

# EQUITY FINANCIAL

Mortgage & Real Estate News for Chicago  
September 2009



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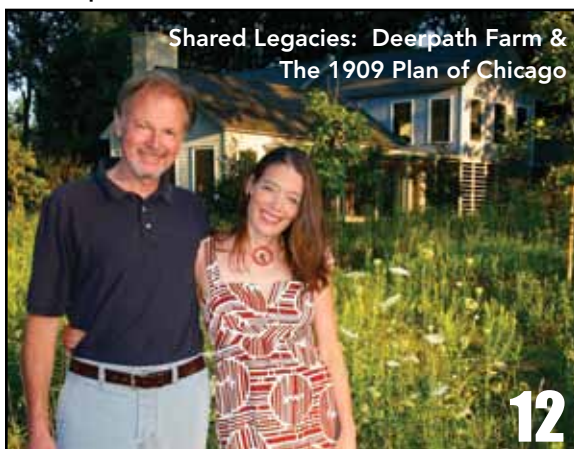
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Photo: Nia Matzaris-Gallardo



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## REAL ESTATE WORLD of Chicago —

## *Again, Welcome!*

Welcome back to **Mortgage & Real Estate News for Chicago**, the new Chicago-based magazine for our real estate community. Please check out Issue 3 here and send any input and/or suggestions to us. What do you need and/or what would you like to see in this magazine to help you succeed in selling real estate? We want to know!

By a most fortunate chance meeting, I met Linda Gardner Phillips, author of our September cover story: “Shared Legacies: Deerpath Farm and the 1909 Plan of Chicago.” After exchanging “What do you do?” accounts, we joined forces. Linda would write a brief account of Edward H. Bennett’s critical role in this year’s celebrated 1909 Plan of Chicago. Simultaneously, she would report on the Edward Bennett Sr.-inspired careers of three later Bennett family architects: son Edward Bennett, Jr., great-grandson Timothy Bennett, and particularly, step-great-grandson Frederick Phillips.

Linda sheds light on Edward H. Bennett, Sr., the sometimes unrecognized partner of Daniel Burnham in the design and execution of the 1909 Plan of Chicago. Bennett Sr. drew on paper the original plans and then altered them as required, particularly given Montgomery Ward’s successful lawsuits. These court decisions demanded the enforcement of an 1837 city ordinance that the lakefront remain forever “open, free, and clear” for public use, which decisions necessitated changes to Burnham’s vision. The 1909 Plan’s implementation, while ongoing even today, came long after Burnham’s death in 1912. Edward H. Bennett, to whom Burnham had confidently passed the reigns, executed the plan, and altered the plan’s design as then current dynamics demanded. That’s illuminating news!

Linda then intertwines this 1909 Plan story with that of her husband, architect Frederick Phillips. Phillips is developing the country retreat of Edward H. Bennett, Sr. into Deerpath Farm, which property has been handed down through the generations.

This land was originally homesteaded by pioneering Illinois families and still contains an original farmhouse. This upscale residential development, embraces the Burnham/Bennett/1909 Plan values, likewise handed down the family through time. Deerpath Farm offers, amid the glory of this rural, idyllic setting, improved lots and homes where buyers can still realize a homestead dream within our bustling, teeming Chicago area.

Visit and acquaint yourself with this possibility, Deerpath Farm, just west of Lake Forest in Mettawa. Some of your clients need and want to know of it! Thanks for the story Linda!

Also, do not miss! YOU are invited to attend our second **Mortgage & Real Estate News for Chicago** network event, a Saturday afternoon cruise on the on Luxury Yacht Valara VI. We’ll board off the west side dock of Burnham Harbor. CEO of Equity Financial Group Rich Killian hosts this cruise with a cash bar and light snacks on Saturday, September 19, from 11:30 AM until 2:30 PM. Here’s your chance to meet Equity Financial and Prospect Equity staff and agents, and other Chicago-area real estate colleagues and guests. Come, enjoy Chicago’s skyline from the lake, as you greet old and new friends alike. This mean YOU!

Space is limited. No charge and we will pass the hat for the crew. You must RSVP at: **630-812-5475 x 8101, the sooner, the better!**

Ahoy, mates!

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# Shared Legacies: Deerpath Farm and the 1909 Plan of Chicago

by Linda Gardner Phillips

When Chicagoans celebrate, we “make no small plans.” We’re especially proud of our city’s architecture, so this year’s Burnham Centennial spotlights the great Daniel Burnham and his 1909 Plan of Chicago. But do you know that the Plan had an often-forgotten co-author? It’s time to toast Edward H. Bennett, the architectural force who planned and designed the greatness Burnham envisioned.

## The quiet genius behind the Plan

Bennett’s quiet genius still brings beauty to millions around the Chicago area. If you’ve ever enjoyed the grace of the Michigan Avenue bridge, or admired the drama of Buckingham Fountain, you can thank Edward H. Bennett – he designed them. Bennett’s fingerprints adorn the Chicago experience.

Bennett also left the Lake Forest area with a living legacy of architecture and open lands. His well-known Bagatelle estate attracts architecture fans from across the country. Those of us who live at the Deerpath Farm conservation community have a special fondness for Bennett, for he owned and preserved the land we live on now. This 200-acre former dairy farm in the Des Plaines River watershed is an important part of Lake County’s unspoiled, protected lands.

## Vital Young Blood

The Plan of Chicago was Daniel Burnham’s baby. Burnham’s vision drove its creation. His connections financed its progress, and his intelligence attracted the world’s best minds. But, Burnham lacked the architectural education and hands-on design skills necessary to render the detailed drawings required by his vision. He needed a gifted partner, and he found one in the young Edward Bennett.

Bennett was modest in temperament, but giant in talent. His father, an English merchant sea-captain, brought the family to San Francisco. Bennett yearned to be a rancher, but as fate would have it, he found work with an architectural firm. His talent was recognized by Arts and Crafts maven Bernard Maybeck and philanthropist Phoebe Hearst. With their help, Bennett moved to Paris and graduated from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1902. He then moved to New York and found a position with George Post’s architectural firm. Only six months passed before Post sent him to temporarily assist Burnham in Chicago – a life-changing encounter.

## A True Partnership

The 26-year-old Bennett caught Burnham’s eye with his combination of artistic integrity and humanitarian civic-mindedness. In 1904 Bennett decided to join forces with Burnham. The two men’s first major endeavor together was the San Francisco Plan of 1905, which was never realized due to the tragic 1906 earthquake. But they discovered how well-suited they were as partners, and soon began collaborating on the 1909 Plan of Chicago, which was to set new standards for city planning.

Most Chicagoans recognize Burnham as the visionary force behind Chicago’s beautiful lakefront, generous parks, widened streets and controlled urban growth. Bennett, on the other hand, has been a sidenote to history. The truth



Edward H. Bennett

Photo courtesy of Rick and Linda Phillips

is that Bennett was more than Burnham’s right-hand man – the two men were creative partners. While Burnham met with civic leaders and convinced the city’s powers to move ahead with the Plan, Bennett directed and drew the plans for “Paris on the Prairie.” His Beaux-Arts training – likely made more meaningful by living and breathing in the French capital’s urban terrain – served him well as he infused the Plan of Chicago with graceful lines and expansive foresight.

Chicago’s lakeside is her shining jewel. Burnham envisioned a lakefront that “by right belongs to the people,” and Bennett crafted a plan to wow the crowds. His architectural smarts – and ability to express them through beautiful renderings – infused the Plan with a power that’s still fresh one hundred years later. It forecast the future of Chicago and its region.

The success of the Plan of Chicago made Burnham’s firm world-famous. But after 1909 Burnham effectively passed the city-planning reins by referring new work to Bennett’s firm. Only three years later, Burnham died. But, Bennett continued to support the legacy by serving on the Chicago Plan Commission and advising on the Plan-related construction projects, including Grant Park.

## The Lake Forest Connection

One hundred years later, Chicago’s celebrating the Burnham Centennial! Websites, exhibits and events abound. One person who regularly tips his hat to Bennett is architect Frederick Phillips, Bennett’s step-grandson and an award-winning architect in his own right. Phillips built the Glade House, a fourth generation structure at Pembroke Estate, for his mother; it received a 2009 Housing Award from the American Institute of Architects. Phillips’s Deerpath Farm conservation community preserves the natural beauty of Bennett’s Lake County retreat.

Architecture and conservation legacies run deep for Rick Phillips. His paternal grandfather graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts just a few years before Bennett, and designed the classical Evanston Library (now demolished). As a boy, Phillips lived and camped on land next to Deerpath Farm. When his literary mother remarried a Modernist architect, Edward Bennett, Jr., Phillips was thrilled. His new step-father inspired his career, as did the Pembroke and Bagatelle estates in Lake Forest.

## Architectural and Family History: Pembroke and Bagatelle

Pembroke was built in 1895 by David B. Jones, a Welch-born attorney and financier from Mineral Point, Wisconsin. Henry Ives Cobb, the Newberry Library’s architect, designed the Georgian Pembroke Lodge and Georgian Revival Pembroke Barn. Frederick Law Olmstead landscaped the property, and Stanley Anderson designed the 4-car garage in the 1920s.

Edward H. Bennett married Jones’ daughter, Catherine. In 1916 the couple built Bagatelle on the estate’s northeast corner at Deerpath and Green Bay Roads, where it still stands. Bennett joked that Americans would not mispronounce the French name. In truth, this French Country estate was inspired by its namesake hunting lodge in Paris’ Bois de Boulogne park, which shelters an ancient oak forest. Bagatelle includes a miniature version of Buckingham Fountain, seen on the cover of *Classic Country Estates of Lake Forest* (2003, W.W. Norton & Company, 2003). Here the couple raised their son, Edward Bennett, Jr. (also known as Ted).





Left: Deerpath Farm, Bennett Road entrance Right: Burnham and Bennett's 1909 Plan of Chicago's Michigan Avenue Bridge (Edward H. Bennett's design)

Ted became a modern architect and founded the Lake Forest Foundation for Historic Preservation. Ted's son, Edward Bennett III (later the Foundation's president) recently won an award for restoring a historic Lake Forest gateway, and is the father of architect Timothy Bennett, a partner with Libertyville firm Richard Preves and Associates.

### Early Inspirations

When Bennett Jr. married Phillips' mother, Kay, they wanted to build on the family estate. Ted first designed a modern house for the glade just south of Bagatelle (now occupied by the Glade House). Instead, they decided to renovate Pembroke Barn. Phillips remembers being fascinated by the design and reconstruction process that transformed the stone animal quarters into simple, luxurious accommodations:

"In the summer of 1965 I worked for Ted on the remodeling. This was my first architectural job, and the experience reinforced my ambition to become an architect. After the house was complete, I used to lie on the living room couch and breathe in the shapes and forms of this beautiful house, that, while so modern, still revealed its original barn beams and spaces." This home appeared in House Beautiful magazine and in the book Living Barns (1984, Bonanza Books).

As a student, Phillips worked in Bennett Jr.'s Santa Fe Building office overlooking Grant Park – the same location where Edward H. Bennett worked on the Plan of Chicago. Later, he shared studio space with his stepfather while starting his own practice. "Much later, Ted originated the idea to responsibly develop Deerpath Farm," said Phillips. "We picnicked there often as a family. It was minutes from home, but felt completely remote."

### Bennett's Deerpath Farm Retreat

The innovative Deerpath Farm conservation community nestles just west of Lake Forest in Mettawa, Illinois. Driving by on Route 60, many people mistake it for a Forest Preserve or working farm – the view looks much as it did 80 years ago. It includes one of the area's longest historic views and 140 acres of permanently protected open space.

Entering on Bennett Road, visitors see wide, open spaces. The curving Farwell Road provides a classic Mettawa experience with tall trees, native plants and views of horses and silos. Great Blue Herons, White Egrets and songbirds thrive in the wetlands, woods and prairies.

E. H. Bennett bought the Deerpath Farm in 1930 from Francis Farwell, who had assembled the full 200 acres in about 1922. Bennett kept the farm as he found it, perhaps living out his early ranching dreams. A tenant dairy farmer produced milk until the 1980s, and most of the land remained natural and wooded. After Bennett died in 1954, the farm went to his son Ted, and then to Ted's wife, Kay, and her family.

### An Inspired Community

"Kay and Ted ordered the original conservation easement at Deerpath Farm in 1990," said Phillips. "When we decided to transition this property," said Phillips, "We had two choices. We could sell it outright or we could develop it ourselves. As I walked the land, I realized that many developers would place houses in the fields, without shade and in full view of every passing car. Deerpath Farm is such a rare and beautiful place; it broke my heart to think about this pristine view being lost forever. So we decided to take the road not commonly taken, and do the hard work ourselves."

Phillips continued, "Many years ago, Ted and I brainstormed ideas for a rural community here. Then inspired by Woodcreek Courts (on Highway 22 just west of I-94), our sketches envisioned conserving land with houses built around courtyards. When I started developing Deerpath Farm, I revisited those ideas, but found myself moving more to the tune of the current marketplace, which demands larger, more private houses.

"My thinking was tangentially inspired by the City Beautiful and Garden City movements, and the lasting legacy of public open space that resulted from E. H. Bennett's Plan of Chicago work. I wanted to preserve Deerpath Farm's original character, and leave it more beautiful than we found it, for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Some community plans remake the landscape, but we took a different approach. We restored the land to its original ecosystem so that native plants and animals could thrive."



Farwell Road at Deerpath Farm; RuralModern houses by Frederick Phillips and others



*The Solar House: one of many pre-designed Deerpath Farm plans*

### Eco-Paradise

Deerpath Farm's "Preserve" – 140 acres of protected open lands – resulted from this public-minded thinking. Phillips worked closely with environmentalist Stephen Christy, Deerpath Farm's long-time landscape restoration ally. Christy took drastic measures to restore the land's health, including removing two miles of drain tiles installed at the turn of the century. Drain tiles allow land to drain quickly for farming, but this kills wetland life and contributes to downriver flooding. Christy began an all-out attack on the invasive plants which choke out native species and make the woods impassable. He also ordered the mapping and tagging of every mature tree on the property; some as old as 150 years.

### New Historical Integrity

Phillips's Deerpath Farm joins the new tradition of private residential rural retreats. Its RuralModern houses intersect history, nature and fine architecture with a style that even a Beaux-Arts pioneer might appreciate.

In later years, Edward H. Bennett fully embraced the new thinking of clean lines and open space. He built a modern studio at Bagatelle. He directed the design of Long Lane, his modern North Carolina house, and excitedly wrote in 1953, "This glass house faces west!"

Deerpath Farm's houses reflect Long Lane and its more traditional outbuildings. The exteriors reveal Phillip's lifelong interest in rural architecture. His boyhood bedroom overlooked his father's fascinating greenhouses. During vacations to New England he spent hours drawing the barns along the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

### Mettawa

In those years, Mettawa consisted of large tracts of land – mostly country estates and farms. Today Bennett's beloved Deerpath Farm is located at the very heart of Mettawa, within the 60045 Lake Forest zip code. In 1960, Phillip's stepfather, Edward Bennett Jr., helped found Mettawa, a uniquely rural village.

Mettawa's founders wanted to save their open lands and equestrian-friendly area from over-development. So they decided to control it through zoning – a principal advocated by E. H. Bennett. The new village was zoned for low-density, 5-acre parcels, officially welcomed the Lake County Forest Preserves, and took its name from a historic Potawatami settlement nearby.

Today, Mettawa continues its pride in preserving open lands and low-density residential development. This green oasis is just around the corner from neighboring communities, including Lake Forest, Lincolnshire, Vernon Hills and Libertyville. Village boundaries boast four large Forest Preserves (including the Adlai Stevenson Historic Home) and a village trail for bicyclists, pedestrians and horseback-riders. Mettawa remains a highly desirable destination for residents who prefer a private, secluded lifestyle just minutes from suburban amenities.

### Living the country life

After thirty years in Chicago, Phillips now lives at Deerpath Farm with his young family. He's thrilled to be there. "When I drive in, my blood pressure drops immediately," Phillips said. "We're big advocates of 'leave no child inside,' and the kids run in nature to their heart's content." He designed the family's house, which appears in the book *Dream Homes Chicago* (2007, Panache). Other ready-to-build Phillips designs can be seen by appointment at the Deerpath Farm Sales Center (buyers can work with their own architect/builder too). The trails and fully-improved lots are open for public exploration.

In a time when so much farmland gives way to pavement and treeless areas, Deerpath Farm's tall trees and elegant homes bring a breath of fresh air. Like Edward H. Bennett, Deerpath Farm is the region's quiet secret, but one that's sure to make history of its own.

*Linda Gardner Phillips lives at Deerpath Farm with her husband, the architect Frederick Phillips, and their two children.*

### Resources:

#### The Burnham Plan Centennial

<http://burnhamplan100.uchicago.edu/>

#### Edward H. Bennett: New Light on the Plan of Chicago (Lake Forest College online exhibit)

<http://library.lakeforest.edu/archives/edwardbennett>

#### Deerpath Farm

<http://www.deerpathfarm.com>

<http://www.twitter.com/deerpathfarm>