

Eye on Evanston: Thoughts on Design

Design Evanston continues its unique role in the City
by Ellen Galland and Jack Weiss, Design Evanston
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For over 41 years, Design Evanston has promoted good design in Evanston.

Starting in October the architects, landscape architects, graphic and industrial designers, planners and other design advocates who are members of the local group will contribute occasional articles to the *RoundTable*.

The articles will reflect the original and continuing objectives that spurred Design Evanston's founding in 1980:

1. Encourage private, municipal and institutional investment in good design
2. Enhance public awareness of the commitment to good design
3. Increase synergy and fellowship between design disciplines

"The 1970s were highlighted by a surge of real estate development investment in downtown Evanston. Good design became an imperative. The result: Design Evanston." – Design Evanston founder Robert Teska.

Design Evanston members have assisted the City by critiquing the design of proposed projects, sponsoring design charettes and tours, presenting "Design Evanston Awards" and publishing books about Evanston architecture and design.

"Evanston: 150 Years 150 Places," a history of Evanston's architecture, was published in 2013 and "Evanston's Design Heritage: Architects, Designers & Planners," came out in 2020. (These books may be purchased at designevanston.org and at several local booksellers.)

In 2018 Design Evanston created a formal process of project reviews based on City of Evanston Plan and Preservation Commission review standards. Among the projects that members have recently reviewed are the Merion Legacy at 1631 Chicago Ave., the 605 Davis St. office building, the new Housing Authority of Cook County building at 1900 Sherman Ave. and the 1101 Church St. (Sojourner Church) adaptive reuse building.



Recent Evanston projects reviewed by Design Evanston: April 2019, 1631 Chicago Ave. (top left, Horizon Realty Group); June 2019, 605 Davis St. (top right, Vermillion Development); February 2020, 1900 Sherman Ave. (bottom left, Papageorge Haymes Partners); March 2021, 1101 Church St. (bottom right, Campbell Coyle).

At the invitation of City Council member Eleanor Revelle, Design Evanston members have been reviewing design details of the Central Street bridge to insure a positive pedestrian experience.

Members have also volunteered with the Chicago Architecture Center's Open House Chicago from 2015 to 2021. Design Evanston convinced the architecture center to expand Open House Chicago to include Evanston by using the book, "Evanston: 150 Years 150 Places" to demonstrate the range of interesting architectural subjects in Evanston.

Design Evanston member tours have included Northwestern's Ryan Center for the Musical Arts and Kellogg School of Management's Global Hub, as well as the City of Evanston's Lake Street Pumping Station and the nearby Masonic Temple at Lake Street and Maple Avenue. The first tour of the restored Oscar Mayer house on Forest Avenue was so successful (88 visitors) that two additional tours had to be scheduled for an additional 92 visitors.

Design Evanston welcomes new Evanston-based professional members who work in architecture and related design fields, or associate members, Evanston residents interested in being involved with Evanston's impressive design heritage and who support Design Evanston's view that "all communities benefit from good design in both the public and private sectors."

Editor's Note regarding the heading for this series: For many years, Evanston architect John Macsai wrote a column for the RoundTable called "Eye on Evanston: Thoughts on Design." Design Evanston's "Eye on Evanston" articles will focus on Evanston's design history and continue to advocate for good design.

Source: *Evanston RoundTable*