

Dear Neighbors:

I'm writing to you regarding an upcoming renovation we have planned for our home at 238 S. Kenilworth. You may have received a notice from the Village regarding our proposed improvement. We moved to our house in January 1998, coming as young working professionals from our River North apartment in Chicago. With children still a few years off, we could not have imagined outgrowing our newly purchased home, as everything was so spacious compared to city living. Fast forward 18 years and here we are with two teenage girls, bursting at the seams. Our family loves our life in Oak Park, and we adore our block with friendly neighbors and a great location. However, we have all grown weary of sharing one full bathroom among the four of us (did I mention the teenage girls?). We can't bear the thought of moving, so a few years back we began some exterior renovation projects, removing the yellowish-greenish vinyl siding and restoring the wood plank siding underneath. We also added a wraparound porch that received some initial resistance from the Village, but ultimately won a historic preservation award. We are ready to continue updating the interior of our home, expanding the first and second level to accommodate a larger kitchen, living room and an additional bathroom upstairs.

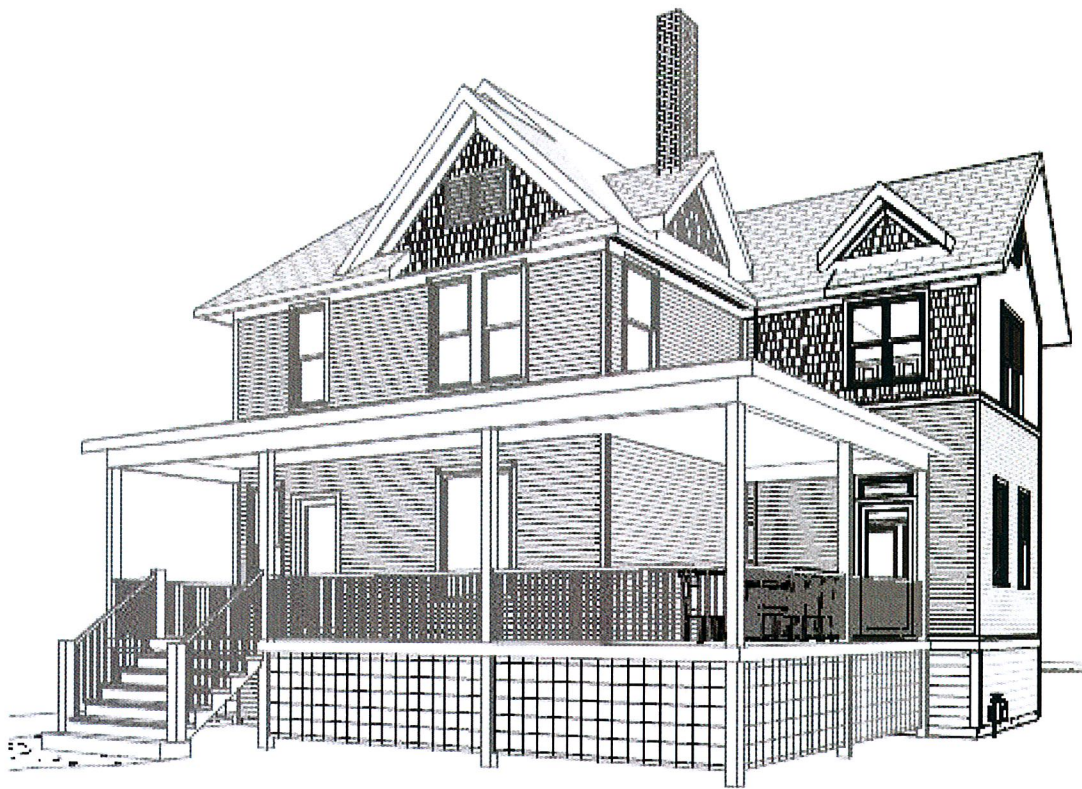
After meeting with the Architectural Review Committee, we made modifications to our design and were somewhat surprised to receive resistance from the Historic Preservation Committee. Our architect, Chris Wollmuth, was able to incorporate a number of their recommendations into a modified design that adheres to the general guidelines provided. An important part of our project includes bumping out to the south into our expansive, and underutilized, side yard. However, the committee feels the bay window on the side of our house is historically significant and should not be altered in any way. In contrast, we feel these side windows are among the least significant features of the home, in great part because of their low visibility location, on the side of the house, mostly hidden behind the side of our porch. Accordingly, we have decided to appeal the committee's decision, given we feel our current design provides the best use of interior space, efficiently utilizes our side yard, and best preserves the open space and birch trees in our backyard.

When meeting with Historic Preservation Committee, we received positive feedback on our design, however, the committee told us they are bound by the guidelines given to them and cannot weigh other factors of judgment into their decision. Given this, we hope the Village will look at this project with a broader scope and perspective. We are committed to the continued beautification and investment in our block and would only pursue a project that would contribute in a positive way to our neighborhood. Attached are photos of our home in its previous and existing state, as well as drawings of our proposed design. As you can see from the photos, the bay windows of concern are hidden from view by the porch. Please feel free to contact us if have any questions regarding this project. We'd be happy to talk with you.

Happy New Year!

Michelle and Tom Gill
238 S. Kenilworth Avenue





Proposed Improvements

