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December 23, 1999

Alderman Mary Ann Smith
5533 N. Broadway
Chicago, IL 60640

Dear Alderman Smith,

The Board of Directors of the Edgewater Historical Society is concerned about the preservation and restoration of historic properties in Edgewater. Recently, it came to our attention that a home on Kenmore Avenue (5400 block) was being advertised for sale for development. Shortly afterwards a developer began the process to get community approval for the demolition of the home and construction of a condo building. At no time in this process were we contacted. Because all of the properties on Kenmore, Winthrop and Sheridan were originally in John Lewis Cochran's Edgewater development of 1885-1889 we would like the opportunity to comment and research any property that might face demolition. We are particularly concerned with the few remaining single family homes which while standing in a high category of zoning (R6?) are really the last remaining evidence of Cochran's original suburb. We would really like to see these homes protected in some way so that buildings that have survived 100 years can be replaced in their original single family zoning. Should you want a list of these special properties we would require a block by block map with the zoning and buildings notated

In the case of the home on the 5400 block of Kenmore it was built before 1889 according to the search done by LeRoy Blommaert. The foundation is Joliet limestone and the home, while disfigured by remodeling still shows evidence of the rear turret, which faced the lake shore before Sheridan Road was built between Foster and Bryn Mawr (after 1910). It may be that there are some significant details in the interior and under the siding that will tell us more about the architect that designed the home. While we attempt to find out more about the home we would like you to delay any demolition permit that the developer has applied for. In order to determine who the architect was we need to have access to photograph the interior. We would like to ask Kathy Cummings to look at it to see if it may be by George Washington Maher.

Since the home faces certain demolition because the process has gone so far, we would like to know if any architectural elements might be preserved in our new museum. A donation by the developer or owner would benefit our community and its effort to preserve its history. Please do whatever you can to facilitate our request.

Yours truly,

Kathryn Gemperle
President