

**Feasibility Report- HIPR 704
Preservation Economics- Savannah
College of Art and Design- Fall 2010**



By Chris Birkentall

This subject of this feasibility report is the Packard building at 640-644 Madison, Oak Park, IL. The goal of saving this architectural gem is paramount, but the proposed use is also vital for the citizens of the Oak Park –River Forest community. Contained within is a summary of the building, it's physical history and condition, along with proposed use for a new business enterprise, to be run by the High School and Opportunity Knocks for the purposes of vocational training for the CITE students.

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STUDIO 626

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Executive Summary

What began as a study to preserve a part of the heritage of Oak Park has now become an effort to create a place for vocational training and work for young adults from the public high school who are cognitively or physically impaired. Saving a historic building is a noble goal, but it is even nobler to create a purposeful place for someone who is often swept aside by society, not considered to be college material, but rather a nuisance to find them a place to work. In Oak Park, we cherish our diversity and expect equal opportunity, as evidenced by years of our history of tolerance and inclusion. It is time we meet this new challenge, to create a destination location on Madison (which has long needed something like this) and to encourage our local disabled youth to stay and live in the community in which they grew up.

Working together, the District 200 OPRF High School and the not-for-profit Opportunity Knocks could help create this place, while making sure the Village of Oak Park is satisfied in saving their designated landmark once known as The Packard Building or Hill Motor Sales Company. The building could be restored using the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, along with following sustainable building practices akin to LEED. The synergy that this building was designed by E. E. Roberts as well as the 1912 addition of the High school is not to be ignored. The owners Foley-Rice spent many dollars restoring the façade of the building and their care is evident, except for the ravages of weather upon an empty building and continual maintenance. The building has been surveyed in the last five years and although water damage was found, the building is intact and its layout allows for some very unique uses.

The report that follows will explain the original use and subsequent uses, along with information on the architects, E.E. and Elmer Roberts. In addition, explored were other uses for the building and market conditions for those uses and the financial cost analysis for the rehab of the building. Information is also reviewed regarding the intended occupants of the building, the young adults of our community who are desperate to find employment and recreation within their hometown. It is with this information, along with further study that needs to occur regarding securing

funding, that ultimately the interested parties can use to determine the final feasibility of the saving of the Packard Building.

The group in need will experience both lack of employment opportunities and lack of living locations. It is imperative that the High School do what they are legally bound to do under the IDEA law: “The purposes of *IDEA* include ensuring that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living”.¹ Unemployment for this group is huge, as they are not college bound material, nor have they the opportunity to access nearby vocational training at places like Triton College in a special education setting.

According to the report “The State of Disability in America” published annually by the United Cerebral Palsy Foundation, “22 percent of students fail to graduate high school compared to 9 percent without disabilities.”² Per this report, “Adults with disabilities are drowning, in large part, because they can’t find jobs to keep them afloat. They want to work. Sixty-three percent told the Harris Poll in 2005 that they want a paying job. Despite their eagerness to work, to secure the dignity that comes from holding a job, and to earn the money they need to pay their bills, adults with disabilities have been deprived of equal opportunity in the American labor market and the American workplace.”³

No successful journey begins without a first step; this report is that first step. With the vision and the desire, obstacles of cost can be overcome. Nothing worthwhile was ever accomplished with ease or without money: it will take both perseverance and determination to create an environment that provides a solid vocational training experience for our local young adults who have what some call a “disability”.

¹US Dept. of Education: Topic: Secondary Transition, <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalBrief%2C17%2C>, accessed November 13,2010

² James Baker, David B. Mixner, Seth D. Harris, “The State of Disability in America, An Evaluation of the Disability Experience by the Life Without Limits Project”, United Cerebral Palsy Foundation,2009.p 32

³ Ibid,p36

I. METHODOLOGY

This feasibility study was produced in fulfillment of the assignment in the Savannah College of Art and Design HIPR 704 Preservation Economics and Development taken by Christina Birkentall, for Professor Robert Allen in the Fall of 2010. The class is designed to help determine how real estate is valued, to determine strategies for profitable rehabilitation of historic properties and also how the projects can be structured to provide for economic benefits for the owners.

The methodology for completing the research contained within this report included personal interviews with the prospective owners of the building and other stake holders in the property, including the lawyers, real estate brokers, along with the spouse of one of the owners, the village personnel in charge of planning and historic preservation. Additional information was gathered from architects and planners from assorted companies in the Chicago area. Historical information was gathered at the Oak Park Historical Society. Access to the site and interior space were not available, so much information regarding the structure comes from a report done by The School of the Art Institute of Chicago graduate students presented in May 2008.

I extend my sincere thanks to the following for their insight, cooperation and comments:

Doug Karre - Village of Oak Park, Urban Planning and Preservation
Craig Failor - Village of Oak Park, Planning
Frank Lipo and Tyler- Oak Park Historical Society
Kathy Rice, Librarian- Oak Park-River Forest High School
Frank Heitzman, AIA- Triton College, Heitzman Architects
Peggy Markey- Special Ed coordinator, Oak Park-River Forest High School
Tina Halliman- Special Education Director, Oak Park-River Forest High School
Sharon Patchak-Layman, Board member, Oak Park-River Forest High School
Mike and Phil Carmody-, Opportunity Knocks Now
Joeseeph Milburn- attorney and Board Member of Opportunity Knocks Now
Ali El Saffar- Village of Oak Park, Tax Accessor
Stephen Citari, AIA and Charles Smith-Cannon Design
Janet Caponigro-, Ardenture Design
Mark Nussbaum PE- ACE Engineers
Andrea Clark- Grizzly Peak, Inc. Fitness
Christine Bernick, Deborah Carey, Young-Jin(Jenny) Kim, Katie McManus, Molly Sargent- graduate students The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL

II. HISTORY

The Hill Motor Company Automobile Showroom was designed by noted local architect E.E. Roberts and built in two parts from 1924 to 1927. It is a fine example of Oak Park's heritage as a prominent location for automobile sales in the Chicago area, known as Motor Row from the 1920's up to 1950's. This building was occupied until 2007 as an automobile dealership. This building displays details of the Tudor Revival style, which was especially fashionable in the 1920's.⁴ The yellow brick façade and the terra cotta and stone trim display details of terra cotta clustered columns, arched openings, and medieval motifs like shields and figurines with automobile tools. The building whole is actually two buildings, but as the same materials and craftsman worked on both parts, the two buildings look unified and essentially functions as one building. The building is for sale for \$4.3 million and has been favored by the Oak Park Historic Commission for Landmark status, with a nomination waiting to be filed.

Architect

The architect of record is Eben E. Roberts for the 1924 east building and the architects for the 1927 building are both Eben E. Roberts and his son, Elmer C. Roberts. Roberts had a large and busy architectural firm in Oak Park in the 1890's which mostly did residential designs catering to the tastes of the day, including Queen Anne, Shingle and Tudor Revival styles. Two of his homes received local landmark status this year, both done in what is considered by Doug Karre, Oak Park Village Planner and Historic Preservation specialist, as his mature Prairie Style. Each house features low-



Fig. 2-Architect EE Roberts

hip roof, wide overhanging eaves, a broad front porch and very prominent horizontal banding, grouped casement windows. Both were also constructed by British mason William A. Pillinger, who worked with the Roberts firm a number of times.

⁴ Doug Karre. Village of Oak Park, Historic Landmark Nomination Report, unpublished, 2007



Figure 3,4 - 639 Fair Oaks (built 1908) and 178 N. Euclid (built 1906)- Both are award winners in the local preservation awards 2010

E.E. Roberts was from Boston originally, and learned mechanical drawing at his father's knee as well as formal training from Tilton Seminary in New Hampshire, where he studied architecture. His older brother, came to the Chicago area to study at Rush Medical Center and the entire family followed, including E.E. By 1889, he had found employment with Chicago architect Solon S. Beman. He opened his own office in Oak Park to work on residential projects, but by 1912 moved the office to Chicago to do more commercial architecture. His son Elmer Clifford joined the practice in 1922, prior to poor health forced E.E. to partially retire. Robert's son Elmer graduated from University of Illinois and served as a Lieutenant in the Army in World War I, then by the mid 1920's took over duties at his father's office.

Roberts designed some of Oak Park's most prominent commercial and public buildings, including the 1912 addition to the Oak Park River Forest High School and the 1908 Prairie style Scoville building, still used for retail and offices today. The 640 Madison building is credited to E.E. and the barrel vaulted addition to the west is credited to both the father and the son, completed in 1927.



History of Building

Frederick A. Hill, Sr. was a prominent real estate developer who built many homes in the Austin and Oak Park areas. His son worked with him until 1920, when the Hill Motor Sales Company building was built for Frederick A. Hill, Jr. as a Packard dealership, replacing a smaller building also on Madison. This business served the entire west side of Chicago and was the largest independent dealer for Packard in Illinois in the 1930's. Packard automobiles were considered among the elite of luxury cars in America.⁵ The 1924 building was built by the firm Harper and Butendorf, a masonry contractor who did many private and public buildings in Oak Park from the 1890's until the 1920's, including other buildings by E.E. Roberts, Charles White, Tallmadge and Watson, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Harper, a native of Scotland, ran as a Village trustee in 1907, as an Independent Voter's party candidate. Oak Park's "Motor Row" became the Mecca for the automobile buyer in the Chicago area by the 1920's. Dealerships found business was better if they clustered together on a wide road specifically designed for the automobile, versus the smaller streets and lanes which were most often designed more for the horse and buggy. Madison Street, a four lane road with median turning, originates at the lake in downtown Chicago, and was easily accessed by numerous train lines which



Figure7- Detail on building indicating the purpose as a Motor Company

extended to Oak Park, one along Lake Street and another along Harrison.

According to Bill Dwyer, in his article "From Horseless Carriages to Hybrids, published in the Oak Leaves newspaper, in 2006, Oak Park ranked from the 1920's until 1950's only behind Chicago's famed Motor Row and Rockford, as the top destination for buying automobiles. The dealerships exchanged owners over the years but by the 1960's Oak Park's smaller lot sizes and

⁵ Karre, Nomination, p. 6, citing news article from Oak Leaves, "President Hill Motor Sales Co." , November 29, 1935 and Wikipedia information on Packard, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Packard>

higher interest rates forced many of the dealerships to leave for more business friendly locales and shut down their Oak Park lots. Today not one remains on Madison, although there is a Volvo dealership who did build a new showroom, easily accessed and visible from the Eisenhower Expressway.

The Building was owned by the Hill family until 1975, in which time Hill Motor Sales Company occupied it from 1924 until 1953. Ganey Motor Sales occupied it from 1956 and then Paul Hall's Madison Street Motors took over the property in 1961. From 1963 until 1966, Tom Coward Lincoln Mercury was the tenant and from 1968 until 1972, Royal Lincoln Mercury occupied the building. It became vacant from 1973 until 1975, and in 1976 until 1989, it had its first non-automobile related business occupy it, Meetinghouse Display, owned by John Davis. In the Village records, there is a sales contract from Davis to Public Storage, dated September 19, 1988 for the cost of \$405,000.00. Public Storage does not appear



Figure 8- Front of buildings as it looks currently

to have ever occupied the space, as Terry Rice bought the building in 1989, to open up a showroom for Cadillac. Foley-Rice Cadillac also owns the building across the street, at 711 Madison. Their main new car showroom was in that building and the used car sales were located in the 644 Madison building. The Village granted the new owners money to restore the façade of the building to its original appearance with the stipulation that the historic building would not be torn down. The permit #8936 application for the renovation was filed with the Village on October 2, 1990, and the cost to restore the façade was noted at \$455,000. The architect of record was Realmuto, Steffen and Loftus, located at 213 N Morgan, Chicago and the contractor of record was Fraser Construction, at 8109 N. Ogden Avenue, Lyons, IL.

Building Information

The best description of the building is the information below, which is taken directly from the Historic Preservation Nomination, written by Doug Karre.

“ The building is an excellent example of the Commercial Style automobile showroom with details reflecting on the Tudor Revival style....Although the east and west wings of the building were constructed at different times(east side, 1924;west side 1927), they present a unified harmonious appearance. ...The wall planes along the front (south) elevation are enhanced by large arched window openings accentuated with an array of terra cotta trim, such as clustered columns, graceful arches, sculpted figures and parapets. Second floor openings consist of diamond lead glass windows with terracotta surrounds on the east wing and steel sash awning windows ...on the west wing, including a large centrally located arched window with a terracotta keystone header.⁶ All steel windows have terracotta sills.

The building has two main entrances facing Madison Street, each located within the east and west wings. The original 1924 east wing consists of two large arched showroom windows flanking an arched entranceway with a large arched glass transom over the entrance doors. Two outer arched showroom windows flank the center portion of the building, separated by clustered terra cotta columns. The base of the window openings is gray terra cotta tile. Above each showroom window is a set of three diamond pane lead glass windows in a terra cotta surround. A terra cotta cornice extends along the façade below the brick and terra cotta parapet. Spaced along the cornice are small terra cotta molds of figures in various auto-related poses such as driving behind a steering wheel and an auto mechanic holding a wrench. Roberts was known for these types of ornament which may also be found on the Park Grove/Park Manor landmark building at 173-181 N. Grove....(done)in 1922/1927.

The 1927 west wing addition includes slightly smaller showroom windows, two on each side flanking a central entrance. The entrance is an arched glass opening within a large terracotta surround with ornament and columns. The arched opening to the east of the entrance includes two doors with sidelights and transoms. This was originally a showroom window which had been replaced with a garage door in 1959. The base of the large window openings, with the exception of the altered opening, is gray terra cotta tile. Large rectangular openings holding steel sash windows on the second floor, each centered above the first floor showroom windows. Decorative terra cotta relief of a face surrounded by wheels and gears ornament the façade above each window.”

The description of the rest of the building includes information regarding the east side, which faced a side street, Wesley, as similarly detailed, with the terra cotta and the brick facing almost

⁶ This is footnoted in the report as have come from E. E. Roberts & E.C. Roberts, Plan #2612: Specifications for Building Addition at 644 Madison Street, April 9,1927 in Doug Karre’s report

half of the building. One of the showroom windows appears to have been in-filled with a stucco or EFS type material. The rear half reflects the service use of the building, with a overhead garage door flanked by windows, and another space where a second garage door may have been. Simple terracotta headers and trim appear in this area.

The north façade faces the alleyway and is done in simple brick and has little ornamentation. Steel sash windows punctuate the second floor of the west side (1927) building and there are no windows and a single vent on the east half. On the west half there is a garage door and one entrance door, but all windows on this side have been in-filled with brick. The parapet on the barrel vaulted roof is capped with clay tile coping. The west side façade is the most altered of all, done originally in common brick, but now has been covered in stucco. There are two small windows and a door near the west front corner, which would have been used to access the west side parking lot.



Figure 9- View from Northeast corner

Current Condition of the Building

Access to the building in person has not been accomplished as of this report; therefore the information herein relies heavily on the Historic Structures Report (HSR) done by Historic Preservation students of Ed Gerns, at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, first done in May 2008. According to this report,

“Despite the renovations (done by the current owner in 1990), the building has experienced significant water related damage, possible structural and environmental-related problems, poorly executed repairs and poor maintenance. The most significant of issues is the water damage-both interior and exterior. Ensuring that the building is watertight will be of primary importance in any restoration project.”

The report further states,

“All restoration should follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of historic buildings. Additionally care should be taken to follow the three steps of basic tenets of historic preservation: to preserve what can be

preserved of the original fabric of the building, repair what can be repaired and restored. If the original material cannot be saved, the replaced material should match the original appearance as best as possible. Although the building has undergone numerous alterations, the building's unique massing and front façade remain relatively unchanged since the building's construction. Overall the building has very good integrity in terms of design, materials and setting.”⁷

The extensive report further details the conditions of the exterior and interior and discusses the mechanical systems along with issues of flooded basement areas. The showroom ceilings were originally 20 feet high but over the years, dropped acoustical ceiling tiles have been installed and drywall offices have been built out. The original ceiling remains intact above the tiles. The flooring of the showroom is original decorative encaustic and glazed clay tile, in an Art Deco design, but is in need of major repair. A mezzanine level in the rear of the east showroom houses offices along with storage. There is a decorative staircase which leads to this area with an iron balustrade in the center of the showroom, and there were arched openings which have been in-filled. There are skylights which help illuminate the mezzanine level.



Figure 10- Corner detail at Terracotta and granite columns

The two buildings were constructed differently, with the 1924 building constructed of steel framing and the 1927 building used reinforced concrete, both having concrete foundations. The steel framed structure of the 1924 building allowed for unobstructed space for the showroom. The area behind the showroom was a service area, which used a steel framed method of steel beams, columns and bow-stringed and pitched trusses. The 1927 building was built using reinforced concrete commonly used for this type of building, as it supported heavy loads and was fire and vibration resistant. The front along Madison is a smaller showroom and behind the showroom is another service area, with a prominent feature in a curved concrete ramp which connects to the second floor, which was used for automobile

⁷ Christine Bernick, Deborah Carey, Young-Jin Kim, Katie McManus, Molly Sargent. Historic Structures Report: Foley-Rice Dealership (1924-1927), unpublished report for Historic Preservation, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, May 2008.

storage. The second floor has a barrel vaulted roof, like the 1924 building, but the outside shows the curve prominently, whereas the roof appears flat in the 1924 building. There are skylights in both buildings which provided both light and ventilation to the service areas.

The existing mechanicals of the building are in various stages of disrepair and corrosion. The heating was provided by two oil boilers located in the basement. There are various hot water tanks in the basement as well, along with air compressor tanks for car lifts. The East showroom has a radiator, with none in the West showroom. There is a roof mounted heating and cooling system on the roof that provides HVAC to both showrooms. In the service areas there are four ceiling suspended space heaters and no air-conditioning. Lighting in the showrooms was from the south and east windows, and skylights in the roof, along with fluorescent lighting in the dropped ceiling. Exhaust fans in the service are large and prominent. There are two large cast



Figure 11,12- West Side at Parking Lot and North side showing the rear of the building

iron pipes that come down from the roof through the service area, most probably roof drains. There are also floor drains for water and other debris in the service area. According to a 1924 Sanborn map, there was a 1,000 gallon underground storage tank. Three restrooms still exist, two of them ADA accessible, done in the 1990 renovation.

Challenges

At first review, the opportunities for this specific style of architecture and building type seem limited. It was built as an automobile showroom and has functioned as that for most of its useful life. In the Historic Structures study done the students of Ed Gerns, professor at the School of the Art Institute, in 2007, they expressed ideas about rehabilitating it to a small specialty grocery store, Trader Joes. By the time of that report, the village had already made a deal for Trader Joe's to come to Oak Park, to be the anchor tenant for the high rise Whiteco Development

apartment building at the corner of Harlem and Ontario. That building was mired in controversy and had many stops and starts, so it would have been a great alternative location for Trader Joes.

The opportunities for this type of building are more limited due to a number of factors. One there is a concrete ramp to the second floor of the 644 building, for storage of the automobiles. There is much square footage devoted to servicing automobiles and an oil storage tank which needs to be removed, at an estimated cost of \$180,000.00 per the brokers. It is not designed to accommodate offices or residential without major retrofitting and some developers have suggested that the empty lot, which is the same size as the building, be developed into something new and the old building somehow be incorporated or be used as a parking garage. In any case, there will be substantial dollars and even more so, enough imagination, required to be used for anything other than the automobile dealership it once was.

Background for development

The building as it is has limited uses, as it was and almost has always been a car dealership. The street front showroom, along with service areas and ramp to the second floor create numerous challenges in trying to find a suitable tenant for this building. It has a large parking lot adjacent, so in the past this building has been considered for use as a Grocery Store and a Public Storage facility. Due to the configuration inside and the exterior fenestration, converting this into typical single occupancy or company offices may prove unfeasible. Given the zoning, which is Commercial, converting to condos or apartments also makes no sense.

The current owners, the families of the Foley's and the Rice's, are trying to sell the building as their Cadillac Dealership was closed down about three years ago. Their asking price for this parcel is \$4.3 million, or about \$100 square foot. They have another parcel with a more modern building south across the street, which is now rented to Equation Fitness gym. The asking price for the two parcels is \$7.8 million. In their property listing, the realtor NAI Hiffman states "Excellent visibility from Madison Street located 1 mile from Metra line and downtown Oak Park. Traffic counts of 17,000- VPD on Madison. Excellent redevelopment opportunity for mixed use retail/residential".

In speaking with Frank Lipo, Director of the Oak Park Historical Society, he explained to me that the Village had an agreement with the owners that they would help fund the restoration of the buildings (thought at first to be regarding the removal of the ill-placed aluminum façade

which covered up all the original arch and windows, done in the 60's), if the owners would agree to preserving the building and agree to not allowing a tear-down of the north side building, but instead seek re-development if needed. In further research, the funds granted from the village were for the restoration of the 711 building, but with the condition that the EE Roberts building was not demolished.

Since GM shuttered many dealerships in the last few years, this one was shuttered as well. The owners now want to sell, but in this economy, there is little use for such a unique building. The Village has proactively written the National Landmark Designation for the building, but has yet to submit it to the state and has been holding back, trying to encourage the owner to develop the space with the building intact.

The Village has spent numerous hours and dollars reviewing the entire street and trying to come up with good ideas for uses and redevelopment for the underutilized commercial areas. A Key Sites report was undertaken in June, 2006 to help determine parcels and uses for a number of sites on Madison St., but did not include 644 Madison as it was occupied by Foley-Rice at the time. A study was done by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. describing the corridor, entitled Village of Oak Park, Madison Street Corridor, published in 2006. Another study, titled Madison Street and Oak Park Avenue Development Study was done by Gingko Planning and Design and DLK Civic Design, in 2008. In the 2006 Key sites report, the lot just west of the Foley-Rice dealership was extensively reviewed as it was and still is an empty lot.

Proposed Use for the building

This study will look to determine the feasibility of the use of the space for a number of related needs for the special needs children of Oak Park and River Forest. Currently, there are space-related needs for the two local school districts (D97 Elementary and D200 High School) and many challenges they face for their special needs students. In both districts, each has a newly appointed Special Education director. Each new director has looked at the number of students who are out-placed to other therapeutic day schools and both wish to begin the process of bringing back to the district the many students who are often bussed miles away.

There is also a program for older students, called CITE which provides a place for those who have passed 12th grade, but still are legally in the school system until age 22. Their home base is used for job skills training, and also a location to gather all the students together, when they are

not at their jobs. This is currently located off campus in a nearby River Forest Community Center, in a large room.

This space is adjacent to another new, very successful program, which is a not-for-profit association, named Opportunity Knocks (OK) which provides after school daycare to this group of students, from ages 14-30. Both programs utilize the public spaces for the community center, including a basketball court, a weight room and nearby tennis courts.

The feasibility study will help determine if the building at 640-44 Madison can be functionally converted to the needs of the programs. If the space allows for the program intended, the High School would most probably be the governmental entity which buys and converts the space and the other programs would rent space within the facility. Funding could be obtained through bond issues, TIF financing, grants from the government and other unknown issues at this time. At this time the High School D200 is noted to have reserves, while D97 is seeking a bond issue for operating costs in the next year. Opportunity Knocks has been quietly raising money through numerous fundraisers for operating funds and does not depend on any governmental dollars at this time, although that is subject to change in the near future.

In speaking with the High School district Special Education Director Tina Halliman, team members Peggy Markey and Nikki Paplyczk, we brainstormed many ideas and one that piqued the interest of the entire team was to use the space solely for the High School Special Needs students and the OK program, without any collaboration with D97 Director, Mike Padevic, he



Figure 13- Members of Opportunity Knocks at 2010 St. Patrick's day parade in Forest Park

explained he wanted a day school for the K-5 students, but felt that this should occur within the existing elementary buildings, so as to not segregate those students from their mainstreamed peers. He did like the idea of joining with the High School for space for the middle school

students who would be in need of transition services, a missing component currently in the districts collaborative efforts. This idea has been positively embraced by D200 as well.

The High School teams idea was to provide space for the CITE program, including a large gathering room, with smaller classroom and training rooms and therapy rooms. In addition, set up a mock apartment, to allow for independent living skills to be taught once again. This was a component of the original program years ago, but had lost the space needed due to other community center needs. This may prove to be a wish that can't be fulfilled, due to zoning issues. There will be a very nearby Low Income public housing building opening in the near future two blocks away in the old Comcast building, which may be able to partner with the High School on this need. Other needs included a full kitchen area for group training and physical fitness areas for the students. They felt they could easily fill up the entire space (over 34,000 square feet) with their needs. They did hold open the thought of sharing the space with older middle school students, but not the youngest students, who they felt would be best served by placement in their home schools, not a separate school. This concept may work, as the youngest children have different needs than do the middle school students. Once a formal space plan is created with the information from the survey's kept in mind, we will be able to determine how many needs can be addressed.

An idea considered was to provide a business opportunity, a real life location where disabled students could gain job skills, where the public could interact with the disabled adults in a positive manner and could contribute financially to the group. A restaurant, perhaps a coffee shop/bakery along with a small florist would work well in this space. There is precedent for this type of retail establishment- in the Chicago area, another disabled adult services program has an annual poinsettia sale, and an order of nuns runs a very successful bakery a few miles east. Charitable donations made in the form of receiving a service or product would benefit all involved- those buying, will feel good about helping the disabled, and those who are creating the service, the disabled- they will feel like productive citizens of society. There is also precedence to having a school run a restaurant- recently there was a story in the paper regarding Robert Morris College opening up a restaurant on Oak Park Avenue, in part to train their culinary

students⁸. Perhaps Triton College's successful culinary program and their floral training program could be assistive in putting together and managing the programs with the High School? This is an idea that comes late in the process of the research for this paper, but one that needs full exploration. Triton College, the local community college and Oak Park-River Forest High School have not partnered previously on a level this intense, but as this is a community issue, this would provide Triton an opportunity to truly assist the local residents with employable skills on a special education level, much like Sequin Services does in the Cicero/Berwyn area.

This community involved project may very well be a dream, but as I have spoken to a number of people in preparing for this assignment I have aroused a great deal of interest in a project like this. It is my hope that through this feasibility study we will determine whether or not the historic structure, known once as the Hill Motor Company, now known as the Foley- Rice Cadillac, can be successfully renovated for the adaptive re-use for a much needed community service for our disabled youth citizens.

In the interest of full disclosure, the author of this study has a son with autism, who is now in twelfth grade and will be moving from the TEAM (Transitional Education with Access to the Mainstream) program to the CITE program next year. He also participates in the OK after school program three days a week. In addition to participating in the OK program, the author has worked with OK to design their space, as part of a community service project done with her students of the Interiors 202 class, while teaching at Triton College, in nearby River Grove. Just like for Mike Carmody, founder of Opportunity Knocks this proposal has a personal mission for the author of this proposal.

⁸ Marty Semniak, "New Eatery on The Avenue- this one run by students- Robert Morris College plans to open student-led restaurant on Oak Park Avenue," *Wednesday Journal*, November 3, 2010, p1



III. MARKET RESEARCH

Current Status of Building

The Hill Motor Sales building, also known as the Foley-Rice building at 640-644 Madison sits empty, waiting for her Prince Charming to come along and rescue her. Many local associations and citizens have great ideas on how to re-purpose this grand building, but no one has the money to make it happen. The village wants to keep it a viable tax-collecting business, like it used to be in the good old days, when it was a car dealership. In 2004, the owners reported paying \$200,000 in sales taxes to the village coffers for the sales of Cadillac's and Oldsmobile's.⁹ The owners wanted to sell it to a nearby private high school, but that deal fell through in late 2008. Their current asking price is \$4.3 million for the north parcel, but there is also a south building for sale, a total of two buildings and the land for sale at \$7.8 million. The Historic Preservation Commission has been waiting in the wings with a Historic Nomination for the north building, a former Packard Dealership, designed by local prominent architect, E.E. Roberts in 1924-27. The Commission waits patiently to file the nomination, worrying about what the owners plan on doing with the building and the land. Meanwhile, a prime piece of real estate, located in the heart of Oak Park, almost 1.79 acres sits vacant and deteriorating and there is no one benefitting from this wonderful relic of Oak Park history, the best example of what remains left of the Oak Park Motor Row. This second part of this feasibility study will look at the market conditions for this building along with the street it is located upon and propose one solution which will be determined financially feasible (or not) in the next (third) part of this study.

⁹ Drew Carter, "Foley-Rice to close", Wednesday Journal newspaper, August 1, 2007. P17

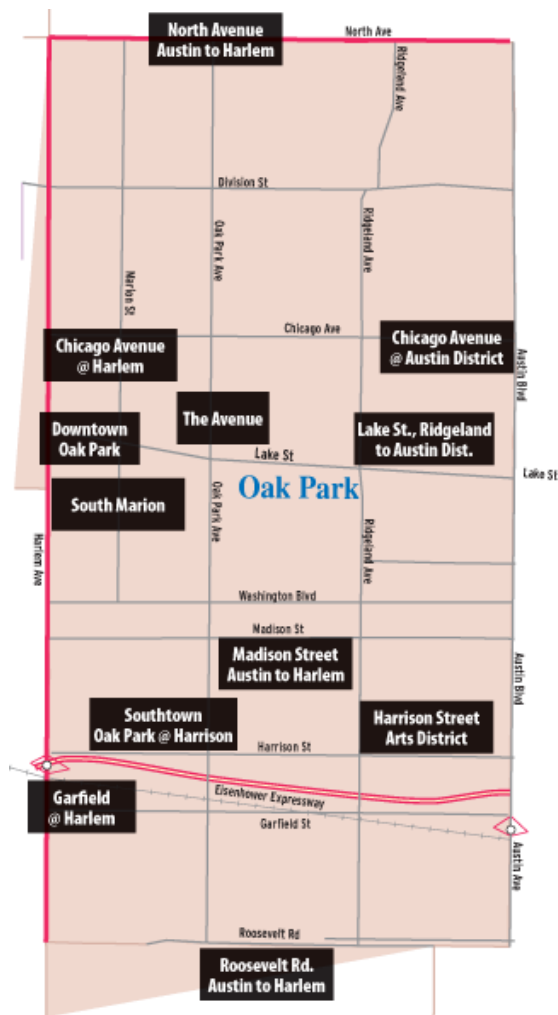


Figure 14- Map of Oak Park, IL with designated business districts

Background information

To fully understand the reasons that this building sits in controversy, one must understand the history of the business district within the village of Oak Park. One must also review the many previous studies which have crafted a way forward for the Madison Street Business corridor, but all have failed to move the plans forward into the future with a progressive attitude.

According to the Oak Park Development Corporation (OPDC) website, the community information page states:

“With its world-renowned architecture, excellent schools and growing residential market, Oak Park is more than just a great place to live. It’s also a great place to locate and expand a business. A compact community of more than 50,000 residents in less than 5 square miles, Oak Park is the perfect market for restaurants and retailers alike. Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway historic sites attract over 190,000 visitors each year.”

The page has the facts and figures of the town demographics from 2006: Median household income is \$69,263 with the per capita income at \$43,959. There are 17,544 private sector employees, with the number of businesses (noted as 2004 information) with up to 19 employees at 1,429 and those with 20 or more employees at 159 businesses. The average sales price of the

single family home in 2009 was \$484,748,(although currently it is much lower). There are an estimated \$547 million in retail sales in the village.¹⁰

In a recent brochure entitled “Succeed Here in Oak Park, jointly published by the Village of Oak Park and the OPDC, the Madison Street corridor is the area’s largest commercial district, with convenient access to medical, professional and auto services along with restaurants and convenience goods.

Businesses located along the mile and a half long Madison Street include the Rush-Oak Park Hospital, District 97 Elementary School headquarters, Village Players and Company Theater, Walgreens, Radio Shack, CVS, and the Village Hall and Police Station. There is dining, mostly fast foods places including Wendy’s, Dunkin Donuts, McDonalds, Popeye’s and KFC. There are also a few sit down restaurants, mostly casual, like Leona’s Pizza, Robinson’s for Ribs, Al’s Diner and New Rebozo Mexican. The street is also home to a number of service businesses, like Stelton Motors, Car X, a Chase Bank drive through facility and another Chase Bank branch, along with Jewel Food Market and Billy’s Fruit Stand. There is an abandoned gas station, which is for sale on the south side west of Oak Park Avenue across from the soon to be empty Walgreens. There are a number of parcels of land that the village has bought up for future redevelopment, including the old Union 76 gas station at the north east corner of Oak Park Avenue, one block west of the Hill Motors building. Across the street from the Hill Motors building, there is a new fitness club, Equation Fitness, which is renting the south building of the Foley-Rice dealership (part of the offer for the Hill building). OPDC lists five sites for redevelopment, including 644 Madison and 711 Madison (the Hill Motor/Foley-Rice buildings).

In the brochure, OPDC has recommended certain categories of business which are desired for this street. These include a Big Box retailer, like a home goods store, pets, apparel, discount or general merchandise, specialty, crafts and wholesale merchandise, or a coffee shop, or family entertainment, or learning/tutoring spaces.

¹⁰ Oak park Community information, Oak park Development website, <http://oakparkdevelopmentcorporation.com/oak-park-community-information/>; accessed September 30.2010

Walgreens has taken a novel approach to this street. Faced with an aging and too small store located on the street, they decided to buy the historic Collins Building on the southwest corner of Oak Park Avenue and Madison, two blocks east of their current location. Instead of tearing down the brick building, Walgreens salvaged the two sided brick façade and is building a new modern facility behind the façade. With this innovative approach, there seems to be a new interest in making Madison Street a “green street” according to Nicolette Vander Meer, Vice-President of the OPDC. Although the OPDC would like to attract a business “to add vibrancy to the corridor,” a new emphasis for this street is to encourage green oriented business, even creating a green business “incubator”. Walgreens is even doing a geothermal heating system in the new building, something the village has wholly encouraged.



Figure 15, 16, 17, 18- Walgreen’s drug store “Façade-etomy” - where the original Collins building façade was saved and the new “green” Walgreen’s was built behind the façade. Red brick along with brown Dryvit elements are part of the new building; the blond brick is from the historic building.

Oak Park Development Corporation- OPDC

Some of the most vital economic and business development services provided to all Oak Park businesses are from the Oak Park Development Corporation. The OPDC was formed in 1974 to act as a “catalyst between developers, property and business owners and Village staff and officials. OPDC develops and administers financial incentives to attract and support businesses; helps companies find commercial locations through its database of available properties; encourages new or expanded business development and tourism; works to increase Oak Park’s tax base and tax revenue”¹¹ As noted in their most recent newsletter, OPDC is one of Chicago’s most successful community development agencies. It is a privately-held, not-for-Profit Corporation that contracts directly with the Village of Oak Park to stimulate economic development and its success results from its “role as an economic development problem-solver, the ongoing participation of local financial institutions and the community’s commitment to a strong local economy.”¹² Partners include Charter One Bank, Community Bank Oak Park & River Forest, Corus Bank among many other banks.

One of the successes of the OPDC is the Façade grants programs. This Commercial Property ReHab and Preservation Program provide funds to owners and tenants to improve the facades of commercial property. Grants up to 50 percent are considered for eligible project expenses of \$5,000 or less and up to 25 percent for eligible expenses over \$5,000 with a cap of \$25,000 per project. As of July 1, 2010, OPDC has been working “closely with a Madison Street business and hopes to use grant funds for extensive changes to five storefronts in 2010. We have reminded the various business associations, including the Madison Street Business Association and the Madison Street Coalition, of the availability of funds.”¹³ There is still \$50,000 in TIF monies available for this program this year, according to the semi-annual report.

Another effort by the OPDC is trying to lure big box businesses to an urban area with little land to develop but a great desire to have more national retail chain stores. In a recently attended webinar that the OPDC hosted at a local university, Target described “how the company planned

¹¹ About Oak park Development Corporation, Oak park Development Corporation website, <http://oakparkdevelopmentcorporation.com/about-oak-park-development-corporation/> accessed September 30, 2010

¹² Semi-Annual Report, 2010. Oak Park Development Corporation, Vol 2 Issue 3, p4

¹³ Ibid, p 3

to expand their urban store model by opening ten stores annually over the next few years. The urban model, which might fit into the existing fabric of Oak Park, is a smaller format (60,000-100,000 square feet) development. This new model includes stores that have parking at grade with a raised single level store. Target is even willing to consider opening these new stores in an existing building that can be retrofitted to meet its needs.”¹⁴ Target has two locations within five miles of Oak Park so the probability of them relocating to Oak Park is not high.

Studies and More Studies

There are twelve separate business areas in Oak Park, with the Madison Street business corridor spanning from one boundary at Austin Avenue on the east, to Harlem Avenue on the west. This area has two business and resident groups looking out for the best interests of the area (Madison Street Business Association and the Madison Street Coalition). This business corridor has been the subject of numerous studies and reports, each one with extensive research and market conditions analysis. Other districts, notably the Downtown and the Avenue have benefitted from past studies and positive action.

In the autumn of 2005, the Village of Oak Park began a planning and development study of the corridor. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. was hired to do an extensive Architectural Historical Survey as part of that study. In June 2006 the public planning process to create a community driven plan for the Madison Street corridor was adopted by the Village Board. This plan was done by Vandewalle & Associates, of Wisconsin and looked extensively at the many factors which have plagued this street for many years. A two year action plan was identified, and highest priorities included the prioritizing of key sites for redevelopment and monitoring infrastructure and streetscape concerns.

In the summer of 2008, several conceptual urban design development scenarios were created for the intersection of Oak Park Avenue and Madison Street, one block west of the Hill Motors building. Massing studies were done to show how this main village intersection would benefit from planned development. The planning was commissioned by the Village of Oak Park and prepared by Gingko Planning & Design, Orland Park, IL and DLK Civic Design, Chicago, IL. Due to the current economic conditions which are impacting life across the country, these plans are all on hold.

¹⁴ Ibid, p1

Most recently, two stories were reported in the October 6, 2010 Wednesday Journal newspaper which may have some impact on these plans or for the available properties on Madison Street. In one article, entitled “Oak Park hopes electric cars become a craze” speaks of Oak Park wanting to encourage people to buy electric cars and a plan for a public solar powered car charging station, along with “working to recruit an electric car dealer here,” according to K. C. Poulos, the sustainability manager for the village. In another article there is a report that the Oak Park Township is looking for a new senior services location. The program is currently located at Oak Park Arms, the senior housing building just north of the corner on the east side of Madison and Oak Park Avenue. They need about 7- 8,000 square feet of space to house offices for senior services like lunches, tax aid, and shuttle buses. They have been looking at space nearby the Oak Park Arms, including space a few blocks north in a building under foreclosure. The township has \$1.2 million earmarked in the budget for a new location.¹⁵

The Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates report states the purpose of the initial project was to

“solicit community input on the current status and perceived needs of the neighborhood; to provide a land use plan to guide future development on Madison Street; to assess the economic marketability of the Madison Street corridor; to promote mixed uses and pedestrian oriented development; to assess parking needs and traffic; to identify economic limitations and funding strategies; to develop a character plan to guide future architectural and infrastructure design on the corridor; to identify zoning and regulatory changes needed to support desired development; and to identify buildings with historic character and significance that should be preserved during future development.”¹⁶

Their report gives a historical overview of the Madison Street business corridor, including noting nearby residential developments of both homebuilders of Seward Gunderson and Thomas Hulbert. Madison Street was developed in the 1920's mostly with one, two or three story

¹⁵ Marty Stempniak, “Oak Park Township looks for new senior services location “and “Oak Park hopes electric cars become a craze” , Wednesday Journal, October 6, 2010

¹⁶ Joshua Freedland, Hafid Cristobal, Kenneth Itle. Architectural Historical Survey, Madison Street, Oak Park, IL. Report by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. Northbrook IL, February 20, 2006

commercial buildings with apartments above the ground floor. Motor Row evolved as the street grew, with upwards of 16 new car dealerships noted in a 1957 Village Directory.¹⁷



Figure 19 – Google Earth map of 644 and 711 Madison buildings and nearby business

The Hill Motor Sales Packard dealership, at 644 Madison is the one building identified in this survey deemed for individual landmark status, versus the entire corridor, as there are many contemporary buildings mixed in with the older structures. This report notes although there are 15 properties identified with car dealerships, further research would have to be accomplished to designate this street as Motor Row, like the one thus designated in Chicago, on South Michigan Avenue. In the 2008 Massing study, the four corners of the intersection just west of the Hill Motors building were planned out using a number of different scenarios. This corner has over

¹⁷ Ibid, p5

33,000 cars passing through it on a daily basis and therefore considered a prime development location. Currently sitting on the southwest corner is the newly built, façade salvaged Walgreens, which is moving from 3 blocks west on Madison. On the southeast corner is a low office building, vacant, and a Kidney Dialysis Center, next to the Equation Fitness space rented from Foley-Rice. On the northwest corner sits a Chase bank branch with a drive-in area, along with a two story commercial building, which used to be Comcast offices. This building is now being considered for SRO housing in conjunction with a religious organization and the Village initiative of trying to provide affordable housing to residents of the Village. On the northeast side, adjacent to the Hill Motors land, is a Car X shop and their parking lot, along with 1.47 acres of empty land. This is the parcel that the Village is most interested in developing as they now own that land once occupied by a Union 76 gas station. This parcel sits just south of Oak Park Arms, a subsidized senior living facility. In the report, this site is considered for any number of uses, including three major retail stores, one with 7,000 square feet, with another ground floor store with 8,000 square feet with a corner two story retail storefront, with a total of

30,000 square feet inside.

Another consideration is to add residential above the storefronts, and add a green roof on the largest building. If the Car X building is removed an additional major retail store of 41,000 could be developed, with a parking garage tucked behind all of the buildings to accommodate the almost 360 required spaces. The estimated cost of this development was almost \$24.7 million per the

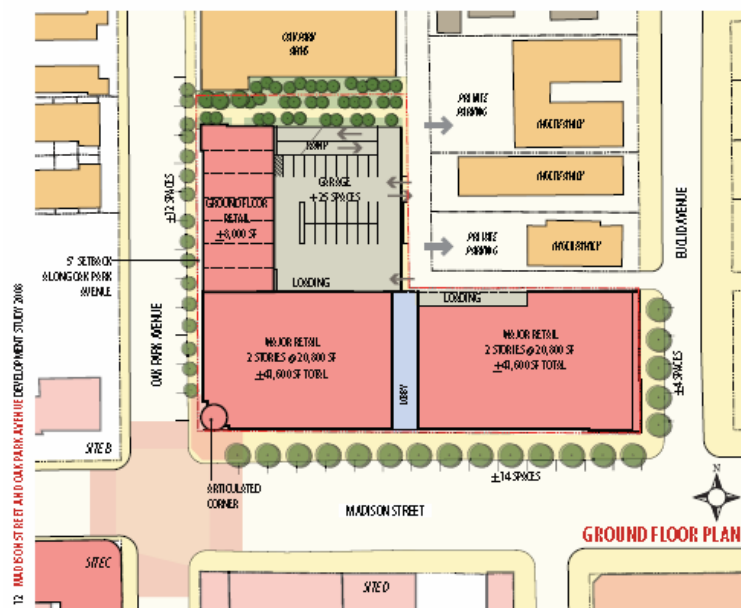


Figure 20- Map of area just west of building- proposed design

2006 report.¹⁸

¹⁸ Village of Oak Park Madison Street Corridor, Key Sites. June 5, 2006, p6

In addition to the 2006 and 2008 studies, most recently, the Historic Preservation Commission

Figure 21- Massing study of Northeast corner of Oak Park Avenue and Madison.
The Hill Motor building is just east of this proposed development

has approved a final “Village-Wide Strategic
Historic Preservation Plan”
Districts, Inc. (BDI) in the

HILL MOTOR
644 Madison

plan served as an update for the 1994 Long Range Historic Preservation Plan, which was never formally adopted. This document was financed in part with federal funds from the Department of the Interior. A review of the Historic Preservation Plan will be more fully detailed later in this report.

Market Assessment

In the 2006 report, a Market Assessment study was conducted for the three key sites as recommended for future development. These three sites were identified as the northeast parcel of Oak Park Avenue at Madison, the southeast and southwest corners of Highland Avenue at Madison, and the property located directly to the north of the Highland at Madison intersection, the site of the former Volvo dealer, all are fully owned by the Village. No plans were made for the 640-44 Madison block as at the time of this report this property was fully occupied by Foley-Rice Cadillac and Oldsmobile dealership. The analysis had site design alternatives, potential construction costs, traffic analysis and a general market assessment for retail and a hotel. The general market assessment was conducted by Goodman Williams Group.

The Village has approved and is moving forward with a development at the south side of Madison and Highland. As reported in the Wednesday Journal newspaper, a proposed four story building will be occupied by offices above, ground retail and 151 parking spaces. The Park District of Oak Park is in negotiations to move their Gymnastics center and their offices to this building. ¹⁹Currently the 7,000 square foot program occupies an older Motor Row building across the street on Madison. The north side of Madison at Highland is not currently under consideration for any development, and the lot at Oak Park and Madison is now used as a parking lot.

¹⁹ Marty Stemniak, “New Office Building on Madison worries neighbors”, Wednesday Journal, July 1, 2009.

Within the Market Assessment there were a number of potential prospective businesses which would allow Madison Street to thrive once more. Reviewed in the study was background information on the retail, office, residential and hotel markets. According to Christine Williams of Gordan Williams, “The Village has acquired key parcels on Madison Street that may accommodate formats of well-established store brands that can act as a catalyst for a new commercial development, attract retailers to existing buildings, and encourage current business to reinvest in Madison Street.”²⁰ They recommended a focus on the Furniture and Home Furnishings category, stating that Madison Street “already has a number of businesses that provides goods and services related to home décor and home improvement. These include a hardware store, landscaper, fireplace shop, picture framing gallery, and various contractors.”²¹

Suggested was a Walter E Smithe furniture store, as they had expressed an interest in the Oak Park market or an Ethan Allen. Other suggestions note the chain name and the potential size of their stores. The total square footage for all ten stores adds up to just 54,300 square feet, so no one store is really considered a “big” retailer, but all are complementary to one another and to the existing businesses on the street.²²

The assessment also showed support for an electronics store, which would be a very attractive draw to the street from the surrounding neighborhoods. There is a Radio Shack on this street, in a small storefront, but the recommendation was to have a Best Buy or Circuit City (this report was before Circuit City went bankrupt) as a major anchor on the street. Other retailers considered but determined not feasible included Crate& Barrel, Pottery Barn or a Williams-Sonoma, as these retailers prefer to co-tenant with other numerous retailers who specialize in lifestyle merchandise. Cost Plus needs about 18,000 square feet, but requires traffic count at over 50,000 cars per day²³, and Madison Street is noted at about 33,000 at Oak Park Avenue on a really busy day.²⁴

²⁰ Memo to Scott Harrington and Kate Crowley, Vandewalle & Associates, from Christine Williams, Goodman Williams Group, Appendix A: Retail Market Assessment, Key sites report, Village of Oak Park Madison Street Corridor, June 5, 6006,p17

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid,p18

²³ ibid

²⁴ OPDC- “Succeed Here in Oak Park” brochure, Market Profile

Restaurants

It is noted that Madison Street can support additional restaurants and specialty food stores, but chain restaurants are “not consistent with the desired character of Madison Street. Independent and local chain restaurants are, however, recommended uses for new construction and adaptive-use projects”²⁵ These restaurants would require anywhere from 4,000-6,000 square feet, with a need for parking and access to the businesses. Specialty grocers like Fox & Obel would require 6,000-10,000 square feet and more parking than an independent restaurant.

Hotels and Meeting Spaces

Included in the review was a look at the village’s need for hotel rooms and conference meeting spaces. The need for rooms is not as great as they were prior to 9/11 and since the recession of 2007, but there are an estimated 200,000 tourists that visit the Oak Park area attractions.²⁶ There are two hotels in the Oak Park area, The Carleton Hotel with 154 rooms and the Write Inn with 65 rooms. The Carleton gets about 72% of the sales; the Write Inn gets about 23% according to sales tax reports. There are four Bed & Breakfasts which account for 5% of the sales.

Most hotels include conference meeting facilities. Oak Park has antiquated meeting spaces, none of which can accommodate more typical needs of today’s meeting planners. The Carleton has space for about 200 at 5,225 square feet. There are private venues including The Arts Center which has a 700 seat auditorium and smaller meeting rooms and the 19th Century Club has a dining room for 100 and can fit 400 as an auditorium. There are two historic mansions which are owned by the Park District/Village, Pleasant Home and Cheney Mansion, both of which can be rented whole house for receptions and events. The historic Oak Park Conservatory has a meeting room which can hold about 50 for meetings. The Lake Theatre can be rented for meetings prior to regular movie showings and the largest auditorium has 600 seats. There is a centrally located office building, designed by E.E. Roberts on Lake Street at Oak Park Avenue called Scoville Square which has a conference room for rent.²⁷

²⁵ Appendix A: Retail Market Assessment, p 18

²⁶ “Succeed Here in Oak Park”

²⁷ Appendix A: p 30

Nearby spaces which are referred to by the Convention and Visitors Bureau include Brookfield Zoo, Maywood Park Race Track, Concordia and Dominican Universities in nearby River Forest, and hotel facilities in Oak Brook and downtown Chicago. Demand for meeting space along with hotel rooms comes from tourists who visit the Hemingway Museum and the Frank Lloyd Wright Studio and Unity Temple, along with over flow from downtown Chicago and the O'Hare airport areas.²⁸

Oak Park has recently approved a new development of a hotel and retail at the corner of Lake Street and Forest, in the heart of the downtown area. The land has been cleared of the old retail that was there and the Village now waits for the developer to raise the required capital funds. In a letter from OPDC President Sara Faust, she stated "The prospect of 70 additional new residential units, new retail, new restaurant and another hotel will add to the vitality of our entire community." She further states, "We believe that this, like other significant investments, will serve as a catalyst for further development and an expanded tax base in Oak Park. In these uncertain and difficult economic times, it is laudable that an enterprise like Sertus Capital Partners would commit to invest in and build an estimated \$85 million development."²⁹ Given the support this new project has from the Village and OPDC, even without financing, it seems unlikely another hotel would be needed or built on Madison Street at this point in time.

What other kinds of businesses has the Village wanted to attract to the Madison Corridor? Would the Village want to make this mostly commercial corridor become more residential? How about the office market? What are the businesses the residents want, the ones that exist elsewhere but residents have to leave town to access, but would not if they existed locally?

Residential

Oak Park is a mature built-up community with an older housing stock, with only 180 new housing units built from 1996 until 2006. The median sales prices of the single family and condominium homes rose dramatically from the 1990's up to about 2005, where it was reported



²⁸ Ibid, p31

²⁹ Sara Faust, "Oak Park Development Corporation endorses Lake & Forest Re-development", July 27, 2009. OPDC website, <http://www.oakparkdevelopmentcorporation.com/?s=hotel+Lake+Street>

that the median price of a single family home was \$428,000 and condominiums was \$200,500.

³⁰Current pricing has dropped back down dramatically, with the homes are losing value, as are condominiums. According to the local realtors, there is at least a six month supply of homes on the market and a 15 month supply of condominiums.

Per the analysis of the residential market, townhomes are well accepted in the Oak Park area and

were the more affordable alternative to single family homes up to about 2008. Local

developer and architect John Scheiss built both Clarence Square, an 18 unit townhome development on Roosevelt Road, and also built Madison Square townhomes, on the west end of Madison Street, between Home and Wisconsin Avenues. These four story homes have 3,100 square feet and were priced to sell between \$480,000 and \$545,000 originally in 2002.

According to Zillow.com, three townhomes in this development sold for between \$320,000 up to \$372,000 in the 10 months of 2010. The taxes on these townhomes are about \$12,500.00, which translates to over \$1,000 per month. ³¹

The rental market in Oak Park is also considered soft at this time. Oak Park has a number of vintage apartments on Washington Boulevard, one block north of Madison, providing businesses with a steady customer base. The only new apartments that have been built in the last ten years are both on Lake Street in the downtown area. Euclid Commons developed by the Taxman Corporation at Lake and Euclid has three stories of rental units, which rented in 2006 for \$1.80 per square foot. Luxury apartments were built as part of the Whiteco Development at the corner of Lake and Harlem named Oak Park Place has the anchor tenant of Trader Joes on the ground level. These units rent for upwards of \$4000 per month, per the Zillow.com listing. ³²

Offices

Is there a market for office space on Madison? There are a number of retail establishments with either apartments or offices above the store. Per the 2006 market assessment, Oak Park is part of

³⁰ Appendix A: p 20

³¹ Oak Park homes for sale and rent, Zillow.com. http://www.zillow.com/homes/for_sale/Oak-Park-IL/#/homes/recently_sold/Oak-Park-IL/apartment_condo,duplex_type/6268_rid/12m_days/2000-_size/41.92544,-87.644928,41.848763,-87.935035_rect/11_zm/. Accessed October 8, 2010.

³² Oak Park homes for sale and rent, Zillow.com. http://www.zillow.com/homedetails/479-N-Harlem-Ave-5-Oak-Park-IL-60301/2130337788_zpid/. Accessed October 8, 2010.

the West Cook submarket, as defined by CB Richard Ellis (CBRE). Per their review, all of the office space in this market is either class B or C, with a typical lease rate of about \$23.75 per square foot (versus downtown Chicago which rents for \$29.15 – 2005 rates). Oak Park has a total of 685,000 square feet of space in major multi-tenant buildings, most built in the 1920's, with the newest completed in 1987.³³ There is one office building on Madison, built in 1987 with 16,000 square feet. The rent in 2005 was \$14-16 net and it was 90% occupied in that year. This building houses a local community bank which was recently taken over late last year and is now a branch for US Bank. As reported this week in Crain's Chicago Business, the suburban occupancy rate for office space is going down, now at only 25.4%, but this is still considered much higher than it should be, or what it was even last year at 24.5%.³⁴

There is a new development planned at Madison and Highland as discussed previously. This will bring new office space to an area which has not historically had a lot of office space. According to the press release from Madison Highlands LLC, "Located at 303 West Madison, at the corner of Madison and Highland, the four story development will bring Class "A" office space and high profile retail to the heart of Oak Park. Madison Highlands will be a catalyst for redevelopment on Madison Street in Oak Park and will help promote a walkable, bikeable community. With two buildings spanning Highland Avenue, Madison Highlands is close to public transportation and the expressway. The development is expected to break ground in the spring of 2010...The 74,000 square foot development... is expected to be LEED Silver



Figure 22- Nevin Hedlund Architects, Inc. rendering of Madison Highlands development

³³ Appendix A: V. Office Market, p 16

³⁴ Eddie Baeb, "Suburban office vacancy rates improves for first time since 2007". Crain's Chicago Business, October 4, 2010. <http://edit.chicagorealestatedaily.com/article/20101004/CREDO2/101009970/suburban-office-vacancy-improves-for-first-time-since-2007> . Accessed October 9, 2010

certified, allowing tenants to experience a healthier and more energy-efficient environment.”³⁵
This development has not broken ground due to the current economic conditions.

Retail

What other retail opportunities would Oak Parkers like to see here in town? Oak Park has twelve business districts, but no large concentration of shops like a mall would provide. Nearby malls include North Riverside Mall, Brickyard Mall and ten miles west Oak Brook Mall, which has a

Nordstrom’s, Sears, Macy’s and Lord & Taylor. Nearby towns Forest Park has “turned its Madison Street corridor a main street for the community. Like Madison Street in Oak Park, the Forest Park segment was tenanted mostly by service businesses at one time. Unlike Oak Park, it has always had bars, and those became one of the catalysts to bring in new restaurants that helped create a vibrant street.”³⁶ Oak Park was founded as a dry town, and to this day has blue liquor laws and restrictions on the sale of liquor only at the eating portion of a restaurant.

Claritas Data provides information to national retailers to determine sites for new stores. As noted in the Goodman Williams report, “Claritas compares expenditure potential of households of a selected geographic area with the actual sales that occurred in that same area. If the expenditure potential is greater than sales, a theoretical opportunity exists to captures those

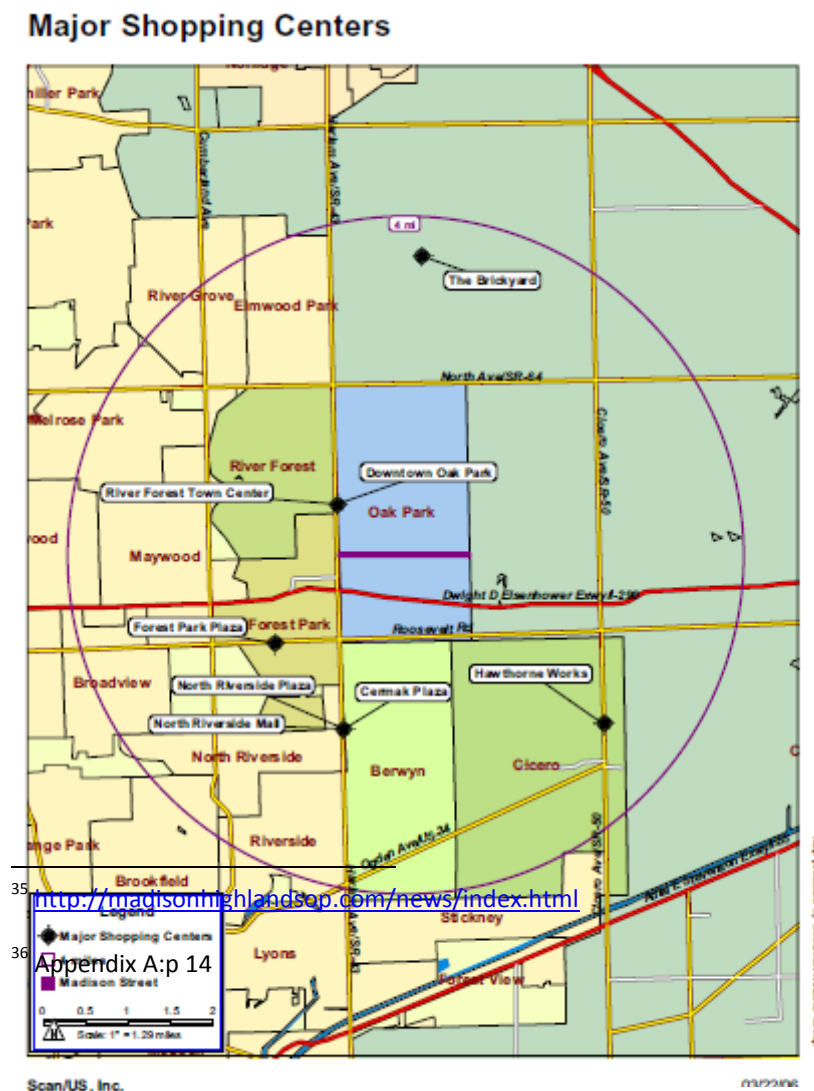


Figure 23- Nearby Shopping Centers

sales. The situation is sometimes referred to as leakage, as dollars are leaking out of the local area. Conversely, if the retail sales are greater than the expenditure potential of households in the area, the situation may be referred to as inflow, as dollars are flowing into the area. In this case, the shopping needs of the area residents are theoretically being met, and households living outside the area are coming to shop.”³⁷

In the summary in the report, it is noted that there are 155 businesses on the street. There are 22 retail stores and 19 Automobile related businesses but a few of them have since gone out of business, notably Foley-Rice, the owners of 644 Madison. There are 17 health related services, 14 salons/barber shops, 13 financial, insurance or real estate service businesses, and 12 restaurants. Of note there are also 6 Social Service agencies, including Easter Seals Willet Center.

What Goodman Williams recommends to add to this mix (in 2006) includes:

- **Furniture and home furnishings-** there is an unmet potential in all areas of Oak Park (a major furniture retailer Plunkett in nearby River Forest closed their doors in 2009, the building is being razed for an immediate care facility for a nearby hospital)
- **Electronics and Appliances-** there is excessive demand, except for camera and photographic as a surplus (since then there was an exit of a major retailer, Wolf Camera in this category)
- **Building Materials and Garden Equipment-** has potential growth potential, but nearby Lowes and Home Depot may impact this. Madison Street has had a seasonal garden supply store, which will be closed once the new Madison Highlands office building is built, and a small local hardware store.
- **Grocery and Beverage-** Oak Park has an over- supply of these, but not on Madison Street
- **Clothing and Accessories-** there are plenty of boutiques, but not family oriented stores. Madison Street has only one or two boutiques which serve this need
- **Sporting Goods, Hobby, books and music-** Sporting goods has the strongest potential, as does Hobby, but books and music are well represented.

³⁷ Gordan Williams report, III. Retail Potential, p 6

- **General Merchandise-** almost completely absent from Oak Park, this category represents 29% of total expenditure potential. These include department stores and warehouse stores. A Dollar store is now moved into the vacant old Walgreens building. A new Costco is now being built in nearby Melrose Park on the site of the famous children's amusement park, Kidd eland. Demand is strong, but land-locked Oak Park has no large sites which would accommodate the needs of a retailer of this size.
- **Food service and Drinking establishments-** Oak Park has an over- supply of full service restaurants, but not in the Madison Street area.

In the 2008 "Succeed Here in Oak Park" marketing brochure this information translates to hard numbers, based upon Claritas 2008 data, as well as U. S. Census County Business Patterns. This profile is used for the entire village, not just the Madison Street Corridor.³⁸

Retail Potential (in millions)

Estimated expenditures	\$1,018	
Estimated Retail Sales	\$698	
Expenditure leakage	\$320	
Expenditure leakage	31%	
Concentrated buying power (per square mile)	\$226	
<u>Expenditure leakage (retail categories)</u>	<u>in millions</u>	<u>sq.ft. potential</u>
General merchandise	\$112.6	690,797
Home Improvements	\$67.8	215,238
Home Furnishings	\$16.2	88,043
Electronics and appliances	\$10.2	37,778
Restaurants	\$8.2	27,063
Food and Beverage	\$18.9	55,752

³⁸ OPDC, Succeed Here in Oak Park, Market Profile

Demographics of Oak Park

Oak Park has changed over the years from 1990 to 2000. Current census information has not been tabulated but in a review of the trends of up to 2000, Oak Park's population was 68.8% white and 22.4% black. The areas in the Madison Street and Austin Avenue corridor (on the east side of the Village) have a higher concentration of African-Americans than other parts of Oak Park. The Hispanic population (4.5%) has increased most notably in the Madison Street area and along with Roosevelt Road, which borders Berwyn, which also seen a large increase in the Hispanic population(38%).³⁹ According to a more current report as reported in the "Succeed Here" brochure, Oak Park's overall population is now 49,666, with 12,094 of these being under 18 years old and 4,968 of those being over 65 years old. There are 22,142 house-holds, averaged size is 2.23 people per household. There are 12,373 owned housing units and these are valued at \$349,587 (median value). There are 9,769 rental housing units.⁴⁰

Household incomes for Oak Parkers have decreased in the recession, but per the 2000 census, the median household income was \$59,183. This compares with incomes of River Forest residents median at \$89,284 and Forest Park at \$44,103, Berwyn at \$43,833 and the suburban Cook County area at \$56,775. Home ownership has increased to 56% in the 2000 census. By 2008, the median household income was \$69,166, with the median family income of \$98,238 and the per capita income at \$43,889.

Considering our intended use for 644 Madison, there are no recently published figures on how many adults there are with disabilities that live in the area of Oak Park. Oak Park has one disabled adult apartment complex, called The Oaks and there are a few group homes scattered in the area. Per the 2000 Census, there were 379 adults in group quarters, 225 institutionalized, and 154 non-institutionalized.⁴¹ Illinois ranks 48th in funding for Medicaid DD for adults with disabilities.⁴² Oak-Leyden Developmental Services, a local service agency, maintains a

³⁹ Goodman-Williams, Demographic Overview, P 3

⁴⁰ OPDC, Succeed – Market Profile

⁴¹ "Oak Park Population and Demographics" Area Connect website.
<http://oakparkil.areaconnect.com/statistics.htm>.. Accessed October 9, 2010

⁴² Michelle Diamant, Arizona Tops Ranking of Medicaid Services. Disability Scoop website.
<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2010/04/13/ucp-medicaid-ranking-2010/7649/>. Accessed October 9, 2010

community home with 16 residents. They also provide a sheltered workshop program for adults with developmental disabilities.⁴³

Approved Village Vision for Madison Street-2006

The Goodman Williams Report, as extensive and detailed as it was, is now over four years old. The economy of Oak Park and the nation has changed dramatically since they envisioned design alternatives for making Madison Street a vibrant street once again. As they noted in their introduction, they intended to establish a “direction, not a destination.”⁴⁴ As they point out “With a corridor of this length and complexity, change will be incremental and take place over a very long period of time... Given the eclectic nature of the corridor... inconsistencies will be impossible to avoid.”⁴⁵ The vision stated that in the area where the Hill Motor building sits, between Oak Park Avenue and East Avenue, they recommend an REI with a café on the first floor, with 3 upper floors for international short term apartments or graduate/intern student housing. Also encouraged is a youth athletic facility with climbing walls, and even perhaps a Trage Brother annex (Trage was an independent appliance store located on Madison in Forest Park, which since has gone out of business in 2008). The report recommends no more townhome development on Madison, but encouraged low rise condos above a commercial or retail development. At the northeast corner of Oak Park Avenue, it is recommended that either a commercial enterprise with parking be built or a fitness/children’s recreation center with outdoor paths, along with a parking structure and a fountain at the corner (like a “gateway”) be built.⁴⁶

The preferred vision also took into consideration issues of historic preservation, transportation and overall community design, and addressed issues raised by those committees Commissioners. In a memo response to the Village of Oak Park and the Madison Street Corridor Plan Steering Committee, on May 23, 2006, Vandewalle and Associates noted that the Oak Park Historical Commission was concerned with the issues of both Significant National Register (SNR) properties and also the use of only economic justification to decide whether a building is to be

⁴³ Community Resources. Net website. Oak-Leyden Developmental Services.
<http://www.communityresources.net/oak-leyden-developmental.html>. Accessed October 9, 2010

⁴⁴ Goodman-Williams, Intro p 2

⁴⁵ ibid

⁴⁶ Goodman-Williams, Preferred Vision, p 38

preserved.⁴⁷ The HP commission also noted concerns about traditional setbacks in the commercial area and if the stated goals in the proposed vision would impact demolition pressure on existing buildings. They also recommended the use of TIF funds for rehabilitation and restoration as well as new development.⁴⁸ It is important to note here that the Hill Motor 644 Madison Building is the only building considered for SNR at this time, on this street, as was identified in the 2005 Architectural Survey done by Wiss, Janney, et al.

Recent news reports stated that the TIF monies needed to be spent or risk losing them. An RFP went out to twelve design firms and the winning firm will have only four months to dream up a way to spruce up (again) the street which can't seem to attract new and exciting businesses. According to Craig Failor, the TIF fund has about \$4 to \$6 million dollars in it.⁴⁹ Once responses are received, the Village will need to determine if elected officials want to redo the street or use the money for other incentives to spur economic development along the Madison Street corridor. One goal for the street is to have a segregated bike lane. There is already \$150,000 set aside for engineering work on a possible redo of Madison Street planned for next year.

Historic Preservation Report

The Village has recently issued at "Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan" in June of 2010. This study was done by Business Districts Inc. (BDI) with the assistance of a fifteen member Steering Committee. Of particular note, it states, "The local preservation community wants to make important contributions to Oak Park's future, including its economic future. Adaptive re-use of Oak Park's buildings will continue to be an important part of ongoing economic development throughout the Village. They want to sustain those things that ensure the Village's unique environment and to work in a coordinated way to contribute their expertise."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Kate Crowley and Scott Harrington, Vandewalle & Associates. "Comments on Madison Street Corridor Plan", Memo to the Village of Oak Park Board of Trustees and Madison Street Corridor Plan Steering Committee. May 23, 2006

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ Marty Stempniak, "With TIF clock ticking, Madison may get spruce up" *Wednesday Journal*, November 3, 2010 p 16

⁵⁰ Business Districts Inc. Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan, Final Plan June 2010. P5

Also noted in this report, “some local resources will prove more important, or significant than others. Certain resources are important because of how they reflect their context within the community and its story.... Ultimately, final decisions will require a balanced approach...

historic preservation represents a key component of their long-term economic development strategy, encouraging ongoing private investment and continually improving the community’s quality of life.”⁵¹



Figure 24- Unity Temple- FLWright’s masterpiece building and early example of Prairie style

This report states that the community has had an active preservation effort for over 40 years and is most known for its association with the Prairie School of Architecture, notably Frank Lloyd Wright’s many homes and Unity Temple on Lake Street. The architectural legacy generates many economic benefits in the way of tourism and image along with market position. The Village has four historic districts which include almost 2,900 properties identified as significant or contributing to those districts. Of note, the report recommends “Begin discussions with Oak Park’s major institutional property owners, specifically Rush Oak Park Hospital, West Suburban Hospital, and Districts 97 and 200, to understand their future plans for their facilities and to address any future planning and preservation issues.”⁵²

In the section titled “Economic Development and Available Initiatives” the report recommends “access to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds for historic preservation projects and available incentives from the Oak Park Development Corporation (OPDC) will likely to remain at current levels. Permit fee waivers are no longer available, and reinstatement should be considered when fiscally possible.... One future opportunity in Illinois may be the proposed state Rehabilitation Tax Credit, making Illinois one of nearly 40 states offering such an incentive. In considering the broader Plan economic strategies specific to Oak Park, the availability of additional incentives

⁵¹ Ibid, p8-9

⁵² Ibid, p19

for historic resources and to support historic preservation programming should be considered as mid to long term options.”⁵³

Another vital issue raised by the Historic report was how to integrate today’s zoning and building code issues in a historically significant building. Madison Street is zoned for Commercial use, for the most part. The Village produced an overly district for zoning in 2009, which allows the Village historic preservation program to provide expertise in dealing with the many aspects of development and preservation within those districts. This allows historic preservation to one of the many factors involved in a decision for zoning changes. In addition, the Village’s Buildings and Property Standards department adopted the International Existing Buildings Code (IEBC) which addresses issues specific to historical properties, notably encouraging and supporting the re-use of existing buildings. Provisions within the code address alterations, repairs, additions, and changes in occupancy construction requirements for existing and historic buildings.⁵⁴ Quoting the report, “applying the IEBC, in tandem with IBC, supports good building stewardship, appropriate local enforcement, and ultimately, economic development.”⁵⁵

Of concern to the Village, and this report, are the taxes that are placed upon all properties. “Certain issues, such as commercial property tax rates, have a dramatic impact upon how local property owners and developers view real estate investments in Oak Park.”⁵⁶ In order to encourage property owners to save their historic buildings the preservation community needs to have an outreach and education program in place and to become more engaged in the Villages’ business community.

In summary of the report, Oak Park has a strong Historic Preservation community, but needs outreach to the business community and other Village entities to encourage the preservation movement and to show how preservation (or adaptive re-use) can work in tandem with development. In part three of this report, we will explore more fully some of the ideas put forth, including using TIF funds, encouraging private/public partnerships, along with code and zoning

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Ibid p25

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid,p31

issues and how these issues may impact the feasibility of using the Hill Motor Company 644 Madison building for a new use.

[Available and Comparable Properties in Oak Park and nearby](#)

This feasibility study is based upon the desire to save a historic old building and the goal to use this building for public good, in the form of a small school and/or community center which caters to the needs of the disabled teen and adult population in the immediate Oak Park area. The building in question, previously built for an automobile dealership may or may not be the best place to locate a special needs facility, due to a number of irreversible factors. Would the school be better located in an office building? Are there comparable spaces available for this type of use elsewhere in the Oak Park-River Forest area? There are a number of questions like this that still need to be answered.

Upon review of the available listings for sale, there are only a few spaces of this size and type out there for sale, and none in the Oak Park area. We will review a number of them to compare to the 644 Madison Street building. Below are also chart showing the current trends for rent and sales of industrial, office and retail spaces in Oak Park.

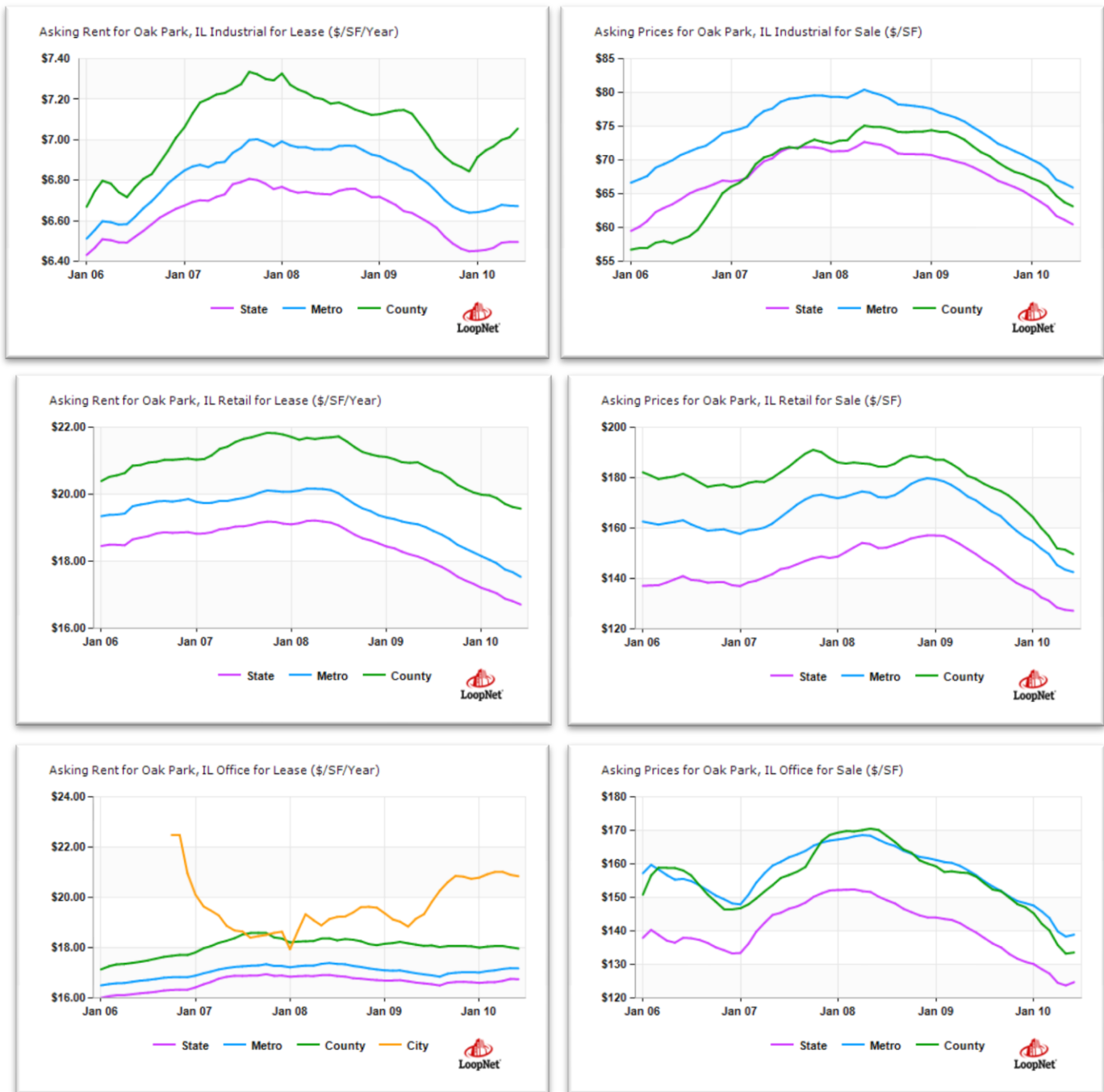


Figure 25- Graphs from LoopNet.com showing asking rent trends for industrial, retail and office leases in the Oak Park area

Asking Price / Asking Rent: "Asking" refers to the dollar amount listed on the LoopNet marketplace. Charts are based on an index of data from the LoopNet marketplace by a given property type in a given geography. Asking Rent Trends are obtained by weighting each rental rate by the space available and dividing it by the sum of the total space available.

County / Metro: County and Metro refer to the parent county and metro of the city. "Metro" is a term LoopNet utilizes and refers to the U.S. Census Bureau definitions of metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, collectively referred to as CBSAs ([learn more](#)). For example a chart representing the city of Oak Park may contain data representing the county of Cook and the Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI metropolitan statistical area.

Y-O-Y: A comparison to the same period in the previous year.

vs. 3 mo prior: A comparison to the average of the 3 months before the current month.

Car Dealerships

In Oak Park, there are no other available properties that were once used for a car dealership other than the building in question. There was a Volvo dealership building on Madison which is under consideration for re-development, but as two repair related buildings, with the façade being maintained. Estimated costs put the concepts at between \$720,000 and \$810,000, to renovate a little over 10,000 square feet. Also considered was moving the Car X business and Aamco Transmission business there to clear the land they currently reside upon for future developments.⁵⁷ The Car X building is just west of 644 Madison.

Retail, Office and Industrial Buildings or Lots for Sale

On Madison Street farther a few blocks farther west a small retail building is for sale, at 844 Madison. This building currently houses the ALLTYPES Fireplace and Chimney Co. The building is only 6,875 square feet and is priced at \$81.31 per square foot, for a sales price of



Figure 26 - 844 Madison for sale

\$599,000. It is noted in the listing that the building could be subdivided for multiple tenants, and they suggest an office showroom, a day care facility or an office warehouse.⁵⁸ On the LoopNet.com real estate site a number of other retail locations were noted as available in Oak Park, but all were smaller sized, the largest being at 8,723 square feet, which includes an owner's apartment in the building, along with retail and storage spaces.

⁵⁷ Goodman- Williams, Key Sites report, p15, 38

⁵⁸ Oak Park Retail for Sale. LoopNet.com website. <http://www.loopnet.com/Listing/16316244/844-Madison-St-Oak-Park-IL/>. Accessed October 5, 2010.

Also on Madison Street is an empty lot, where once stood a gas station. The asking price for this land is \$480,000 for the lot sized at 8,500 square feet, making the asking price \$1200 per square foot. It is bank owned and any new owner would need to remediate the site of the underground storage tanks.⁵⁹



Figure 27- Madison Street lot for sale, gas station

In addition, there is a mixed use building at 310 W. Madison Street, which is for sale for \$799,000 for a total of 6,414 square feet of space. This building has 2 commercial spaces and 4 one bedroom apartments. In comparison the 644 Madison, along with the 711 Madison building sits on a split 78,123 square feet of land and has a little over 56,000 square feet between the two buildings, being offered at \$37.50 per square foot for a total of \$7.7 million dollars.

Noted on a linked site from the OPDC, Location One has listed for rent the entire fourth floor of the historic (formerly the Marshall Field's Dept Store) 1144 Lake Street building. The rent is noted at \$19.50 gross per square foot per year and 12,893 feet are available.



Figure 28- Marshall Field's building – 1144 Lake Street in Downtown Oak Park

However, the 1140 building, adjacent to this building has just gone into foreclosure with a mortgage of \$4. 8million. This building used to house the Oak Leaves newspaper, which was bought by Pioneer Press a number of years ago and have moved their offices to smaller quarters down the street at 1010 Lake Street. Fifty percent of the buildings 65,000 square feet is now empty, with two long term leased retail stores at street level occupied.⁶⁰In an un-updated listing on the Location One site, there was listed 10,234 square feet listed for rent in this building at \$10.00 per square foot.

⁵⁹ Oak Park Land/Gas Station for Sale. LoopNet.com website. <http://www.loopnet.com/Listing/16606656/901-Madison-Oak-Park-IL/>. Accessed October 5,2010

Special Needs School and Community Center Needs

In conclusion, regarding space available for use as a small school and community center, needing at least 20,000 square feet, there is none available locally to be used, with the exception of the spaces vacated by the Oak Leaves newspaper in the 1140 Lake Street office building. Zoning overlay mandates in the downtown area rejected a proposed technical school in this area a few years ago, with concerns about parking and the mixed-use nature of the district. Nowhere in the assorted studies of the space requirements and re-development thoughts expressed for Madison Street is there any mention of the need for a small special needs school or the like. Zoning most likely would need a variance and the question remains does the community need a place for the special needs center of the sort proposed.

Within the Preferred Vision report by Goodman-Williams the street is in need of many desired uses, including retail like Trader Joes, a used book shop, cooking utensils and culinary type shop and a coffee shop, along with the desired home furnishings category previously noted. At the redevelopment stretch of land between Home Avenue east to Oak Park Avenue, it is suggested a high end grocer, professional offices and a Performing arts center. Also suggested is moving the Elementary School District 97 headquarters which sits on the northeast corner of Home and Madison Street over to vacant space at Village Hall, located on the opposite end of Madison. The reason for the move is mainly that the existing building does not fit with the desired character of the newly designed district. Of particular comparison to the desired use for a special needs facility, the report suggests that a Fitness/Children's Recreation Center with outdoor paths be build at the northeast corner of Oak Park Avenue and Madison St. Nearby is suggested a Lake Theatre Annex which would show art films.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Marty Stempniak, "Oak Leaves building in downtown OP faces foreclosure", Wednesday Journal Newspaper, September 29, 2010.

⁶¹ Goodman Williams-Appendix A: p35-39

In the development guidelines, it is stated that the Madison Street corridor “preserve and respect historic structures and their desired scale, character, style, articulation and detailing while adapting them to new uses.”⁶² The goal to preserve the features of the original building which makes it distinguishable is suggested, with little or no removal or alteration of the historic materials or distinctive features. The 644 Madison has many of these features which would be appropriate to save, outside and inside the building. Of particular concern is what to use the existing concrete ramp to the second floor for and how can it can be incorporated into a new use. Additionally, there is a large area of the building which was used as a car service area and there is a storage tank below which needs to be removed and the soil possibly remediated.

In the next section of this feasibility report, we will explore more fully the programming of the space needs for a Special Needs School and Community Center and how the community may react to such a use for this historic property. In that review will be the mortgage history of the building, along with the TIF and renovation history of the

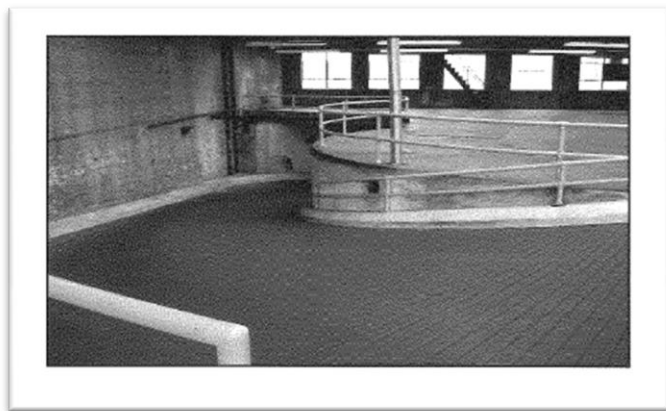


Figure 29-Reinforced concrete ramp to second floor storage area

644 Madison Street building. Both the CITE program and the OK program will be planned for this site. A community center will be part of the plan, with a basketball court, work-out room and a performance space as envisioned by the Goodman-Williams report. A full service casual coffee house along with a business enterprise for training special needs adults vocational skills will all be part of the concept, with the goal of providing the community with much needed services. With all these needs, this space will be fully planned for the entire community's needs.

⁶² Goodman Williams- Development Guidelines, p23



IV. Financial Analysis

Initial Assumptions

In the previous review of the 644 Madison building, we have determined the building is in decent shape, but as it sits empty, is rapidly falling into disrepair, most especially with water damage. We have also found that the Madison Street corridor has been long studied but has not progressed in the manner which all the studies have suggested. It is not for lack of desire, but simply a lack of dollars. The Village of Oak Park has purchased a number of parcels along Madison, in order to help shape the vision of how this street should look in the near future. Our proposal for the redevelopment of the 644 Madison building and adjacent lot will require a whole lot of community good will, much creative thinking, along with many dollars and most probably intervention from the Village and the Village school districts. Stranger things have happened in this town, so this is not impossible and may very well be determined feasible. Almost anything is feasible given enough dollars and desire.

Village Madison Street TIF

The whole story has not been told about this property in the first two parts of this study, so in order to fully understand the proposal, some additional information is needed regarding the Village and the building's history.

In 1995, the Village passed a Tax Increment Financing plan for the Madison Street corridor. In layman's terms, this means, "property taxes paid to local governments are frozen for up to 23 years, and any additional tax collections are used to build infrastructure that promotes economic development. Those additional funds can be declared surplus and given to the local governments."⁶³ The TIF recognized that the "proposed RPA (the redevelopment area) on the whole has not been subject to growth and development through investment by private enterprise and would not be reasonably anticipated to be developed without the adoption of the plan."⁶⁴

The area in question is considered a "conservation district." The estimated date of completion of

⁶³ Hal Dardic, "Daley budget taps TIF funds," Chicago Tribune, October 9, 2010

⁶⁴ "An Ordinance of the Village of Oak Park, Cook County, IL adopting tax increment allocation financing for the Madison Street Business Corridor Redevelopment Project Area". Signed by Lawrence Christmas, Village President. February 6, 1995. P3

the project is December 31, 2015 with the estimated date of all obligations incurred for the redevelopment costs is December 31, 2018.

In a memo to President Christmas and the Board of Trustees, from John Labaj, Director of Community and Economic Development, from January, 1995, notes, the “Corridor TIF District roughly contributes four percent to the Village’s total equalized assessed value (EAV). The four percent has been roughly constant over the last twelve years... TIF constitutes 17 percent of the total commercially assessed EAV within the Village. This amount has been declining over the past twelve years. It is anticipated that these ratios will remain constant, absent substantial project-based private investment.” There are many variables when it comes to determining revenues from a TIF district, including county multipliers, tax cap legislation, tri-annual reassessments, and new growth among many other concerns. In this memo, it was noted that Oak Park Hospital asked to be included within the district, but it was not amended to add them. They continued working on crafting a “surplus agreement” with those within the corridor district. “The only taxing body pursuing this agreement and offering public testimony during the public hearing was District 97. The District had agreed to continue working on the surplus language definition after a TIF designation...”⁶⁵

District 97 and the Village entered into an Intergovernmental agreement which provided payment to D97 from the TIF. The School district has real estate in the area to be redeveloped, in the form of the District headquarters and also a service garage and storage building. In addition, the agreement acknowledged that “ the adoption of the (TIF)plan will have an impact on the School District by diverting tax dollars which were originally levied for the purposes of educating the students of the region”⁶⁶, to the TIF. Ultimately through their agreement, the District gets portion of the tax revenues but not the full amount they originally expected without the TIF in place.

The TIF was passed and continues to this day. A Joint Review Board meets annually to review the progress of the redevelopment of the corridor, which allows for other “effected taxing

⁶⁵ John Labaj, Director of Community & Economic Development, “Ordinances Designating the Madison Street Corridor Tax Increment Financing District”, Memo to President Lawrence Christmas and the Board of Trustees, January 31,1995,p3

⁶⁶ Intergovernmental Agreement between Village of Oak Park and District 97, as adopted by the Village President and Board of Trustees, March 6,1995

jurisdictions (other than through normal Village budgetary process) will be able to receive updated information on TIF budgets and expenditures.”⁶⁷

The Madison Street Corridor Redevelopment plan was formally adopted by the Village Board on June 6, 2006, upon review of the reports from the Wisconsin based Vandewalle & Associates. This report reviewed the Market Analysis of the corridor, the potential for redevelopment and proposed timeline moving forward (this later plan was used extensively for research for Part 2 of this Feasibility Study).

The Village has spent considerable effort in street-scaping the corridor. The entire length of the corridor was resurfaced and the median was designed with planters and landscaping, along with new lighting and pavers in some areas, completed in 1989. The Redevelopment Plan and Project written as part of the TIF, done in 1995, notes the area has had piece-meal, limited redevelopment thus far. They propose that adopting the plan will “conserve the positive qualities that have been fostered while encouraging and allowing for comprehensive redevelopment of this area.”⁶⁸

Further, it states that “significant public investment...is needed to alleviate the blighting characteristics in the area and to encourage and complement the private investment in major new developments.”⁶⁹ In 1990, the Village updated and revised their Comprehensive Plan. Within this plan it was noted that the Village would clear any area by demolition or remove existing buildings or structures; install, repair, construct or relocate streets, utilities and site improvement essential to the redevelopment site, construct public facilities, and exercise any and all other powers necessary to effectuate the purposes of the Act.⁷⁰

The costs of doing the prep work and the funding for such work was also part of the plan. Estimated costs totaled \$28,000,000 and included things like land acquisition, public



Figure 30-Foley Rice building
Available for Sale

⁶⁷ Labaj, p3

⁶⁸ “Madison Street Business Corridor Tax Increment Financing Redevelopment Plan and Project”, Department of Community and Economic Development, the Village of Oak Park, Exhibit A, no date (about 1995)

⁶⁹ Ibid,p6

⁷⁰ Ibid,p7

improvements, site preparation, rehabilitation of existing buildings, along with administration and professional services. These costs are in 1994 dollars and it was noted in the report that “adjustments may be required as the project moves forward... project costs are to be incurred over the 23 year life span of the RPA.”⁷¹

As part of the Village wide economic development goals, it is noted “expand the tax base in order to maintain a high level of services, programs and facilities” and “encourage a broad range of convenient retail and service facilities to serve Oak Park residents and others.”⁷² In addition, the desire to implement the objectives which “retain and increase local employment opportunities” and “create job opportunities for local residents”⁷³ is encouraged within the corridor.

Funding sources for all of this planning comes directly from the TIF. Additional funds may come from “parking funds, proceeds from the sales of Village-owned property within the RPA, motor fuel tax funds, special service area taxes, and other general revenue sources which the Village may desire to apply.”⁷⁴

Upon completion of the redevelopment of the corridor, it was projected that the EAV will be over \$38 million, up from the 1994 assessment of about \$24 million. Although it was noted within the report that redevelopment of the area would increase demand on services of the police and fire departments, the added costs would be negated by the number of new jobs created by such development.⁷⁵

Amended to the TIF plan was Oak Park Village Code, Chapter 13, Article III, which states it is unlawful to discriminate in employment, including “on account of race, sex, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, matriculation or physical handicap...further, that all persons with a physical or mental handicap shall be free from discrimination unrelated to ability in hiring or promotion practice of the Village.”⁷⁶ The amendment also notes that contractors who do work or bid on work within the Village must also abide by this “equal opportunity employer” provision. This information is pointed out in this study due to the nature of the proposed use of the building.

⁷¹ Ibid,p8

⁷² Ibid,p5

⁷³ Ibid,p6

⁷⁴ Ibid, p9

⁷⁵ Ibid, p16

⁷⁶ ibid

The Village worked with Arthur Anderson Consultants in 1999 to create a plan for the Madison Street Corridor. This plan is no longer highlighted on the Village web site, but per the November 17, 1999 article in the Wednesday Journal, the plan noted there was a vast need for restaurants of all kinds, and over represented were hair salons, currency exchanges and dry cleaners. Most of the buildings were of “obsolete stock”, especially those used as automobile showplaces, but many of the buildings have potential for rehabilitation. The one main concern was that the TIF fund, in place four years at that time, “won’t grow if governmental bodies and other property tax-exempt agencies continue taking up residence on Madison Street.”⁷⁷

In summary, the TIF is now in year 15 and there are 8 years left. No redevelopment has occurred as planned in either the 1995 plan or the 2006 plans; however there is positive movement on the redevelopment of one parcel, called Madison Highlands. This will eventually be built (fingers crossed) as a 72,000 square foot office complex. The Park District is in negotiation with the developer to move their cramped quarters into this building.⁷⁸ No dirt has been moved yet, and no news as to when construction will begin. Madison Street continues to appear blighted and under-utilized asset to the village. The one large taxable business (Foley-Rice Cadillac and Oldsmobile) has gone out of business in 2007 and there is no evidence the street will return to its glory days of being part of Motor Row.

Property History Concerns

The 644 Madison building is waiting for a new owner. As with all property, this one is not immune to issues of taxes, mortgages, and loans, which will complicate the proposed redevelopment of the property. The current owner, Steve Foley, has listed the two parcels for \$7.33 million for both the land (644 and 711, across the street) and the buildings which sit upon that land. The 644 site and building are listed at \$4.3



Figure 31- South building-711 Madison, now rented as Fitness Center

⁷⁷ Christine des Garennes, “Village opens arms to Madison Street neighborhood”, Wednesday Journal, November 17, 1999

⁷⁸ Marty Stempniak, “New Office building on Madison worries neighbors”, Wednesday Journal, July 1, 2009.p18

million, at about \$100 per square foot. Nearby spaces are priced less, at about \$81.00 per square feet (844 Madison, noted in part two). Given the specialty nature of the architecture, this may or may not be a selling point.

The property in question has had only a few uses in its 86 years. Mostly it has been a car garage and dealership. For a while in the 1980's it was a business which managed events, called Meetinghouse Display. According to public records, the owner, John Davis, sold the 640-644 building to Public Storage in June of 1988. This plan to tear down and rebuild the space was met with resistance from the Village Board. The Wednesday Journal reported in February 1992 that although the Planning Commission had approved the use of the building as a Public Storage facility, the Village Board voted no to selling the building as it was later determined that the building would have been torn down. The reasons they gave was that the Public Storage facility would generate no sales tax and only marginal real estate taxes and only one job (the caretaker).

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This controversy sparked the Village to propose the TIF. "Many merchants who opposed that project said they favor economic development, but wanted a higher standard use for that particular site," as was reported in the Oak Leaves in September 1994. The TIF "is not an increase in property taxes...any growth in taxes coming into that TIF district... would go to the TIF fund instead of being spread out to the other local taxing districts."⁸⁰ John Labaj is quoted, "Since Madison used to be a lot of automotive dealerships and automotive repair businesses, there's a lot of underground storage tanks (on those sites) that perhaps unduly burden" the sale and future development of such parcels." According to the article, "Federal law requires old tanks to be removed and the cleanup of any soil contaminated by fuel while the tanks were in use".⁸¹ Also noted "there is a car dealership on Madison that is interested in acquiring additional property where there is an underground fuel tank, said Art Replogle, president of the Oak Park Development Corporation." The OPDC initiated discussions offering financial assistance to that car dealership to acquire the additional land. "It seems that one way to solve the problem (of removing underground tanks) is by creating a TIF district," said Replogle. In this same article,

⁷⁹"Village Board 'No' vote sends public storage warehouse packing", Wednesday Journal, February 26,1992

⁸⁰ Susan Montgomery, "Madison tagged for special district", Oak Leaves, September 7,1994

⁸¹ ibid

Labaj “confirmed that those involved in planning the health care facility have eyed the Madison site once proposed for the storage facility (644 Madison).⁸²

The records for the building are confusing. The timeline is not always reported accurately.

According to a report in the Wednesday Journal, Foley- Rice bought the former Meetinghouse Display building sometime before November 14, 1990 to provide for added showroom space and garage space. They wanted to expand their core Cadillac business and had the opportunity to buy out the shuttered Oak Park Olds in late 1991.

Acknowledging there were only so many Cadillac buyers out there, Terry Rice is quoted he could “double what I am doing now”, selling at least 25 new Oldsmobiles

and even more used cars.” Rice noted that his dealership has more space now with recent addition of the renovated 640 Madison building. “The anticipated extra business can be done with low additional overhead and likely a minimum number of new employees.”⁸³

In 1992, Foley-Rice Cadillac and Oldsmobile was granted permission by the village to install running lights on the 711 building. In the article noted in the Wednesday Journal, Terry Rice also said “village hall should do all it can to insure the success of his business, which has made a significant investment on Madison Street. In recent years...the company has spent approximately \$4.5 million to remodel the 711 building and to purchase and renovate a new auxiliary location at 640 Madison Street.”⁸⁴ The Village Trustee Robert Sherrell “agreed that Foley-Rice was an important business in the village and said Oak Park should do whatever was reasonable to assist



Figure 32- Map of Madison at Oak Park Ave- location of 2 Foley Rice properties

⁸² ibid

⁸³ Eric Linden, “Foley-Rice the newest generation of Olds”, Wednesday Journal, December 11, 1991

⁸⁴ Eric Linden, “Board backs bright idea for Foley-Rice”, Wednesday Journal, April 15, 1992

auto dealerships because they are an important to the village economy and because many in the industry currently “struggle” to operate.”⁸⁵

The automobile dealership was successful and in 2004 planned an expansion at their main showroom, the 711 building. Terry Rice proposed to the village that the north-south street adjacent to their building, the 500 block of South Wesley Avenue be turned into a cul-de-sac, so that the entrance to his dealership service area would be re-routed⁸⁶ from Euclid, with that side now being the exit from the service area. As reported in the Oak Leaves, Rice had purchased an apartment/retail building on the southeast corner of Wesley and Madison and was negotiating to purchase two other properties to the east, which will become a parking lot between the dealership and the existing body shop. Rice had purchased the dealership in 1987 and the 711 building which was built in the mid-1940s was getting costly to maintain, saying that “it’s an inadequate facility and not enough facility... basically; it is falling apart around me.”⁸⁷

Rice further noted he did not want to leave Oak Park and it makes more sense for him to try to remodel. He requested assistance from the village, but no details were reported. “Part of the business retention agreement... would include his selling the village his parking lot (at 722 Madison, one block west of the 644 Madison building) near Oak Park Avenue and Madison Street once construction was completed. The village would pay for the installation of the cul-de-sac on Wesley.

The president of the Madison Street Business corridor, Dennis Marani, was noted as thinking this renovation would help revitalize Madison Street, stating, “this is a big step in the redevelopment of Madison...”⁸⁸ This type of accommodation is not unheard of for the Village. In July of 2003, the Shepard Volvo dealership reached a business retention agreement to move from cramped quarters on

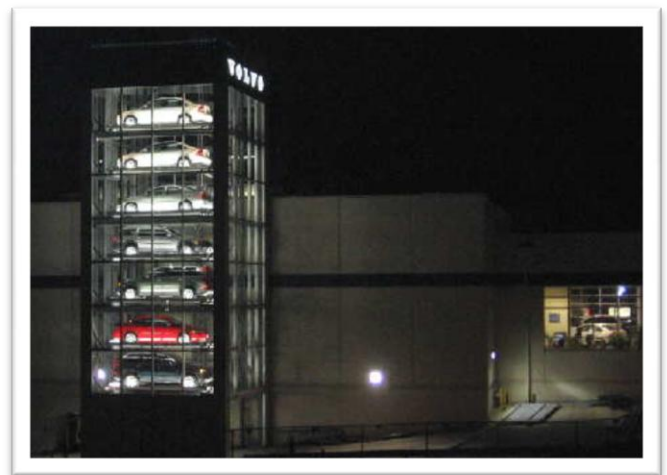


Figure 33- Volvo of Oak Park, tower of cars 2005.

⁸⁵ ibid

⁸⁶ Cheri Bentrup, “Caddy dealer wants Wesley cul-de-sac’d”, Oak Leaves, September 22, 2004

⁸⁷ ibid

⁸⁸ ibid

Madison to the northeast corner of Harlem and Garfield, which was bought from the village for \$750,000.⁸⁹ They proceeded to build a state of the art facility which has a unique feature of a “tower of autos” visible from the Eisenhower Expressway and the off ramps to Harlem.

Foley- Rice did renovate the 711 showroom in 2004, but GM ended production of the Oldsmobile line that year, and the loss of revenues from that franchise cut sales by half and decreased the service business by 35 percent.⁹⁰ By August 1, 2007, it was reported in both local newspapers that the dealership was to close. Rice is quoted in the *Wednesday Journal*, “It’s become very expensive to operate here.” The property taxes rose 18 percent in that year, rising more than \$30,000, and he felt that he would see an additional jump after the three year assessment due to the renovations made in the past. Rice put the sales tax generated by his dealership at about \$200,000 in 2004. According to the article, the dealership was nearing the completion of an overhaul of the facilities, partially financially made possible by a 2005 business retention agreement from the village, paid with TIF funds. Rice vowed to pay this money back, “I’m not keeping the taxpayers money.”⁹¹ As reported in the *Oak Leaves*, “under that agreement, Foley-Rice received a \$575,000 construction subsidy from the village to renovate the dealership. The village also agreed to reimburse the dealership up to half the cost of purchasing three properties on the (south side) 600 block of Madison for expansion. The Village (had) vacated Wesley Avenue between Madison ... and the alley to the south...in exchange the dealership agreed to sell its car lot on the north side of the street, 722 Madison, to the village for \$1.15 million.” As reported, “Rice said he intends to pay back the tax increment finance money the village gave to the dealership in exchange for being released from the agreement.”⁹²

There was an intended sale of the business, but it had to be approved by GM, which retains the right to close the business. The properties used by the dealership will be sold and the land is owned by Stephen Foley Sr. and his family. Per the *Wednesday Journal* article, this land could “create attractive development potential as it includes two full block stretches.”⁹³ Reported in the story in *Oak Leaves*, there was some interest from Fenwick High School regarding the land

⁸⁹ *ibid*

⁹⁰ Drew Carter, “Foley-Rice to close: rising property taxes , loss of Olds line blamed”, *Wednesday Journal*, August 1, 2007

⁹¹ *ibid*

⁹² Chris LaFortune, “Cadillac Dealer to close doors”, *Oak Leaves*, August 1, 2007

⁹³ Carter

on the north side of the 600 block of Madison (where the E.E. Roberts building is located). According to Fenwick Foundation Chairman, Thomas McCauley, some of the land would be used for parking, and also they are also considering “if we can work a retail use into the property”.⁹⁴

By October it was reported “Fenwick may buy Packard building: Madison structure is on state watch list” in the Wednesday Journal. In the flurry of activity surrounding the closing of the dealership and the potential sale of the buildings, the Village of Oak Park Historic Commission sounded the alarm regarding the potential loss of the historic 640-644 yellow brick building and placed the structure on the Landmark Illinois 2007 Watch list. Fenwick “will seek a joint venture to develop the property, hoping to add first floor retail and a perpetual easement for around 150 parking spaces to be used by the school.”⁹⁵ According to the business retention agreement between the village and the dealership, “the property is required to be used as a premium card dealership until 2012, and Village President David Pope said, “There isn’t latitude to do otherwise.”⁹⁶ Rice has asked to be removed from the agreement and wants to pay the village \$400,000 they invested “to modernize the dealership”, but Pope said the village would not release him from the agreement unless the money is repaid. “Terry wants to repay every nickel because he is an honorable guy, said Pope.”⁹⁷

In the RFP for the building and property, the attorney for Fenwick Gregory Melnyk makes no mention of demolishing the building. Pope is quoted “If you look at Madison Street, there are a few buildings along the corridor that you definitely don’t want to see come down... and this is one of them.”⁹⁸

Oak Park wants to designate the 640-644 buildings at a local and a National Register landmark. Referred to as the “Packard” building, whoever owns the building would be required to go before the Oak Park Historic Commission for permission to demolish or alter the building’s exterior. Terry Rice has asked to delay that designation, for the fifth time, until after the building is sold, according to the article in the Wednesday Journal, October 15, 2008. Doug Karre, the Village’s

⁹⁴ LaFortune

⁹⁵ Marty Stempniak, “Fenwick may buy Packard building”, Wednesday Journal, October 3, 2007

⁹⁶ ibid

⁹⁷ ibid

⁹⁸ ibid

urban planner, said, “what we hope is they find a buyer and we move forward with preserving and re-using it. The commission has been cooperating with the applicant to hopefully make a sale easier.”⁹⁹

In the spring of 2009, the Foley-Rice dealership properties were still not sold. In an attempt to make the property economically viable, the 711 building was rented to Evolution Fitness by Foley-Rice. The village would not give the business a license to operate until the \$400,000 debt owed from the TIF was repaid. The gym was stuck in the middle of the agreement. “The dealership wants to enter a short-term lease to get some temporary income. The pending lease, written between the gym and the property owner, would have a 60-day out clause in case they sold the property,”¹⁰⁰ according to the article “Will gym be fit for Madison?” in the Wednesday Journal on April 8, 2009. The gym has opened and is operating at this time in 2010. Inquiries to the Village have not confirmed whether or not the monies were repaid. However, there was a special meeting of the Village President and Board of Trustees, on April 20, 2009. The notes state that they adopted and approved an execution of the Third Amendment to the Business Retention agreement between the Village and Foley- Rice. This agreement forces Foley-Rice to pay the village 50% of the rent from Evolution Fitness and they must pay all property taxes owed on time.¹⁰¹

Tax Concerns

In the current Cook County Tax records, the Assessed Valuation of the 640-644 parcels (PIN #16-07-419-023-0000) of the land was \$32,787; the building was assessed at \$43,129, with a total assessed value of \$75,916. These figures were the same for the 2009 Board of Review Certified numbers. The building is described with Special Commercial Improvements, with improvements prorated with one or more parcels. The land square footage is noted at 13,115. There is a history of appeals on these taxes.

Looking at the history of the tax appeals, one can understand the Foley-Rice business’s concerns with their huge tax bill. The 2005 Assessment had an appeal (#3590) which showed a value of \$108,173 in 2004 and the 2005 value and final Assessor value at \$163,175. In 2008 there was

⁹⁹ Oak Park Notes, “Foley-Rice asks for delay on landmark designation”, Wednesday Journal, October 15, 2008

¹⁰⁰ Marty Stemniak, “Will gym be fit for Madison?, Foley-Rice debt keeps Evolution Fitness from Oak Park license”, Wednesday Journal, April 8, 2010.

¹⁰¹ “ Approved Minutes of the Special Meeting of the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park – held on Monday April 20th, 2009, at 7:30 pm in the council chambers of Oak Park Village Hall”. http://www.oak-park.us/public/pdfs/2009%20Minutes/04.20.09_minutes.pdf, accessed October 16, 2010.

another appeal, with the 2007 assessed value at \$127,155. It was in 2007 that the dealership closed, citing high property taxes amongst other things. The final 2008 Assessor value brought down the tax valuation to \$92,616. There was an appeal as well in 2009, which had the County valuing the property at \$71,832 in the final 2008 assessment, but proposed the value for 2009 at \$248,431. The appeal brought that number down to a final of \$75,916.¹⁰² It does appear that the tax lawyers have been successful in lowering the tax liability for the owners, especially since the building is now un-occupied. In any case, the tax bill is based upon the assessed valuation, with a complicated formula which is used to determine the tax on a piece of property, based upon the valuation. According to the Assessor's office, the valuations have been developed differently for each property type. These include the Cost Approach, Income Approach, Sales Comparison Approach, GIS (Geographical Information service), visiting re-assessed neighborhoods, historical data and current market data. "Market occupancy and vacancy rates are always included in our determination of market value. Vacancy rates are determined by property class and location. In Cook County, the vacancy rates are higher for depressed areas and areas with poorer building conditions. This reflects the problem that currently exist in the market."¹⁰³ There are 17 properties listed in the 5-97 class in the 20 mile vicinity of the property. Their rent is listed at stable median rent at \$10.50 per square foot.¹⁰⁴ It is unknown how much rent that Equation Fitness is paying or for how long.

In a phone conversation with Eli Alsafar, the Oak Park Township Assessor, the complex formula for determining the previous and current taxes on the property, yielded this information: in the taxed year of 2005, paid in 2006, the building parcels were charged \$59,014 and the parking lot was similar to the most recent taxes paid in 2008 (almost \$21,000). These taxes, reduced by appeal, in 2008, due to the vacant nature of the building were reduced to \$29,909.15 and the parking lot (which has a number of parcels to it, pin numbers 017-023) totaled almost \$21,965.1. Total tax paid last year for the land and the building is \$51,874.26. The proposed new use of this

¹⁰² James M. Houlihan, Tax Assessor. Cook County Assessors Office website. http://cookcountyassessor.com/Internet_Appeals/DefaultInternal.aspx?Pin=16074190230000. Retrieved September 29, 2010.

¹⁰³ James M. Houlihan, Tax Assessor. "How Property is Valued,". Cook County Assessors Office website. <http://cookcountyassessor.com/propertyvaluation.aspx>. Retrieved October 20, 2010

¹⁰⁴ James M. Houlihan, Tax Assessor. "2010 Valuation statistics,". Cook County Assessors Office website. <http://cookcountyassessor.com/valuationstatistics.aspx>. Retrieved October 20, 2010

property would yield no taxes for the Village, as the owners would be tax-exempt. This would leave the Village with almost \$52,000 less revenue.

The market value of the property is not the same as the assessed value. Cook County requires homes and small residential properties to be assessed at 16% of market value, while industrial property is assessed at 36% and commercial property is assessed at 38%.¹⁰⁵ The market value shown on the tax bill is not the property's true value, it is actually a tax value, and typically it is 37% below an actual sales price. There is also multiplier and equalizer attached to the rates, which makes determining the real estate value very difficult to determine for the current market.

Mortgage Issues

Researching the mortgage on this property has turned up that the most recent mortgage was assigned to the FDIC as a receiver due to the fact that the bank that previously held the mortgage for the Essex Foley Family Limited Partnership was taken over late last year by the FDIC. US Bank, who was granted the bank charter upon the previous bank's failure took over the mortgage from First Bank of Oak Park. The effective date was October 30, 2009 (the date the feds seized the bank), but the executed document was dated July 22, 2010. Prior to that, the mortgage was held by JP Morgan Chase Bank, who bought up Bank One. Paperwork dating to 2005 only shows an assignment of rents, but no final mortgage numbers.

Assumptions regarding feasibility of project

A number of assumptions will have to be made in order for the proposed project to move forward. First, if the project is deemed financially feasible, with this study being the beginning of the research, but not the final research or say on the project. Many more financial and construction studies will need to be done to determine the true feasibility of this project. Second, the community determines there is a valid need to provide a limited use center for the use of disabled student citizens of the area and also support the business enterprise to be run by those disabled citizens. Three, the costs to renovate and rehabilitate the building are reasonable and the funds needed are available through a combination of grants, easements, TIF monies and the like. As the two main parties to the space, the High School and the not-for-profit, Opportunity Knocks, are both tax exempt bodies, there would not be any Tax Rehabilitation Credits extended

¹⁰⁵ Ali ElSaffar, "Assessor questions, the Process of Assessment", Oak Park township website, <http://www.oakparktownship.org/generalgov/assessor/assessment.htm>, accessed October 26, 2010

to them, nor would they be eligible for many other types of grants for rehabilitation of historic properties. Four, the various agencies which would use this building can work out an intergovernmental agreement to provide the necessary funding and ongoing operating expenses for this project.

Governmental bodies and Not-for-Profit Status

The local school High School district is by its nature a tax exempt governmental body, with the ability to levy taxes for operations and obligations. It is beyond the scope of this feasibility project to review their funding concerns. Currently it is reported that the High School has a surplus of funds but they are now in the middle of a lawsuit against the village, stating that the village owes them \$3.3 million from the TIF funds. Negotiations have been underway, but all the talks are bound by an order not to discuss the issue in the press until a settlement is reached.¹⁰⁶

In addition to this issue, the village may face a \$1.7 million deficit next year if taxes increases are not implemented or cuts aren't made. Cuts recently made include a 20 percent reduction in staff at Village Hall and the Police Departments.¹⁰⁷ Pension obligations, runaway spending, and no income tax increase in the future, all of which are causing the state of Illinois credit ratings to be downgraded recently, are often cited as some of the worst in the nation.¹⁰⁸ Funding for the project will be a challenge for any of the interested parties.

In response to my inquiry to the Village planning department, regarding potential funding for the proposed project, Doug Karre wrote, "Both the federal tax credits and the Cook County Class L deal with property taxes, so a not-for-profit would not qualify. The Madison TIF is expiring in a year or so, so I'm not sure if they have money available. ...Landmarks Illinois's façade easement deals with an income tax deduction. I can say that the Village would probably not be happy about a non-tax-paying enterprise in such a large Madison Street property. They really want to see some revenue coming back from that property."¹⁰⁹

Craig Failor, who is head of the planning department of the Village added, "Relative to TIF; the village does have TIF funds available, however I would not believe they would be a good use

¹⁰⁶ Marty Stempniak, "Oak Park, Schools continue to meet on TIF lawsuit", Wednesday Journal, September 29, 2010, p10

¹⁰⁷ Marty Stempniak, Cuts, tax increased may be in order for Oak Park in 2011", Wednesday Journal, September 29, 2010, p10

¹⁰⁸ Doug Finke, "Illinois credit rating downgraded", The State Journal-Register, Springfield, July 29, 2010, <http://www.sj-r.com/news/x6397/Fitch-drops-the-state-credit-rating> Retrieved October 20, 2010

¹⁰⁹ Doug Karre, email to C. Birkentall, subject: tax credits?, date October 20, 2010.

toward a not for profit endeavor. If a commercial endeavor, they may be available depending on the reuse plan for the building and what other project the village has prioritized for Madison Street. There are façade improvement grant monies available from the TIF through the Oak Park Development Corporation. I'm not sure which HS you are referring to, but if Fenwick, that is a private school and they would use donated monies. If OPRF, my guess is that they have enough in reserve (\$80M currently) they could buy the building outright, however if they chose another route, they would probably float a bond of some sort.”¹¹⁰

CITE and Opportunity Knocks

To understand the desires of the proposed project, one must learn more about the two groups which the space is intended for. As a note, there was earlier thought that both District 97 and the Oak Park Senior Services may also be part of this project, but since the project has been programmed and space planned, there doesn't seem to be enough space to accommodate their needs on top of the needs of the primary users, so those two groups will not be included in our review herein.

The founder of the OK organization is Mike Carmody, a 27 year old Special Education teacher at the High School. He has been a tireless advocate for the developmentally disabled in the community. His 22 year old brother, who has Down syndrome, was the inspiration of his life work. “As John approached the age of 22, he and his family were faced with a stark realization. All of the wonderful educational and occupational programs of which he had grown to rely on would soon stop. After the age of 22, Illinois statute deems developmentally disabled individuals ineligible for service and support programs that are funded through and offered by the public school system. For individuals with developmental disabilities... whom have eclipsed the age of 22, seeking out equivalent services becomes an immense challenge.”¹¹¹

Mike and his family have decided to change the system and make their own place, not only for their brother, but for all the kids Mike works with at the High School. Opportunity Knocks launched its after school program in early 2010, after spending \$20,000 on build-out costs¹¹² at a space at the nearby River Forest Community Center. This location was chosen for a number of

¹¹⁰ Craig Failor, email to C. Birkentall, subject: tax credits?, date October 20, 2010

¹¹¹ Mike Carmody, “About Us”, Opportunity Knocks website. http://www.Opportunityknocksnow.org/about_us.php. Accessed October 19, 2010.

¹¹² Mike Carmody, email to C. Birkentall, subject: Feasibility Study, October 7, 2010.

reasons, including extremely low rent, and proximity to the High School CITE program. They share the rent with the High School CITE program for 9 months of the year. The CITE program, according to Peggy Markey, the High School Special Education director in charge of the program, now has about 15 kids in it with about that many coming up to go through the program in the next five years. CITE stands for Community Integration Transition Education. We will review both group's objectives and long term goals.

The Opportunity Knocks organization has big plans and dreams for its future. According to their strategic plan, noted on their website:

Opportunity Knocks will provide recreational, occupational, social and self-interest activities for the developmentally disabled population in our community. Our initial participant base will be from the Oak Park, River Forest and Forest Park communities. These participants will range in age from 14.5-30 years of age....

Goals

- Build independence.
- Foster self-advocacy.
- Enhance skill development for employment (social, timing, habits).
- Encourage well-rounded lifestyles, to include social and leisurely pursuits.

Objectives - Over the short term, we will:

- Identify 1200-1800 –square-foot facility that is centrally located, handicap accessible, has a kitchen, storage, parking and access to public transportation nearby.
- Design programs to meet needs of participants based on parental surveys and interviews with participant.
- Develop a curriculum and preliminary calendar of activities.

Over the long term, we will:

- Phase I: Develop and offer a full calendar year after school programs.
- Phase II: Build to full-day developmental training services, for the post-22 DD individual, with inclusion of employment assistance.
- Phase III: Acquire and manage Community Integrated Living Arrangements.
- The Ultimate Goal: Operate simultaneously and successfully in all three phases. ¹¹³



Figure 34- Participants of Opportunity Knocks at their space in RFCC.

The Opportunity Knocks program is ambitious and is poised to accomplish their short and long term goals. On the positive side are their constant fundraising efforts- the main fundraiser for the organization is their annual Kathy Garrigan KG Classic Memorial Softball tournament and they

¹¹³ Strategic Plan, Opportunity Knocks website. <http://www.opportunityknocksnow.org/staff.php?ids=30>, accessed October 20,2010

have been tirelessly working other fundraising activities as well. At that tournament this year, the organization was presented a check for \$11,000 from a neighborhood lemonade stand that raises funds one day a year, Sept. 11, in order to honor those who gave their lives to their country. The community has embraced helping out the young adults of this program and will continue to do as long as their profile remains public.

The CITE program has students from after twelfth grade until age 22. Many of the twenty students who are part of OK come from the CITE program as well as the 9-12th graders from the High School. According to the Oak Park River Forest High school catalog:

“The philosophy of the CITE Program is to provide an outcome-based program that will promote students’ optimal independence in the home and community by teaching individualized, age-appropriate life skills.

Upon completion of four years of high school and by recommendation of the IEP, TEAM students may be recommended for participation in the Community Integrated Transition Education Program. The curriculum focus is on life and vocational skills that are age-appropriate and community-based. The seven curriculum areas are:

1. Parent/Adult Services - Students/families will develop an awareness of adult services.
2. Academics - Instruction will focus on skills needed to participate in the community as independently as possible.
3. Vocation - Students will participate in community-based vocational training.
4. Community - Students will increase knowledge and independent in the community.
5. Domestic - Students will increase independent in home based activities.
6. Recreation/Leisure - Students will explore community options for using free time productively.
7. Transportation - Students will work toward using transportation independently for work and community activities.¹¹⁴

These are stated goals, but due to space limitations, budget cuts and lack of willing employer choices, the program has had difficulties in achieving these goals for each student. The space where they currently reside does not meet their needs and the program is slated to double in size in the next few years.

¹¹⁴ Oak Park River Forest High School, Course Catalog,
http://www.oprfhs.org/export/sites/oprf/academic_divisions/Academic_Catalog_2010-11.pdf, accessed October 26, 2010

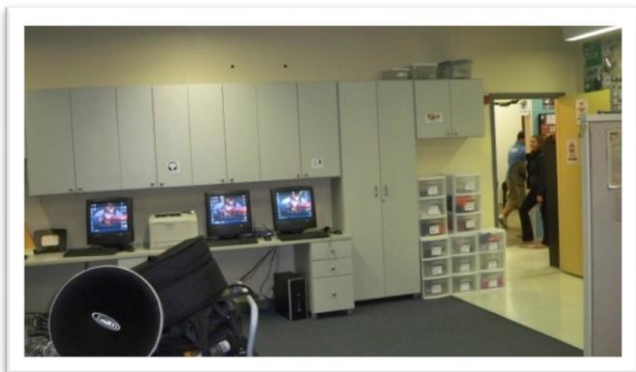
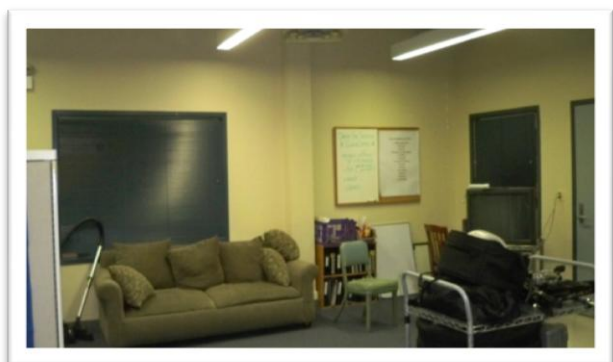


Figure 35, 36, &37 - CITE space- lounge, kitchen area and work area, the door leads to the OK space at right

Current Space for CITE/OK

The current space for the two programs is housed within approximately 1500 square feet of the River Forest Community Center, located at 8020 W. Madison, about 1.5 miles from the 644 Madison building in Oak Park. According to Sharon Patchak- Layman, D200 School Board member, in a recent phone conversation, she said the CITE program was given a home at the RFCC as part of an agreement between the High School and the RFCC. The High School used to have housed on their main campus on Scoville Avenue a day care center. This center served many purposes, including providing job

training for the High school vocational students, along with child care services for the teachers and students children. The program outgrew its space and the High School could no longer manage the service. A few years ago, they moved the program to the RFCC and a private association provides the

management of the program. With this move, the RFCC also provided space for the CITE program. This year, OK leased space



Figure 38,39, 40 &41- OK space at RFCC

next to the CITE space and opened its doors to provide after school day care for special needs students aged 14-30. The two are adjacent to one another and integrated into the small children day care space as well. The advantage to the space located at the River Forest Community Center is that there is access to an exercise weight room and a full size basketball court. The restrooms are not located within the two rooms but are shared with the rest of the center. There is a toilet room in the CITE space, but it is sized for small children, not teenagers or adults.

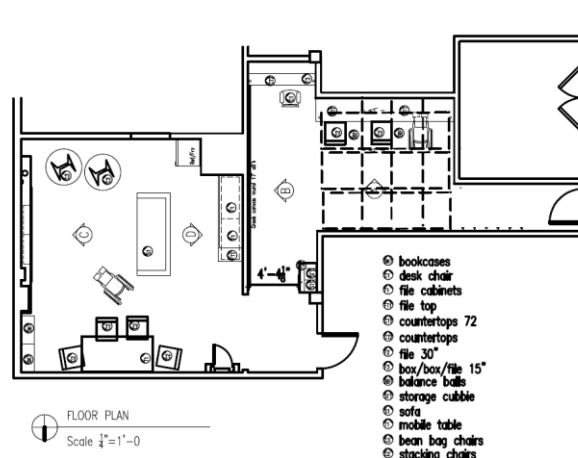


Figure 42- OK floor plans done by Triton College students. Note: the CITE room is located where the furnishings key is shown.

The OK space is done with much more color and visual stimulation, versus the grays and blues the CITE space. This obvious difference helps signal a change in attitude, from school to fun place for the students. The OK space can use the CITE space to spread out after school hours.

These pictures shown here were taken last week, with many of the students and parents in the space during pick up time. It is apparent that the space is already too small for the twenty students and four to six volunteers who work with them three days a week after school. There are two rooms for the OK space; one is considered the “quiet room” with space for computers and the supervisor, the second room houses art activities, storage, a sofa for lounging and a wall for projection of movies and Wii gaming. There is one large room for the CITE space, with a kitchen area, along with a work computer area and also a lounge area. Many of the kids within the program have sensory issues, so there are assorted therapy items located about the rooms. Activities occur in the three rooms, along with other spaces available to them in the center.

Space Program and Plan for new space

The prospective occupants were asked a number of questions regarding their needs in the new space. A survey was filled out by Peggy Markey of the CITE program and Mike and Phil Carmody of OK. The results were combined to



Figure 43- Front facade of both buildings 644-640 Madison

find the needs and the wants of the two groups.

With this information, a space program was planned within the available square footage of the space in the building. The space plan showed a few problems, but none that are insurmountable. There was not enough useable square footage for the classrooms requested by District 97 or the potential goal of providing space for the Senior Services department.

Programmed in the space will be a number of offices for the CITE and OK supervisors, workstations for administrative personnel, and also for training area for the student’s vocational needs. There will be a shared conference areas and a reception area. Classrooms will be designed as multi-purposed, for use by the students and required aides and a teacher, with a Library/study area along with an Art room and Music room. There will be a computer area for use by students and staff alike. A small nurse’s office should be planned to attend to those students who may need medical assistance while there. For physical exercise, a full size basketball court will be planned and also track with a center exercise equipment/weight area, along with a therapy pool

and nearby sensory room and locker rooms for use by the students. There will be a student lounge area for after school group activities and a performance space for karaoke and also community use. Added to the wish list from the groups include Smart boards wherever possible, a climbing wall, and a flat screen TV in the front to show a video loop of the students activities. Outdoor plans include a small greenhouse, and raised beds for produce, and a place to play lawn bowling or bocce ball outside during the good months of weather.

The two buildings (640-644) together are being sold with the notation of 34,000 square feet of space. There are no existing floors, so preparing plans has proved problematic. Using the legal Plat of Survey for measurements (all which need to be verified), the 640 building has approximately 5000 square feet of space on the first floor office area and about 2400 square feet above on the mezzanine floor. The double volume ceiling space behind this area, used as the mechanic garage area, has about 6,000 square feet. The 644 building has about 12,500 square feet per floor, less the ramp which takes up at least a sixth of each floor, thus making the space on each floor to be planned at about 10,000 square feet.

The current lease for the CITE and OK space at the RFCC is at about 1500 square feet, but this does not include the use of the basketball court, weight room and public restrooms, or a large upstairs community room, which add another 14,900 square feet. This number does not include front desk reception or hallway circulation space. The net gain for the CITE and OK programs in the new building would be about 17,600 square feet. CITE's rent is part of the Day Care Center and is not determinable at that this point. OK has a 3 year lease, which is graduated. In the first year, the cost is \$1,000 per month, the second year the rent per month is \$1,200 per month, and the third year is \$1,500 per month. The first six months they received a rent waiver. Overall costs total for three years is \$38,000.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Email from Mike Carmody to C. Birkentall, "Re: Feasibility study", October 7, 2010

Existing Shared Space Used by CITE/OK at the RFCC

GROUP	Number of Participants	Description of Space	Amount of Square Feet
CITE	15-30	Large group space	800
OK	20-30	Large group space	500
OK		Small group space	300
BOTH AND PUBLIC		Workout room	1200
BOTH AND PUBLIC		Basketball court	11,400
BOTH AND PUBLIC		Locker rooms/rest room	1000
BOTH AND PUBLIC		Community room	1200
TOTAL NOW USED			16,400

New Building and New Needs

Upon review of the programmed wants and desires for the new space there are a number of wonderful ideas, but there may not be enough space in the 640-644 existing buildings due to a number of configuration issues. The buildings, once used for showrooms and

garage mechanical areas plus automobile storage are

not easily re-planned for the new needs. In the 644 building, the street front was showroom area, and the back was additional garage area. In this building, which has a barrel vaulted roof, there is a large obstacle which if removed may compromise the historic integrity of the building. The main issue is the existing concrete ramp going up to the wide open space of the second floor. This takes almost 4,000 square feet of space unusable of the 24,000 square feet within that building.



Figure 44- 644 building- Showroom area, with large opening to the back service garage area and concrete ramp beyond



Figure 45- Interior ramp in 644 building

The 640 building is also configured to be open showroom plus a mechanical garage area, this area takes up almost half of the building. The showroom area has a mezzanine level, which helps add 2400 square feet, but these are secluded

from the main area and only reachable by a front stairwell. The garage area could be built out with additional mezzanine, but then the roof will need to be re-worked as there is a large vented skylight in this area. Somewhere under the two buildings sits a fuel tank, which will need to be removed. The dream is to place a therapy pool in the void leftover.



Figure 46- 640 Building showing the mezzanine stairwell just behind the showroom area

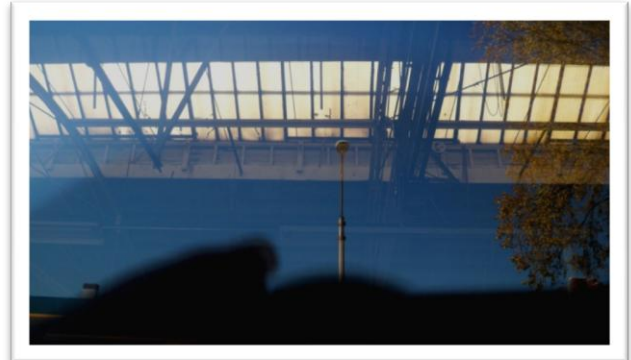


Figure 47,48- The outside of the 640 building, with the garage door off Wesley Street, and the vented skylight in that space



Figure 49, 50- Rear of 640 building open garage area. Note the large opening in the rear showing the concrete ramp in the 644 building

Programmed Space Needs for CITE/OK

The information gathered from the potential users is shown in the table below. As noted, there is a need for almost 31,000 square feet, before circulation is added into the equation. Using a very conservative figure for such diverse needs of 25 % circulation, the need eclipses what is available by almost 4000 square feet. In order for the space to be deemed feasible an actual plan was done to determine if any efficiency in the program and planning was determinable.

Description of Space	Optimum size	Notes	Amount of Square Feet
Reception area	10 x 20		200
Offices (10 total)	10 x10	Shared and training area	1000
Conference	20x30		600
Small conference	15x20		300
Computer room	15x20		300
Class rooms	20x20	Music	400
Class rooms	30x30	Art	900
Class rooms	20x 30	Library/computers	600
Class room	30x 30	Therapy	900
Locker rooms	30 x40	Two with rest rooms	2400
Exercise area	40 x80	With running track	3200
Basket ball court	115 x60	Multi -purpose area	6900
Performance area	50 x 75	Multi -purpose area	3750
Student Lounge	30 x 40		1200
SUB-TOTAL for student use			22,650
COFFEE SHOP	50 X75		3750
KITCHEN	50X 30	Vocational training area	1500
Floral Gift shop	40 x 50	Front room area	2000
Floral work room	20 x 30	Back vocational area	600
SUB-TOTAL For business use			7850
TOTAL SPACE NEEDS			30,500
Circulation	25%	Low estimate	7,725
TOTAL TRUE SPACE NEEDS			38,125
ACTUAL SPACE IN THE TWO BUIDINGS			34,000
Space Deficit			4,125

Figure 51- Table showing Programmed space needs for Use

Proposed Floor
Plan of
Buildings
Planned for
CITE/OK

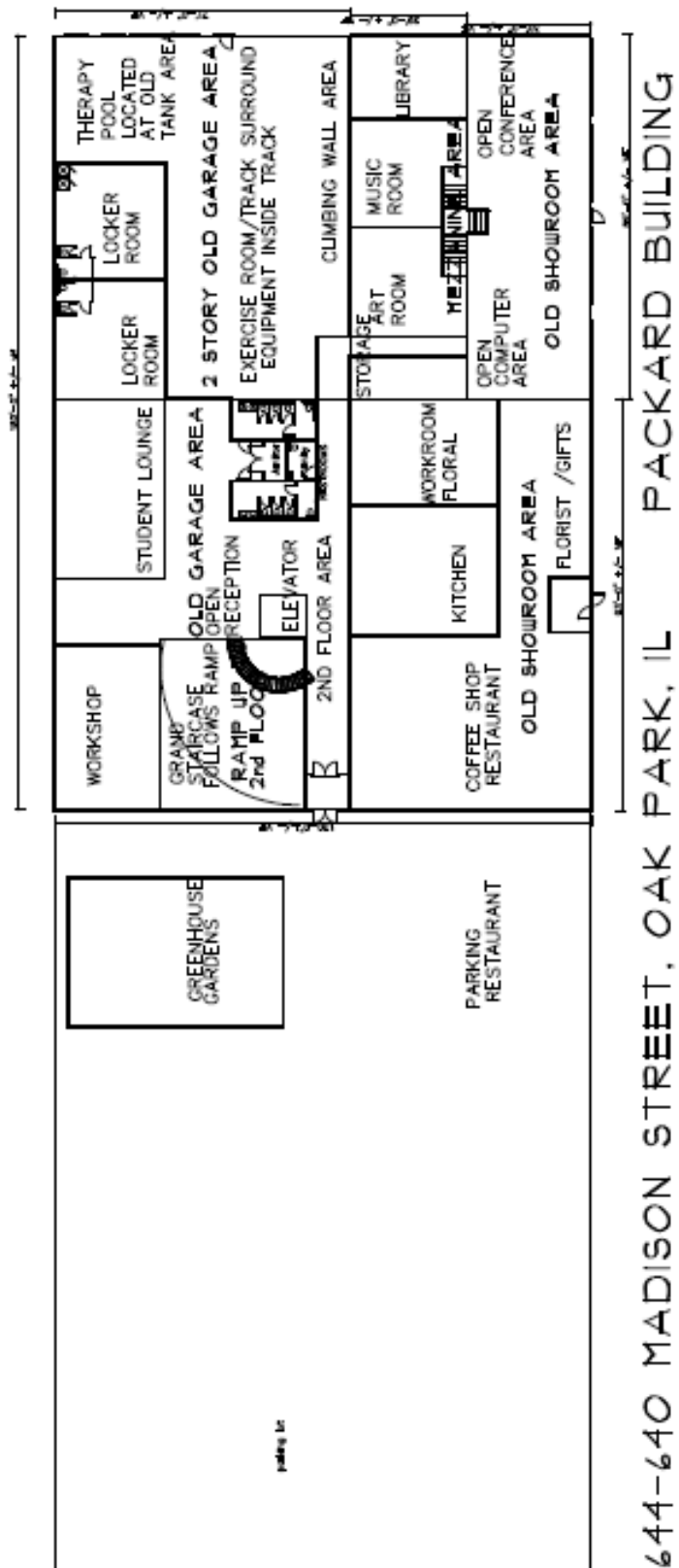


Figure 52- Proposed Space Plan for building

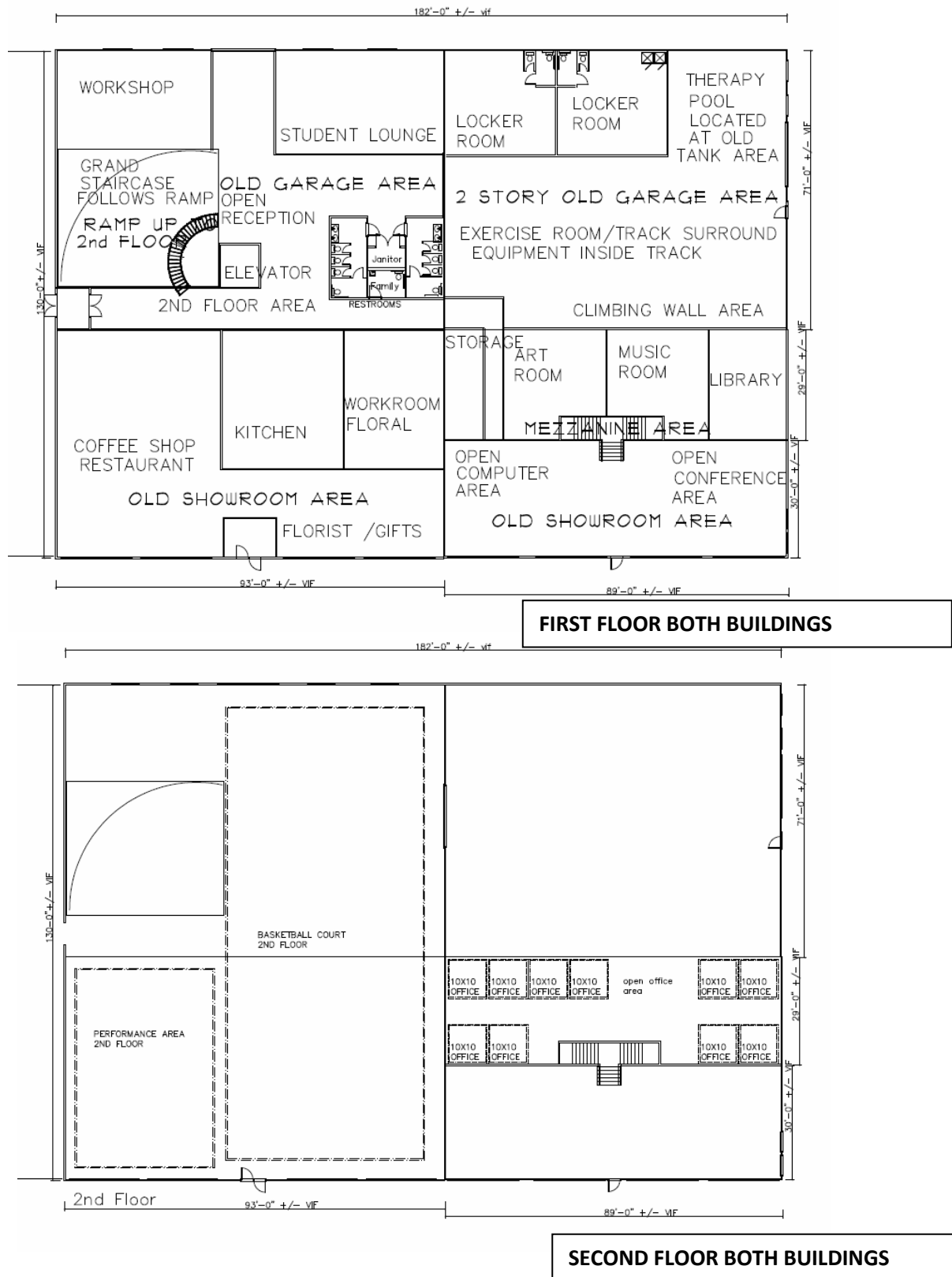


Figure 53,54- First and Second Floor plan

Potential Costs for Rehabilitation

The goal of having these buildings saved for posterity is currently on hold since the building's current owners are still trying to sell the building. The Village has on hand a written National Register nomination form waiting to see what happens with the building in the near future. The building is considered worthy from the design viewpoint, along with contributing from the community's heritage viewpoint.¹¹⁶ As the proposal contained herein involves non-taxing bodies buying the building and funding an adaptive re-use for the space, there are many questions raised about the salvation of this building. Does it make sense to pursue the Secretary of the Interior standards to further restore the façade and parts of the exterior? Can the façade be donated to the state preservation council like Unity Temple did a few years ago? What are the anticipated costs for buying the building, re-habbing the building exterior, restoring the façade, building out the interior spaces for new uses and finally what will the end result financially?

Without a full set of design documents, it is only guesstimated as to what the build-out costs will run. Referencing information gotten for like projects or comparables is the only way to begin to set some sort of budget for this project. Comparable information has been obtained from an architectural firm which rehabs old and builds out new schools, along with an interiors firm which does renovation work for a major fast food chain, and from a supplier of athletic equipment for park districts and public schools.

With this information, we can deduce some prospective costs which will be incurred in the rehabilitation of the spaces. For our purposes, we will assume that the exterior façade work will be done with the Secretary of the Interior standards in spirit, if not letter. The interior work will be respectful of the historical perspective of the building but will be more utilitarian in design. Elements desired to be saved include the staircase and the ramp. Elements needed to be installed include an elevator to the second floor along with public restrooms. All elements will need to be brought up to current building codes, fire protection codes and ADA codes. Mechanical elements of the space will need to be replaced and added, as there were only space heaters installed in the garage areas. For our purposes, we will propose geo-thermal system which will also help heat the therapy pool (located where the underground tank will be removed). All work and new materials introduced will be considered from a sustainable and green viewpoint.

¹¹⁶ Doug Karre. Village of Oak Park, Historic Landmark Nomination Report, unpublished, 2007

Façade improvements finished in 1990 cost the existing owners \$455,000. This included work on the interior to update bathrooms to ADA standards.¹¹⁷ Façade conditions have deteriorated over the years, but the bulk of the yellow brickwork and terracotta elements are intact and structurally sound.¹¹⁸ Tuck pointing and water damage may warrant repairs. Removal or replacement of the garage doors may impact costs. Adding doors to the parking lot area may add to the costs as well. If we plan on half that amount already spent, we may be close on our estimate.



Figure 55- Detail of Façade showing mechanic figure

Removal of the underground storage tank will allow for a therapy pool to be installed in the garage area of the 640 building. The costs quoted by Dan Wilkins, the real estate broker for the building is \$180,000 to remove the tank and possible remediate the soil. This cost needs to be fully explored along with the goal of installing a therapy pool. Both the architectural firm and athletic equipment supplier cautioned strongly against installing a pool of any sort in the building due to many factors, including ventilation, chemical storage, towel laundry and storage.¹¹⁹ This part of the dream may prove unfeasible. The High School does have at the main campus two indoor pools, but they are used mostly for competitions and practice for the swim and synchronized teams.

Typical costs to renovate a local McDonalds in 2005 (the one a few blocks east from this site) were quoted by Janet Caponigro, lead designer for Ardenture, Naperville, IL design firm which specializes in this type of work. The design was based upon the local Prairie influence and included a gas-light fireplace. The décor of the space was almost \$77,000 and the shell work done by the general contractor was not priced out.¹²⁰ An outfitted commercial kitchen for a coffee shop, including a griddle, and bakery ovens will be at least \$70,000, per William Housey,

¹¹⁷ Permit application #8936, Village of Oak Park. Architects Realmuto, Steffan and Loftus, Chicago, IL. September 19, 1990

¹¹⁸ Christine Bernick, Deborah Carey, Young-Jin Kim, Katie McManus, Molly Sargent. Historic Structures Report: Foley-Rice Dealership (1924-1927), unpublished report for Historic Preservation, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, May 2008.

¹¹⁹ Email from Andrea Clark, to C. Birkentall, "Re: Typical Restaurant school costs", September

¹²⁰ Email from Janet Caponigro, to C. Birkentall, "Re: Typical Restaurant school costs", September 20, 2010.

a kitchen designer who has outfitted a number of small commercial kitchens. Of course, buying used products from restaurants which have gone out of business may save money.

The McDonalds space requirements were noted by Janet as 1,900square feet for the dining room area, 1,486 square feet for the kitchen area and additional 332 square feet for the freezer. In the proposed space, the restaurant will be located in the front showroom area of the 644 building, along with the floral/gift shop area. Since this area is now open, construction of the space will have to be factored in, along with the costs of the floral refrigerator and workroom area.

Concept school renovation costs were given by Charles Smith from Cannon Design. “We typically don’t price out isolated programmatic elements on a cost/sf basis due to the fact that they are supported by a variety of utilities, infrastructures, spaces. Recent costs for classroom renovations in an office building are about \$95/sf (just classrooms, offices, library). Our new building K-12 schools are coming in about \$300/sf. If one considers a renovation it could possibly be in the range of \$225-250/sf.”¹²¹ The existing spaces in the 640 building may able to be re-used for closed classrooms and the office area should be planned using open office type furnishings, which will reduce the costs tremendously.

The open space back garage areas of the 640 building will be used for the exercise area. Along with locker rooms with restrooms and showers, the costs will be mostly the equipment. A recent proposal to Walsh Construction from Grizzly Peak, Inc, Mesa, CO, budgeted for 3 treadmills, 3 upright bikes, 3 stair climbers, along with a number of other training equipment and the final number was almost \$65,000.¹²² This doesn’t include the desired climbing wall or therapy pool costs. The costs for the basketball court and performance space will be minimally \$200,000, depending on the extent of design, per a quote from Basketball Goals, out of Connecticut.

The mechanical system of the space is currently not adequate, as the garage areas were heated by space heaters only. Mark Nussbaum, P.E., who has designed the geothermal system for nearby historic Unity Temple, provided this information, “when trying to ballpark a system size, on energy efficient commercial occupancy buildings with excellent insulation and energy recovery on the ventilation, you can use a range (of) 300 to 400 SF per ton in the Chicago area. This

¹²¹ Email from Stephen Citari, AIA,forwarded from Charles Smith, to C. Birkentall, “Re: Typical Restaurant school costs”,September 22,2010

¹²² Andrea Clark, “Grizzly Peak Inc For Walsh Design Build”, budget, 2010

number is greatly affected by the amount and type of glass, the amount of wall and roof insulation, the number of people and the efficiency of the energy recovery system- so for your old building being retrofitted, depending on the use, you may want to use the lower end of the SF range- thus giving you a larger system. Then with your tonnage roughed out, the range for ground source heat pumps from a very basic system up to a high end, bells and whistles system, will go from \$8500/ton up to \$15,000 per ton. I would recommend using \$10,000 per ton as a good place to start with a good quality (high efficient) alternative system costing around \$6000 to 7,000 per ton.”¹²³ There are 34,000 square feet of space needing air handling, per this formula; there is a need for a minimum of 97 tons. This might be altered due to the actual configuration and zones which may be designed into the system upon further review.

There are many other costs that will be incurred in the build out of the space, including electrical, plumbing, interior build out and refinishing. In addition to the build out and rehabilitation costs of the project, other costs that will be incurred include the outside landscaping, signage and greenhouse area. The intent is to use about one third of the parking lot, which is more than generous in size (but a full code review needs to be done to determine number of spots required for the school space and the business space) at 10,680 square feet of land space. The business



Figure 56- Sequin Greenhouse in Brookfield IL

enterprise for the school will use the greenhouse for vocational purposes and also will use greens grown within for the restaurant use. This concept is borrowed

from Sequin Services, another service agency which provides

vocational training for disabled adults in another suburb, Brookfield, IL.

Other costs which are only guessed as mere placeholders, for the purposes of this report include electrical changes, elevator and stairs retrofits, new restrooms, locker rooms, and quite a few others. Below is a chart with some of the basic costs covered, but this is not intended to be all inclusive of costs.

¹²³ Email from Mark Nussbaum, PE, to C.Birkentall, “subject:Geothermal?”, October 26,2010

Estimated Costs for Reconstruction

Façade and exterior work	Per Sec. of Interior standards	250,000
Mechanical	Geothermal	97,000
Electrical, phone	Re-routed, etc	75,000
Basketball court		200,000
Performance Space		75,000
Restaurant		75,000
Kitchen	Seek out used equipment	70,000
Gift Shop/Florist		45,000
Exercise Room		65,000
Therapy Pool	Including remediation of tanks	255,000
Climbing Wall		30,000
Therapy room		30,000
Open office workstations	Includes conference, used	25,000
ADA restrooms		30,000
Elevator		65,000
Locker rooms		50,000
Misc Construction	Include stairwell at ramp	275,000
AV equipment		50,000
Classroom furniture	Art/Music/Library	75,000
Lounge	Student break area	30,000
Workshop		50,000
Landscaping	Include Greenhouse	100,000
SUB-TOTAL		\$1,617,000. 00
Contractor Fees	10%	161,700
Contingency	10%	161,700
TOTAL FOR CONSTRUCTION		1,940,400.00

Figure 57- Table of Potential costs

Full Cost Expectations

The costs for this project consists of many line items, including construction, soft costs, operating costs and un-expected expenses yet to be determined. Our analysis is based upon the concept that this project would be undertaken by not-for-profit groups, which will change the financial impact from the anticipated line item analysis as intended for the SCAD project. For purposes of true understanding, the analysis will be undertaken using two sets of numbers from two scenarios anticipated. One scenario involves the initial concept, either the High School buys and renovates the building and rents it out to Opportunity Knocks, or Opportunity Knocks buys and renovates the building and rents out space to the High School. In either case, the analysis regarding tax issues remains the same, neither is liable for taxes. Another option would be to have an investor group buy and renovate the building and have OK or the High School run the programs within, paying rent to that investor group. A loss may occur for a while due to the

upstart nature of the new business, but it is hoped that eventually the business could be profitable. All proceeds would go back to the investors, who in turn could donate them to not-for-profit group, or use them for maintenance or profit.

In the attached financial analysis, many assumptions have been used. One, the cost of the building, is at full market price. Given today's economic conditions, this price could certainly be negotiated downwards. The new owners could also negotiate parking for the village as part of the lot sale, allowing for permit parking after hours, much like other businesses have done in the village (parking is a huge issue in the village, there are more renters than spots to park their cars). This might make the loss of the taxable land more palatable to the village. Another assumption is the cost of the rehabilitation. Figures noted are basic and although based upon comparable costs as noted within this report, they would all need to be verified, upon completion of actual construction documents. Given the not-for-profit status of the potential owner, the tax implications are essentially moot. There is no tax credit nor savings as there is no tax liability. If we assume some costs associated with borrowing of funds, those are noted at a low 3% loan rate for 30 years. Overall the costs to buy and rehabilitate this space for the proposed purpose may total almost \$7 million dollars.

Business Structure

In the process of trying to justify the many costs, the idea of having someone else other than the High School or OK purchase the property was explored. In a memo from Joe Milburn, Business law attorney, and Board member of OK, his suggestions were as follows:

The first option and easiest being straight forward ownership by Opportunity Knocks (hereinafter "OK"). OK is an established not for profit corporation. Accordingly, no organization formation costs would be involved. Off course, as with any ownership structure adopted, the enormous cost of the project and the raising of the funds necessary will guide the structure, as well as the ownership formation. For OK to have direct ownership, funds would need to be raised from public and/or private sources. Of course, private gifts would have to be in the form of charitable contributions. The location would be available for lease to the High School by OK.

A second option is for a public entity, such as District 200 or the Village of Oak Park to acquire the property and rehab same with OK leasing the property. This would involve public funds only, except as to lease payments paid by OK to the Owner.

A third option would be for private investors to raise funds necessary for the acquisition and development of the real estate. Under this scenario the investors would form a non-profit, limited liability company or corporation and lease the space to OK. I do not believe that any entity other than a not-for-profit would be viable in this scenario. However, if the numbers were viable, the private investors could form a For Profit LLC or Corporation and then lease the space to OK. A For Profit scenario would carry a high degree of risk as the investors in such a venture would have little assurance of receiving any return on their investment. Given the current economic conditions, this is an extremely doubtful approach.

A fourth option would be to explore the possibilities of forming a new charitable entity, either an LLC or Corporation, to engage in a joint venture with an established services provider (“Provider”) such as Clearbrook. Under this scenario OK and the Provider would be the Owners of the newly formed entity, which would raise the funds needed to acquire and develop the property. OK could then enter into a lease or other arrangement with this joint venture entity to use the property, with the Provider providing services such as housing in the subject property and job training and even on site employment.

A related approach would be to try to enter into a simple service arrangement with a Provider, whereby the Provider acquires the property and then leases it back to OK to use for its services and programs. Again, arrangements could be made for the Provider to provide its housing, job and other services.

These service providers, who are long established, already have foundation, state and/or federal funding available to them. Given their established history, an entity such as Clearbrook, may be interested in acquiring a local property and expanding the territory it services to include the Oak Park and River Forest area.

Overall, the above structures will depend greatly upon the financing available. Given the level of funding needed, it is most likely that state, federal and/or foundation funding would be required. Most of the options would entail a lease arrangement for Opportunity Knocks. However, as with any residential or commercial lease, an option for OK to purchase the property could be included.¹²⁴

It is undeterminable at this time to create the structure for this proposal, given so many unknowns at this time. Lawyers, financiers and the community will have to focus on that part of this proposal to make it real.

¹²⁴ Joe Milburn, Memo to C Birkentall, October 27,2010

I. PROJECT COSTS		For either scenario	NFP	INVESTORS
Acquisition Costs	Land Value (10,680sf x100PSF)	1,068,000		
Asked for prices	Building and land Value (34,000 x100PSF)	3,400,000		
		4,468,000		
Rehabilitation Costs	Total square feet- 34,000			
Contractor and contingency included	Rehab costs PSF	60.00		
	Total SF rehab cost	2,040,000		
Unknowns at 10%	Other rehab cost	204,000		
	TOTAL rehab cost	2,240,000		
Soft Costs-10% of total		22,400		
Rent Up costs-	None	1000		
TOTAL PROJECT COST		\$6,731,400		
II. OPERATING COSTS	Total square feet-34,000			
Restaurant/ Gift shop	Rentable square feet-4,000	4,000		
	Net to Gross ratio	NA		
	Rent rate per SF	\$15.00		
	Total Annual Rental Income	60,000		
	Vacancy Rate	1%		
	Vacancy Allowance deduction	\$600		
	TOTAL rent/operating income	\$59,400		
III. OPERATING EXPENSES	Operating expense ratio	20%		
	Anticipate operating expenses	71,280		
	Net Rent/Operating Income	-(11,880)		
IV. FINANCING	Loan to value ratio		0	90%
	Maximum loan amount		0	6,058,260
	Minimum investment required		0	673,140
	Actual loan amount		0	6,058,260
	Loan Term(years)		0	30
	Interest Rate		0	3%
	Monthly Principal and Interest payment		0	25,541.87
	Annual Principal and Interest payment		0	306,502.44
	Annual Cash Flow			-(318,382.44)
V. TAX EFFECTS	Recovery period		0	0
	Amount to be recovered		0	0
Since the owners of this	Annual Depreciation deduction		0	0
Proposed project	Total Rehab Tax credit amount		0	0
Are not for profit	Deduction for Façade Easement		0	0
Taxes do not apply	Net rent/operating income		0	0
	Less: Annual Depreciation Deduction		0	0
	Less: Façade Easement Deduction		0	0
	Taxable Income		0	0
	Tax (%)		0	0
	Less Tax Rehabilitation Credit		0	0
	Net Tax		0	0

Figure 58- SCAD Table showing potential costs

V. SUMMARY

The ultimate question of any feasibility study is to determine if the proposed use for a rehabilitated building would make financial sense. It is evident by the numbers, this project is not on the surface financially feasible, but if the only goal is to rehabilitate the old Packard building is to make a profit, the building would no longer be standing, as the building is obsolete and single-purposed. Due to the strained economic times, the building sits vacant and collecting only about half of the property taxes it used to and absolutely no sales taxes. However, with the strong desire of the Village to save this building as a reminder of Oak Park's Motor Row, saving this building is possible if one thinks outside of the "box" and purposefully plans for salvaging this building. Although through the recommendation of consultants state that Madison Street should no longer be home to any more not-for-profit or non-taxed entities, there are exceptions to that concern being planned today. The former Comcast building, two blocks west, is under plans for creating single occupancy apartments to be run by a charitable organization, and even in the proposed new office building, Madison Highlands, the Park District is negotiating to carve out a chunk of space for the Gymnastics program. It is obvious that the taxing concerns of the street will not return to their former glory and that the plans proposed for the street in better economic times needs to be re-evaluated.

This re-evaluation should address the needs of the Oak Park-River Forest community as a whole and the immediate needs of the High Schools CITE program along with adult day care and vocational training for disabled individuals close to home. The community has access to three state agencies which provide services (Sequin, Aspire, Misericordia), but each are over five miles away from here and public transportation is not easily managed by many disabled adults. The High School has failed to make adequate yearly progress for the eighth time, although this year the special education students did qualify, due to a program change.¹²⁵ In addition, the High School is no longer even listed in the top 50 High Schools in the state.¹²⁶ The High School needs to provide a better education and vocational training for all students, but most especially the disabled student. The community needs a safe place for these young adults to be able to learn a trade, or hang out with their friends. Perhaps the community needs to determine if a charter

¹²⁵ Katie McCole and Elena Michaels, "OPRF fails to meet AYP for the Eighth time", *Trapeze* student newspaper, October 22, 2010, vol. 100, no. 2 p1

¹²⁶ Tara Malone, "Even Top Schools miss mark", *Chicago Tribune*, October 28, 2010, p1

school for these students would be the solution, like St. Coletta's in Washington D.C. has become recently. In any case, in the next ten years, there will be over 50 adults who live in this community who are not prepared to live on their own nor work at a job unless there is a place to learn these skills.

The proposed project financially needs initial and ongoing funding, from many sources, including historic preservation dollars to state educational charter school grants and on through to disability services, to be feasible. No project which operates in the red will last for very long without support. The ultimate result will be a positive for a few concerns: the building will be saved historically intact as is the Village's desire and can be placed upon the National Register and the building will be used for a true community need for citizens of the community who have no other place to turn to. This is called a win-win situation: now the need is to have the community embrace this concept and make it a priority.



Figure 59- Cartoon

Plat of Survey- 644-640 Madison, Oak Park,IL

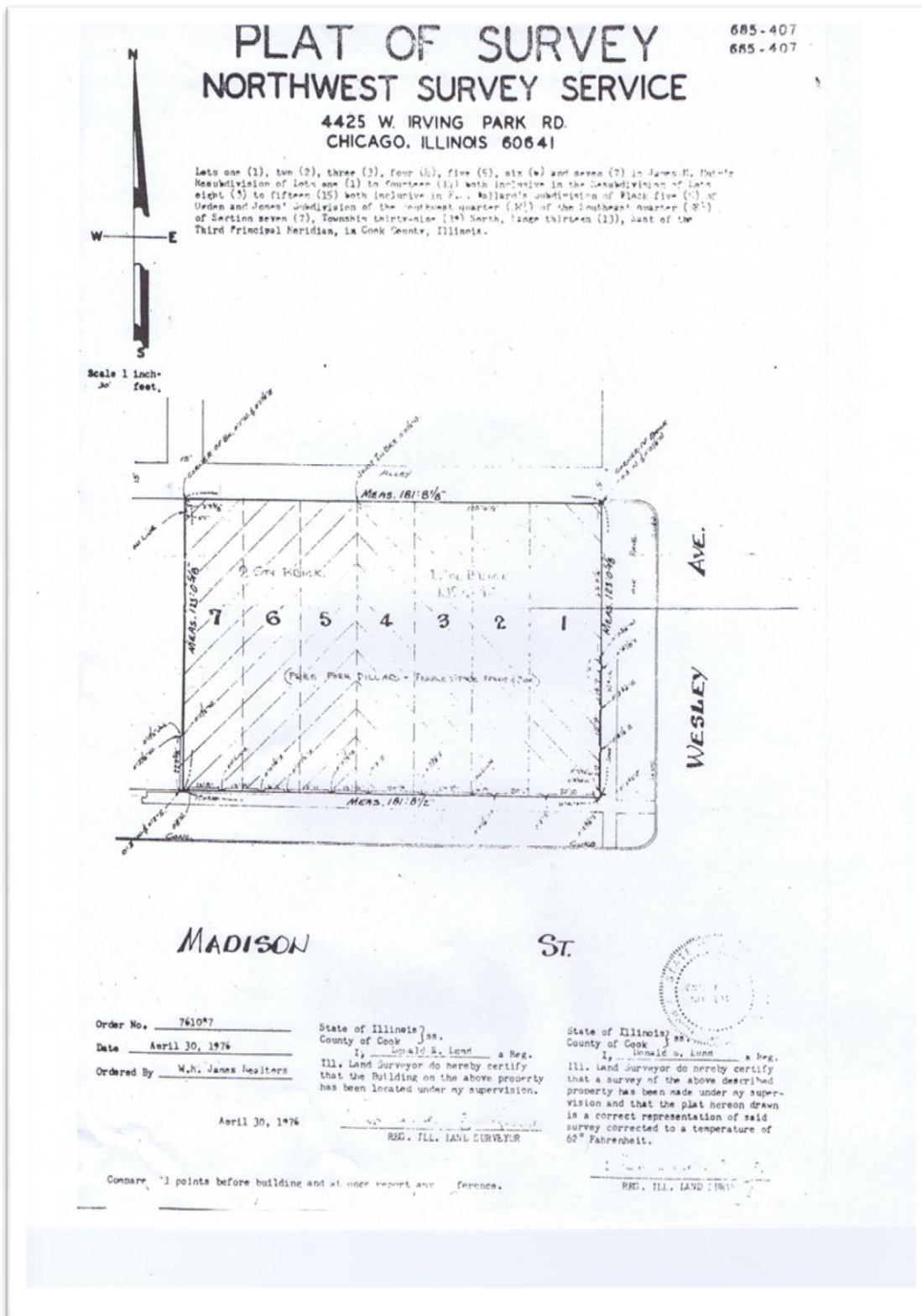


Figure 60- Plat Survey Map

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