



President's Message

Happy New Year to each of you. It is exciting to start off the year for Lincoln Central. We are very fortunate to have a full compliment of very talented Board members and some exciting projects to complete.

Recently, my son and I enjoyed dinner at Flat Top Grill and I noticed the sign for the Chinese New Year in February. 2005 is the **"Year of the Rooster"** in the Chinese calendar. "Roosters" are hard working, decisive and unafraid to speak out. In keeping with the New Year, I thought it would be appropriate for Lincoln Central to set a theme for 2005. I propose that 2005 for Lincoln Central would be the **"Year of the Money"**.

It is time for our organization to set fundraising as a top priority. I also think that all of the money we raise this year and in future years is returned to our community in terms of public space improvements.

I think we have two primary roles. One is to monitor and control what happens on private property through our Zoning Committee and working with the Alderman's office and our neighbors. The second is to improve public spaces within our neighborhood. Those would be parks, parkways and any open land available. Zoning matters are time consuming, but do not cost us much as an organization. Improving public spaces can cost us as much as we have to spend.

This past year, the Board discussed several worthy projects we have been unable to implement because of funding. The **Lincoln Central Park** at Dickens St. and Lincoln Ave. is in need of a sprinkler system so the plantings can better survive a Chicago summer. Price tag: \$10,000. The parkway surrounding **Bauler Playground** needs to be rehabbed. \$10,000 has been collected, and this project should start this spring. To completely rehab this area, though, we need an additional \$6,000. The largest project and possibly the one with the most impact on our community would be to upgrade the land at North Ave. and Larabee St. and create a **"Gateway to Lincoln Central"**. We started this project with monthly maintenance of this land in 2004. To plant anything in this area would require a \$25,000 sprinkler system, plus \$10,000 to \$15,000 of landscape improvements. That is a big project for us. It will take several years to complete, but one we will all be proud of.

We're planning a **"Party for our Parks"** this summer, a fundraiser to jump-start raising money for these improvements to public areas within Lincoln Central. It will likely be outdoors and include family activities. During the winter, we'll help sponsor a **"Dickens' Christmas" festival** on Dickens St., along with Four Farthings restaurant.

We won't raise enough money to complete all of our projects this year, but we will start that process. The important thing is that we renew our fundraising efforts and show our neighbors the benefits of contributing to making our great neighborhood better.

Richard Rausch



LCA's Redesigned Website Launched

By David Varnerin

www.lincolncentral.org

Earlier this winter, LCA activated its **completely redesigned website, www.lincolncentral.org**. Under development for several months, the new site was spearheaded by a special committee that included **Bob Swanson**, a longtime LCA member and Board members **Deirdre Graziano, Brant Serxner** and **David Varnerin**. Bob Swanson is an Internet consultant and was instrumental in designing and constructing the new site.

The "new" website now has more attractive graphics, easier navigation and more content about the neighborhood and its history. Some features are:

- **A Landmark Buildings Section** featuring 136 architecturally significant structures (orange rated) within our community. Background is provided on each building and by double clicking on the building address, a pop-up photo of the building appears.
- **A Calendar** of upcoming community events and meetings.
- A section featuring short articles about **neighborhood developments**.
- A section on **LCA parks** with historical background and current photos. Current initiatives affecting several of those parks are outlined along with ways interested neighbors can participate.

The new website also houses LCA's membership **e-mail database**, which allows broadcast e-mails to be distributed instantaneously about such things as safety alerts, neighborhood meetings, community events and other special situations. Broadcast e-mails will typically be brief and may direct you to the website for more details.

If you have e-mail capability (home or office) and have yet to provide LCA with your e-mail address, please send it to **DavidVarnerin@aol.com** and your name will be added to our list.

The 43rd Ward also offers an e-mail notification service. In addition to general topics of interest, the service will provide news on specific topics chosen by the recipient, such as:

Art in the Ward, CTA's Brown Line renovation, dogs, infrastructure and CAPS. To subscribe, visit **www.chicago43rd.org**.

Stay informed with the click of a mouse by visiting **www.lincolncentral.org**. Comments and suggestions about the site are welcome, especially with regard to the types of information members would find most useful. Please e-mail (DavidVarnerin@aol.com) or telephone (312-751-0057) with your thoughts and suggestions.

Winter fun in Oz Park!



By Anne Moore

“New construction is fine, but I enjoy doing restoration,” says builder **Jamie Dicker**, president and CEO of Chicago-based **Redker Development Corp.** He and partner **Adam Kamarat**, vice president, create



new single-family homes in the shells of old Lincoln Park two- and three-flats. “We start from scratch on the inside, and restore the

outside,” says Mr. Dicker. Several of their projects have been within Lincoln Central’s boundaries, where tear-downs and new construction are more the norm.

Most recently, they completed the renewal of **638 W. Webster Ave.**, a former multiunit brick Victorian



that faces Oz Park. Now it’s a 6,000 square foot luxury home. (see rendering above) Buyers wearied by the cookie-cutter look of high-end homes in the neighborhood are attracted to their projects, notes Mr. Dicker, 33. “People get so excited. They say ‘This is what we’ve been looking for. We don’t want ‘new’ construction!’”

Adds Mr. Kamarat, 34, “There are lots of big houses for sale in Lincoln Park, but few are restored. There are not a lot of development companies doing what we do.”

The two men grew up in suburban Des Plaines and share a love of “old-style” Chicago architecture. They’ve been friends since high school. As adults, Mr. Kamarat pursued a career in real-estate finance while Mr. Dicker chased a dream to be a rock-and-roll star. To support himself, Mr. Dicker turned to construction work during the day. He got hooked on restoration



638 W. Webster Avenue

during a masonry job in Rogers Park, when he had to figure out the composition of 100-year-old mortar.

Mr. Dicker incorporated his construction business in 1997, and three years later asked Mr. Kamarat to join him. Karen Peterson, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker in Lincoln Park, advises them on the latest in luxury home buyers’ wants and needs.

The two take on one or two projects per year. Each building takes about one year to restore and construct. They’ve never requested an exception or a variance, they say, because it would slow them down and eat into profits.

While no project is without bumps, a restoration at **1909 N. Mohawk St.** (see photo at right) has been their most problematic. When the basement was dug out, a large amount of water flooded the area and weakened one of the brick walls, which put stress on the other three. (They considered tearing down the building at that point, but that would have created complications, too.)

From the street, it was clear something had gone wrong at the site. But instead of complaints, neighbors came by offering sympathy and thanks for saving an old building.

“There was a neighborhood outpouring,” recalls Mr. Kamarat. “So many people came by to wish us well. We’ve never had a project (go badly) like that, so it was a nice feeling. Usually neighbors are complaining about noise, or subcontractors blocking the alley.”

That wall was entirely rebuilt, and construction and restoration continues there. “At the end of a project I am so proud,” says Mr. Dicker. “I think



1909 N. Mohawk Street

to myself, ‘We’ve kept this 100-year-old building and turned it into this (new home) and allowed it to live another hundred years.’ It’s a great feeling.”

Affordable housing in Lincoln Park?

LCA member **Deirdre Graziano** hosted a meeting on affordable housing in the 43rd ward in her Lincoln Park home Jan. 13th. Ald. Vi Daley attended, as did representatives of most of the Lincoln Park neighborhood organizations. Representatives voiced a need for information: What is affordable housing? (Units designated for a family of four with an income of \$57,000.) What is the history of affordable housing in Lincoln Park? Can affordable housing be included in new Lincoln Park construction? An information packet containing those answers is to be created by the Ward, and will be distributed to community organizations.



1725 N. Burling Street

More than 50 neighbors attended a community meeting Tuesday, Jan. 25 regarding a proposed development at **Willow and Burling Streets**. At issue: construction of a five-story condominium building and the preservation of **1725 N. Burling St.**, a pre-Fire dwelling rated “orange” – architecturally or historically significant – by Chicago’s Planning and Development Dept.’s Landmark Division. Saving historic buildings within our boundaries is a stated goal of Lincoln Central.

Developers **Michael P. O’Connor** and **Dimitrios Nassis** plan to restore **1725 N. Burling St.**, a former rectory, and use it for office space. (See photo above) The church at **725 W. Willow St.** would be demolished. To create their planned six-unit condominium building and preserve the Burling Street dwelling, the developers are requesting from Ald. Vi Daley a zoning change that would allow them to build five feet higher than

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allowed under current zoning (50 feet), and would increase the building's floor area by more than 3,000 square feet.

Lincoln Central's zoning and planning committee requested the community meeting so that it could hear neighbors' concerns before making its recommendation to the Lincoln Central board. Ald. Vi Daley looks to Lincoln Central for its opinion before making a decision on such requests.

Neighbors seemed most concerned with the height of the proposed building. Developers noted that the building is scaled back as it rises. Other concerns: garbage removal, brick type, parking-garage entrance, new ivy and trees along the parkway. Developers made verbal agreements with neighbors on most of these concerns.

Lincoln Central's zoning and planning committee met with these developers several times over the past year. Committee members, too, are concerned with the proposed building's height. However, many aspects of the project are welcome: its design is visually rich and interesting. The building would offer a variety of housing (two- and three-bedroom units). The preserved 1725 Burling St., at 2.5 stories, would provide a buffer between the proposed five-story building and smaller residences along Burling Street. Developers would provide 1.5 parking spaces per unit (code requires 1 space per unit).



[ANSWER TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ]

Where in LCA's world can you find this architectural detail?



(Answer: 716 W. Webster Street)



Send this completed Application, with your check, made payable to **Lincoln Central Association** to:

Membership Chair
Lincoln Central Assn.
P.O. Box 14306
Chicago, IL 60614-0306

Voice Mail
(312) 409-2783

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership Type

- Family (2 Members) \$25.00
- Individual (1 Member) \$20.00
- Organization (1 Member) \$25.00
- Senior (1 Member) \$10.00

Contribution

(includes membership)

- Patron \$50.00
- Benefactor \$100.00

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip+4 _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

e-mail address _____

Please indicate your interests.

- Membership
- Newsletter/Public Relations
- Planning/Zoning
- Beautification/City Services
- Parking
- Fund Raising
- Safety/Security
- Community Relations
- Finance
- Parks
- Social Programs
- Schools

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Spotlight

SPOTLIGHT QUIZ

Where in LCA's world can you find this architectural detail?

