



FALL 2002

# preserve

THE NEWSLETTER FOR  
FRIENDS AND MEMBERS  
OF CITIZENS FOR GLEN  
ELLYN PRESERVATION

GROUP KICKS OFF KEY PROJECT

## Lost and Found Glen Ellyn

CITIZENS FOR GLEN ELLYN PRESERVATION has begun the task of recording a time of great change in the character of the village. Photographs of the hundreds of homes that have fallen to demolition are being collected and preserved as a reminder of lost heritage. At the same time, photographs that document newly restored or renovated homes are being collected as a reminder of the dedication and hard work of the many citizens determined to preserve the charm and unique history of the village.

Last year 63 homes were torn down in the village of Glen Ellyn. The majority of these were demolished on spec by contractors, rather than by resident homeowners. A significant number of these buildings dated from the late 19th century through the mid 20th century.

**WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF THIS TREND?** Over 90% of the Glen Ellyn residents who answered a door-to door survey by Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation felt that the losses outweighed the gains. Although most agree that homes that have been allowed to deteriorate beyond repair are welcome targets for demolition and new construction, the trend to tear down anything and everything, without regard to historic significance, is of great concern to residents. Many of the new, larger replacement homes, too often are designed without sensitivity to the

Welcome to the premier issue of the **Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation** newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate with the residents of Glen Ellyn about preserving the historic character of our community. The same character that originally drew us to, and keeps us in Glen Ellyn. In this issue we will share information with you concerning:

**Teardowns** What they mean to our Village and how to control their impact on our neighborhoods.

**Preservation Success Stories** How people in Glen Ellyn have used approaches other than teardowns to increase their living space and adapt their homes to contemporary needs.

**Our Mission & Goals** Who we are and what we want to accomplish.

**Current Activities & Future Plans** What we've accomplished, what we're currently working on, and what we plan for the future.

**Citizen Survey** Please take a few moments to complete the enclosed survey. We need to know how Glen Ellyn residents feel about preservation.

## SPOTLIGHT ON RENOVATION

# Success Story!



404 Prospect Avenue

**It's every home restorer's dream; being able to contact a descendent of the original owner of your home and find out details and information no one else could provide.**

John and Gretchen DeCoster were able to do just that. They are the present owners of an original Churchill family Victorian home in Glen Ellyn built around 1896 that was once the original farm house for the area. Moving to Glen Ellyn because they were attracted to the lovely old homes it possessed, the DeCosters purchased the home in 1996. Tracking down Patricia Mitchell of Wheaton, the great granddaughter of Isacc and Angelina Churchill who built the home, proved invaluable to the

homeowners. Mrs. Mitchell was able to supply them with original photos of the home, unlocking secrets such as front porch details, which had been removed, as well as window configurations that had been altered. John and Gretchen painstakingly replicated the front porch details, adding a great deal of charm and practicality to the home. The windows were reconfigured to stylistically appropriate placement and scale.

Relying on sweat equity, tremendous amounts of determination, and the help of family members, the DeCosters stripped all the original woodwork in the living room and foyer, as well as removing up to 6 layers of wall paper in some areas. Against the advice of several floor refinishers, they have successfully refinished what are now the gleaming wide-board fir floors in those rooms. The drab, dropped ceilings in most of the house were removed to reveal the original majestic 10-foot height. Ornamental ceiling medallions and gorgeous, vintage light fixtures gave new life to the elegantly proportioned rooms. Gretchen hunted down these jewels from various antique fairs and stores. She is also a self-described "Queen of the Internet," locating a wealth of site resources for their renovation.

The pocket door between the living room and front parlor, as well as the front door, are both something of a miracle. About ready to give up on ever finding a single pocket door to fit the existing space, they found out that a contractor friend had salvaged a pocket door and a front door from Holland that he thought might fit in their home. Miraculously, both doors fit the openings exactly without having to be cut down in any way, and they are both stunning focal points in the home!

The exterior displays a historically correct color scheme as well as unique narrow clapboard siding with an extra horizontal

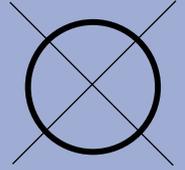
bead detail obviously not found on "off the shelf" wood siding. When the homeowners began renovating the back section of their home they discovered that the original clapboard under the aluminum siding was too damaged to use. Determined to stay authentic, to replace it they routed their own to match, up to 3,300 linear feet for this section of the home alone! They have since sheathed their garage in the same hand-milled siding.

Even the gardens have benefited from the DeCosters stewardship. Heirloom peonies, as well as ancient grapevines now entwine on a lovely old-fashioned pergola John designed and built in the back yard. Next on the list for improvements for this energetic couple is a cozy cobblestone patio to replace an on-display wooden deck.

This home, however, is not a museum piece – it is a very livable house. Boasting all the modern conveniences, its light and airy eat-in kitchen houses an island, built-in appliances, and a farm style sink. The freshly renovated family room, with hand-crafted mantle and built-in bookcases repeats the high ceilings of the rest of the house.

This lovely old home has many things new houses can never have: thick, old-growth oak mouldings and trim; ancient floors with glowing patina; sound plaster walls; and most importantly, an amazing history tied to a very significant Glen Ellyn family. These things can never be replicated and should never be lost. As a village, Glen Ellyn must celebrate this stunning example of renovation and restoration.

Kudos to John and Gretchen for bringing back this house to its rightful place as a Glen Ellyn landmark and a show-place. Homes such as these are what make Glen Ellyn charming, special, and unique.



2002 survey

Please complete this questionnaire  
and return it to:  
Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation  
342 Montclair Ave.  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

You may also complete the membership form and  
return it along with your membership dues and survey.

We will tally the results and share our findings with you  
and our Village government so that the citizens of Glen  
Ellyn are accurately represented when decisions are  
made that affect the historic character of our community.

**Please return by October 15th!**

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Do you like the atmosphere that vintage homes and buildings give Glen Ellyn neighborhoods and its downtown?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is preserving the quality of Glen Ellyn neighborhoods and downtown area a worthwhile goal?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Should new development in older and historic neighborhoods complement and "fit in" with existing structures in terms of size and appearance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Should the Village government support and protect historic neighborhoods, including the downtown area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel homes currently being built in Glen Ellyn reflect the historic character of the neighborhoods and downtown?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Should Glen Ellyn adopt reasonable constraints on the size of homes and buildings built in Glen Ellyn relative to lot size and the size of pre-existing structures in the neighborhood/ area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would the historic character of the Village benefit through identifying and designating older and historic neighborhoods and buildings for special protections?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Should Glen Ellyn adopt design guidelines for commercial and residential buildings in Glen Ellyn?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel homes that give Glen Ellyn its unique character are being torn down without regard to their value to the Village neighborhoods?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would a waiting period prior to building demolition be appropriate in the Village?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Should a demolition's impact be reviewed to help preserve historic neighborhoods in Glen Ellyn?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Should demolition permits carry a surcharge, sufficient enough to significantly offset the cost of historic preservation programs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the Village doing enough to preserve older and historic homes/buildings in Glen Ellyn?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Should citizens have the greatest say in how Village development progresses?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**(optional)**

Name	Address
City/State	Zip
Phone	E-mail

## About Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation

**MISSION** Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation is a group of residents who want to protect the distinctive character, history, and architectural integrity of the Glen Ellyn community through historic preservation, planning and sensible growth. We intend to do this by: • Educating citizens, government representatives and others. • Mobilizing citizens to promote and maintain the architectural and environmental integrity of the community and not letting the aesthetic be controlled by builders and developers. • Protecting the streetscape and scale of structures within the community.

**2001 ACCOMPLISHMENTS** Formed citizens' group, and established the mission, goals & objectives. • Circulated petitions and collected 200 signatures over two brief weekends in support of reduced height & bulk regulations. • Presented petitions and testified at all Village Board meetings and workshops in support of reduced bulk & height guidelines in the Village Zoning Code. • Issued press releases in all major area papers concerning the formation of the Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation and the group's numerous activities. • Distributed 250 promotional brochures at the 2001 Glen Ellyn Christmas Walk and collected & forwarded to the Village President 30 completed "What would you like to tell your Village government?" postcards. • Supported the "Save the Special 8" grass roots organization.

**2002 GOALS** Gather and publish photographs of Glen Ellyn buildings lost to demolition and buildings appropriately restored/remodeled/rehabilitated. • Publish quarterly newsletter to broadcast information about preservation and the activities of the Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation. • Conduct a citizens' survey to prove that people in Glen Ellyn care about preservation. Disseminate survey results to the general public and Village policy-makers. (See enclosed questionnaire.) • Hold educational events, such as architectural tours, community presentations, and village meetings to increase public interest and knowledge in preservation.

**If you are attracted to Glen Ellyn because you love its historic character and want to work with others to preserve it, please join us on the first Thursday of each month 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Faith Lutheran Church 41 North Park Boulevard, Glen Ellyn.**

Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation  
Acting Chairperson, Genell Scheurell

## Preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation

**Preservation:** Applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building, and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site. It may include substantial stabilization work, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials.

**Restoration:** The act of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared

at a particular time by means of removing later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

**Rehabilitation:** The act of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural values.

# Glen Ellyn Teardown Update

Teardowns – demolishing an existing house to make way for a significantly larger new house on the same site – are a major threat, in Glen Ellyn and in older, historic communities nationwide. This epidemic is so threatening that the National Trust for Historic Preservation has added “Teardowns in Historic Neighborhoods” to its list of *America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*.

Teardowns have an irreversible, negative impact on a community like Glen Ellyn. They mean the loss of the historic fabric responsible for Glen Ellyn’s visual character.

Possible solutions include:

- Identifying and defining the Village’s historic resources to ensure that historically or architecturally-important buildings are not torn down.
- Encouraging sensitive additions and remodeling to homes through technical assistance, educational programs, or financial incentives.

- Instituting design guidelines and zoning code ordinances that help encourage housing appropriate to the neighborhood in which homes are being demolished.
- Utilizing voluntary easements and covenants for selected properties. These solutions are not about dictating taste or restraining an individual homeowner’s rights. They are about preserving the community into which we came because we were attracted to its historic character and charm. These solutions have been implemented in other communities across the United States and offer no more restriction of individual homeowner rights than any zoning code ordinance.

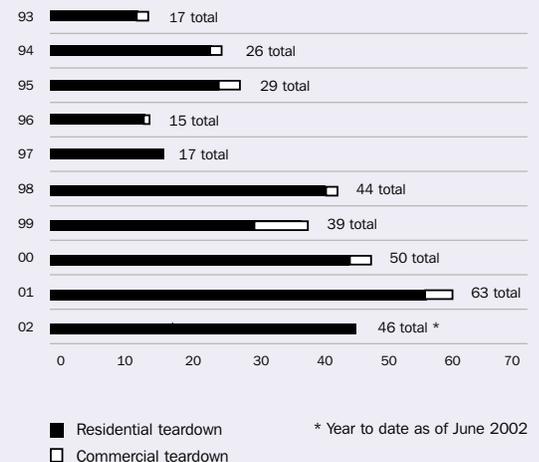
At the increasing rate that teardowns are occurring, we cannot afford to take a slow approach to addressing the problem. Everyday we are losing resources that can never be replaced. The visual character of our village is being dramatically changed, usually by



696 Hillside Avenue, torn down June 2002

unthinking, speculative developers who can see our neighborhoods as nothing more than a source of profits. The Village of Glen Ellyn needs to begin taking action to control teardowns.

## The teardown trend



## Lost and found Glen Ellyn continued from page 1

style and scale of surrounding houses, have created loss of green space, privacy and sunlight for their neighbors, resulting in a more and more urban feel to the village. This type of building also has increased drainage problems, negatively impacted already crowded schools, and increased demands on utilities and roads.

In great contrast, many Glen Ellyn residents have lovingly brought their old homes into the 21st century through restoration, renovation and/or architecturally sensitive additions. By updating and adding on to existing buildings, many homes of varying vintages and styles have been preserved for future generations.

Also, as each home is an integral part of the overall streetscape, preservation of one building actually enhances the architectural unity of an entire neighborhood.

By maintaining this visual history of Glen Ellyn homes, CGEP hopes to document the rapid change taking place in the character of the village. At the same time, it is hoped that these images will be a valuable resource for those interested in learning about and preserving this historic town.

Please forward photographs to :  
 Linda Gilbert, 388 Montclair Ave, Glen Ellyn, 60137

## House Style Primer

In this issue of *Preserve*, we take a closer look at two historical and significant house styles that are somewhat prominent in our village. These two adaptable and inviting styles took America by storm 80 years ago and remain popular favorites today.



**CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW (1900-1935)** Greene & Greene of Pasadena, California originally designed craftsman houses. They began with simply styled designs that became more intricately detailed as the style became more popular. One-story or one and a half story vernacular styles are usually referred to as bungalows and were commonly found in early 20th century suburbs. Sears sold several different models through their mail-order catalog. • Long sloping roofs with wide projecting eaves, deep porches with heavy columns or porch supports, and exposed rafters characterize bungalows. The front door generally opens into a living room and the rooms are of irregular sizes. • Bungalows incorporate a high degree of craftsmanship in their design and in selection of building materials that are left as close to their natural state as possible. They typically have broad, low proportions and a lack of ornamentation that allows them to blend in with their landscape. They are often covered with shingles or shakes in natural earth-tone colors.

**AMERICAN FOURSQUARE (1900-1920)** The American Foursquare is one of four principal subtypes of Prairie-style houses. It has a hipped roof and cube-shaped two-story mass. In its simplest form, the Foursquare has four rooms on each of two floors. Its boxy shape provides for roomy interiors even on smaller lots • The Foursquare was usually built as a frame or stuccoed frame home, but stone or brick were occasionally used. Differing materials may have been combined on the first and second floor exteriors, and classical or colonial details were often featured. Later Foursquares shared the same type of interior details as bungalows: open floor plans, lots of built-ins and fireplaces. • The entrance is the focal point of the facade. Full-width, single-story front porches and double-hung sash windows are common characteristics. It may have two single windows, or two double or triple windows on the second floor.

### CALL FOR MEMBERSHIP

## WE NEED YOU!

We have decided to move from a group of interested citizens to a membership organization. This will help us to keep in regular touch with citizens who share our philosophies. Membership dues also will give us the seed money we need to begin to raise other funds to keep the organization growing. Thank you for your support!

### Annual Membership Dues

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Dual or Family	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$7.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen (over 65)	\$7.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Member	\$150
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit Organization	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Member	\$100

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable and send dues to:  
Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation,  
342 Montclair Ave.  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137