

# Design**Evanston**

In 1980 Evanston's downtown and peripheral commercial districts were languishing. Retail sales were relatively poor and the condition and design of many structures and the urban infrastructure were suffering. A number of local design professionals and planners, seeing the need to encourage good design to improve the image and experience of these urban spaces formed Design Evanston. Under the leadership of Bob Teska, an urban planner, and Hayward Blake, a graphic designer, Design Evanston sought to encourage good design through the volunteer contributions of local design professionals. The organization's operating credo was "Good design is good business".

Good design is good business, and good public policy. Today, Design Evanston continues, as a civic service, through its programs, activities, and contributions to city design related commissions and public hearings, seeks to increase awareness of the designed environment; to demonstrate and communicate principles and standards of design excellence; and to support and stimulate actions to improve the quality of design in both the public, and the private sector.

Membership in the organization is open to any planner, engineer, architect, landscape architect, interior designer, graphic designer, industrial designer or other design professional who lives or works in Evanston, or any other Evanston professional who may assist Design Evanston in legal, communications, accounting, community relations or other matters.

Among some of the past contributions to Evanston's planning and design, Design Evanston has:

1. Provided pro-bono design services to economically challenged clients.
2. Provided creative input and discussion of options in early stages of design development for store and restaurant interiors, street and park landscapes, signage, window displays. Business district facades, building adaptive re-use and public projects.

Specifically by:

- Researching Binding Appearance Review Guidelines and advisement to the Plan commission in the formulation of such guidelines.
- Assisting the city in drafting the design and competition guidelines for the Evanston Public Library Design Competition.
- Assisting the City in creating Design Charrette sessions for the Church Street Plaza Development.
- Participating in a Fountain Square Design Charrette sponsored by the American society of Landscape Architects.
- Assisting the city in drafting a new Comprehensive Plan for the downtown through a "visioning" process.
- Investigating means of visually connecting disparate areas of the downtown.
- Testifying before city commissions, committees, and city council on important design related projects.
- Contributing articles to local newspapers that seek to inform the public about good design principles and practices.
- Sponsoring lectures by prominent design professionals.

Design Evanston has, and continues to identify significant aesthetic and functional improvements in the Evanston community, and to recognize them with annual Design Awards. In annual ceremonies at Chamber of Commerce luncheons, awards are presented to those Owners responsible for the design excellence of local projects. These awards may be for architectural new construction, additions, adaptive re-use, multi-family structures, sensitive in-fill single family residences and maintenance of significant contributing structures. In addition awards are granted in urban design, interior design, landscape design, signage/graphic design and merchandizing design.

Evanston has been since its inception, and continues to be, a special, unique place. Its founders were infused with the desire to create a habitation of the highest moral, cultural and aesthetic principles. The famous and talented Daniel Burnham chose to make it his home, and with the contributing efforts of other talented and principled architects, Thomas Tallmedge, John Holabird, Stephen A. Jennings, Ernest Mayo, and others, laid the groundwork for a well planned, vibrant, and aesthetically pleasing environment. Design Evanston seeks to continue in this noble tradition.

