was added to the southern



entrance and the entire building was brought up to code and remodeled. The only original feature of the interior that still exists today is the center staircase. Made of cast iron with marble treads, this classic staircase reminds us of an earlier time in history.

City Hall serves as a perfect example of how a classic, well built structure can be brought forward into the 21st century. Many of the older commercial buildings such as the Riley Building, Carnegie Library and the Lake County Superior Court can all be revitalized to once again serve this community.





# Main Post Office

While most would not consider a Post Office something to be addressed by local citizens, the loss of this structure would be devastating to the architectural integrity of East Chicago. As the U.S. Postal Service continues to cut costs, it is only a matter of time before the cost of constructing a smaller, more energy efficient building out weights the annual heating and maintenance costs.

Constructed of Bedford Limestone in 1920 this Renaissance Revival structure has become a historic anchor for all of East Chicago. While municipal funds will never be used to maintain the building, we may have to lobby our federal government to guarantee the permanency of this truly great building. Placing it on the National Register of Historic Places should be a priority for those concerned with preserving our past for future generations.





# Inland Steel Office Building



*From Inland Steel to Ispat Inland to Mittal Steel, you can change the name but not the architecture. How many people remember the wonderful Christmas displays that once graced the front lawn at Inland?*

Conceived in the optimism of the twenties, Inland's six-story office building, the Twin City's second high-rise at that time, opened May, 1930, just a few months after the stock market crash of 1929. It stood throughout the Depression as a visible symbol of hope that the Twin City would once again grow and develop as the hub of the great Calumet Region. The building was designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst & White who also designed the Museum of Science of Industry, the Wrigley Building and the Civic Opera House in Chicago.





# Marktown Historic District



Above: Market Square circa 1920.

Below: Market Square today!

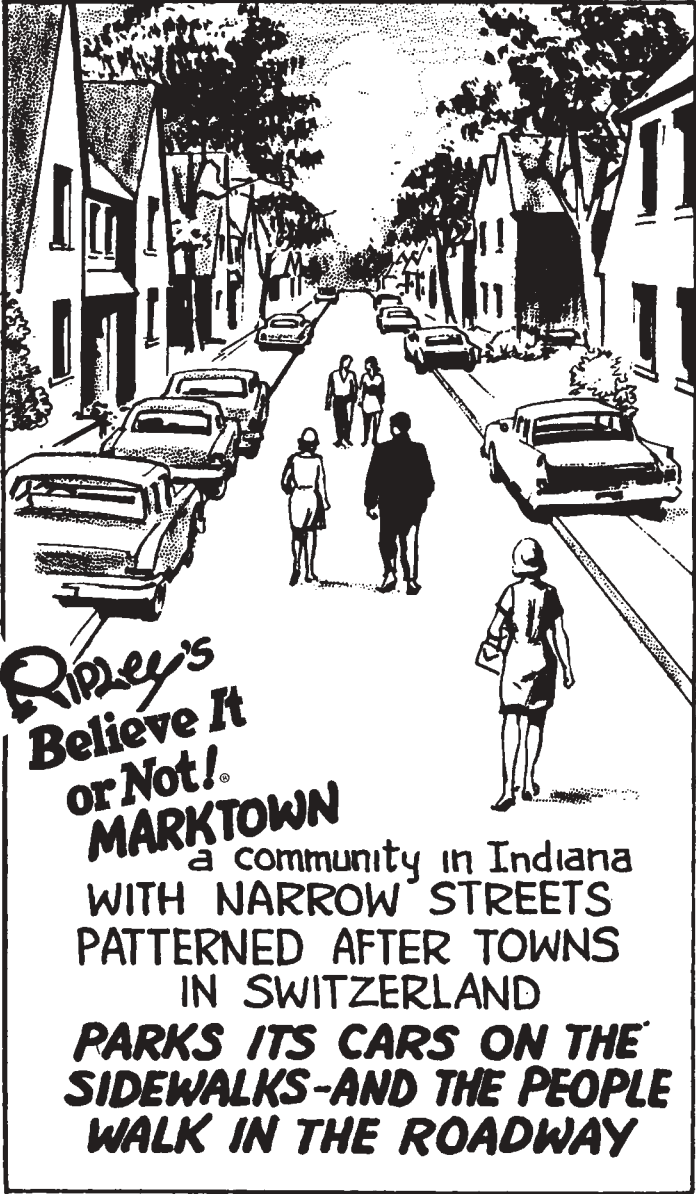


Commercial reinvestment in the Marktown Historic District has been non-existent for more than thirty years. All of the commercial buildings are owned by an out-of-town property owner who refuses to reinvest in the future of the neighborhood. While the Market Square Building (above) and the Mark Hotel Building (below) are fully restorable, without the owners' participation in either the restoration of the building or the reasonable sale of the buildings to other parties it will eventually result in the razing of both structures. Both buildings merit our attention and full restoration in the very near future.



Above: Mark Hotel circa 1920.

Below: Mark Hotel today!



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

*Richard Morrisroe, City Planner 1974  
National Register of Historic Places  
Marktown Historic District Nomination 1975*

Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in the 1970s, the Marktown Historic District is one of the most outstanding examples of pre-WWI worker homes designed under the Garden City Concept of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The East Chicago Department of Redevelopment has entered into a contract with an architectural firm to write a revitalization plan for this most unique, endangered and isolated of neighborhoods. Placing the neighborhood on the National Register of Historic Places prevented Cline Avenue from taking its original route down Dickey Road which would have called for the razing of the entire neighborhood in the mid 1970s.





First Edition  
June 13, 2006  
Five copies distributed to:

Office of the Mayor  
City Planner  
Director of Redevelopment  
Historic Preservation Officer  
Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana

Produced by Paul A. Myers  
at the request of  
Nethaniel Ruff - Co-Corporate Council  
City of East Chicago



