

# LAKEWOOD HERITAGE ADVISORY BOARD



## 2000 ANNUAL REPORT

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The year 2000 represented the fourth full year of operation of the Lakewood Heritage Advisory Board (LHAB). The Board successfully continued its efforts in the areas of public education, legislative assistance, and technical assistance to the Lakewood community.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

◆ **Researched and publicized the history and significance of the Coutant Avenue Manual Substation.** As part of the 2003 Ohio Bicentennial celebration, the Ohio Bicentennial Commission has been soliciting nominations for markers to commemorate important people, places, and events in Ohio's history. LHAB discussed submission of a nomination reflecting an important aspect of Lakewood history and decided upon the Coutant Avenue Manual Substation. This power substation is perhaps the most significant remaining illustration of Lakewood's streetcar heritage.

The Coutant Avenue building is part of a system of manual substations built by the Cleveland Railway Company. The company purchased alternating current electricity from the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, and the substation's electrical systems converted the alternating current electricity to the 600 volt direct current used by the transit system. Sixteen such substations were built by the Cleveland Railway Company between

1912 and 1934, including thirteen in Cleveland, two in Lakewood, and one in East Cleveland. The Coutant substation, placed into service in 1912, was the third built.

Of the sixteen original substations, six have been demolished, three are abandoned, and four are used for industrial or warehouse purposes. The other three substations, all in Cleveland, have been adaptively reused as a sculptor's studio, church, and a contemporary art gallery.

Other buildings associated with streetcar operations in Lakewood have been demolished, including the car barns at West 117<sup>th</sup> Street and Madison Avenue, the car barns on Detroit Avenue at the west end of Lakewood, and the power substation on Warren Road.

As part of the marker nomination process, LHAB sought the support of the current owner of the building, the Lakewood Board of Education, prior to submitting the nomination.

The research and publicity concerning the structure, including an article in the *Lakewood Sun Post*, has brought attention to a neglected piece of Lakewood history and may be important as future development proposals for the vicinity of West 117<sup>th</sup> Street and Madison Avenue are presented.

Note: In spring 2001, the Lakewood Board of Education requested that LHAB defer submitting the nomination due to the School

District Facilities Master Plan that was under preparation. Subsequent to the school board request, the Ohio Bicentennial Commission eliminated the marker program due to state budget constraints.

◆ **Continued internet site in cooperation with the Lakewood Public Library.** The LHAB site features a bibliography of materials in the categories of general restoration and maintenance, architectural styles, and architectural history. The purpose of the guide is to serve as an easy reference source for Lakewood residents, providing information about old houses and how to maintain, repair, and improve them inside and out, while being respectful of the architecture and design of the house. The listings include magazines and books held in the collection of the Lakewood Public Library, as well as a link to National Park Service publications.

Another highlight of the site is the complete text of the LHAB's popular *Front Porches of Lakewood* publication.

The site recorded a substantial increase in the number of visits during 2000, compared to 1999. For the entire year, 4,804 visits were recorded to the home page, a four-fold increase from 1999. The *Front Porches of Lakewood* publication recorded 4,594 visits for 2000, more than double the 1999 total.

In addition, the spring issue of Cleveland Restoration Society's *Facade* publication listed the LHAB website as a resource in an article on "streetcar suburbs" of Cleveland.

The address of the LHAB site is <http://www.lkwdpl.org/homepres>.

◆ **Continued speakers bureau and publication distribution.** LHAB members

are available to offer programs to community groups on a variety of topics.

The successful *Front Porches of Lakewood* publication continues to be popular, with more than 500 copies distributed since its publication.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANCE

◆ **Sandstone sidewalks.** During 1999, the Public Works Committee of Lakewood City Council, requested that LHAB prepare a position statement concerning sandstone sidewalks, their relationship to the heritage of Lakewood, and recommendations to address this issue.

LHAB stated their view that the character and charm of Lakewood is created not only by its buildings, but also the relationship of buildings to their front yards, sidewalks, treelawns, and streets. Sandstone sidewalks, like street trees, are part of the character of the community and should be preserved when possible. Preservation however, must be balanced with the need for public safety in a pedestrian-oriented, densely populated community, as well as take into consideration the cost to public works projects.

At its meeting in February, 2000, the Public Works Committee of Lakewood City Council worked out solutions with the Public Works Director and the City Engineer. The adopted approaches incorporated several LHAB recommendations:

- ✓ For the sidewalk condition violation program, residents will be informed of the option of leveling sandstone slabs, replacing broken sandstone slabs, or installing new sandstone slabs to replace concrete. These options will be in

addition to information regarding concrete sidewalks.

- ✓ For entire street reconstructions—which involves work funded through the city’s general fund or federal programs such as CDBG—one of the issues is that the grade of the public right-of-way (sidewalk-to-sidewalk) is often changed, meaning that existing sidewalks need to be removed at the start of construction. The Public Works Director indicated a willingness to work with an owner to retain, repair, or install sandstone. It is anticipated that owners would need to pay the price difference between concrete and sandstone.
- ✓ In all cases, sandstone is not to be placed as part of the driveway apron, because the sandstone will break under the weight of vehicles.
- ✓ Finally, there was general agreement that the Public Works Department would create a stockpile of removed sandstone slabs. This program would be on a one-year trial basis. Sandstone would be available only for the personal use of Lakewood residents. The program would need to operate at no net cost to the City (Note: The one-year may be initiated in the next reporting period).

LHAB will continue to participate with City Council, the City Engineer, and the Department of Public Works to create choices for Lakewood property owners concerning the retention and installation of sandstone sidewalks.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- ◆ **Architectural Salvage.** During 2000,

LHAB provided the technical assistance that created a partnership involving Lakewood Hospital, the Lakewood Historical Society, and the Cleveland Restoration Society to administer the architectural salvage of six houses scheduled for demolition as part of the expansion of the hospital’s emergency department and related parking facilities.

In July, 2000, Lakewood Hospital officials presented their plans to LHAB and requested assistance to organize an architectural salvage project. LHAB members worked through the end of the year drafting procedures for the project, including overall manpower needs, inventorying of salvageable items, logistics for removal and safe storage of items, and item pricing, as well as sale organization, publicity, and staffing needs.

NOTE: The very successful salvage sale, held in March, 2001 at Dussault Moving & Storage, was attended by over 700 Lakewood residents. The community’s overwhelming response to this effort underscores the commitment of Lakewood homeowners to maintain and restore the early 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance of the community’s residential properties.

◆ **Residential Design Guidelines.** Members of LHAB and the Lakewood Architectural Board of Review continued to serve on an ad hoc committee to work with the staffs of the Department of Planning and Development and the Division of Building & Housing on revisions to the *Lakewood Home Improvement Guide*. City staff completed a draft revision of building code related material and developed a draft report layout for the entire document. LHAB and the Architectural Board of Review representative have completed 19 draft narratives within the broader topics of: maintenance considerations for older houses;

aesthetic considerations in maintaining, repairing, and building additions on older houses; and an illustrated guide of common architectural styles in Lakewood. Department of Planning and Development staff anticipate that publication of the revised and expanded *Lakewood Home Improvement Guide* will occur by the end of 2001.

◆ **Survey all buildings located in commercial and industrial zoning districts for their historic and architectural value.**

The goal of this project, which has the support of both the Administration and City Council, is to create for other city boards and commissions—particularly the Architectural Board of Review—city staff, and the general public, a citywide database of information concerning the relative architectural and historic significance of all the buildings in commercial and industrial zoning districts. This information would make developers, businesses, and property owners aware, early in the planning for building rehabilitation or site consideration for new buildings, of the importance of retaining specific buildings based on their architectural character and/or historical significance.

To meet this need to proactively provide guidance, LHAB initiated a detailed survey of the approximately 800 structures within the city that are located in commercial or industrial zoning districts. The number of structures in the survey area increased about 10% from the original estimate of 720 due to the inclusion of buildings on side streets adjacent to main streets such as Detroit and Madison that are in commercial zoning districts.

The survey, coupled with additional research in local records, will inventory the age and design characteristics of the buildings, and

assess their architectural and historic qualities. The result will be to assign one of a number of possible ratings to each building, identifying its relative priority based upon architectural and/or historical significance.

LHAB estimates that a project of this scale, if completed by an outside consultant, would cost \$40,000-\$50,000. In comparison, the estimated cost for completion by LHAB—through volunteer efforts—is approximately \$1,200. To help defray the project cost, LHAB worked with the City of Lakewood Department of Planning and Development to obtain a grant in late 1999 from the Preservation Resource Center of Northeast Ohio.

The Cleveland Restoration Society's Perspectives newsletter included a summary of the survey project.

During 2000, photography for the project was completed and the preparation of survey forms began. Due to the need to address the issue of architectural salvage for the houses scheduled to be demolished by Lakewood Hospital for its emergency room expansion, the survey project has been delayed. It is anticipated that the survey project will be completed by the end of 2001.

◆ **Offered technical assistance on five requests for maintenance and repair issues.**

Through direct inquiries to LHAB members and referrals from City departments, LHAB members responded by telephone, with written materials, and/or site visits to Lakewood property owners on topics that included exterior paint color schemes, porch railing design, aluminum siding removal, and brick and glazed terra cotta repair. The requests originated from homeowners and commercial property owners, as well as a

church congregation that requested general assistance on repairs, plus stained glass maintenance.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

Although LHAB members serve in staggered four-year terms, no terms expired at the end of the year 2000.

In March, 2000, LHAB received the appointment of Gerald Weber from the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, in order to fill the unexpired term of their appointee to the Board.

## **2000 LAKEWOOD HERITAGE ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

James Dolce, Vice-Chairman and Secretary  
Sandy Koozer  
Rhonda Loje  
Paula Reed  
Heather Rudge  
Richard Sicha, Chairman  
Gerald Weber

The seven members of the Board are appointed by the Mayor's Office, Lakewood City Council, Lakewood Historical Society, and the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce.

*This annual report is prepared in accordance with Ordinance 50-95, Section 6.*