HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION – STAFF REPORT

Address:	**640-644 Madison St**
Meeting Date:	February 14, 2019
Property Owner:	Steve Foley Cadillac
Construction Date:	1924/1927
Zoning:	MS: Madison Street
Project Description:	Landmark consideration hearing

Historic Preservation Ordinance

In accordance with the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance, a public hearing will be held by the Historic Preservation Commission to take testimony regarding the designation of 640-644 Madison St (Hill Motor Sales Company Building, 1924/1927) as an Oak Park Historic Landmark.

The property owners and owners of record within 250 feet of the home were notified of the hearing date, time and location. The Commission made a preliminary determination of eligibility at its January 10, 2019 meeting, agreeing that the nominated building meets the following criteria for Landmark designation:

1. Significance as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States

3. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage, or other aspect, of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States
5. Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of a significant architectural type, or style, or engineering specimen
6. Identification as the work of a builder, designer, architect, craftsperson, engineer or landscape architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States

In addition, the property is at least 50 years old and has sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation.

Landmark Nomination Process

Within 45 days of the hearing, if such a determination is made by the Commission, a resolution and report recommending designation shall be delivered to the nominator, the Village Board, the Village Clerk, the Code Administration Department, and the owner(s) of record. The resolution shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of the full Commission to recommend designation to the Village Board. Within 30 days after receiving the resolution and report, the Village Board shall either designate the historic landmark or reject the nomination by simple majority vote of the full Board.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the nomination as the findings of fact and recommends forwarding a resolution and the findings of fact to the Village Board for approval.

Attachments

- Owner Statement of Position
- Historic Preservation Commission Memo from 1/3/19
- Historic Landmark nomination form
- Historic Landmark nomination report and supplementary materials

Oak Park

Historic Preservation Commission

Owner of Record – Statement of Position

As the owner of record for **640-644 Madison Street**, I understand that an application has been submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission for its designation as an Oak Park Historic Landmark. I have been provided with a copy of that application.

My statement of position on the Landmark designation is as follows:

☐ **YES**, I support the Landmark designation.

Reason:_____

☒ **NO**, I do not support the Landmark designation.

Reason: THERE HAS BEEN NO INTEREST IN THIS BUILDING FOR 20 YEARS. NO ONE WANTS TO BUY IT TO PRESERVE IT.

Name (please print): STEPHEN X. FOLEY JR

Address (please print): 485 HOLLAND CT. LAKE FOREST, IL 60045

Signature:

Date: 1/29/19

Please return no later than February 2, 2019 to:

Susie Trexler
Historic Preservation Urban Planner
Village of Oak Park
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, IL 60302

Failure to respond shall be presumed by the Historic Preservation Commission to indicate your support for the proposed Landmark designation. However, you may appear at the public hearing and testify in opposition to the designation to rebut this assumption.

123 MADISON STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS 60302

Date: January 3, 2019

To: Historic Preservation Commission

From: Susie Trexler, Urban Planner/Historic Preservation

Copy: Paul Stephanides, Village Attorney
Tammie Grossman, Director, Development Customer Services
Craig Failor, Village Planner
Greg Smith, Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins

Re: **644 Madison Street and the Historic Preservation Commission**

Per the request of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) at the December 13, 2018 meeting, a summarized history of 644 Madison St, including its status in the Oak Park Landmark process, is provided below.

Summary

The Foley Rice Cadillac property located at 644 Madison Street (also known as the Hill Motor Sales Company) was previously nominated to be an Oak Park Landmark in 2007. The HPC agreed to defer consideration of Landmark eligibility at the property owner's request. The Deferral time period was continued until September 2018. The 2007 nomination is no longer valid due to established time requirements within the Historic Preservation Ordinance, which state a preliminary determination of eligibility must occur within 15 days of nomination and that a public hearing must occur within 45 days of determination.

A new nomination was submitted by Oak Park residents Frank Lipo and Frank Heitzman to Village staff on December 28, 2018. As per the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance (7-9-6 [B-1]), the Historic Preservation Commission will be required to make a preliminary determination of eligibility at the next regularly scheduled meeting, which will occur on January 10, 2019.

History of 644 Madison St and the HPC

The Foley Rice Cadillac property located at 644 Madison Street was first identified as a potential Oak Park Historic Landmark in the Madison Street Architectural Survey conducted in 2006 in conjunction with the Madison Street Corridor Plan. It was also identified as potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) at that time. The building was

built in 1924 and is significant for its historic association with the Motor Row on Madison, as an example of an early 20th century automobile showroom in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, and for its design by prolific local architects E. E. Roberts and Elmer Roberts. The building was listed on the Landmarks Illinois 2007 Chicagoland Watch List as a potentially threatened historic resource.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) began discussions on the building at their August 9, 2007 Historic Preservation Commission meeting, which the property owner and the Fenwick Foundation attorney attended. At the time, the Fenwick Foundation had a contract to purchase the property. Fenwick intended to find a retail-oriented developer and retain the parking. They expressed they did not intend to demolish the building. Village Manager Barwin provided direction to the HPC to begin the Landmark designation process for the building in 2007. A Landmark nomination was submitted to the HPC on November 8, 2007. Also on November 8, 2007, the HPC responded to a request from the property owner to delay the designation process in order to facilitate the sale of the building, with the understanding that the HPC would move forward with historic designation on a future date and the existing owners would not undertake any demolition or modifications of the property that the Village would otherwise seek to preserve. The HPC agreed to table its consideration of the Landmark nomination report for a period of 60 days beginning November 8. This moratorium was continued at various intervals (60 days, 180 days, and 1 year) until it expired on September 30, 2018. As of December 20, 2018, a request has not been made to continue it.

In 2010, the HPC held a meeting between the Village staff, HPC, property owner, the realtors for the property, Oak Park Development Corporation and potentially others, to discuss the marketing strategy and available incentives to assist in the sale and re-use of the building. In 2010, Village staff provided details on preservation tax incentives to several prospective buyers. In 2011, an ALDI grocery store was proposed for the site. The ARC reviewed the plans and provided recommendations. ALDI's proposal retained the full south elevation facing Madison Street and half of the east elevation facing Wesley Avenue. They proposed demolishing the north half of the east wall due to deterioration and planned to rebuild it in brick to match the original height but without any door or window openings. They proposed to demolish the roof, the interior, and the north and west walls, and planned to construct a new, smaller building behind the two remaining facades. In 2012, the ALDI grocery store withdrew their proposal.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted on November 30, 2018, by Oak Park citizen and former Historic Preservation Commission member Frank Heitzman. Heitzman requested a formal review of eligibility. The SHPO reviewed the property and in a December 5, 2018, letter determined that it is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for commercial history at a local level of significance. The period of significance was identified as 1924 to 1972, beginning with its construction and ending when the last auto dealership left the building. The SHPO stated that the building may also be eligible under Criterion C for architecture but more information would be needed to make that determination.

Please contact Susie Trexler at (708) 358-5443 or strexler@oak-park.us if you have any questions.

Oak Park

Historic Landmark Nomination Form

The Village of Oak Park
Village Hall
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272

708.383.6400
Fax 708.383.6692
TTY 708.383.0048
village@oak-park.us

This form is for use in nominating Oak Park Landmarks. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor or computer to complete all items.

NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic name: Hill Motor Sales Company Building
Common name: Foley-Rice Cadillac

LOCATION

Street & number: 640-44 Madison Street

City or town	State	Code	County	Code	Zip code
Oak Park	Illinois	IL	Cook	031	

CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

[x] Private [ ] Public: Local [ ] Public: State [ ] Public: Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

[x] Building(s) [ ] District [ ] Site [x] Structure [ ] Object

Number of Resources within Property

	Contributing	Noncontributing
1 Buildings		
Sites		
1 Structures		
Objects		
1 Total		

Type of Designation [x] Exterior [ ] Public interior

FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Category: Commerce/Trade
Subcategory: Specialty Store: Auto Showroom

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Category: Vacant
Subcategory:

DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
Category: Early 20th Century American: Commercial Style
Subcategory: Spanish Colonial Revival elements

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
Foundation: Concrete
Roof: Flat/Bituminous; Barrel
Walls: Brick/Stucco
Other: Terra Cotta

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See attached report

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Categories 1, 3, 5 and 6. See narrative for more detail
Areas of Significance

1924 (east) 1927 (west) Continues until 1968
Period of Significance

Eben E. Roberts & Elmer C. Roberts Builders: Harper & Butendorff and Husak & Root
Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See attached report

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

See attached report

Representation in Existing Surveys

Madison Street Corridor Architectural/Historical Survey, 2006

Oak Park Potential Landmark Inventory, 2002

Legal Description (Attach additional pages if necessary)

See attached

Form Prepared By

Frank Lipe
Name/Title

Organization

708-969-4410
Telephone

12-26-18
Date

535 N. Ridgeland
Street & Number

Oak Park — IL — 60302
City or Town — State — Zip Code

Property Owner(s)

Essex Foley Family LLP c/o Steve Filipowski, Attorney — 312-621-4400
Name — Telephone

20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 2900
Street & Number

Chicago — IL — 60606
City or Town — State — Zip Code

Applicant

Frank Lipe and Frank Heitzman — 708 969-4410
Name — Telephone

535 N. Ridgeland and 213 S. Euclid
Street & Number

Oak Park — IL — 60302
City or Town — State — Zip Code

Frank J. Lipe III — Frank G. Heitzman — 12-26-18
Signature — Date

Official Action

Date of Owner Consent

Date of Public Hearing

Result

Date of Village Board Action

Result

640-644 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois

Legal Description

Lots 1 to 7 in James M. Muir's Resubdivision of Lots 1 to 14 both inclusive in the Resubdivision of Lots 8 to 15 both inclusive in F. E. Ballard's Subdivision of Block 5 of Ogden and Jones' Subdivision of the Southwest ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 7, Township 39 North, Range 13 east of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.
Pin#: 16-06-415-009

Hill Motor Sales Company Building
640-644 Madison Street

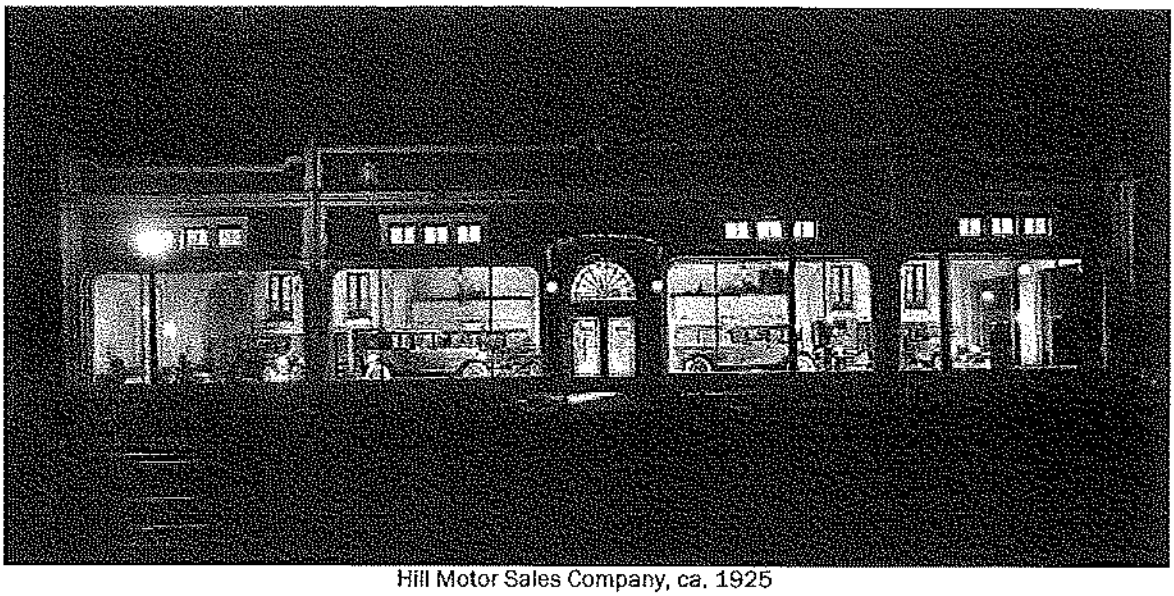
Nomination Report Initially Prepared by Doug Kaarre in November 2007 at the direction of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission. Updated periodically in subsequent years at direction of HPC and formally re-submitted in December 2018 by Frank Lipo and Frank Heitzman

Hill Motor Sales Company Building
640-644 Madison Street

Built:	1924 / 1927
Architect:	Eben E. Roberts / E. E. & E. C. Roberts
Builder:	Harper & Butendorff / Husak & Root

The building at 644 Madison Street is a yellow brick and white terra cotta commercial building at the northwest corner of Madison Street and Wesley Avenue. The property extends the entire block to the west terminating at N. Euclid Avenue. The building is comprised of two wings: the east wing is a one-story building constructed in 1924; the west wing is a two-story building with a barrel vaulted ceiling and bowstring truss roof with skylights, constructed in 1927.

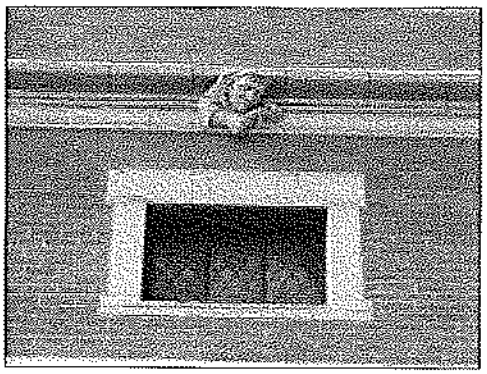
The building was built for the Hill Motor Sales Company by realtor and automobile dealer F. A. Hill, Jr. to house a Packard automobile franchise. The building is an excellent example of a Commercial Style automobile showroom with details reflecting on the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Especially fashionable during the 1920s, elements of the style include terra cotta and stone trim, groups of windows separated by terra cotta columns, arched openings, diamond pane lead glass windows, and Medieval motifs, such as shields, integrated into the building's terra cotta ornamentation.



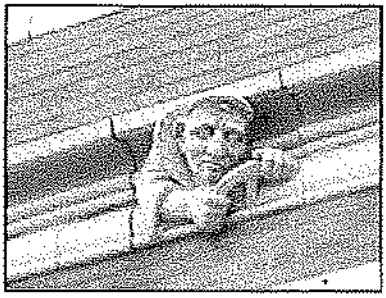
Hill Motor Sales Company, ca. 1925
(Source: Steven L. Hill)

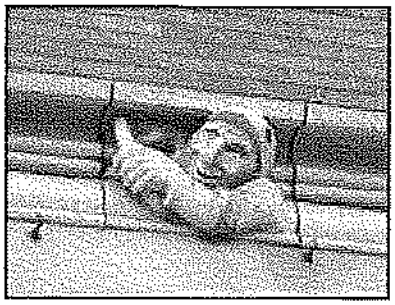
Although the east and west wings of the building were constructed three years apart, they present a unified, harmonious appearance. The yellow face brick on the addition matches the earlier building and was provided by the same company, the Wisconsin Lime & Cement

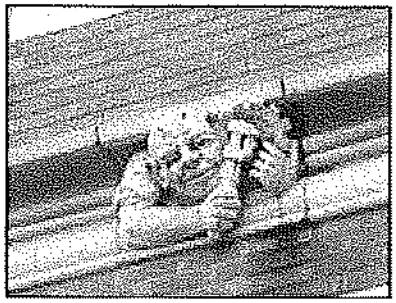
Company.[1] The wall planes along the front (south) elevation are enhanced by large arched window openings accentuated with an array of terra cotta trim, such as clustered columns, graceful arches, sculpted figures, and parapets. Second floor window openings consist of diamond pane lead glass windows with terra cotta surrounds on the east wing and steel sash awning windows from David Lupton's Sons Co. on the west wing, including a large centrally located arched window with a terra cotta keystone header.[2] All steel windows have terra cotta sills.



The building has two main entrances facing Madison Street, each centrally 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 apartment building at 173-181 N. Grove, designed by Roberts and his son Elmer in 1922/1927.



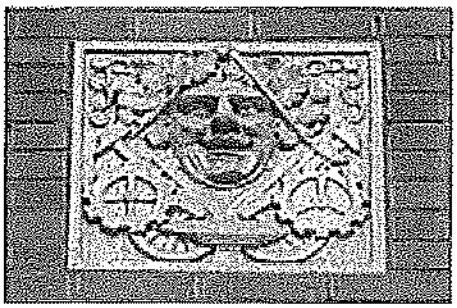




The 1927 west wing addition includes slightly smaller showroom windows, two on each side flanking a central entrance. The entrance is an arched glass opening within a large terra

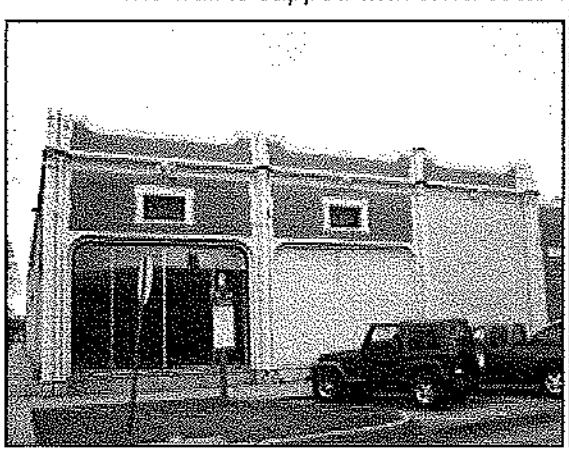
[1] E.E. Roberts & Elmer C. Roberts, *Plan #2612: Specifications for Building Addition at 644 Madison Street*, April 9, 1927.
[2] Ibid.

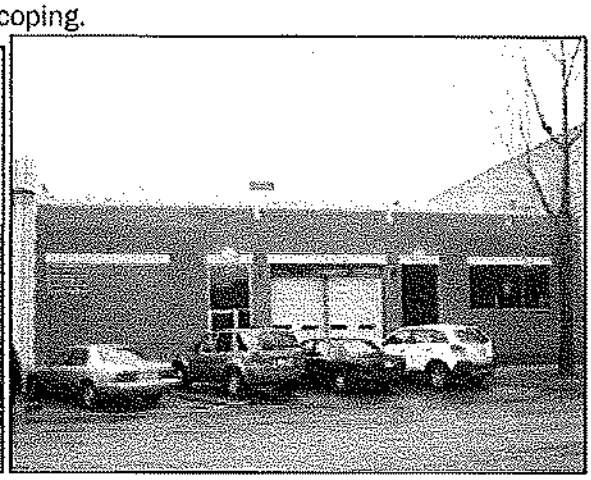
cotta surround with ornament and columns. The arched opening to the east of the entrance includes two doors with sidelights and transoms. This was originally a showroom window which had been replaced with a garage door in 1959. The base of the window openings, with the exception of the altered opening, is gray terra cotta tile. Large rectangular openings hold 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 decorative elements of the main façade – yellow face brick and terra cotta – wrap around to the east side of the building, extending approximately half-way back in three sections divided by clustered terra cotta columns. Here it appears that one of two showroom windows was infilled with stucco. The terra cotta arched openings remain, and the front showroom window glass also remains. A diamond pane lead glass window in a terra cotta surround is centered above each showroom window, similar to the main (south) façade. A third section is completely filled with stucco from the ground to the terra cotta cornice. This opening is not as wide as the others, and may have been either a door or smaller window.

The rear half of the east façade facing Wesley Avenue is simpler, reflecting a more service use. A garage door is centered on the yellow brick façade, flanked by window openings. A steel sash window sits at the north end. Each opening is capped by a simple terra cotta header. A second garage door opening was infilled with brick, though the terra cotta header remains. The wall is capped with terra cotta coping.



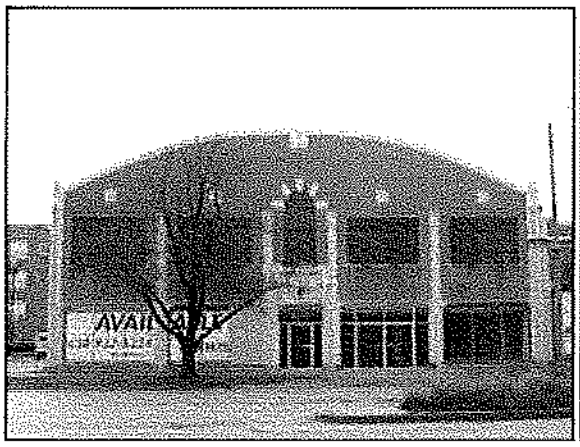


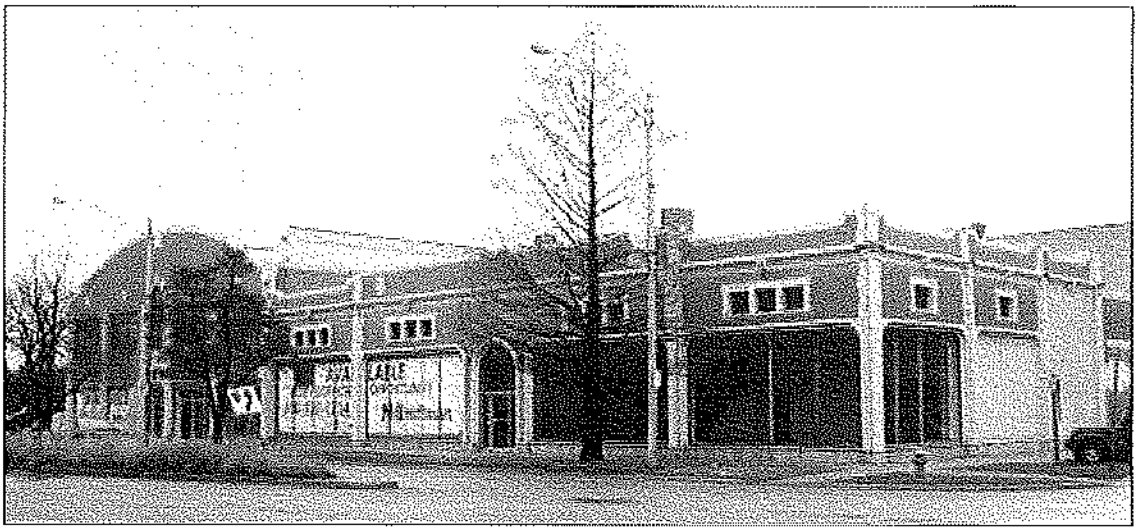
The rear (north) facades are simple brick walls with window and door openings. The east half is yellow brick with no openings, one metal vent, and a stepped parapet with clay tile

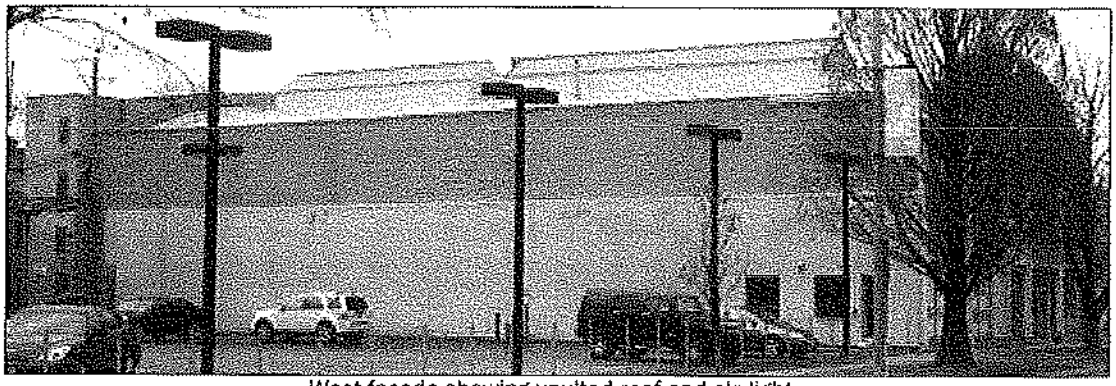
coping. The west half is common brick with steel sash window openings along the second floor. The first floor has one central garage door opening and one entrance door. All first floor window openings have been infilled with brick. The parapet on the vaulted roof is capped with clay tile coping.

The west façade is the most altered. Originally common brick, the entire first floor of the façade has been covered with stucco. Two small window openings and a door were added near the front corner.

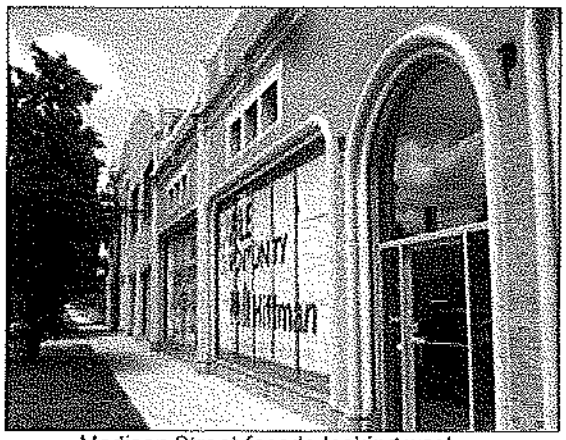
The building was clad in aluminum siding in 1967, and the current owners Essex Foley Family LLC. rehabilitated and restored much of the façade in 1990. The Hill Motor Sales Company building retains very good integrity in terms of its design, materials and setting, and is virtually unchanged from its original appearance on its main façade facing Madison Street, with some reversible changes on the Wesley Avenue facade. Many of the windows on the building are original, while some showroom windows have been replaced.



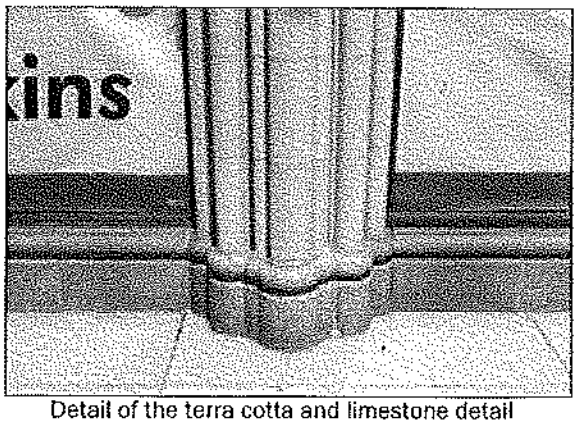




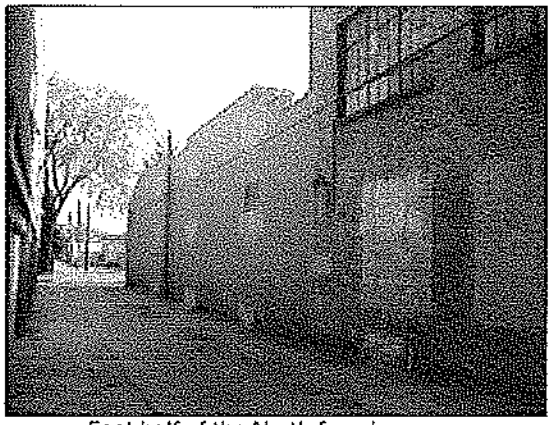
West façade showing vaulted roof and skylights



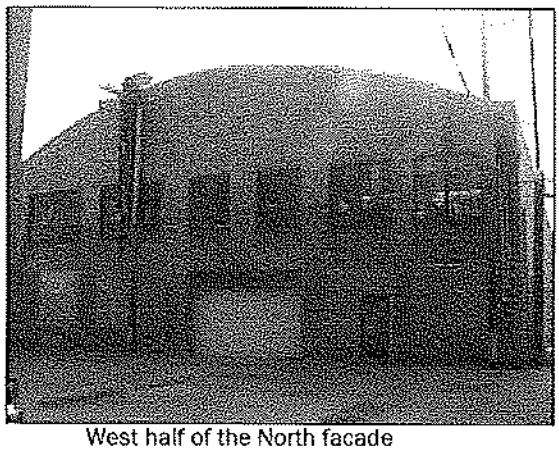
Madison Street façade looking west



Detail of the terra cotta and limestone detail

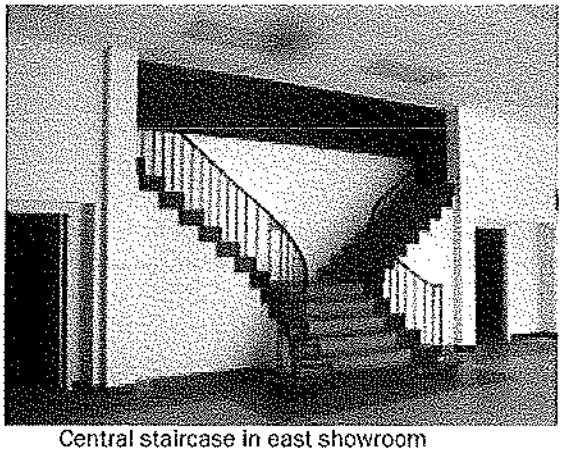


East half of the North façade

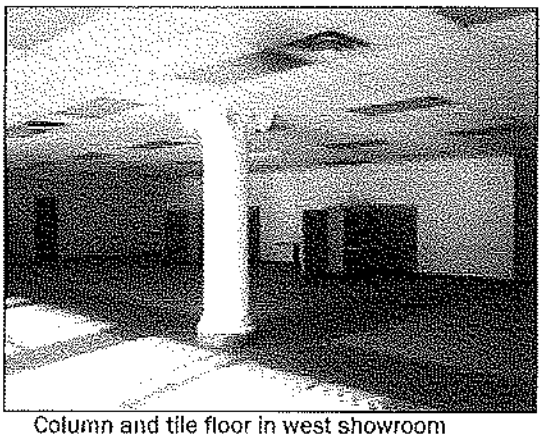


West half of the North facade

The interior of the showroom on the east half of the building retains its original tile floor and curved double stair up to the mezzanine level. A drop ceiling and false walls were installed to cover the original stucco decorative detailing, much of which remains hidden. The west showroom also retains its original tile floor and one stucco column; the remaining details may be covered or missing.

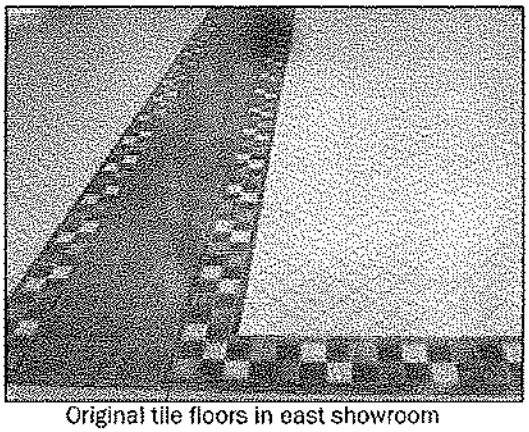


Central staircase in east showroom

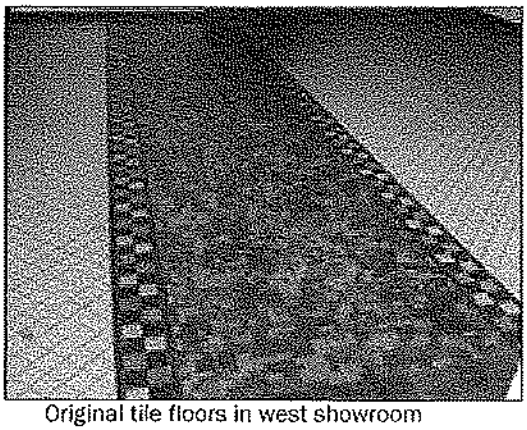


Column and tile floor in west showroom

The rear of the east half is an open garage space with skylights. The west half of the building includes a second floor level accessible via an auto ramp where cars were stored during servicing or sales. The roof includes a bowstring truss roof with large central skylights.

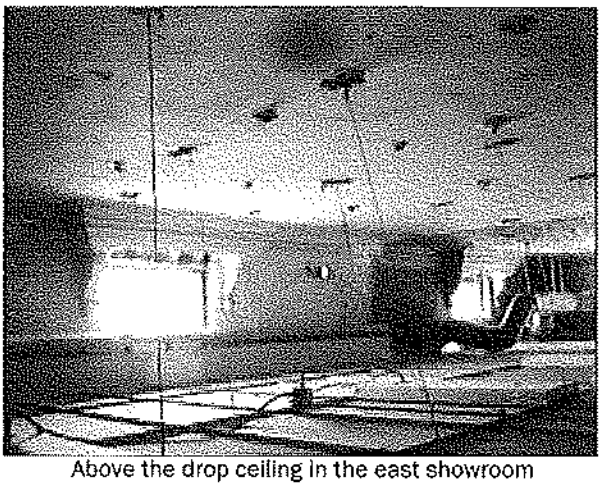


Original tile floors in east showroom

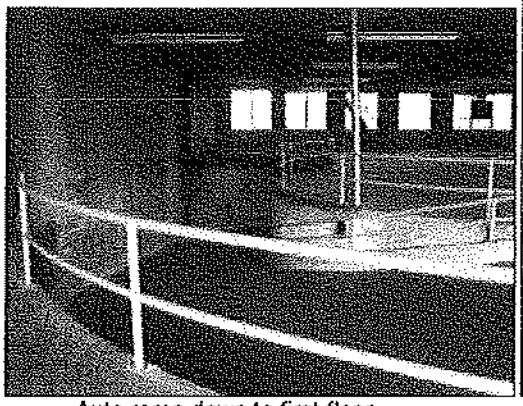


Original tile floors in west showroom

Mezzanine skylight



Above the drop ceiling in the east showroom



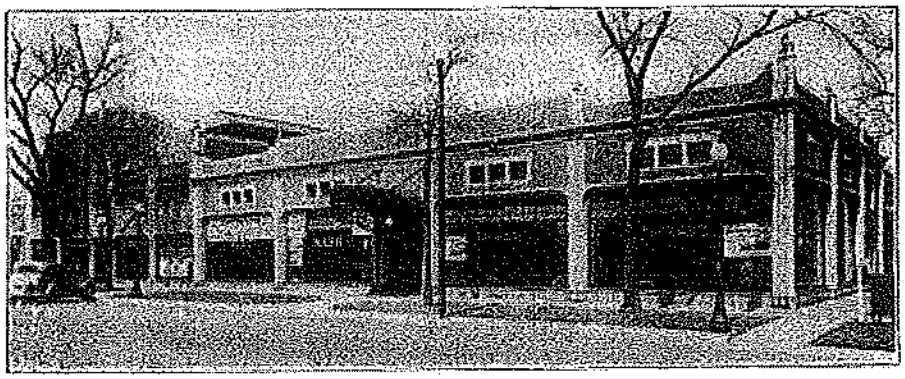
Auto ramp down to first floor

Vaulted bowstring truss roof and skylights

History of the Hill Motor Sales Company Building

The building located at 644 Madison Street, known historically as the Hill Motor Sales Company, is a remarkably intact example of an early auto showroom, and was designed by Eben E. Roberts, a prominent Oak Park architect and Elmer C. Roberts, his son and partner in the firm of E. E. and E. C. Roberts. It is a rare surviving example of an automobile showroom from the early development of the automobile. The Hill Motor Sales Company building is significant for its architectural importance, both as the work of a noted local architect, and as a fine example of a Commercial style Automobile showroom, a unique type of early 20th century architecture. Additionally, the building is the best remaining example of the large auto sales and service industry that occurred along Madison Street from around 1912 through the 1960s, known as Oak Park's "Auto Row."

Hill Motor Sales, 640 Madison



The above structure, owned by Hill Motor Sales, of which F. A. Hill, Jr., is president, houses Packard, Nash and LaFayette. The building was erected in 1923. Late in 1932 Plymouth was added but was quickly replaced by the Nash to which now is added the new LaFayette which is also built by Nash. This well-known concern has long been one of the largest Packard dealers in Illinois and enjoys a position well in the forefront of fine car dealers. The Nash with its new lines and many improvements has proved immensely popular, while the new LaFayette is attracting widespread attention in the low price field. Special organizations sell and service each car. (Holahan Photo)

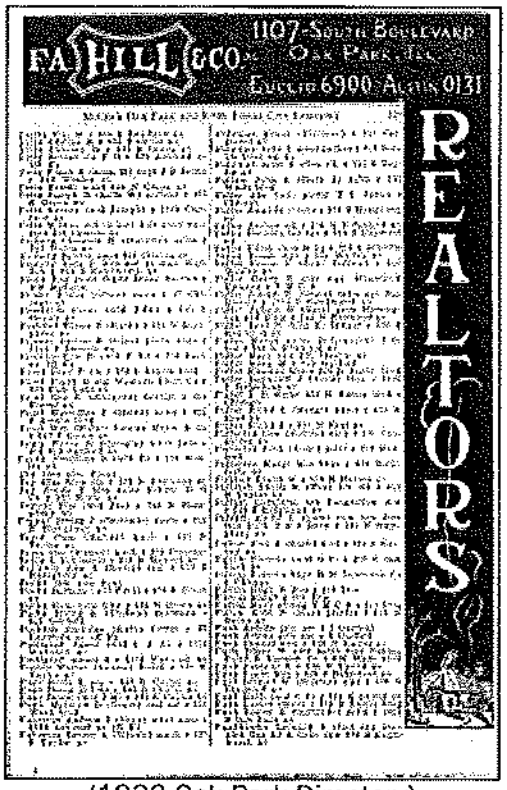
(Oak Leaves, April 13, 1934)

Hill Motor Sales Company

Frederick A. Hill, Sr. was born in Chicago on February 2, 24, 1862 to William H. and Carline (Pound) hill, both natives of England. Hill was educated in the Chicago public schools and began working as an errand boy for Armour & Company at age 14. He remained with the company until age 22, first as a clerk, then a department head in the jobbing division, and finally as a traveling salesman. In 1884 he entered the grain business with the Board of Trade.[3]

In 1889 Hill founded the real estate business F. A. Hill & Co., of which he was president. With offices in downtown Chicago and the Austin neighborhood, Hill developed many homes in the Austin and Oak Park areas, including subdivisions on the 100-400 blocks of S. Humphrey Avenue and the 200 block of S. Cuyler Avenue in the early 20th century. Mr. Hill was credited in 1897 with being one of the earliest home builders in the area:

> *Much of the credit of building up and beautifying Austin and Oak Park is due to the energetic efforts of Mr. F. A. Hill, who, during the past five years, has built upward of 150 houses in the two towns and has put in several miles of streets and stone walks on his five subdivisions.*[4]



(1930 Oak Park Directory)

By 1909 he had opened 18 subdivisions and constructed over 500 homes.[5]

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[3] Weston A. Goodspeed and Daniel Healy, History of Cook County Illinois, Chicago, 1909, p. 745-746.
[4] Edward Pritchard, Illinois of Today and Its Progressive Cities, 1897, p. 133.
[5] Weston A. Goodspeed and Daniel Healy, History of Cook County Illinois, Chicago, 1909, p. 745-746.

Hill married Marie Bartelme on July 29, 2886 and the couple had two children – Frederick A. Hill, Jr. (1888) and Grace Marie (date). The family lived at 303 N. Parkside in Austin until moving to 329 N. East Avenue in Oak Park in the 1920s.[6] F. A. Hill died at home in 1933 at the age of 71.[7] Following her husband's death, Marie Hill moved in with her daughter Grace Hill Corning in Winnetka. She died on June 24, 1942 at age 83.[8]

Mr. Hill's son Frederick A. Hill, Jr. was born in Austin on May 1, 1888 and grew up at the house at 303 N. Parkside. He was educated at Austin High School and attended the University of Michigan. He married Helen Flack, the daughter of Gerial Kinzer Flack, a prominent Chicago Methodist minister, on September 12, 1922. The couple had three children – Frederick A. Hill, III (1923), John Flack Hill (1929) and David Eugene Hill (1932). Following their marriage the couple resided briefly at the Oak park Arms, then moved to a new home at 830 N. Oak Park Avenue. In the 1920s they purchased the house at 514 Linden Avenue, where Hill lived until his death in 1946. Helen Flack sold the house in the early 1950s and moved to the Oak Park Arms, where she remained until her death in 1987 at age 90.[9]

Helen Flack Hill with sons at Oak Park Country Club
(L. to R.) John, David and Fred, ca. 1940
(Source: Steven L. Hill)

F. A. Hill, Jr. worked with his father in the real estate business throughout his life, but also focused on opening and running a Packard dealership with the construction of the building at 644 Madison Street in 1924. Hill Motor Sales Company served the entire west side of Chicago and became the largest independent Packard dealer in Illinois by the 1930s.[10] Packard automobiles first came online in 1899, built by the Packard Motor Car Company of Detroit. By the late nineteen-tens and twenties, they were consistently among the elite in

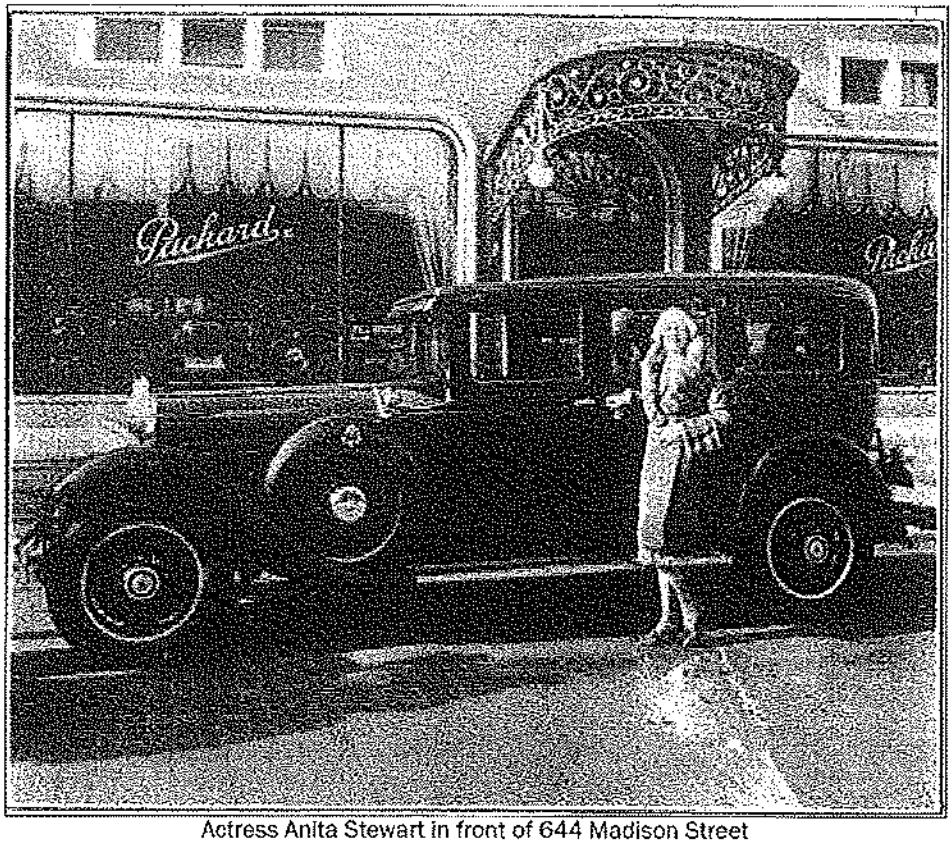
[6] Weston A. Goodspeed and Daniel Healy, History of Cook County Illinois, Chicago, 1909, p. 745-746.
[7] Death of F. A. Hill, Leader for 40 Years, *Oak Leaves*, October 26, 1933.
[8] Obituary: Mrs. Marie B. Hill, Chicago Daily Tribune, June 25, 1942, p. 14.
[9] Family history as provided by Steven L. Hill, grandson of F. A. Hill, Jr., 2011.
[10] President Hill Motor Sales Co., *Oak Leaves*, November 29, 1935, p. 195.

luxury automobiles throughout the country.[11] In addition to the sales room and service department at 644 Madison, they also maintained a salesroom in the Austin neighborhood of Chicago at 4550 W. Washington, now demolished. Hill was a prominent businessman in Oak Park, and in addition to acting as president and treasurer of the Hill Motor Sales Company, was also the president and treasurer of the F. A. Hill & Co. real estate company by 1930 following his father's retirement. Hill died in 1946 following a long illness.

1928 Logo

Packard Second Series 243 Touring 1926
(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Packard)

1913 Wheel Hub Center

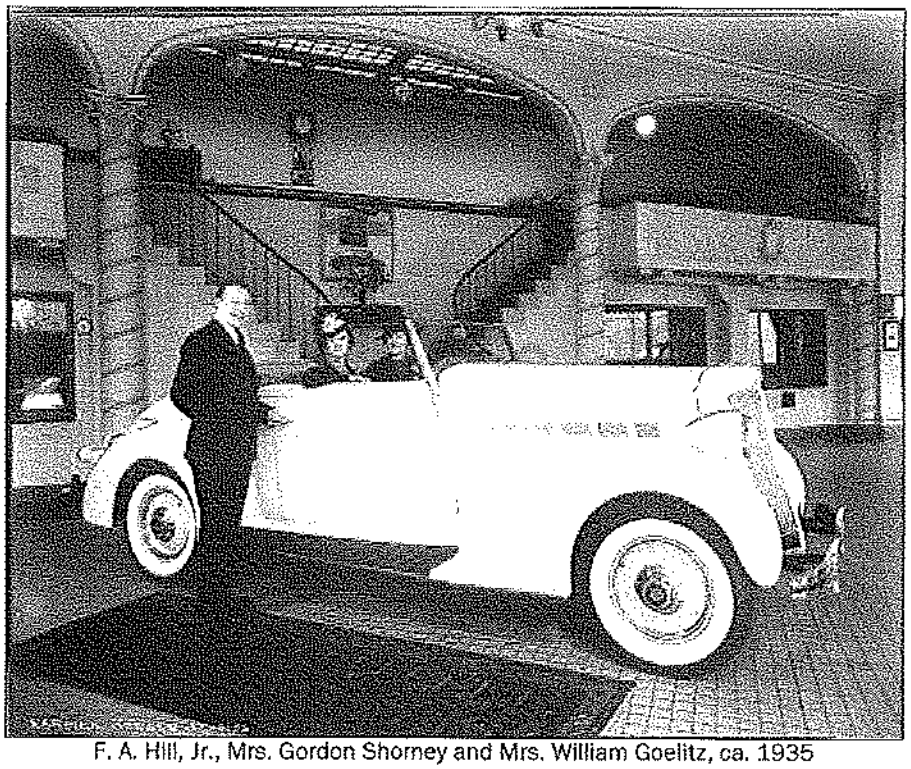


Actress Anita Stewart in front of 644 Madison Street
(Source: Oak Leaves, 1929)

[11] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Packard

(Oak Leaves, April 4, 1935)

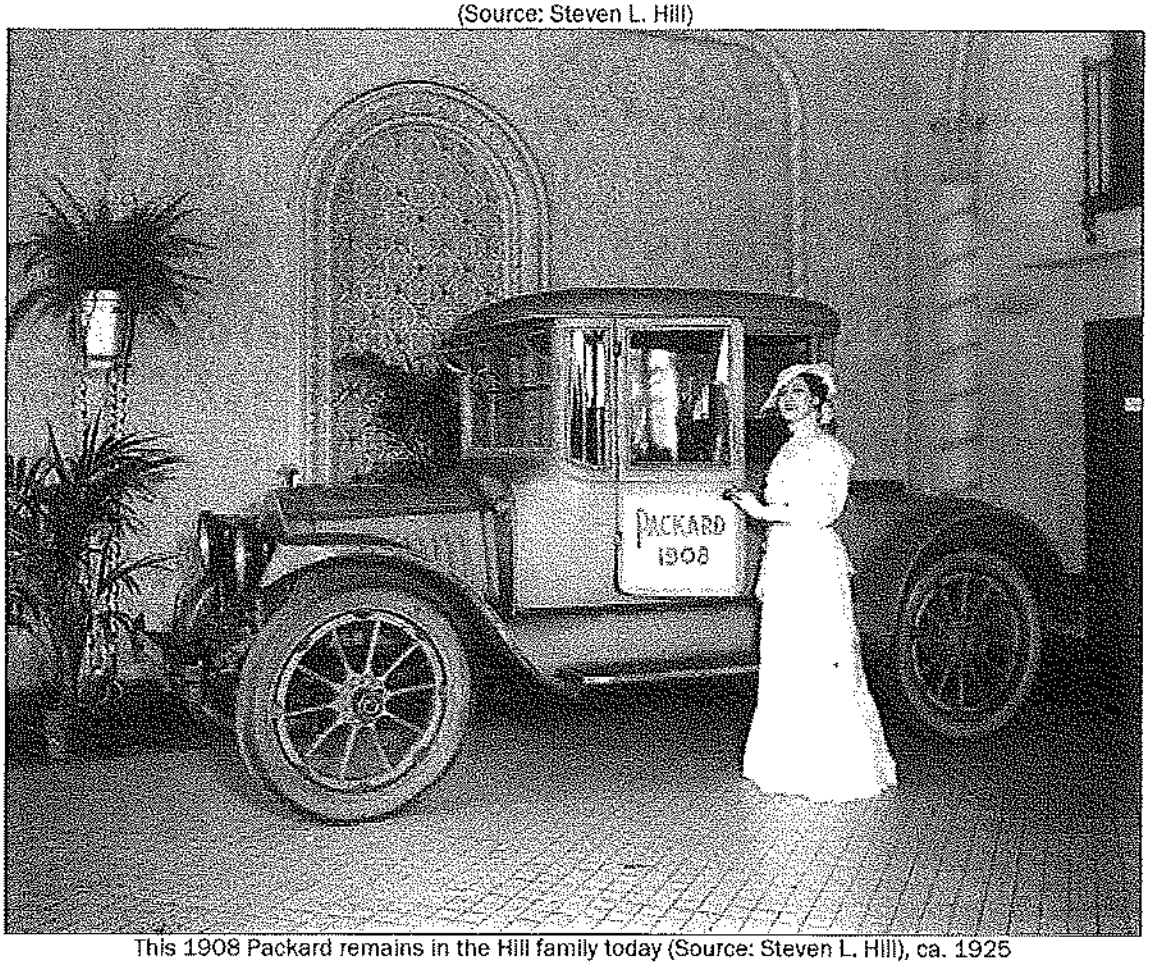
(1930 Oak Park Directory)


F. A. Hill, Jr., Mrs. Gordon Shorney and Mrs. William Goelitz, ca. 1935
(Source: Steven L. Hill)

F. A. Hill, Jr., Mrs. Gordon Shorney and Mrs. William Goelitz, ca. 1935

F. A. Hill, Jr. hosting a fashion show, ca. 1935

(Source: Steven L. Hill)



This 1908 Packard remains in the Hill family today (Source: Steven L. Hill), ca. 1925
(Source: Steven L. Hill)

(Oak Leaves, 1930 Oak Park Directory)

Eben E. Roberts and Elmer C. Roberts, Architects

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1866, E.E. Roberts was the second child of George Smith Roberts, a woodcarver, and Hattie Whitman Sanborn. He attended public school in Boston and Meredith, New Hampshire before entering Tilton Seminary in New Hampshire, where he studied drafting and architecture. George Smith Roberts was skilled in mechanical drawing and art, and is often credited with instructing the young E.E. Roberts in drafting.[12]

E.E. Roberts' older brother, Thomas Elmer, moved to Chicago to study at Rush Medical Center in 1888. The rest of the Roberts family followed, settling in Oak Park. In 1889, E.E. Roberts found employment with Chicago architect Solon S. Beman, first as a timekeeper and later as a supervisor of construction.[13] Roberts soon opened his own architectural practice in Oak Park, emphasizing residential architecture. Roberts employed several draftsman, including William Gray Purcell in 1902 and John Van Bergen in 1908-09. Roy Hotchkiss was his head draftsman for many years, and later opened his own practice in the Village. His most well-known work is the Art Deco Medial Arts Building at 715 Lake Street.[14] He moved his office to Chicago in 1912 to focus on commercial architecture, but always remained a resident of Oak Park. Roberts lived with his wife, Rossie (Willey) Roberts in a house of his design at 1019 Superior Street until his death in 1943. They had two children, Margaret Willey (b. 1895) and Elmer Clifford (b. 1896). Roberts made his son Elmer a partner in his practice in 1922, four years before poor health prompted Roberts to partially retire. He continued to live in his house at 1019 Superior until his death in 1943.[15]

Roberts enjoyed a prolific career, and he was fluent in many architectural styles. His early homes were simple, clapboard two-story structures with steep roofs, sometimes with Victorian or Classical detailing. Roberts also designed Queen Anne Style homes, such as the Hoover house of 1896, located at 521 N. Euclid Avenue, which features an octagonal tower, several bays, and a gabled roof. The Sampson Rogers House at 537 N. Euclid Avenue, built in 1895, is constructed in the Shingle Style and has an overhanging attic, off-center entrance, and octagonal bays. The 1908 Elliott House, located at 539 N. Oak Park Avenue, employs half-timbering in its Tudor Revival design, a nationally popular style in the 1910s.

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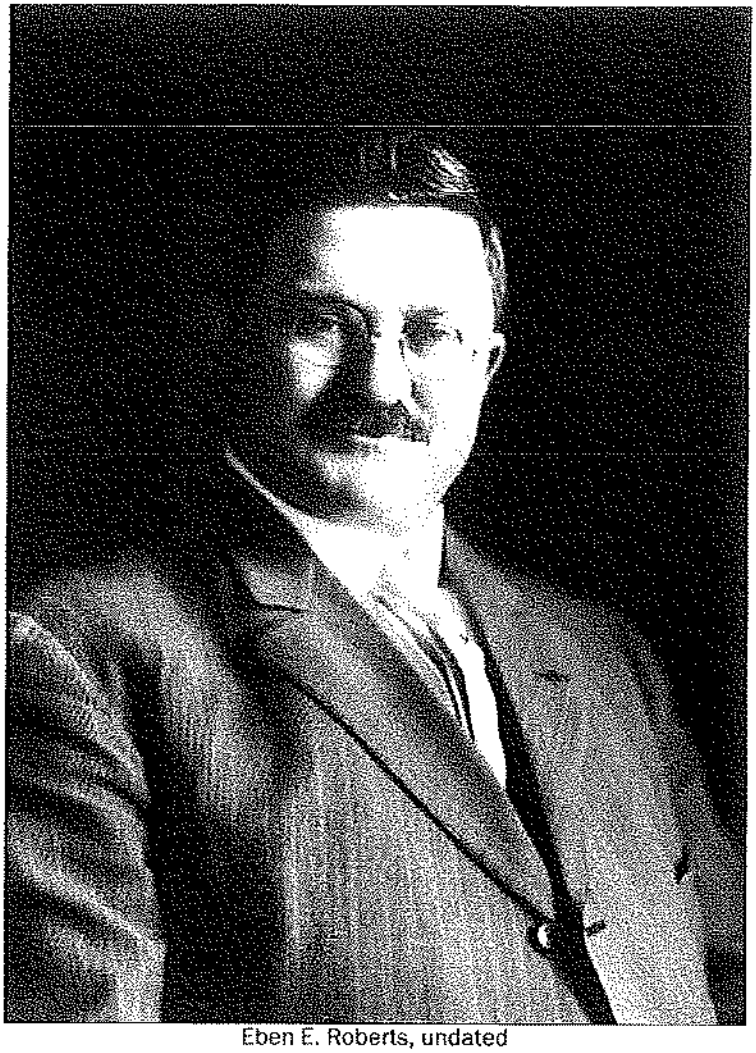
[12] Katherine Keleman. Oak Park Historic Landmark nomination for 625 S. Oak Park Avenue, prepared for property owner Kevin Cuthbert and submitted on July 26, 2006, p. 6.

[13] Unpublished biographical essay on E.E. Roberts written by his grandson, Howard Roberts Drew, dated December 1993.

[14] Don Gunning. Wright Plus 2004 Research Report for the Charles Lorenzen House, 635 Fair Oaks.

[15] Don Gunning. Wright Plus 2004 Research Report for the Charles Lorenzen House, 635 Fair Oaks.

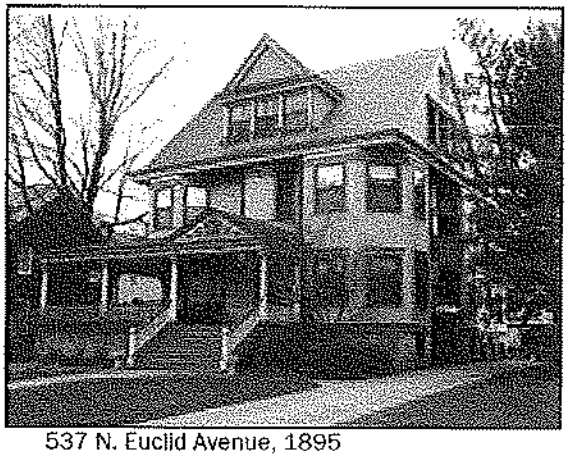


Eben E. Roberts, undated
(Source: Historical Society of Oak Park & River Forest)

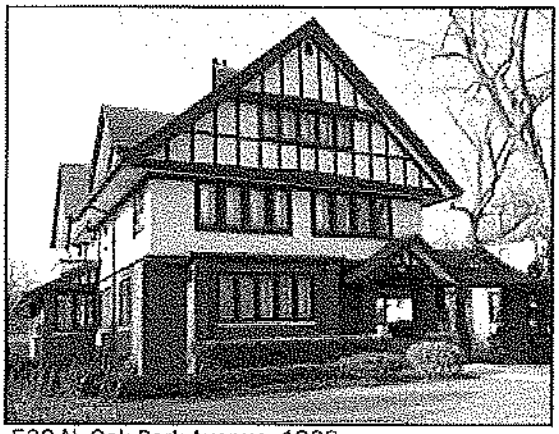
Roberts also designed such public buildings as the 1908 Prairie Style Scoville Building on Lake Street and Oak Park Avenue and the original Village Hall, at 635 Lake Street, a Neoclassical structure built in 1903 (now demolished). A number of Oak Park churches and schools also were designed by Roberts. The Village of Oak Park has declared several of his buildings as Historic Landmarks, including the Park Grove and Park Manor apartments, 173-181 N. Grove (1922, 1926-27), the Roberts Building, 300-304 N. Grove (1926), and the Maze Branch Library, 845 Gunderson (1936).[16]

[16] These three buildings were constructed in the later part of Roberts' career. Although E.E. Roberts was still a partner and advisor in the firm, his son, Elmer, drove the designs for their commissions following 1926.

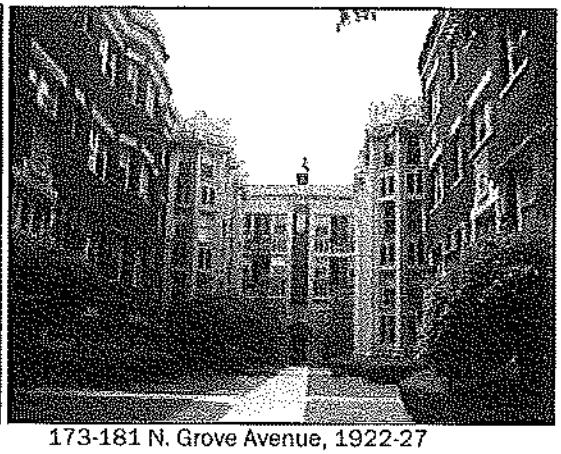
521 N. Euclid Avenue, 1896



537 N. Euclid Avenue, 1895



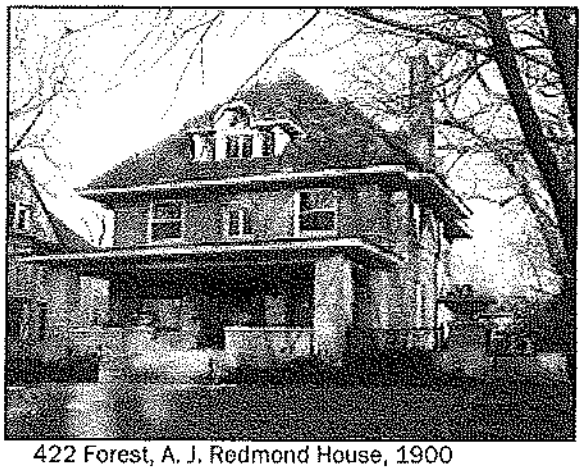
539 N. Oak Park Avenue, 1908



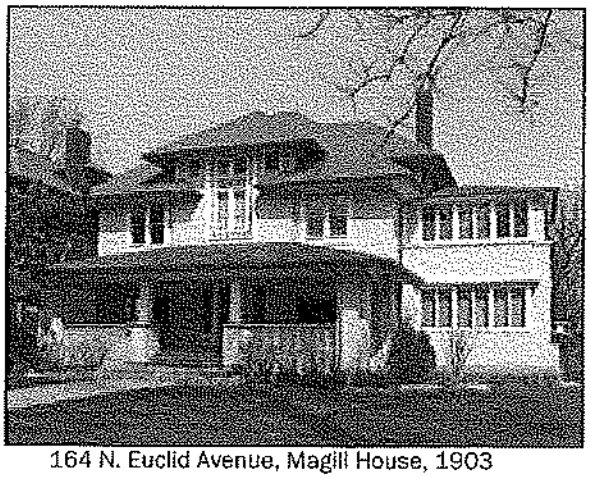
173-181 N. Grove Avenue, 1922-27

E. E. Roberts made an indelible mark on the landscape of Oak Park during his long, productive career, designing dozens of homes, schools, churches, apartment blocks and cultural buildings throughout the village. Roberts developed a large architectural practice in Oak Park, employing several draftsmen. His residential designs of the 1890s catered to popular tastes, featuring the Queen Anne, Shingle and Tudor Revival styles. An excellent example of Roberts' early Queen Anne designs is the Sampson Rogers House at 537 N. Euclid Ave. (1896), a picturesque structure with a steeply pitched roof, dormers and bay windows. The Joseph and Sampson Dunlop houses at 407 and 417 N. Kenilworth, also built in the mid-1890s, are streamlined versions of the Queen Anne.

The A.J. Redmond House at 422 Forest Avenue (1900) marks a fundamental change in Roberts' residential work: it had a horizontal, rather than a vertical emphasis, broad windows, wide eaves, and massive piers supporting a full-façade porch. Many of the homes designed by Roberts in the early 1900s were based on a similar design that was varied through decorative devices, such as dormers. This stock house type featured a four-square plan, wood-trimmed stucco exterior, and a full-width porch with massive corner piers. Elements such as hipped roofs and overhanging eaves were reminiscent of the Prairie style. Examples of this design type are the Henry P. Magill House at 164 N. Euclid (1903) and the Frank W. Hall House at 412 S. Clinton Avenue (1904).

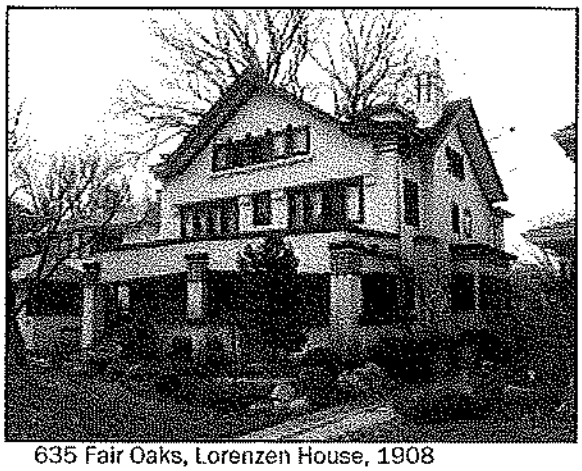


422 Forest, A. J. Redmond House, 1900

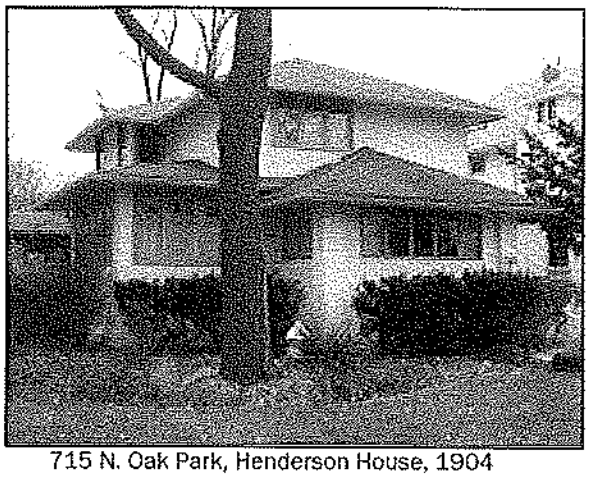


164 N. Euclid Avenue, Magill House, 1903

Following the Redmond and Magill houses, Roberts designed dozens of solid, two-story, symmetrical homes in the modern, rectilinear style (later referred to as Prairie or Prairie-influenced), often varying only the dormers. Hipped roofs, full-width porches, and broad eaves are recurrent. Houses such as the geometric Lorenzen House (1908) at 635 Fair Oaks Avenue, with its heavy porch posts, and the Henderson House (1904) at 715 N. Oak Park Avenue, with its low roof and complex arrangement of block-like parts, reflect the influence of the Prairie School on Roberts' architecture.[17]



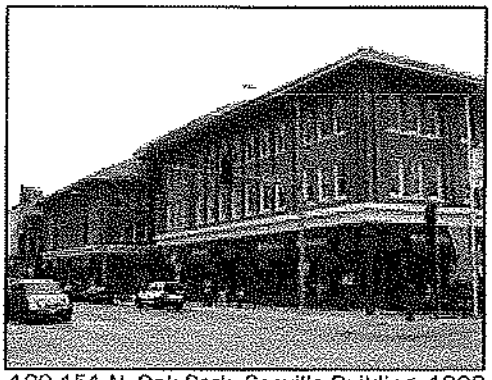
635 Fair Oaks, Lorenzen House, 1908



715 N. Oak Park, Henderson House, 1904

Although best known for his residential work, Roberts also designed some of Oak Park's most prominent public, commercial, educational and ecclesiastical buildings. His Oak Park Village Hall, a stately Neoclassical structure, was located on the corner of Euclid and Lake Street (1903, demolished). The Prairie style Scoville Building at the southwest corner of Lake Street and Oak Park Avenue (1908) remains one of Oak Park's most distinctive visual landmarks. Roberts also designed the original West Suburban Hospital building at 518 N. Austin Boulevard (1912), a red brick six-story block with Classical detailing.

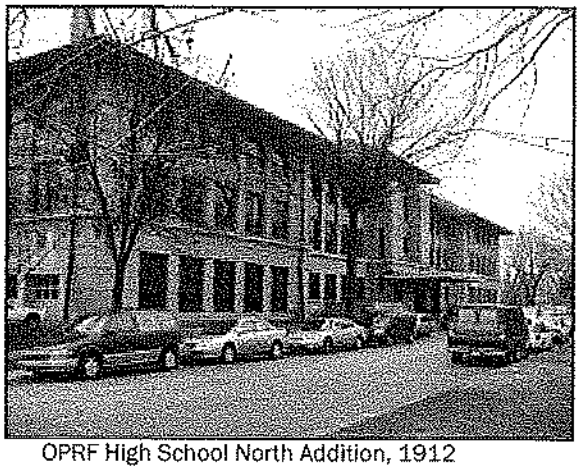
[17] Ibid, p. 6.



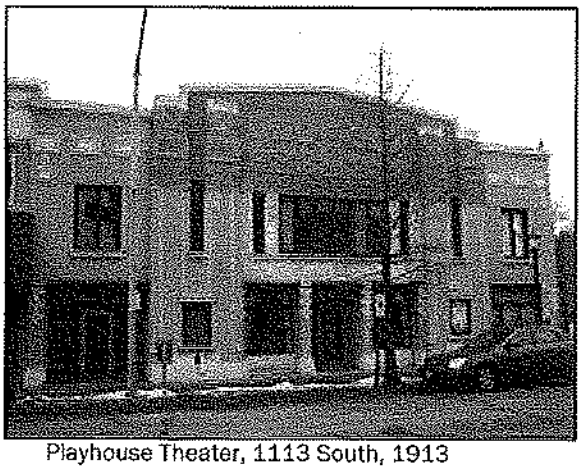
129-151 N. Oak Park, Scoville Building, 1908

3 Erie (500 N. Austin), West Suburban Hospital, 1911

Several of Roberts' school designs were erected in 1907, including Whittier at 713 N. Harvey, Lincoln at 1111 S. Grove, and Washington Irving at 1125 S. Cuyler. His most prominent school design, however, was the large north addition for Oak Park River Forest High School (1912), which housed the physical education, manual training and domestic science departments. Ecclesiastical buildings include Trinity Lutheran Chapel and Church at 300 N. Ridgeland Ave. (1909, 1916) and United Methodist Church at 405 S. Euclid Ave. (1922), a Late Gothic Revival structure. The Playhouse Theater at 1111 S. Boulevard (1913)--now an office building--was built as a 700-seat theater with a stage suitable for vaudeville performances.



OPRF High School North Addition, 1912



Playhouse Theater, 1113 South, 1913

Roberts' son Elmer obtained his degree in architecture from the University of Illinois, with additional studies at the University of Michigan, and became active in the offices of his father for various periods beginning in 1913. Following overseas service as a Lieutenant in the army during World War I, Elmer became a regular member of the staff and was admitted as a partner in 1924. By the middle of that decade, he had completely taken over the designing duties of the office, and E. E. Roberts & Elmer C. Roberts, Inc., embarked upon a different character of design. Previously, the office had specialized in smaller homes and church work – they had now chosen to undertake larger structures such as schools,

convalescent homes, and apartment buildings. In 1926, the elder Roberts' health forced him into partial retirement, although he continued as an advisor for some time thereafter.

In addition to his passion for architecture, Eben E. Roberts also maintained a great interest in art throughout his life, devoting much of his spare time to painting and sketching. He was a founding member of both the Oak Park River Forest Art League and the Business Mens' Art Club of Chicago, serving on both boards for several years. Later in life, he studied at the Art Institute of Chicago under Karl A. Buehr, exhibiting paintings at the Palette and Chisel Academy in Chicago and the Carson Pirie Scott & Company Galleries.[18]

Harper and Butendorff Company, Contractors

Harper and Butendorff was a masonry contracting firm operating in Oak Park from 1890 through the 1920s. The firm worked both on private residences as well as public and commercial buildings. The firm worked with many of the prominent architects of the day, including E.E. Roberts, Henry Fiddelke, Charles E. White, Jr., Tallmadge & Watson and Frank Lloyd Wright. Examples of the homes they constructed include the following:

- *Oscar Balch House* at 611 N. Kenilworth, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1911;
- the *Isaac Conrad House* at 321 Clinton, designed by E.E. Roberts in 1902;
- the *Ernest Hemingway Boyhood Home* at 600 N. Kenilworth, designed by Henry Fiddelke in 1906;
- the *James Skinner House* at 605 Linden, designed by Charles White in 1909;
- and the *George Hemingway House* at 228 N. Scoville, designed by Tallmadge & Watson in 1919.

They also constructed prominent commercial structures such as the following:

- *1100-06 Chicago Avenue* (home of Peterson's Ice Cream), designed by E. E. Roberts in 1925.
- several buildings on the 100 block of N. Marion Street in downtown Oak Park,
- the *Lovetts Building* at the southeast corner of Lake and Marion Streets, constructed in 1915.
- and the Buick dealership owned by F. A. Hill at 700-710 Madison Street (home of Car-X), designed by E. E. Roberts in 1922.

Their office in the 1920s was at 1028 North Boulevard.

James Harper, president of the company, was a master craftsman and also ran for Village Trustee in 1907 as an Independent Voter's party candidate. A native of the Scottish Orkney Islands, Harper came to the United States in 1885 and Oak Park in 1890. He lived with his wife at 1122 Chicago Avenue.[19]

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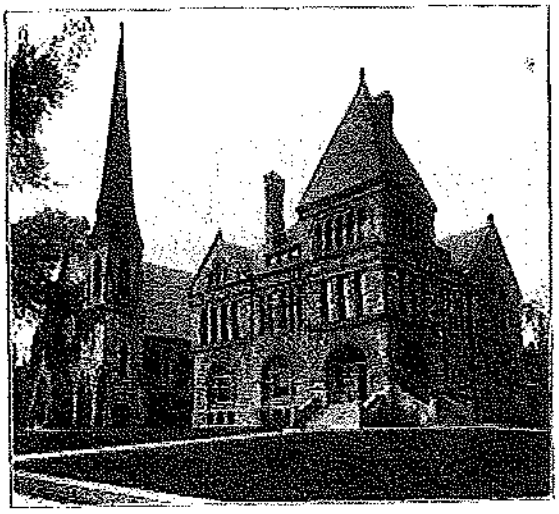
[18] Edna Sellroe. "Eben E. Roberts—Architect, Painter and Distinguished Citizen of Oak Park," *Artistry*, Nov. 1940.

[19] James Harper, *Oak Leaves*, March 23, 1907, p. 18.



SCOVILLE INSTITUTE

OAK PARK'S Historic Social Center and Public Library. James Harper, senior member of the firm of Harper & Butendorff, did his first work on this building as a master craftsman. ¶In the years since, our firm has done high-class mason work and has left its mark to last for generations.

Harper & Butendorff Co.

Mason Contractors

Office: 1028 North Boulevard **Telephone: Oak Park 1416**

We are known throughout the community for our substantial work on public buildings and beautiful residences. For more than twenty years we have been engaged in the Mason Construction work in Oak Park and vicinity.

We will be glad to talk to you in regard to any work you contemplate having done this coming Spring and Summer. ¶Estimates furnished upon request and all orders given prompt attention

JAMES HARPER, Pres. ALFRED STELZER, Treas. H. W. MEYER, Sec'y

(Source: Oak Leaves, May 28, 1921, p. 177)

Oak Park's Motor Row

As the rise of the automobile took place at the beginning of the 20th century, new auto dealers were finding that business was better when grouped with other auto-related services on a road that was excellent for driving conditions – not a sure thing in the early 20th century. In Oak Park that was Madison Street – a wide four lane street connecting Oak Park

to downtown Chicago. Beginning as early as 1912, automobile dealers and service garages began appearing on Madison. Early dealers included the following:

- Madison Motor Company at the northwest corner of Oak Park and Madison opened in 1917 – later Clarke Pontiac;
- Nodell Motors, selling Plymouths and DeSotos at 541 Madison Street;
- Hill Motor Sales Company at 644 Madison opening in 1924;
- Oak Park Buick Sales built in 1926 at 702 Madison;
- Pontiac Sales Room built in 1926 at 52 Madison;
- Mudd Lincoln built in 1924 at 133-141 Madison - later Emich Chevrolet;
- and numerous other dealers, garages and repair shops.

From the early 1920s through the 1950s, the Village ranked behind only Chicago's famed Motor Row on S. Michigan Avenue and Rockford as a top destination for buying cars.[20] Many of the showrooms changed hands over the years as tastes in automobiles changed. However, beginning in the 1960s the location along Madison was no longer desirable for selling cars due to limited lot sizes, zoning restrictions and high interest rates.[21] One by one each dealer moved or closed. Many of the dealer showrooms were either used for other purposes or demolished. Today only 15 properties remain as a reminder of Madison Street's Motor Row heyday. Although many of these buildings are architecturally relatively simple, the concentration of these business types along Madison Street is a distinctive historical legacy of the first decades of the twentieth century.[22]

The Hill Motor Sales company building is by far the most significant auto-related building on Madison as it is the only remaining building not significantly altered and, until 2007, still in use as a dealer showroom.

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[20] Bill Dwyer, "From Horseless Carriages to Hybrids," *Oak Leaves*, December 13, 2006, p. 27.
[21] Ibid., p. 32.
[22] Village of Oak Park, Madison Street Architectural Historical Study, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, February 20, 2006, p. 10.

(The Oak Parker, November 29, 1935)

<u>Building Timeline</u>

The building was owned by the Hill family until 1975.
1924 to 1953: Hill Motor Sales Company
1956: Ganey Motor Sales
1961: Paul Hall's Madison Street Motors
1963 to 1966: Tom Coward Lincoln Mercury
1968 to 1972: Royal Lincoln Mercury
1973 to 1975: Vacant/Storage
1976 to 1989: Meetinghouse Display (John Davis)
1990 to 2017: Essex Foley Family LLC (Foley-Rice Cadillac until 2007)

Criteria for Designation

According to Section 7-9-6(B) of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission must make a preliminary determination of eligibility after receiving a nomination. A determination of preliminary eligibility must be based upon a finding that there is a likelihood that a nominated historic landmark will meet one or more of the "Criteria for Designation" set forth in Section 7-9-5 of this Article.

The Hill Motor Sales Company was nominated under the following criteria:

(1) Significance as an example of the architectural development or heritage of the Village of Oak Park;

(3) Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic or social heritage of the Village of Oak Park, the State, or the United States;

(5) Embodiment of those distinguishing characteristics of a significant architectural style;

(6) Identification as the work of an architect whose individual work is significant in the development of the Village of Oak Park, the State of Illinois and the United States;

In addition, the property is at least 50 years old and has sufficient integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration.

Bibliographical References

Primary and unpublished sources

Building permit no. 14266, issued January 8, 1924 to F. A. Hill, owner. Harper & Butendorff, contractors, sales and service station, estimated value $40,000.

Building permit no. 18031, issued June 7, 1927 to F. A. Hill, Sr., owner. Husak & Root, contractors, E. E. and Elmer C. Roberts, architects, sales and service station addition, estimated value $95,000.

Building permit no. 29116, issued April 17, 1959 to Continental Bank, owner. R. H. Clemence Co., Inc., contractors, remove plate glass window and replace with overhead garage door.

Building permit no. 31988, issued November 17, 1967 to Ford Tax Affairs, owner. Ray Blankenship, contractor, and A. A. Lipsey, architect, altering exterior of building.

Building permit no. 8936, issued October 2, 1990 to Foley-Rice Partnership, owner. Fraser Construction, contractors, and Realmuto, Steffen & Loftus, architects, remodeling of existing automobile sales areas and repairs to existing automobile storage.

Roberts, E.E. and Elmer C. Roberts. *Plan #2612, Specifications for Building Addition at 644 Madison Street*, April 9, 1927.

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"Death of F. A. Hill, Leader for 40 Years," Oak Leaves, October 26, 1933.

Dwyer, Bill. *"From horseless carriages to hybrids: For much of the 20th century, Oak Park was an automotive mecca, Part 1 of 2."* Oak Leaves, December 13, 2006, p. 27-32.

Dwyer, Bill. *"Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Auto Row on Madison Street was never dull, Part 2 of 2."* Oak Leaves, December 20, 2006, p. 27-32.

"F. A. Hill, Jr. to Wed Miss Flack Today." Chicago Daily Tribune, September 12, 1922.

Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920 Population.

Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population.

"Funeral today for F. A. Hill Sr., Realty Veteran." Chicago Daily Tribune, October 26, 1933, p. 16.

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"Obituary: Mrs. Marie B. Hill." Chicago Daily Tribune, June 25, 1942, p. 14.

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December 28, 2018

Chairman Christopher Payne

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission

123 Madison Street, Oak Park, IL 60302

Dear Chris:

Enclosed is a completed application to nominate the building at 644 Madison Street to be designated an Oak Park Landmark. Designed by architect E. E. Roberts in 1924 and 1927, this building has long been identified as significant and worthy of preservation, being cited in the 2006 Village of Oak Park Madison Street survey as one of only three buildings in the corridor as eligible to be individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places because of its architectural significance. Earlier this month, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency issued a letter stating that they have determined 644 Madison, the Hill Motor Sales building, to be eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. By making this decision, the State of Illinois will immediately deliver the same level of importance and protection for this building as if it were listed on the National Register. Additionally, naming 644 Madison as an Oak Park Landmark will further recognize its importance and extend protection of this valuable architectural resource for the continuing benefit of our community as part of Madison Street redevelopment.

This is an unusual Landmark application in the sense that it was first requested in October 2007 by a unanimous vote of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission. The application was tabled in November 2007 at the request of the building owner with the stipulation it would be returned to the HPC agenda. I understand that has been done periodically in the years since 2007.

Frank Heitzman and I, both former members of the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission, are formally re-submitting this application.

Attached to this letter are materials that I request be included as part of this application and shared with the members of the HPC, including the December 4, 2018 letter from Andrew Heckenkamp, Illinois National Register Coordinator; HPC minutes from the October and November meetings of 2007; and three sample news articles (among many others) that show that the significance of this structure have been in the public record for more than a decade.

Please feel free to contact me by email or on my cell phone, 708-969-4410 with questions. Thanks!

Frank Lipo

Frank Lipo, 535 North Ridgeland, Oak Park

Illinois Department of
Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
www.dnr.illinois.gov

Bruce Rauner, Governor
Wayne A. Rosenthal, Director

December 4, 2018

Frank Heitzman
111 North Marion Street
Oak Pak, IL 60301

RE: Hill Motor Sales Company Building
640-644 Madison Street
Oak Park – Cook County

Dear Mr. Heitzman:

Thank you for requesting an assessment of the above property's eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

We have reviewed the information you provided and have evaluated the property in terms of the National Register Criteria. Based on this review, we believe the property would be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area commercial history at a local level of significance. The period of significance would begin in 1924, when construction began, until 1972, when the last auto dealership that occupied the building was closed. To nominate the building under Criterion C for architectural significance, staff would need additional clarifications on existing architectural features. We would be happy to work with you on this once the writing of the National Register Form is started.

Please feel free to contact me at 217/785-4324 if you have any questions about the National Register listing process.

Sincerely,

Andrew Heckenkamp
Survey & National Register Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office

- In reviewing the standards in the variance application, it appears that it does not meet No. 6 – altering the character of the neighborhood. It also does not appear to meet No. 4.
- The Commission speaks for the historic district as a neighbor.
- There is an issue of the appearance of the lights during the day. Something that big will be invasive.
- Light pollution is a potential important issue.
- Both sides of the application are understandable. In theory the High School could build 45-foot high lights.

Under Section 7-9-1 of the preservation ordinance, which is the purpose of the ordinance, items B and C were cited as relevant. The application goes against both items:

B. Conserving and improving the value of properties designated as historic landmarks or located within historic districts;

C. Enhancing the attractiveness of the Village to homeowners, visitors, tourists, and shoppers and, thereby, supporting business, commerce and industry in the Village and providing economic benefits to the Village;

The Commission requested that their comments be forwarded to the Zoning Board of Appeals for consideration in the public hearing.

K. 644 Madison Street/Foley-Rice (Potential Landmark Designation)
The property owner was not present.

Chair Gilbert reviewed the process to date. The Commission met with the property owner in August and he argued that the building is not historic. The potential new owner also stated that they did not want any restrictions on the property as they wished to sell it for redevelopment. The Commission did not initiate Landmark designation at that time as they wanted more information and feedback from the Village Board. The building was identified as Significant and eligible for the National Register in the Madison Street Corridor Architectural Survey. The building was also recently listed on Landmarks Illinois' 2007 Chicagoland Watch List. They have received direction from the Village Manager to pursue Landmark designation.

The Commission discussed a cursory inspection of the building. The owner emphasized changes he had made to the structure. There appears to be Board and Staff support for designation.

The Commission discussed Landmark designation without owner consent. They have never initiated the process without it in the past. They want to be clear they have support from the Board.

Motion by Lipo to direct Commission Staff to prepare a Landmark nomination and initiate the designation process. Second by Susmilch. Vote: 10-0.

Staff can determine if they should prepare the nomination or a consultant. A consultant may lend more credibility to the process.

N. OTHER BUSINESS

Architectural Review Committee: Report on September 26, 2007 meeting. The meeting notes were provided to the Commission.

O. ADJOURN

Motion by Susmilch to adjourn. Second by Diamond. Motion approved: 10-0.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 pm. Minutes prepared by Doug Kaarre, Urban Planner.

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alterations will continue to be reviewed by the HPC; and c) the HPC was not unanimous as there was some concern about the impact of the zoning change. Second by Diamond. Vote: 7-2-1 (Freerksen recused).

E. HPC 07-52: 644 Madison Street (Preliminary Determination of Eligibility for Landmark Designation)
Terry Rice was present representing the property owners.

Commissioner Diamond left at 9:05 p.m.

Chair Gilbert stated that the a letter from the attorneys representing Mr. Rice and the other property owners has been submitted requesting a 60 day delay in the Commission's preliminary determination of eligibility for the designation of 644 Madison Street as an Historic Landmark.

Terry Rice, property owner, stated that the Foley-Rice business has closed and Fenwick High School has backed out of the sale of the property. He never intended to do anything to the building. He had a business retention agreement with the Village and he is negotiating to return the money provided to him. He needs to find a way to sell the property. He has no money to maintain it and he needs to market it in a way that meets the Madison Street Corridor Plan.

Chair Gilbert stated that the Commission's concern was not with Foley-Rice, who were good stewards of the building. Their concern is the long-term retention of an important historic resource. Future owners need to understand that while it is being marketed. The Village is committed to recognizing and protecting this important historic resource. He would like additional information as to why 60 days is being requested and what will happen during that period.

Mr. Rice stated that he had a contract to sell the building before the business was sold. Now it is changed and it is a critical issue. He needs a delay to work out the best way to market the property. He had no plans to do anything except sell the building. Brokers feel it would take longer and cost more to sell the building if it's designated historic. He worked with licensed auto brokers to try and get an auto dealer to move to Oak Park. No one was interested. The building is expensive and obsolete for auto use. It is a beautiful building but there is a ramp inside that makes it useless for anything. It takes time to market. Fenwick pulled out of the sale due to the Village not approving their use and the pending Landmark designation.

Chair Gilbert stated that the request to table come from the ownership. The letter allows the Commission to know that they won't do anything to the building during that 60-day period. He still wants to know what benefit there is to a 60-day delay.

Mr. Rice stated that they can figure out a solution on the best way to proceed. Fenwick walked away from a large sum of money. They felt it would make development too difficult. Landmark designation would make it harder to find a buyer, though not impossible. Allowing

demolition and new construction would make the sale easier. They are trying to find a way to get the best solution for everyone.

Commissioner Kalogeresis stated that it could take longer to sell the building, but a historic rehab could be eligible for tax credits, which could be substantial for this property. The issue is the use of the property.

Chair Gilbert stated that he could support tabling the issue if the owner works with the Commission on determining potential restrictions and uses to help market the building. They are interested in protecting the building but also to find a viable use for it. The owner wants to sell for the best price. There is no imminent threat to the building. His only concern is stalling the process.

Mr. Rice stated that stalling is not in his favor or interest either.

Commissioner Susmilch stated that the only fair thing to do is grant the delay. She doesn't feel the Commission should submit an application for Landmark designation. It is not fair to the owner. They should grant some time to work through it. She remains concerned about their direction on this.

Commissioner Lipo suggested tabling specifically to the January meeting rather than just 60 days. They should talk with all Village resources including OPDC and not just leave it on the owner.

Mr. Rice stated that he has talked with John Eckenroad at OPDC. The Village says they had some interest from an auto dealer but he has no further word on that. An auto broker tried to sell it. Auto dealers want to be near others on vast acreage. The last real estate taxes sent him looking for a new owner.

Planner Kaarre stated that the letter has been reviewed by the Commission's attorney.

Chair Gilbert stated that any alterations or demolition would need a building permit and staff would know if that happened during the 60 days and alert them. This is an opportunity to help the owner market and sell the property. If everyone is agreed, it is a good idea to table the review.

Mr. Rice stated that there is a large amount of property up for sale. It is in the best interest of the Village to find a solution for the use of those properties.

Commissioner Lipo stated that the building was listed as Significant in the Madison Street Corridor Survey, which was part of the planning process and is part of the plan.

Commissioner Freerksen agreed with Commissioner Susmilch. He is not comfortable taking initiative on landmarking buildings. Action should be reserved for special circumstances under a special threat. It could happen with this building, but no danger is imminent tonight. It is an important building that could use some incentives. They need to make sure the

building is handled appropriately. He agrees to table the issue. He encourages owners to tell potential buyers that its an important building so there's no confusion.

Chair Gilbert stated that the Commission never felt there was an imminent threat by the current owner, but by the sale of the property without a plan for preservation. The sale would sell for the potential development cost and not the value of the building. This would wipe out the value of the building. That's what happened to the Colt Building. He never supported its demolition but the Put/Call agreement doomed it.

Mr. Rice asked how saving the building outweighs future development.

Commissioner Lipo stated that uses change but the building can remain through adaptive reuse. They should explore more fully what other uses could be there.

Mr. Rice stated that a buyer who wants the entire block might back out if it doesn't work with the building remaining. They want as many options as they can get.

Chair Gilbert stated that he understands that a historic building could make it more difficult to market. They want to help educate buyers. The Village will encourage the preservation of the building. It would be only one of many restrictions (zoning, etc.). They need to be on the same page. The Village is committed to protecting this historic resource.

Motion by Lipo to table consideration of the Historic Landmark nomination until the January 10, 2008 meeting. Second by Susmilch.

Commissioner Doty stated that the Commission has the ability and right to Landmark and needs to be able to initiate the process if necessary. It's part of their charge. Economics is a separate hearing and not initially considered. It should be clear that the Commission is not backing off or less inclined to designate the building a Landmark.

Vote: 9-0.

Chair Gilbert stated that they look forward to working with the owner and any potential buyers. Staff can provide additional information. They should also reach out to the National Trust and Landmarks Illinois.

F. HPC 07-53: 129 Lake Street (National Register of Historic Places Nomination)
Property owned by the Village of Oak Park.

Chair Gilbert stated that this is a preliminary review of the nomination and no action is required. They should provide feedback. The nomination still needs to go to the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). The Commission will have formal comment on the final version. Following approval by the State, it will go to the National Park Service.

Terri Embry stated that she is a student at Loyola University in Chicago and is preparing the nomination for her class on the Management of Historic Resources. She feels the building is a good candidate for the National Register.

Are three buildings historic?

By CHERI BENTRUP | STAFF WRITER
cbentrup@pionneriocal.com

For the 1.5-mile stretch of Madison Street through Oak Park, an architectural consultant who worked with Vandewalle & Associates on the Madison redevelopment plan has identified three buildings that potentially could be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Village Hall, at 123 Madison St., is among those with National Register potential, according to the report.

Doug Kaarre, village staff liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission, said Village Hall would likely have to wait until it's at least 50 years old to be considered for the National Register.

"It's not very often one less than 50 years old is eligible for the Register," Kaarre said. Village Hall was built in 1974-75.

The other two buildings considered good candidates for the National Register are 644 Madison St., home to Foley-Rice Cadillac, and 124-126 Madison St., which houses Sahagian Associates Inc.

"What drew me to this building is that it's such a unique property," owner Linda Sahagian said of her building, constructed as a mortuary in the 1920s. "I just fell in love with it."

Sahagian purchased the building in the late 1980s. Since being a funeral home, the building also served as a day care and printing company before she claimed it for her business.

"We never changed anything on the exterior," Sahagian said.

Eighteen other buildings on the thoroughfare are listed as significant – suggesting that they should be spared the wrecking ball based on their historic merit – and 47 were listed as structures of merit, meaning they have historical or aesthetic value, but to a lesser degree than significant buildings.

The report also listed 36 buildings of "no merit."

Trustees heard at their May 11 study session regarding the Madison Street redevelopment plan that although the buildings are not grouped appropriately for a historic district along Madison Street, individual buildings do have historic merit.

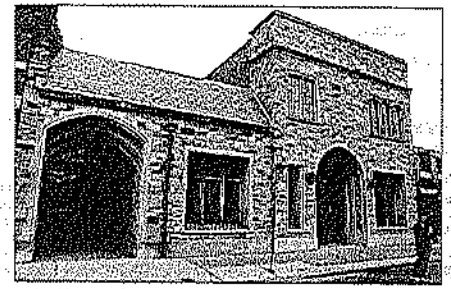
Trustee Robert Milstein has suggested that the village first do whatever is necessary to protect the historic buildings along Madison Street.

■ Ornamental terra cotta with human figures at 644 Madison St. Foley-Rice Cadillac. National Register potential. Built in 1925, designed by E.E. and Elmer Roberts.

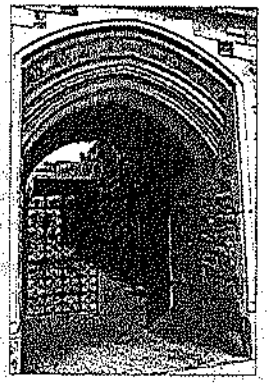
Historical Madison Street

These buildings were listed as significant in consultant Vandewalle & Associates' redevelopment plan for Madison Street. Significant buildings are considered worthy of preservation.
Photos by Jon Langham/Photo Chief

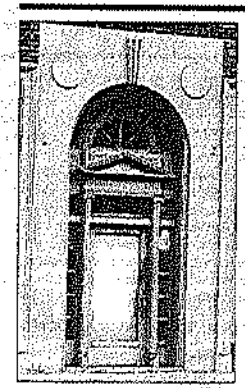
■ 4 Madison St. The Athlete's Foot store; prior use, Funnell's Cafeteria. Building in 1912. Some terra cotta ornament on the building may be from a pattern book designed by Louis Sullivan.
■ 116-120 Madison St. Easter Seal Society; prior use, Oak Park Cleaners & Dryers. Designed by E.E. Roberts and Arthur Malmgrim.
■ 123 Madison St. Village Hall has National Register potential. Built in 1974 by Harry Weese & Associates.
■ 128-132 Madison St. Retail and apartments owned by the Oak Park Residence Corporation.
■ 260-262 Madison St. Village garage stall; as Hills Motor Sales Co. by E.E. Roberts in 1920.
■ 300-308 Madison St. Apartment/retail building constructed in 1924, prior use National Tax Co.
■ 315-321 Madison St. Apartment/retail building built in 1927, designed by architect Roy Hotchkiss.
■ 500 Madison St. Madison Video, built in 1927; has decorative terra cotta intact.
■ 506-512 Madison St. Arts and Crafts style apartment building constructed in 1915.
■ 513 Madison St. Gilchrist Hardware, built in 1922 and continuously occupied by Gilchrist Hardware.
■ 645-649 Madison St. Allstate Insurance/Century 21 realty; has original storefronts along Wesley Avenue.
■ 801-807 Madison St. Sears Pharmacy/apartments, built in 1922; known as the Collins Building for original owner E. and D. Collins.
■ 852-854 Madison St. K&M Draperies & Shades, built in 1909, has original storefronts.
■ 1000 Madison St. Frame House, built in 1922 to house an electrician and Great A&P Tea Co.
■ 1001-1005 Madison St. Regas Electric Co., built in 1927, has original storefronts.
■ 1007 Madison St. Shredding Store, built in 1922.
■ 438-440 Maple Ave. Neo-Classical Revival apartment building constructed in 1900s.

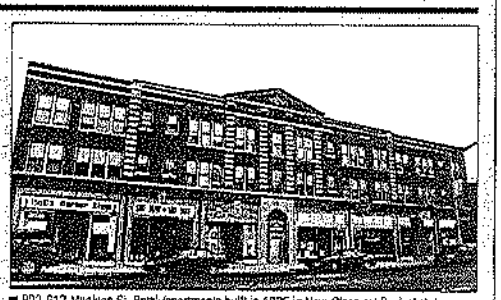


■ 124-126 Madison St. Sahagian Associates Inc. has National Register potential. Built in 1902 as Haggard Mortuary. Tudor Revival style, well preserved with no discernible exterior renovation.



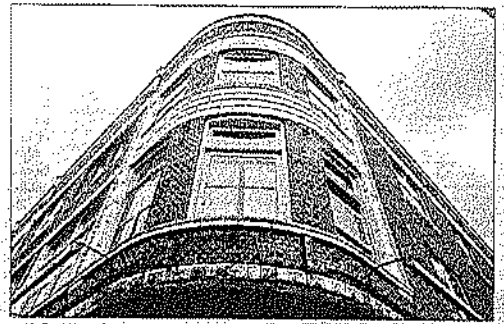
Notable feature: side alley with gate and canopies.



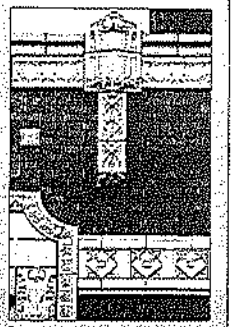


■ 900-912 Madison St. Retail/apartments built in 1926 in New-Classical Revival style.

Notable feature: entrance surround at door to apartments.



■ 1047-1053 Madison St. Retail/apartments, built in 1924 and used by a druggist, very decorative terra cotta detailing.



Some decorative terra cotta elements may be from a Louis Sullivan pattern book.

Source: Vandewalle & Associates (architectural survey by Hitz, Zeisler, Stone Architects, Inc.)

Pioneer Press/LHR

644 MADISON

P-1

October 3, 2007
Vol. 28, No. 13
ONE DOLLAR

Wednesday Journal

Fenwick may buy Packard building

Madison structure is on state watch list

By MARTY STEMPNIAK

Fenwick High School is closing in on the purchase of the former Packard Dealership building and the nearby lot, currently owned by Foley-Rice Cadillac.

Utilized as a used car dealership by Foley-Rice for many years, the property at 644 Madison St. was placed on the Landmark Illinois 2007 Watch List last month.

Fenwick hopes to close the deal with Foley-Rice sometime this month, according to Gregory Melnyk, attorney for the Fenwick Foundation, a separate entity working for the long-term viability of the high school.

The school will seek a joint venture to develop the property, hoping to add

See PACKARD on page 17

PACKARD

Fenwick doesn't plan to demolish

from page 1

first floor retail and a perpetual easement for around 150 parking spaces to be used by the school.

Melnyk could not disclose a purchase price, saying the deal was still being worked out in its final stages.

Once the deal goes through, Fenwick plans to release a request for proposals (RFP) for the 644 Madison property. What a developer puts there depends on village zoning ordinances and the Madison Street Corridor Plan.

Under a business retention agreement between Foley-Rice and the village, the property is required to be used as a premium car dealership until 2012, and Village President David Pope said, "There isn't latitude to do otherwise."

Owner Terry Rice has requested to be removed from the agreement.

Rice wants to repay $400,000 the village invested to modernize the dealership before Foley-Rice announced it was closing recently. Pope said if it isn't repaid, the village would not release him from the agreement.

"Terry wants to repay every nickel because he is an honorable guy," Pope said.

Melnyk made no mention of demolishing the historic building, designed by architect Elmer Roberts in 1924.

"If you look at Madison Street, there are few buildings along the corridor that you definitely don't want to see come down," Pope said of the one-time Packard dealership. "This is one of them."

Wednesday Journal p.3

 Nov. 23, 2011

INSIDE REPORT

Aldi may preserve more of Madison building

Plans to rip down most of a historic auto dealership on Madison Street might be changing at the request of local preservationists.

For months, Aldi has been eyeing a long-vacant former Packard dealership at 644 Madison St., which was built in the 1920s and designed by noted architect E.E. Roberts. Their early plan involved tearing down most of the property and preserving the façade, similar to what Walgreens did at the corner of Madison and Oak Park Avenue.

The idea was received warmly by business leaders on the street, while the Historic Preservation Commission expressed concerns last month, believing that too little of the structure is being saved.

The commission met with representatives from Aldi at the Packard building on Nov. 9. After the get-together, Aldi was expected to go back to the drawing board and return with a revised plan that preserves more of the property, according to Doug Kaarre, urban planner for the village.

He expects they'll receive a revised proposal some time in December, which the preservation commission will meet to discuss.

Representatives from Aldi could not be reached for comment on Monday, and the Batavia-based chain declined to comment earlier this month.

File 2006

SAVING GRACE: *Local preservationists may be making headway in convincing Aldi to save more of this old Packard dealership.*