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## Historic appeal lingers

**Once teardown central, it hangs onto its charm; 'less formal' feel appeals**

Mike Burr has a hard time putting his finger on exactly what gives Hinsdale a "feel" that can be elusive. "I don't know how to characterize it really," says Mr. Burr, 42, managing director of J. P. Morgan Securities Inc. "It's perhaps a little more relaxed. A little less formal."



Executive recruiter Peter Crist owns Hinsdale's second-oldest home, built in 1864. Photo: John R. Boehm

Maybe it's the tall, old elm trees that flourish throughout the village. Or the streets that roll slightly, uncharacteristic of this flat part of the world. Or the six-block downtown, recently listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.

Maybe it's the impressive schools; Mr. Burr says that in Fort Worth, Texas, his kids had to attend private schools to achieve the same level of quality. Or the three area country clubs, or the plethora of community pools and sports opportunities.

Regardless, the pull was strong enough that the former Texan decided against the North Shore in favor of settling his wife and three school-age children in the village.

"I run into several people I compete against (in business) all the time," Mr. Burr says. "When we get to the weekend, there seems to not be a lot of spillover of our competitive jobs. It's less about that, and more about what our friends, family and kids are doing."

Other prominent residents include Fred Krehbiel, co-chairman of Molex Inc.; Linda S. Wolf, recently retired as CEO of Leo Burnett, and Michael J. Birck, retired CEO of Tellabs Inc.

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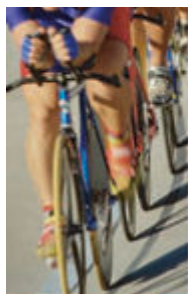
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average sale price for new construction was \$2.27 million, says Sue Daley, a real-estate agent with Re/Max Action in Oak Brook and Lisle. Sale prices are up nearly 4% over all homes sold from 2005.

Landlocked by other well-to-do communities, including Clarendon Hills, Burr Ridge and Oak Brook, Hinsdale has had more than its share of teardowns. But some vintage charm has prevailed on the town's tree-lined streets.

Keeping residential redevelopment in check is one aim of Hinsdale 2025, a strategic planning effort. Put into motion last year, the project is studying housing as well as seven additional areas, including infrastructure, the downtown district, parking, and health and welfare.

Peter Crist, an executive recruiter, owns Hinsdale's second-oldest home, built in 1864. His four sons attended Hinsdale's public schools. "The education of your children is fabulous," says Mr. Crist, 54. "You get a great return on your tax investment."

A few years ago, he moved Crist & Associates' global headquarters from the Sears Tower to Second Street, four blocks from his home of nearly 30 years.

The steady arrival of families from the city helps create a youthful environment in what Mr. Crist calls a "true community" of neighborhoods and a downtown area with boutiques and coffee shops. "You can walk from your home and enjoy the ambience of the downtown," he says.

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Hinsdale was founded in 1863, thanks to the railroad. It immediately drew the wealthy and was incorporated 10 years later. Early amenities included a library (1887) followed by a golf course (1894) and a hospital (1904). Those tracks laid long ago make for an easy commute to the Loop.

In the first six months of 2006, 117 homes sold at an average price of \$1.08 million; the

average sale price for new construction was \$2.27 million, says Sue Daley, a real-estate agent with Re/Max Action in Oak Brook and Lisle. Sale prices are up nearly 4% over all homes sold from 2005.

## BEST PLACES TO LIVE Hinsdale

**Population:** 17,898

**Area:** 4.6 square miles

**Median household income:** \$104,551

**Commute:** 22 minutes by Metra

Population figure estimates as of July 2005; household income as of 2000. U.S. Census and land area data are from City-Data.com. Commute times are to Chicago's Loop during morning rush hour and are calculated by Metra schedule.

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