

"A suburban mother's role is to deliver children obstetrically once, and by car forever after."

—Peter De Vries

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Architect has creative designs on Edgewater

By CRYSTAL FENCKE
SPECIAL TO INSIDE

On Friday evening, April 24, the Andersonville resident and principal of the local firm Greene and Proppe Design, opened "Unbuilt Projects and Fantasy Architecture: The Collective Works of Thom Greene, Architect" at the Edgewater Historical Society and Museum. For his first exhibit in a 30-year career, Greene offered up years of examples of structures he designed and worked on with developers, but that never made it to public view. At the reception he narrated a lively PowerPoint presentation of the 60 sketches and blueprints on view.

Greene said the idea for this showing came from Kathy Gempeler, president of the Edgewater Historical Society, who said to him, "Why not show what could have been done in Edgewater?"

About 50 neighbors, fellow designers and local activists crowded the cozy 600 sq. ft. exhibit space. Greene and Proppe Design is the architect of record for the museum itself which opened in 2002, rehabbed from a former firehouse. The firm is so active in Edgewater and throughout the city that historical society board member Bob Remer introduced Greene by saying, "This is one of the many jewels that has Tom's name on it. My wife has become an expert on the Thom Greene style."

Greene showed slides of familiar facades and intersections to those who travel anywhere from the lake to about Ravenswood Avenue and Foster to Devon avenues, and namedropped a bit as well. For example, he presented a colorful rendering he completed in 1996 of exterior renovations for Andies restaurant,

Edgewater is home to some architectural showcases. If local architect Thom Greene had his way, its cityscape would have even more character, color and whimsy.

5253 N. Clark St., which included a look with Middle Eastern columns and turrets. This project stalled said the architect, as owner Andie Tamras, a pal of Greene's, "wanted to stay my friend forever." As it's not always easy to do business with friends, the restaurateur decided to end the working relationship to maintain the friendship. That was a good deci-

The exhibit "Unbuilt Projects and Fantasy Architecture: The Collective Works of Thom Greene, Architect" is now on display at the Edgewater Historical Society and Museum, 5358 N. Ashland Ave.



"Not for TODAY — But for ALL TIME"
By G. W. Hoppes

Green inks a vision for the Uptown Theater.

sion, said Greene, as the owner ultimately fired the next architect.

One of the best-known properties to Edgewater residents is the Uptown Theatre, which has been in disrepair since the early 1980s. The second-largest theatre in the country, next to Radio City Music Hall in New York City, it has one acre of seating. In 2003, Greene began developing plans not for a specific developer, but to help the various groups involved "see the big picture." A 400-car parking lot to serve the entertainment community would have been

situated behind the theatre and the Green Mill jazz club. Greene estimates that developers would need to raise \$40 million for the entire building, the parking lot and a cul-de-sac. His hopeful rendering shows a brightly-lit theatre at opening night.

Green's 2003 Montrose Harbor vision to add a new facility with a restaurant to be run by North Park's Bruce Sherman was

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Among the drawings, including this one, are 20 whimsical, brightly-hued sketches structures one would love to see dot North Side streets.



Montrose Harbor Building
Proposed Concept

The architect proposed this eatery at Montrose Harbor in 2003.

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scrapped because of some leadership changes at the Chicago Park District, he said. The then-Chicago Plan Commission approved the controversial plan which left some questions about parking and traffic. "Mayor Daley liked it. It would have jutted out into the lake as a peninsula (giving) fantastic views of the city," said Greene.

Loren Robare provided photography for the Uptown Theatre 2003 calendar. "I was kind of worried about the property at

Ridge and Glenwood," she said. An old classic car showroom at that spot is being renovated by an artist with Greene listed as the architect of record.

Among the drawings are 20 whimsical, brightly-hued sketches structures one would love to see dot North Side streets. One is a balconied high rise in pastel colors with a combination of different influences, including Gothic and Middle Eastern. Expensive to build and maintain, Greene said in other parts of the world, such as Dubai, architecture like this is

commonplace.

"Unbuilt Projects and Fantasy Architecture: The Collective Works of Thom Greene, Architect" will be on display at the Edgewater Historical Society and Museum, 5358 N. Ashland Ave. until June 6, on Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Greene is planning to repeat the presentation on May 15, as so many community members are involved in these planning processes, he said. Greene and Proppe Design is located at 1209 W. Berwyn Ave. in the historic Lakewood-Balmoral District.