

The Development of Indian Hill Estates

Ninety years ago, on May 18, 1926, just a month after Wilmette annexed the land from Illinois Road west to the North Shore Electric Line, a motion was presented to the Wilmette Village Trustees to plat the Indian Hill Estates subdivision. The motion was carried by unanimous vote, and the first ad for the subdivision appeared in the *Wilmette Life* just three days later. The two original sections were developed by Bills Realty. The 1926 section is bounded by Lake Street, Romona Road, and the curve of Illinois Road. The 1928 section to the east is bounded by Lake Street, Illinois, Elmwood and Hunter. The Indian Wood Addition to Indian Hill Estates was annexed in several sections between 1962 and 1972. And the 1963 Avoca Addition includes properties on Iroquois Road west of Romona Road.

Indian Hill Estates was the brainchild of Henry W. Drucker, a real estate attorney in the Chicago firm of Urion, Drucker, Reichmann & Boutell. Drucker was one of the main financial backers of the development. He and his wife Mary built a home on Mohawk Road, and Mary is credited with giving the streets their Indian names. Bills Realty was responsible for planning the subdivision, building its infrastructure, and promoting its sales. The officers included three Bills brothers: Chairman, Benjamin Franklin Bills; President, F.W. Bills; and Vice President, H.W. Bills. In 1926, Bills Realty already had three offices: one in No Man's Land on Sheridan Road, one in Glencoe, and one in Chicago on South LaSalle Street. In order to oversee the project and to promote sales, the developers built a new office at the southwest corner of Locust and Illinois Roads that was still there in the early 1950s.

The prestigious name of the area was borrowed from the adjacent Indian Hill Club. Conceived of as an upscale residential neighborhood, the site plan was laid out by architect Philip Maher. The plan featured curving streets with expansive lawns lined with stately old oak trees and newly planted elm trees. Each lot had a 50' setback.

The park-like setting was enhanced by ornamental street lamps, stone entrance lamp posts and underground utilities. Basic standards mandated substantial two-story houses with attached garages and slate roofs. The interiors were equipped with hardwood floors, tiled bathrooms and the most up-to-date utilities. In order to promote sales in the new subdivision,

Bills Realty hired six architects and built a number of spec houses that were based on traditional architectural styles, including Tudor, Colonial, Norman and Chateausque. A hedge was originally planned to surround the entire subdivision to create the effect of a great English park. A sense of arrival is still achieved at Locust Road by the low stone walls with posts and lights at the entrances. Locust is the central entrance off of Lake Avenue. At each road into the earlier section of the subdivision, there are stone entrance posts with flat tops and decorative lighting. When the 1928 section was developed, stone entrance posts with gable tops and lighting were constructed along Lake Avenue.

In the early promotional material, the developers suggested that the future Indian Hill Estates would be an "ideal community" for executive and professional families. The subdivision would consist of individually designed houses, "Estates of Distinction," that would be set on expansive lots. These large wooded and elevated parcels of land offered "perpetual assurance of sunshine and fresh air and greensward."

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To experience Indian Hill Estates for yourself, sign up for our Spring Housewalk!

DISTINCT—

As the Separate Notes of a Song— Are the Homes in Indian Hill Estates

And like the cadence of music, the Estates homes harmonize with delightful order and dignity in the English Quadrangle plan—

Chateau, Tower, Brittany, Gothic, Tudor, are the names of some of the notes of the ever increasing scores of distinctive homes. Only three houses of thirteen built by Bills Bros., Inc., remain unsold.

Yet you can build in Indian Hill Estates at less cost than you can buy in the older sections of the North Shore where land values have advanced to as much as \$100 per front foot more than in Estates.



Indian Hill Estates

a secluded community, five minutes ride to stations and schools, by private motor coaches.



SEE YOUR REALTOR

or
BILLS REALTY, INC.

Loop Office:
208 S. La Salle Street
State 0268

Indian Hill Estates Office:
Locust Road at Ashland
Wilmette 069-7797
Greenleaf 1544

Del Lago Office:
960 Spanish Coast
Wilmette 5740

Bills Realty ad, 1929

If all this sounds inviting to you, be sure to purchase a ticket to this year's Housewalk while they last, and come and see the neighborhood for yourself!

Connie Casey