

A PLACE FOR EVERYONE – "UP-TOP"

ALTGELD GARDENS COMMERCIAL BUILDING

- Mid-Century Modern / Jet Age
- 13106–13128 S. Ellis Avenue
- Chicago's Riverdale Community
- Kech & Kech
- 1945–1946



PRESERVATION CHICAGO
THE CHICAGO 7 MOST ENDANGERED • 2022



Preservation Chicago Unveils the 2022 Chicago 7 Most Endangered



Peterson Avenue
Mid-Century Modern District



Central Park Theater



St. Martin de Tours Church



Public Housing Sites;
Altgeld, Lathrop & Cabrini



N. DuSable Lake Shore Dr.



Moody Triangle



Century & Consumers
Buildings



Promontory Point

Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers, Ward Miller, Adam Natenshon

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Preservation Chicago's 2022 Chicago 7 Most Endangered

Since 2003, the 'Chicago 7 Most Endangered' has sounded the alarm on imminently threatened historic buildings and public assets in Chicago to mobilize the stakeholder support necessary to save them from demolition.



Consumers Building, Chicago, IL, 1913. Mundie & Jensen, J.W. Taylor, photographer. Historic Architecture and Landscape Image Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago. Digital file #16458.

Table of Contents

• Chicago 7 2022 Map	2
• Table of Contents	3
• Century & Consumers Buildings	4
• Public Housing Sites	16
• St. Martin de Tours Church	34
• Peterson Ave. Midcentury District	42
• Promontory Point	52
• Central Park Theater	60
• North DuSable Lake Shore Drive	68
• Moody Triangle	76
• Acknowledgements	86

Get involved at **www.PreservationChicago.org**

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Vision: Preservation Chicago is committed to strengthening the vibrancy of Chicago's economy and quality of life by championing our historic built environment.



Mission: Preservation Chicago protects and revitalizes Chicago's irreplaceable architecture, neighborhoods and urban green spaces. We influence stakeholders toward creative reuse and preservation through advocacy, outreach, education, and partnership.

Century & Consumers Buildings

202 & 220 S. State Street, Chicago



The Century and Consumers Buildings, 202 S. State Street & 220 S. State Street. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

Overview

Preservation Chicago has long been concerned about the deferred maintenance, vacancy and deteriorating condition of the Century and Consumers Buildings, fronting State Street, Adams Street and Quincy Court, in the heart of the Chicago Loop and Central Business District. These two early 20th-century skyscraper structures were included as a Chicago 7 Most Endangered in 2011 and in 2013. And now for a third time in 2022, both have again been selected due to a significant threat of demolition.

Preservation Chicago has learned that a \$52 million expenditure has been earmarked in the Federal Infrastructure Appropriations Bill, currently before Congress, specifically for the demolition of the Century and Consumers Buildings. It appears that the decades-long advocacy efforts to save these significant buildings is reaching a critical stage.

The Century Building

Address: **202 S. State Street**
Architects: **Holabird and Roche**
Date: **1915**

The Consumers Building

Address: **220 S. State Street**
Architects: **Jenney, Mundie & Jensen**
Date: **1913**

Neighborhood: **Loop**
Style: **Early Chicago School Skyscrapers**



The Century and Consumers Buildings, 202 S. State Street & 220 S. State Street. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

These two remarkable buildings, the 16-story Century Building by Holabird & Roche (1915) and the 22-story Consumers Building by Jenney, Mundie & Jensen (1913), were once principally occupied by small businesses, attorney offices and showrooms. Due to the close proximity of the courthouse and courtrooms, the Federal Government and the General Services Administration (GSA), exercised its power of eminent domain in 2005-2007, to take control of these State Street buildings based on increased security concerns following the events of September 11, 2001. Since that acquisition by the GSA, the buildings have been stable but slowly deteriorating due to deferred maintenance and prolonged vacancy.

Multiple adaptive reuse plans for the Century and Consumers Buildings have been proposed and later blocked due to the proximity to the Chicago Federal Center. The Dirksen Federal Courthouse, part of the larger Federal Center complex, fronting Dearborn Street on the west, is located across a rear courtyard and alley from these historic buildings. The Quincy Court entry to the Dirksen Building was originally envisioned as a principal pedestrian entrance to the courthouse structure from State Street by architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Originally both the Century and Consumers Buildings, along with parcels to the south extending to Jackson Boulevard along State Street, were all to be occupied by Federal Government offices as part of an expansion of their Loop campus. That proposal would have included the Century and Consumers Buildings, along with two smaller buildings located at 212 and 214 S. State Street. 214 S. State was known as The Consumers Annex and location of Roberto's storefront. It was remodeled by Jenney Mundie & Jensen in the 1920s. Originally it was designed by architect, C.M. Palmer in 1883, for Gunther's Confectionary store, and later Martin Jewelers and Roberto's Men's Store with a remodeled Art Deco storefront by Isadore E. Alexander, c.1949. Also included in those Federal Center expansion plans were the Art Moderne Benson & Rixon Store Building by Alfred Alschuler in 1937 at 230 S. State

Chicago 7: The Century and Consumers Buildings



The Century Building, 1915, Holabird and Roche, 202 S. State Street. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

and the modernist Bond's Clothing Store by Friedman, Alschuler & Sincere, with Morris Lapidus, in 1949 at 240 S. State, also known as 10 W. Jackson Boulevard. A small two-story building included on this block is the heavily-remodeled and truncated E.L. Brand Building by Adler & Sullivan from 1883 at 12-18 W. Jackson Boulevard.

These seven properties on the block-long parcel fronting State Street, one of Chicago's most famous and notable thoroughfares, were acquired by the GSA to be used exclusively for Federal Government offices. They were long-considered to be part of a larger revisioning and vast expansion of the Federal Center complex. At one time, the GSA proposed a new large office building, which was to be sheathed in glass to bridge and connect the Century and Consumers Buildings. This proposal would have further increased the larger and more desired floor plates and square footages for Federal offices. That proposal was welcomed by many in the architectural community, as it engaged and bridged the two historic skyscrapers in a sensitive manner, reinvested in the restoration, and repurposed these two seminal buildings. The plans also engaged The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration, which is a series of established guidelines, principles and best practices for the reuse of historic buildings and part of a Federal program.

In the past decade, it was determined that the expansion of the offices into all of these buildings was unnecessary with federal funding largely diminished for this larger and broader vision. Only the Benson-Rixon Building, with its broad horizontal banding and curvilinear corner, along with the former Bond's Store, were to be converted into governmental offices. The remaining buildings along State Street, between Adams and Quincy Court, were to be planned to be reused at some point in the future. Discussions held at the Federal Center in about 2009-2010, which included Preservation Chicago and our other partner organizations, also considered demolition of one or both of the tall Chicago School buildings as a possibility. The conversation around demolition of these early skyscrapers was

considered unbelievable and incomprehensible at the time by members of the architecture and preservation community, and this response was shared with GSA officials.

Security concerns and a reduction in required office space in the Loop appeared to have halted the GSA's initial plans for renovation and reuse. Then in 2017 after an extensive advocacy effort by Preservation Chicago, the City of Chicago issued a Request For Proposals for the adaptive reuse of the Century and Consumers Buildings. Preservation Chicago was delighted by the City of Chicago's selection of CA Ventures in partnership with Cedar Street Companies. Their \$141 million renovation proposal planned for a preservation-sensitive adaptive reuse of the four building cluster, with the two terra cotta office towers as residential apartments and the two adjacent low-rise buildings as State Street retail with a tower above. Despite a strong developer team submitting a solid adaptive reuse for a residential plan, it was halted by a federal judge citing security concerns due to the proximity of the rooftop deck and rear windows to the courthouse.



Consumers Building, 1913, Jenney, Mundie & Jensen, 220 S. State Street. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

Widely considered to be an impossible challenge to solve, Preservation Chicago redoubled its efforts to identify an adaptive reuse that could accommodate the rigorous courthouse security requirements. Eventually, we arrived at a highly unusual solution, a collaborative national archive center to be known as the “Chicago Collaborative Archive Center.”

At first, the notion of repurposing two tall, slender Chicago School skyscrapers into an archive center seemed unique and perhaps even improbable. In fact, this creative solution has many strengths and is very achievable. Recognizing the growing urgency to repurpose these buildings, Preservation Chicago has been working diligently over the past two years to build a strong coalition of critical stakeholders. There is now strong interest, support and enthusiasm for this adaptive reuse project. This coalition of partners has already engaged architects and engineers long before news broke of the \$52 million demolition congressional earmark in February 2022.

Chicago 7: The Century and Consumers Buildings

History

Originally, these tall and elegant skyscraper buildings were part of a thriving and vibrant State Street Retail District. The 16-story Century Building at 202 S. State Street was designed by Holabird and Roche in 1915. The 22-story Consumers Building at 220 S. State Street and 1 W. Quincy Court was designed by Jenny, Mundie & Jensen in 1913.

The Century Building is historically unique for two important reasons. First, the distinct vertical expression of the building's exterior elevations demonstrate the transition from the Chicago School buildings of the late 19th century to the early decades of the 20th century. Emphasis of verticality is achieved with strong vertical bands and understated recessed spandrels. Second, the overall design of the façade ornament is a rare example of Neo-Manueline (inspired by the historic Portuguese style) influenced architecture in the Midwest. The proliferation of complex ornament around the building fenestration and openings, such as windows and doors, along with the uppermost floors of the building, features shields, knights in armor, along with botanical and other motifs, and contributes to the diversity of the architectural environment within the Chicago Loop.



The Century and Consumers Buildings, 202 S. State Street & 220 S. State Street. Photo Credit: Kaufmann & Fabry Co., State Street, 200-298 S. Folder 1177, Sheet 18, CPC_04_D_1177_018, Chicago - Photographic Images of Change, University of Illinois at Chicago. Library. Special Collections Department

This building is listed as a contributing structure to the Loop Retail Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. It has been determined by a General Services Administration study that it may be eligible for an individual National Register listing according to a March 2006 Cultural Resources Survey. It also received an orange-rating in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, published in 1996. An orange-rated building “possesses some architectural feature or historical association that made them potentially significant in the context of the surrounding community.” It would be a strong candidate for Chicago Landmark designation.

The history of The Century Building began when Buck & Rayner, a pioneering Chicago drug store firm later absorbed by Liggett Drug stores, commissioned the noted Chicago architectural firm Holabird & Roche in 1913 to design a modern commercial skyscraper building.



The Century Building, 1915, Holabird and Roche, 202 S. State Street. Photo Credit: Chicago Architectural Photographing Company, State Street, 200-298 S. Folder 1177, Sheet 21, CPC_04_D_1177_021, Chicago - Photographic Images of Change, University of Illinois at Chicago. Library. Special Collections Department

Completed in 1915, the Twentieth Century Building, as it was originally called, is an excellent example of a tall shops building. Its upper floors were occupied by a wide variety of tenants through the years including tailors, furriers, beauty shops, clothes shops, lawyers, brokers, and dentists, reinforcing the vibrancy of the commercial district within the Loop. The Twentieth Century Building's name was changed to the Century Building in 1917 after the newly named Century Trust and Savings Bank signed a 20-year lease for space in the building. In 1949, Home Federal Savings and Loan Association purchased the Century Building, resulting in alterations to the storefronts and lobby space. In about 1958, Home Federal Savings & Loan Bank acquired the Republic Building (1905-1961), by architects Holabird & Roche, also a building of great architectural merit and located directly across the street, on the southeast corner of State and Adams Street. The Republic Building was then demolished by Home Federal and replaced with a nondescript bank building, which opened in 1962, as the bank's new headquarters.

The iconic Consumers Building represents the last period of the large-scale Chicago School commissions, (also known as the Chicago Commercial Style), along with its neighbor, the Century Building. Typical of this commercial style, the 22-story building is constructed with a steel frame and clad in white architectural terra cotta made locally in Chicago, with a vertically-oriented, streamlined design highlighted by decorative ornament. The steel structure is supported with 38 caissons that took 200 men two months to drive into the ground. One week after the building permit was granted, a new Chicago building code limited the height of buildings to 200 feet. The Consumers Building is 291 feet tall.

Chicago 7: The Century and Consumers Buildings



The Consumers Building, 1913, Jenney, Mundie & Jensen, 220 S. State Street, c. 1960. Photo credit: Chicago Architectural Photographing Company, State Street, 200-298 S. Folder 1177, Sheet 4, CPC_04_D_1177_004, Chicago - Photographic Images of Change, University of Illinois at Chicago. Library. Special Collections Department

Windows are present on all four sides of the building so that natural sunlight reaches all parts of the floor plates, which was an important feature in the early years of electricity and ventilation. An interior lightwell, which was typical of many large commercial buildings of the era, was eliminated from the design, as windows wrap all sides of the building. Floors 2, 3 and 4 feature the three-part Chicago windows, with a central fixed panel and two operable

double hung windows on each side. The remaining floors contain more typical paired double-hung windows, extending to the top of the building. The primary street facades on both State Street and Quincy Court are recognized for their vertical expression and their tripartite design, which consist of a defined base, shaft or middle section and capital or cornice.

The Consumers Building is separated into these defined sections at the 1st, 4th, 17th, and 20th stories by simple horizontal bands of terra cotta and topped with an ornamental fascia and cornice. The terra cotta spandrels are detailed with simple geometric shapes. In contrast, many of the public and semi-public interior spaces of the Consumers Building are highly ornamented and detailed. The revolving door and entrance to the building fronting State Street favors the far north side of the ground floor elevation and is asymmetrical, surrounded by bronze and granite surfaces.

Upon entering the building, the lobby is composed of Italian marble-clad walls and ceiling, all authentic to the original architect's vision and design. Bronze fixtures, finishes, and surfaces, including elaborate bronze elevator doors, are original features within the lobby. Several alterations have been made to the ground-floor facade of the building. The bronze canopy over the State Street entrance was removed along with the storefronts. These early storefronts were replaced with modern storefronts over time. The original roof that included a frieze band and cornice with lights, located at the very top of the building, was also modified.

Plans for the Consumers Building began when Jacob L. Kesner, part of Kesner Realty Trust, initially purchased two buildings on the site along with a ground-lease under the structures. Both buildings were then demolished in order for the skyscraper to be constructed. The State and Quincy corner site was ideal for retail and store frontage, as there was good light, and ventilation. Kesner went on



The Century Building, 1915, Holabird and Roche, 202 S. State Street. Photo Credit: Chicago Architectural Photographing Company, State Street, 200-298 S. Folder 1177, Sheet 21, CPC_04_D_1177_021, Chicago - Photographic Images of Change, University of Illinois at Chicago. Library. Special Collections Department



The Consumers Building, 1913, Jenney, Mundie & Jensen, 220 S. State Street. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

to purchase the adjacent building at 214 S. State Street to ensure that no other skyscraper would be built there and to forever protect his tall building's light and ventilation. That building was later remodeled by Jenney, Mundie & Jensen and called the Consumers Building Annex.

The Consumers Building secured three important tenants, the first was A. Weis & Co. for the Winter Garden, a formal restaurant located in the basement of 220 S. State, with much of the lavish interior ornament signifying a very desirable restaurant entity. The second was the Hilton Company, a men's clothing store from New York City, which was placed in the corner store location at street level. A month later, the name of the building was changed to the Consumers Building, which noted the occupancy of the Consumers Company on the 20th and 21st floors. At this time, a 60-foot electric circular "Consumers" sign was installed on the roof of the building. This sign was later removed at an unknown date. Throughout the years, the building's tenants have also included film companies, clothing dealers, and the Remington Typewriter Company.

One of the smaller buildings located between the two early Chicago skyscrapers mentioned prior, dates from 1886-1887 and designed by architect Charles M. Palmer for Gunther's Confectionary store, located at 214 S. State Street. It was reduced in height and revisioned as the Consumers Building Annex, to protect against intrusions on the adjacent Consumers Building and the many windows on the building's north elevation. The 214 S. State Street building was later remodeled once again in about 1949 and has an important historic curvilinear storefront and entry which should also be preserved. The streamlined, high-style Art Deco/Art Moderne storefront by Isadore E. Alexander, with its black Vitrolite, colored terrazzo, silver banding, and exuberant circular glass window display, is highly intact and a rare survivor celebrating State Street's rich history. Preservation Chicago hopes that particular care and sensitivity will be taken to protect and restore this significant element.



Marble-clad Consumers Building elevator lobby and grand staircase with bronze fixtures. c.2017. Credit: John O'Dwyer / JSO Valuation Group

Threat

The irreparable damage that demolition of these historic buildings will have on South State Street cannot be overstated. Their facades provide an important anchor for the existing street walls along both State Street, Adams Street, and the Chicago Federal Center, which Ludwig Mies van der Rohe felt it important to frame his buildings. If demolished, not only will Chicago lose two important early Chicago School skyscrapers by two of its most important architecture firms, it will also create a huge void and open site which will adversely impact and vacate the energy from one of downtown Chicago's most vibrant thoroughfares and intersections. Chicago does not need another vacant lot or windswept plaza, nor does it need the shame of losing more of its early historic skyscrapers. Every effort should be made to repurpose these buildings, so they contribute to the vibrancy of State Street and the tax rolls.

Moreover, there are also concerns regarding the impact that demolition of 202 S. State St. would have on neighboring buildings that compose the historic Berghoff Restaurant at 17 W. Adams Street. A recent structural survey has concluded that the Berghoff Restaurant – Chicago's oldest extant restaurant, comprising two historic 1870s buildings – could potentially lose the significant structural stability that they currently receive from the frame of the Century Building.

There is much more at stake here than just the terra cotta skyscrapers. Chicago's 'Early Chicago Skyscrapers' are currently under consideration for a UNESCO World Heritage Site. If the Century and Consumers Buildings were to be demolished, it would jeopardize eligibility for this extraordinary designation and international recognition. Additionally, a successful Chicago's 'Early Chicago Skyscrapers' UNESCO World Heritage Site would generate thousands of annual heritage visitors and millions of additional heritage tourism dollars to the economy.

Recommendations

Chicago 7: The Century and Consumers Buildings



Roberto's storefront / originally Gunther's Confectionary, 214 S. State. Remodeled in 1949 by Isadore E. Alexander in a streamlined, high-style Art Moderne style. A highly intact and rare survivor celebrating State Street's rich history. Photo Credit: Google Maps

Every effort should be made in partnership with the GSA and Federal Government to preserve, protect, and reuse the Century and Consumers Buildings. Since the buildings are already owned by the federal government, they could be rehabilitated for government use, or a creative solution like a collaborative and shared archives institution, as proposed by the Chicago Collaborative Archives Center.

Preservation Chicago hopes that the Consumers Building's elevations on State and Quincy Streets will be restored to include the building's original rooflines, frieze band, fascia, cornice and terra cotta, along with the storefronts and grand marble-lined lobby and arcade.

Preservation Chicago is currently engaged with a consortium of stakeholders for a collaborative Chicago Archives Center. To date, we have a group of religious archive collections which have joined together to explore the Century and Consumers Buildings as a national collaborative archives center, which could prove beneficial to many religious orders around the nation. Such an idea could also provide a center for religious studies and research, centrally located and under one roof, in an area of Chicago noted for its concentration of universities and university students.

With this collaborative archives project, many of the rear elevation windows on the Consumers Building, closest to the Federal Courthouse, could be blocked for the archives stacks which are sensitive to sunlight exposure. Other windows at the west end of the Quincy Court elevation, could potentially be blocked from the interior side, which would not impact the building's southern elevation. The easternmost windows on Quincy, as well as those fronting State Street, could remain open but inoperable with special glass. The areas at the front of the building could be used as a research center for each archive, which could potentially be located on individual floors of the building and locked off with security as needed. Of course, security would be of great importance and entry to the building would be by appointment only and via a security desk in the lobby of each building. This is an exciting opportunity and concept and could even house municipal, state and federal archives, as well. One suburban university has even proposed the idea of a new presence in the Loop for their library and archive departments.

In an era of ever-shrinking tax dollars, now is not the time to use \$52 million of public taxpayer monies to destroy historic buildings for vacant lots. If properly repurposed for government use, or as a Chicago Archives Center, these two buildings could serve the people of Chicago for another 100 years or more.



The Century Building, 202 S. State Street. Photo credit: Chicago Architectural Photographing Company, State Street, 200-298 S. Folder 1177, Sheet 13, CPC_04_D_1177_013, Chicago - Photographic Images of Change, University of Illinois at Chicago. Library. Special Collections Department

Public Housing Sites

Altgeld Gardens, Cabrini Rowhouses, Lathrop Homes



Altgeld Gardens 'Up Top' © Ward Miller



Cabrini Rowhouses © Ward Miller



Lathrop Homes © Adam Natenshon

Altgeld Gardens Commercial Buildings; 'Up Top', and Carver Elementary School "C Building"

Address: **13100 S. Ellis Avenue; between 133rd Street and 133rd Place**

Architect: **Keck & Keck; Naess & Murphy**

Date: **1946; 1944**

Style: **Midcentury Modern; Classical Revival**

Neighborhood: **Altgeld Gardens / Riverdale Community**

Cabrini Rowhouses

Address: **Bounded by Chicago Avenue, Larrabee, Oak and Hudson Streets**

Architects: **Henry Holsman, George Burmeister, Maurice Rissman, Ernest Grunsfeld Jr, L.R. Solomon, G.M. Jones, Karl M. Vitzhum, I.S. Loewenberg, Frank McNally**

Date: **c.1940s**

Style: **Chicago Vernacular**

Neighborhood: **Near North Side**

Lathrop Homes's South Campus

Address: **South of Diversey Avenue, between Damen Ave. and the Chicago River**

Architects: **Robert DeGolyer, Hubert Burnham, Hugh Garden, Quinn & Christiansen, Tallmadge & Watson, White & Weber, Edwin Clark, Lowenberg & Lowenberg, Mayo & Mayo, E.E. & Elmer Roberts, with landscape architect Jens Jensen**

Date: **c.1938**

Style: **Chicago Vernacular**

Neighborhood: **North Center / Lincoln Park / Hamlin Park**



Lathrop Homes's South Campus. Photo Credit: Deborah Mercer

OVERVIEW: Public Housing Sites

Preservation Chicago has once again selected Chicago's public housing sites, or specific buildings within them, many of which are historic Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) properties, as part of our 2022 Chicago 7 Most Endangered list. Altgeld Gardens "Up Top" structure and George Washington Carver Elementary's "C Building", the Cabrini Row Houses, and Lathrop Homes- South Campus, all comprise this year's selection.

Altgeld Gardens: At Altgeld Gardens, we are spotlighting the unique Midcentury Modern, one-story curvilinear Commercial Building, known locally as "Up Top," designed by the seminal architecture firm of Keck & Keck. This gently curving, block-long building with its undulating cantilevered canopy and open arcade with retail tenants, overlooks a community plaza and greenspace and was once the vibrant heart of the Altgeld Gardens community.

The commercial storefront structure is the only privately-owned building in the Altgeld Gardens development and it once contained a cooperative-owned grocery store, drug and variety store, beauty salon and barber shop, and a tavern. After years of neglect, the building is now almost completely vacant while the open arcade contains a heartbreaking memorial wall of handwritten names for those community members lost to death, nearby environmental hazards and even violence. The current private owner had attempted to sell the building to CHA in the past, yet there has been no movement in recent years, leading to the building's further disrepair and vacancy. As a result Altgeld Gardens, specifically the "Up Top " commercial building has earned a place on our Chicago 7 Most Endangered List in 2022.

The other building within the Altgeld Gardens housing development in extreme disrepair is the C Building, a wing of the George Washington Carver Elementary and Primary School complex. It was designed as part of a multi-building campus of one-story structures for preschool and primary grades. These Federal-style buildings overlook Carver Park and the playground. The C Building was the original Carver school structure, prior to the addition of



Julia C. Lathrop Homes, originally known as Diversey Housing Project H1406, site rendering, Chicago, IL, 1938. Photo credit: Historic Architecture and Landscape Image Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago. Digital file #52469

later school buildings and the oldest school building of the complex. In later years it was used as an administration building for the Carver School, but has been vacant for over three decades. Recently, the Chicago Board of Education, the owner of the C Building, expressed an interest in demolishing the building, but a robust response from the community was able to prevent, or at least delay, the immediate demolition threat. This building is part of an ensemble, including buildings A, B and D which together form a curved wall of buildings fronting a portion of George Washington Carver Park within the park, while also providing a portion of two streetwalls on the street-facing elevations. Together, these structures form an “L” shaped corner complex of one-story school buildings and provide a beautiful protective enclave for the schoolchildren that also use the park as their school’s playground.

The Altgeld Gardens Rowhouses were a 2017 Preservation Chicago 7 Most Endangered, with 624 housing units in 26 buildings in Blocks 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 all noted as threatened, along with the privately-owned “Up Top.” With the exception of the “Up Top,” building, all of the noted blocks of residential buildings were tragically demolished in the following years due to significant neglect and legal challenges. The currently vacant former housing site is now the proposed location for a 130th Street terminal, station, and multi-story parking lot for the Red Line Extension.

Frances Xavier Cabrini Rowhouses: The Cabrini Rowhouses include 586 units across 16 acres. Bounded by Chicago Avenue, Larrabee Street, Oak Street, and Hudson Avenue, they were originally known as the Frances Cabrini Homes and consisted of two- and three-story buildings. Over the years this portion of the development has languished and fallen into disrepair. Approximately 140 units of the western portion of these early rowhouses have been retained, restored and reused. However, the vast majority of this rowhouse village remains untouched, despite the overall growth and development of much of the former Cabrini-Green project area on the Near North Side. Despite Chicago’s acute shortage of affordable housing, there was a recent plan to demolish half of the structures to accommodate wider streets. Walkable dense neighborhoods should be the priority over providing additional public street parking. The concern was that dense street parking could interfere with emergency vehicles’ access. A simple solution would be to eliminate the street parking and offer off-site parking for resident vehicles on nearby CHA-owned vacant land. The CHA needs to step up and return these units into providing homes for Chicago’s most vulnerable community of residents and perhaps senior citizens. It’s astounding that many former Cabrini Rowhouses have been waiting for nearly 20 years to returned to use.

Lathrop Homes, South Campus (South of Diversey Avenue): A 2013 Chicago 7 Most Endangered, Lathrop Homes’s North Campus and its historic Jens Jensen landscape has been beautifully renovated after a 20-year



Cabrini Rowhouses. Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago



Lathrop Homes's South Campus. Photo Credit: Adam Natenshon / Preservation Chicago

advocacy effort. However, the South Campus, located south of Diversey, is again stalled. Since 2002, Preservation Chicago has advocated with the community and our partner organizations, to reject the early revisioning concepts, which included a wholesale demolition of most, if not all, of the buildings on the Lathrop site. Most of the historic 1938 buildings of the south portion of the campus are vacant, with the exception of a senior housing building and a new apartment structure, while a corner building at Diversey and Damen has just begun a renovation effort.

The CHA is once again neglecting its historic resources and developments, with more than 1,000 existing housing units being mothballed or vacant. In the case of the Cabrini Rowhouses and the Lathrop Homes's South Campus, many of these affordable units constructed for Chicago's most vulnerable residents have remained vacant for far too long.

History: The Chicago Housing Authority was established in 1937 as a means to house Chicago's most vulnerable population. The progressive programs and housing were realized by the Public Works Administration under President Franklin Roosevelt. These new programs and housing were revolutionary in concept, with design services often offered pro-bono for humanitarian reasons. Meanwhile, these projects saw the nation's and city's philanthropic business and civic communities coming together to achieve this goal. The first of these projects, developed in 1938 by the CHA, included the Jane Addams Homes (demolished), the Julia C. Lathrop Homes, and the Trumbull Park Homes.



Altgeld Gardens Commercial Building 'Up Top', 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Avenue. Photo Credit: Ward Miller

Over the decades, many of these public housing projects were added to and further enhanced with more buildings. Unfortunately in the mid-1950s, the successful and sustainable garden-apartment public housing model was displaced by the tower-in-a-garden approach. This approach resulted in towers of buildings for miles on end, concentrating poverty and allowing for the isolation of some residents from other more central areas of Chicago. The public housing high-rise tower design coupled with a lack of proper security and often neglected maintenance, contributed to a notoriety which cast many public housing developments into a negative light.

Ironically, the early examples of public housing were historic, groundbreaking developments and proved resilient over time. This was especially true with the earliest developments which employed a human scale and gave dignity to the residents, helping to create communities which often blended to some degree into the surrounding areas. However, these early housing projects were remarkable in their design and proved that with the reinvestment and commitment of the ownership and community partners. These residential communities can continue to be successful and sustainable resources.

Altgeld Gardens

HISTORY: Altgeld Gardens

Altgeld Gardens was constructed between 1943 and 1946 for returning African-American veterans that served their country in World War II and their families. Located in Chicago's Riverdale Community and part of the larger Calumet Region on Chicago's Far South Side, the development consisted of 1,500 units, divided into 162 separate buildings of two-story town homes. It is bounded by 130th Street, South Doty and South St. Lawrence Avenues. The complex of buildings was mostly designed by the noted architectural firm of Naess & Murphy and was reported to be "the most self-contained comprehensive public housing project ever constructed in Chicago."



Altgeld Gardens Commercial Center 'Up Top', Project #317, 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Ave. Photo Credit: Hedrich Blessing Photographers, George Fred and William Keck papers, Chicago History Museum / Wisconsin Historical Society, #126126

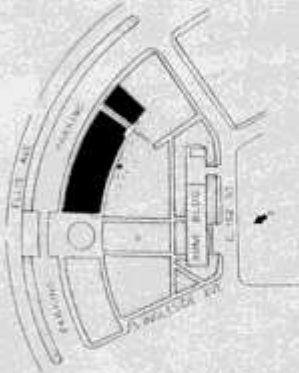
29. *Essential services for 1,500 families*

LOCATION: CHICAGO, ILL.

GEORGE FRED KECK & WILLIAM KECK, Architects

PERRY CONSTRUCTION CO.

General Contractors



The Chicago Housing Authority's Altgeld Gardens, a housing project for 1,500 families, was built—as so many such projects must be—in a rather isolated location near south-side manufacturing plants. The Authority wanted a set of necessary services available for residents of this project, and decided that the essentials were a supermarket, variety store, tailor and shoe repair shop, tavern, drug store, delicatessen, beauty parlor, barber shop and laundry. This building was then planned—to be privately owned and financed—for a prominent location in the project, to house these essentials and help create the full community. Architecture and materials were planned to conform with other buildings in the project. Chief decorative feature is the marquee which flares gracefully over the front sidewalk.

CONSTRUCTION OUTLINE: FOUNDATIONS—reinforced concrete. STRUCTURE: Exterior walls—brick, cement block backup and interior finish. ROOF—built-up tar and gravel, Johns-Manville Corp. INSULATION—Celotex Corp. GLASS—Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Co. DOORS—New Londoner, American Plywood Corp. HARDWARE—P. & F. Corbin. PAINTS—Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION—National Electric Products Co. PLUMBING FIXTURES—Crane Co. HEATING—gas fired system.

Altgeld Garden's Development Brochure. Image Credit: Chicago Housing Authority



Altgeld Gardens Commercial Building 'Up Top', 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Avenue. Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

The Altgeld Gardens Housing Project was named in honor of Governor John Peter Altgeld (1847-1902), who served as Governor of the State of Illinois from 1893 to 1897. Altgeld was a leader in the Progressive Movement and implemented child labor and workplace safety laws to protect the state's most vulnerable residents. He is often associated with the Labor Movement and the Haymarket Riots, as he pardoned three men charged for their involvement in the riot and refused to intervene in the Pullman Strike of 1894.

The Altgeld Gardens Rowhouses consisted of 100 apartments with 3 ½ rooms, 600 with 4 ½ rooms, another 600 with 5 ½ rooms and 200 with 6 ½ rooms. The development's original population was 7,000 tenants with only 3,000 adults and 57% under the age of 19 years old, so the idea of caring for young families became paramount in the development of Altgeld Gardens. As the project was built on the Far South Side of the City and noted as having limited transportation services, a whole community was developed to support the needs of the residents. This included "a Board of Health station, public library, six-room nursery school for 240 children ages two to five, auditorium, clubrooms and teenagers' lounge." The Chicago Board of Education built four, one-story school buildings (known as George Washington Carver's A, B, C & D Buildings) for elementary and high school classes located across 133rd Place.

The structure known as "Up-Top" and also the Altgeld Commercial Building was designed by the noted architects, Keck & Keck and part of a host of shops and the center of the community. Among other services it provided a grocery store, built and owned by Alfred Beals, affectionately known as "Al's Certified" grocery store. Alfred Beals and his wife Jeanne Anderson, an elementary school teacher, once operated and owned many, if not all of the stores, and were parents of Hollywood actress Jennifer Beals. It is said that a young Jennifer Beals regularly played outside the grocery store at Up-Top, until the untimely demise of her father, while she was still a child.



Memorial Wall at Altgeld Gardens Commercial Building 'Up Top', 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Avenue. Photo Credit: Ward Miller

THREAT: Altgeld Gardens

A large portion of Altgeld Gardens's rowhouses were part of Preservation Chicago's 2017 Chicago 7 Most Endangered list. Despite promises from CHA and their consultants that the buildings would be renovated and preserved, a lawsuit challenged this work and ultimately most of the buildings were demolished. However, during those Section 106 hearings, a proposal for a large and wide boulevard connecting 130th Street/Hazel Johnson Environmental Justice Parkway through the development and connecting to the Little Calumet River, would have eliminated many of the public buildings at Altgeld Gardens. Fortunately, this plan was halted, due in part to Preservation Chicago's advocacy as part of these public hearings.

At the time, Preservation Chicago made the argument that while everyone wanted to explore the sites where George Washington and Abraham Lincoln visited, in Chicago we had a sitting president, Barack Obama, who started his community services and engagement work with Hazel Johnson at Altgeld. Therefore, we should sensitively rethink such harsh and insensitive plans, along with a wide boulevard, which would have encouraged speeding cars into the heart of Altgeld Gardens.

These formerly proposed plans would have demolished the Commercial Building by architects Keck & Keck – brothers George Fred Keck and William Keck – along with the plaza and other public and semi-public buildings. That would have been a tremendous loss for Altgeld Gardens and its residents, along with individuals interested in modern architecture and that of Keck & Keck. Keck & Keck are considered to be one of Chicago's best architectural practitioners during this period and are among an esteemed group of other leading modernist architects including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, The Architects Collaborative, Paul Schweiker, and Bertrand Goldberg.



Altgeld Gardens Carver School 'C Building', 1944, Naess & Murphy, between 133rd Street and 133rd Place. Photo Credit: Ward Miller

School Building C, part of George Washington Carver Elementary School's campus of 1940s buildings, narrowly missed demolition in 2021 after wrecking equipment had actually been delivered to the site. Despite decades of vacancy, the Chicago Board of Education chose not to repurpose the building or allow it to become repurposed as a community-centric structure. Basic maintenance was deferred and the building was neglected during its long-term vacancy. Despite its current condition, there are a variety of community visions for reuse ideas including a community training center.

We also understand from residents that over 200 renovated units at Altgeld Gardens remain vacant, despite a huge waiting list for those in need. In a large and resourceful city like Chicago, why aren't our public housing agencies addressing these needs in a more timely manner?

These buildings present amazing reuse opportunities, however the potential in each of these structures is being squandered. We can do better. We must do better. We request Chicago Housing Authority, City Hall, and the Chicago Board of Education to work together towards a beneficial preservation outcome for the community. It's an embarrassment to our City that these buildings have been in an extensive period of vacancy and deterioration in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. It is time to act decisively and correct the missteps of the past.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Altgeld Gardens

With the Red Line Extension to 130th Street anticipated in the next five years, we at Preservation Chicago are of the opinion that the Keck & Keck-designed "Up Top" Commercial Building should be acquired by the CHA or other agency and offered through a Request for Proposals from the City of Chicago. We join Altgeld residents' concerns that this structure is extremely important for its architecture, innovation and cultural history. The Commercial Building should be considered for Chicago Landmark designation, as other notable structures by this seminal firm



Altgeld Gardens Carver School 'C Building', 1944, between 133rd Street and 133rd Place, Naess & Murphy. Photo Credit: Ward Miller

have been honored with a landmark designation in the past. The firm's recognition extends to Keck & Keck's "House of Tomorrow," which was part of the 1933 Century of Progress World's Fair. The House of Tomorrow was floated across Lake Michigan and re-sited in the Indiana Dunes, near Beverly Shores, Indiana. It is now undergoing a sensitive and much-needed restoration, much like what is required for Altgeld's "Up Top."

We also would like to join the community vision of a reuse and revisioning of the C Building, currently part of the Carver School Campus, which is in complete disrepair. This building has endless possibilities as a structure that could house worker training programs for residents in various industries, in addition to providing new skills and education in the various trades to local residents of Altgeld Gardens and the neighboring Phillip Murray Homes. If funding was lacking for such programs, the C Building could be adapted in part as a cultural center or housing for seniors and people with disabilities. Community residents recall a visit from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to the Altgeld Gardens and the Building C of Carver Elementary School in the 1960s.

Looking to the future, Chicago's INVEST South/West program should be extended to include the buildings of Altgeld Gardens to encourage a purchase, renovation and reuse of the "Up Top" Commercial Building, which has brought so much interest to this site. With a Chicago Landmark designation, the curvilinear commercial building could take advantage of Adopt-A-Landmark funds or perhaps Neighborhood Opportunity Funds. The same ideas and funding may be available to consider for the C Building, and perhaps the Chicago Board of Education (BOE) and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), would consider a sale of the building for another use—a creative use. Using CPS and BOE funds to demolish their historic buildings is counterintuitive to their mission and could perhaps be viewed as a violation of taxpayer funds, when such buildings could be donated or sold to a new user or, better yet, gifted to the community, with support funding from other City agencies. There are many possibilities for the C Building, if only the owner could work with the community and elected officials.

Lastly, the City of Chicago needs to further recognize the outstanding work of Ms. Hazel Johnson (1935–2011), founder of People for Community Recovery (PCR) and recognized as "The Mother of Environmental Justice." Ms.



Cabrini Rowhouses. Photo Credit: Nick Brumfield / Windy City Aerial Photography

Johnson, who lived with her seven children and family at 13141 S. Langley in Altgeld Gardens, was recognized and honored by several United States presidents for her work. Her home was the site of many visits from President Barack Obama, whom she mentored when he was a community organizer on Chicago's Far South Side. Her former home, which is still occupied by members of her family at Altgeld Gardens, should be considered for a Chicago Landmark designation.

Hazel Johnson's office and the People for Community Recovery Environmental Organization, also known as PCR, has operated for 43 years and was once headquartered in the "Up Top" Commercial Building at Altgeld Gardens, and within the 13116 S. Ellis Avenue storefront. This is yet another reason for the preservation, reuse and Chicago Landmark designation of that important commercial building.

A recognition and Chicago Landmark Designation of Ms. Hazel Johnson's work and service at Altgeld Gardens would further inspire many residents and citizens to take up causes in the field of environmental justice and the health hazards associated with the toxins in their communities. These issues continue to impact many housing projects and low-income communities across the nation, which we have all witnessed from Flint, Michigan and Chicago's Far South Side to cities and towns across the United States. Much of this work began with Hazel Johnson and continues under the leadership of her daughter, Cheryl Johnson, to this day.

Cabrini Rowhouses

HISTORY: Cabrini Rowhouses

The Cabrini Rowhouses were designed in the early 1940s for an area of the Near North Side near the North Branch of the Chicago River which had been considered a slum by city officials and cited as lacking many modern sanitation standards. The architects of the new Cabrini Rowhouses included Henry Holsman, George Burmeister, Maurice



Cabrini Rowhouses. Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

Rissman, Ernest Grunsfeld Jr, L.R. Solomon, G. M. Jones, K.M Vitzhum, I.S. Loewenberg, and Frank McNally. These were all recognized names in the world of architecture in Chicago during this time period.

The western boundary of the Near North Side, near the former Montgomery Ward Warehouse and Administration Building, had originally been settled in Chicago's early years by mostly Swedish immigrants and known as "Swede Town." By the 1940s, this area was considered dilapidated and was home to many immigrants and families of Italian, Irish and Puerto Rican descent, along with a growing African-American population. Prior to the construction of the Cabrini Rowhouses, this area had been known as "Little Hell," noting the poor living and sanitary conditions within many of the 19th-century buildings. For instance, in Devereaux Bowley's book *The Poorhouse*, it is cited that most of the 683 apartments in these older buildings had severe sanitary issues with "443 having no bathtubs, 480 had no hot water and 515 were heated only by stoves. Forty-three toilets were shared by two families each, and there were twenty-nine 'yard toilets' and ten 'under sidewalk' toilets."

As a solution to improve the living conditions of residents, 586 new rowhouses were built in 1942, filling an approximately three-square-block area. These new rowhouses were constructed to replace the crumbling apartment buildings that were typical in the neighborhood. The community's population increased rapidly with industrial workers during the war effort mobilization and with veterans returning following the end of World War II. The rowhouses averaged 4.41 rooms each with private bathrooms and kitchens. The cost was \$6,333 per unit. The first residents moved in on August 1, 1942.

The Cabrini Rowhouses were named in honor of Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, M.S.C. (1850 - 1917), who was later beatified in 1938 and canonized in 1946 as St. Frances Cabrini. She was recognized as America's first saint by the Roman Catholic Church. Mother Cabrini was born Maria Francesca Cabrini on July 15, 1850, near Lombardy, Italy and immigrated to America in 1889. She worked in cities around the nation, establishing orphanages, hospitals, and



Cabrini Rowhouses. Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

schools and addressing the conditions of the nation's most vulnerable. In all, Cabrini is said to have founded 67 institutions in Chicago, New York, Seattle, Denver, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Latin America and Europe. Mother Cabrini died in 1917 in Chicago at Columbus Hospital, now the site of a national shrine dedicated to her.

The success of the Cabrini Rowhouses as a community to house a heavily immigrant and low-income population led to successive expansions of the housing project over the next several decades. In 1957, this expansion included many low- and high-rise red brick buildings, known as Cabrini Extension North and Cabrini Extension South which comprised about 1,925 units. Later developments included the expansion of another 1,096 units in 1962 with the William Green Homes, white brick tower buildings which were named for William Green (1873-1952), an American legislator, former Ohio state senator, labor advocate and president of the American Federation of Labor (1924-1952). These buildings were constructed north of Division Street and led to the hyphenation of the housing project as Cabrini-Green. By the late 1950s and extending into the late 1990s, the Cabrini-Green Development housed mostly African-American residents. Yet the failure of routine maintenance and long-neglected repairs led to many of the buildings becoming unsafe and uninhabitable. Coupled with a large concentration of poverty and the buildings' extreme disrepair, most of the buildings were targeted for demolition to alleviate both the issues of deferred maintenance and crime. At its height of occupancy and development, Cabrini-Green had over 3,600 units and 15,000 residents.

THREAT: Cabrini Rowhouses

Demolition of a majority of the Cabrini-Green Housing Project and many of its high-rises began in the 1990s and continued to 2011, with the last of the tall buildings located at 1230 N. Burling. The Cabrini Rowhouses are some of the few remaining of the original 3,607 units that the CHA has not demolished and destroyed. A small portion of the rowhouses were renovated, totaling about 140 units. However, according to the CHA, "the remaining rowhomes and flats are one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom units" and remain vacant as they have been for nearly two decades. In 2019, there were rumblings of a demolition threat for these rowhouses. While the active demolition threat has



Public Sculpture and Street Markers at Cabrini Rowhouses, c.1940s, Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

temporarily subsided, as long as these units remain vacant, the threat persists. The long-term vacancy is even more tragic considering the unfulfilled promise of CHA to replace these units and return long-time Cabrini residents to their community, many who have been waiting nearly 20 years.

It has been reported that 80% of the estimated 3,500 families who were promised a home in the new development have not yet returned and that the total price tag to the taxpayers is approximately \$2 billion dollars, according to an article in Block Club Chicago “Cabrini-Green: A History of Broken Promises,” by Alejandra Cancino of the Better Government Association and published in December 2021.

Despite their good design, human scale and the almost European qualities of this tight-knit development, the Cabrini Row Houses remain vacant as they have for approximately 20 years. These rowhouses could make for wonderful affordable or mixed income family units. However, time and time again, there’s been little action. About five years ago, a Federal Section 106 Hearing to which Preservation Chicago attended as a Consulting Party member proposed a demolition of half of the housing units in order to widen streets to accommodate parked cars and emergency vehicles. We at Preservation Chicago, encouraged no-parking zones on the streets within the district of rowhouses, to allow for emergency vehicles to service future residents versus wholesale demolition of 50% or half of all of the historic rowhouses. We suggested parking nearby on the many acres of vacant land as a solution to this issue.





Lathrop Homes South Campus. Photo Credit: Adam Natenshon / Preservation Chicago

Following that Section 106 meeting at the Chicago Federal Center, no follow-up meetings for the Cabrini Rowhouses occurred and they remain vacant to this day. This has encouraged Preservation Chicago to list the Cabrini Rowhouses as a Chicago 7 Most Endangered for 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Cabrini Rowhouses

The Cabrini Rowhouses represent the very last remaining components of the once much larger Cabrini-Green Housing Project, bounded by a series of streets within the central area of Chicago, close to transportation and many resources, including excellent schools, jobs, grocery stores and other facilities. These cream-colored buildings are human scaled and represent the original visions for Cabrini and other public housing developments in Chicago—and among the best examples of them. We therefore are of the opinion that the remaining vacant 446 rowhouses be given priority for renovation and restoration. We therefore encourage the City and CHA to work toward a fulfillment of prior obligations and promises to bring these homes back to the people that need them and provide decent housing for these families and citizens of Chicago.

Lathrop Homes South Campus

HISTORY: Lathrop Homes South Campus

The Julia C. Lathrop Homes was one of the Chicago Housing Authority's first housing project developments, constructed in 1938 by a great assortment of architects including Daniel Burnham's two sons, Daniel Jr. and Hubert Burnham, Robert DeGolyer, and others, with a noted landscape designed by Jens Jensen. It is our understanding that all architectural and design services were pro bono, gifted for the greater good. Julia C. Lathrop was a leading social reformer who worked closely with Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr at Hull House. She later served as the director of the United States Children's Bureau.

In the case of Lathrop Homes, Preservation Chicago has advocated for the preservation and restoration of these housing units for almost two decades. As a result of our advocacy and of our partners, working with City Hall, CHA, the developers, and at times the National Park Service, the northern portion of Lathrop Homes has become a beautifully restored campus of buildings designed by a who's who of architects that had originally volunteered their



Lathrop Homes South Campus. Photo Credit: Adam Natenshon / Preservation Chicago

time in the 1930s. Throughout the course of this 20-year advocacy effort, plans to develop the area into market-rate high-rises along with scorched earth demolition have been thwarted. These proposals were unacceptable and, despite the wildly successful outcomes of the North Campus, we now face the same obstacles and delays that were so common in the past on the South Campus. CHA has to authorize the renovation of these units and we encourage a full preservation and restoration of these units to match the success of the North Campus.

THREAT: Lathrop Homes South Campus

While the North Campus of the Lathrop Homes has been fully renovated after a decades-long effort, we are witnessing numerous delays in efforts toward the renovation and restoration of buildings and features on the South Campus. This area, bounded by Diversey, Damen and the North Branch of the Chicago River, awaits the promised redevelopment plan while the boarded up and fenced buildings continue to deteriorate. This appears to be of concern as the buildings languish and there is talk of the possible demolition of more buildings, which are said to be structurally unsound, despite all of the Lathrop buildings being constructed at the same time and with the same materials. However, even with such considerations, work should begin on the buildings that are scheduled to be renovated and reused, noting the volume of units which are currently vacant and the extreme need for decent affordable housing in Chicago.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Lathrop Homes South Campus

The development team of Related Midwest, Heartland Housing and other partners, along with the CHA, all need to come together to realize the same and proven vision and success realized on the North Campus. CHA and the Lathrop Partners must proceed forward quickly with the renovation and reuse of the many buildings, while also exploring alternate plans for some of the buildings that are said to have structural issues. What are those structural issues, who determined these faults, and can they be resolved without demolition? Also, what are the final plans for the Rowhouses, with their kitchen gardens located just west of Damen Avenue, along with plans for a large boiler and power plant at the south end of the site, adjacent to the North Branch of the Chicago River? These are questions for a beautifully situated and pastoral site with incredible views of Downtown Chicago, located near many of the City's most desirable neighborhoods and communities.



Lathrop Homes North Campus after comprehensive restoration. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Before/After. 2603-01 N. Levitt, part of Lathrop Homes South Campus. The CHA has allowed Lathrop Home's South Campus to profoundly deteriorate over the past four years. The photo on the left with blue sky was taken in 2018. The photo the right with the grey sky photo was taken in 2022. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers and Adam Natenshon

St. Martin de Tours Church

5848 S. Princeton Avenue, Chicago



St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

OVERVIEW

A striking Gothic structure with a soaring steeple, St. Martin Church has been a visual landmark on the South Side of Chicago for nearly 130 years. It was designed by renowned ecclesial architect Henry J. Schlacks and Louis A. Becker for a fledgling German Catholic parish in Englewood.

The church first served German immigrants and ultimately became a thriving African-American parish before being closed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago in 1989. Following its closure, the church was used for a short time by the Archdiocese as a storage

**St. Martin de Tours/St. Martin de Porres/
Chicago Embassy Church**

Address: 5848 S. Princeton Avenue, Chicago

Architect: Henry J. Schlacks with Louis Becker

Date: 1895

Style: High Gothic

Neighborhood: Englewood



St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

facility and warehouse. Its subsequent purchase and reopening as a Protestant house of worship, known as The Chicago Embassy Church in 1998, was a hopeful outcome for the historic building and the Englewood community. However, with the unfortunate closure of Chicago Embassy Church in recent years, the former glory of this amazing church structure has further diminished from deferred maintenance which led to its current state of vacancy, deterioration and neglect.

There is an urgent and immediate need to find a preservation solution to save St. Martin's. Restoration of this magnificent edifice to its former prominence would add to the spiritual and social life of the community, and creative reuse could spark renewal of this corner of Englewood.

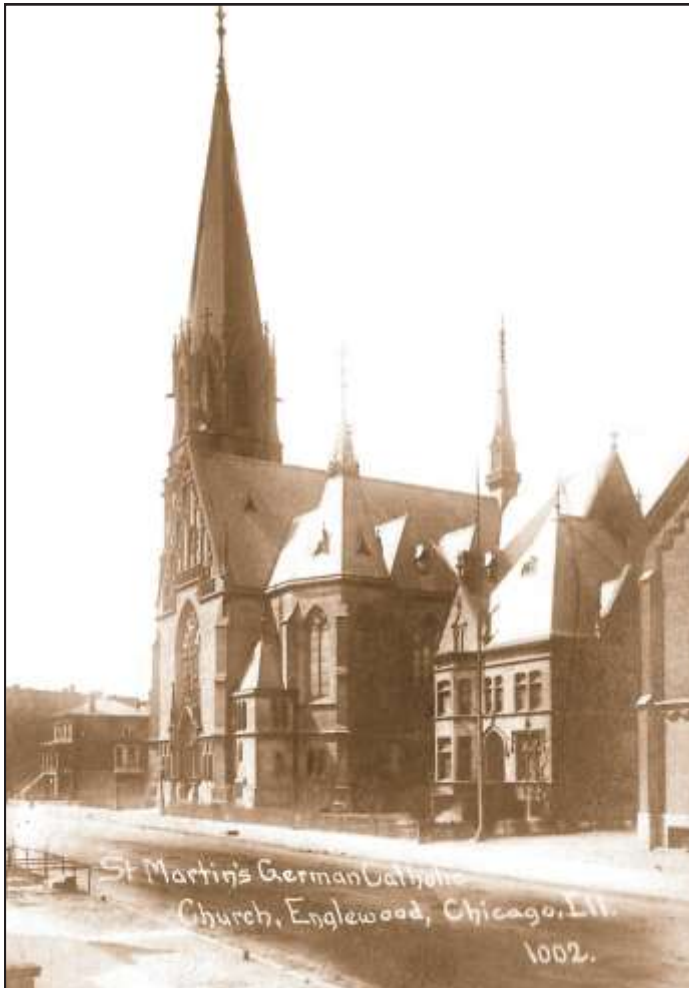
HISTORY

The cornerstone of St. Martin's was laid in September 1894 and the church was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day 1895 by Archbishop Patrick Feehan. At the time of the dedication, it was noted that 400 families were part of St. Martin's Parish, with 350 students enrolled in the school.

The magnificence of the edifice was readily apparent and it was deemed "one of the finest examples of German Gothic architecture in the country." Its 228-foot steeple had 4 bronze bells weighing from 2,500 to 5,000 pounds each. The immense weight of the tower due to its height resulted in a novel, separate foundation for the tower consisting of 120 oak piles. The church features extraordinary quality cut stonework on its exterior Indiana limestone elevations, with its Gothic spires, turrets, blind arches, arcades, crockets, gargoyles and fine tracery.

Schlacks' interior was equally impressive with a hand-carved oak altar rail, confessionals, and altars decorated with "a small forest of spires." There were numerous statues and wooden carved Stations of the Cross by German

Chicago 7: St. Martin de Tours Church



Historic photo of St. Martin de Tours Catholic Church circa 1909. St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks with Louis A. Becker, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Image Credit: Chuckman's Postcard Collection



Saint Martin's Church, Chicago, IL, 1894. Louis A. Becker, Schlacks & Ottenheimer. Printed in Inland Architect, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1897. Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago. Digital file #IA2901_2226

craftsmen. Although many of these interior features have been lost over the decades, the high-quality art glass windows manufactured by Franz Meyer of Munich, Germany and TGA (Tyroler Glasmalerei Anstalt) of Innsbruck, Austria, are still intact. The apse windows depict scenes from the life of Christ, with the transept windows depicting the lives of St. Martin and St. Boniface, while other saints are depicted in the nave. A massive, 72-register, 3,000-pipe organ built by Johnson & Son which had been in use at the Central Music Hall, designed by architect Dankmar Adler & Company and previously located at State and Randolph Streets (on the site of the Marshall Field & Company store), was donated to St. Martin's by Mrs. Marshall Field, Jr.

An original exterior wooden statuary group of "St. Martin and the Beggar" carved by Sebastian Buscher was replaced by a metal statue designed by German-American architect, Hermann J. Gaul. It depicted St. Martin de Tours on horseback and was mounted atop the peak of the high stone gable fronting Princeton Avenue. The statue was later covered in gold leaf, making it even more visible and gleaming to all who passed the church. This golden statue was reportedly used as a landmark by pilots on their approach to Midway Airport and Meigs Field. The gold leaf was restored in 1960, and with the opening of the neighboring Dan Ryan Expressway-Interstate 90-94 in segments in 1961-1962, the statue became a marker for tens of thousands of daily commuters and visitors. In 2006, the statue was damaged by high winds and removed for repairs. Following its removal, it was stored in a nearby garage and awaiting possible repair before being stolen. The current location of the massive gilded sculpture is unknown, but may have been potentially scrapped.

The St. Martin de Tours sculpture atop the church's high gable was especially meaningful for generations of parishioners. St. Martin de Tours, for whom the church was originally named, was a 4th century Roman soldier who



St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

cut his cloak in half to share with a beggar on a cold night. The parish was renamed in the decade before its closing for St. Martin de Porres, a Black Dominican from Lima, Peru, who comforted the sick and provided for the poor.

Care of the poor and dispossessed has been a constant throughout St. Martin's history. In its early decades, as the German immigrant population grew, the parish continued expansion of its campus and services. The parish hall located to the north of the church was destroyed by fire in June 1908, and was replaced with a brick building that had been enlarged in 1902. Additionally, a three-story school building designed by Hermann J. Gaul, another noted ecclesial architect, was built at 5830-5838 S. Princeton in 1909 and operated by the "School Sisters of St. Francis." A two-year coeducational high school was added in 1910, with school enrollment and parishioners increasing.

By the 1920s, the parish was free of debt, the church was redecorated with new altars installed, and the organ was rebuilt and enlarged. Additional property was purchased for the construction of a convent, continuing during the Depression years of the 1930s. Improvements proceeded with the beautiful art glass windows repaired as necessary, along with the slate of the tall steeple and all honoring the parish's golden jubilee in 1936.

By 1941, the parish was no longer a "thoroughly German" parish; English replaced German in sermons, announcements, and publications. By the post-war years, the parish had become multi-ethnic with Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Mexican, and Black families joining the Germans. After a temporary decline in school enrollment, non-Catholic students began to enroll in the school in 1951.

Throughout the 1950s, the percentage of African-American students significantly increased, with enrollment reaching nearly the same level as the earlier peak in the 1920s. By the 75th anniversary of the parish, St. Martin's had become a majority African-American school and parish. Some parishioners were displaced by the construction of the Dan Ryan Expressway and financial difficulties continued through the later decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Yet parish operations expanded, with kindergarten and day care services added. The parish remained active, operating a food pantry, lunch program for seniors, and a scouting program, among other things. In 1978, four bells in the church tower were repaired, blessed and rung daily, after many decades of silence.



Saint Martin's Church, Chicago, IL, 1894. Louis A. Becker, Schlacks & Ottenheimer. Printed in Inland Architect, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1897. Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago. Digital file #IA2901_2229

THREAT

After years of deferred maintenance and closure, St. Martin has suffered significant deterioration. Sections of the roof appear to be compromised with large holes visible resulting in interior exposure to the elements. The roof of the adjacent mansion-like rectory also appears to have deteriorated. Some of the windows appear to have been damaged and occasional graffiti to the church's limestone facade has been noted. The condition of the interior of the building is presently unknown, but was in good repair prior to the recent closing of the Chicago Embassy Church. Without intervention, this church will continue on a steady path of deterioration due to weather, deferred maintenance, and unheated conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

St. Martin's entire existence has combined the highest level of structural craftsmanship with service and attention to its community's many needs. The awareness that beauty is a need and a benefit to the poor as much as to the wealthy has lifted the spiritual and emotional well-being of its parishioners of every background.

Like most disinvested communities, the present day needs of the community are many, including education and job training, economic investment, accessible mental health, and a clean and healthy environment, among many others. As pressing as these needs are, there is also the need for intangible goods, like a sense of security, safety, and peace of mind.



St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

The restoration of St. Martin's Church as a beautiful, luminous space can provide a spiritual and emotional benefit even if it is not used for religious services. The church and complex could be repurposed for smaller-scale musical performances, occasional art exhibits, possibly of the immersive experience type. This reuse could be coupled with arts, music and other classes in the renovated rectory-parish hall building north of the church. Perhaps this could be accomplished in collaboration with faculty of the nearby Kennedy-King College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago. Various spaces could also house a small gallery featuring goods produced by local craftspeople and artists. The existing paved parking lot on the site of the demolished St. Martin's School building could be turned into green space with beekeeping and a native-plant garden, as well as community plots for growing fresh produce. In this way, the entire St. Martin campus could become something of a creative incubator space.

If restored and repurposed, the irreplaceable and landmark-quality structure of St. Martin's could anchor an oasis of creativity, while embracing nature, offering music performance, arts training, and a restful and welcoming place for present-day and future generations of Englewood residents.

In commenting on the damaged equestrian statue, once located atop the high gable of St. Martin in 2006 one of the clergy of the Chicago Embassy Church commented that: "The statue can tell the story of the Englewood community and where it was, and where it is. And [...]where it is going. We believe that Englewood is one of the hidden treasures in our city." A renovated St. Martin Church can be a beacon of pride and hope for the entire community, making this corner of Englewood a monumental destination for those residents nearby, as well as visitors that pass this beautiful structure. It's estimated that over 330,000 cars use I-90/94, the Dan Ryan Expressway, each day, and such preservation and reuse options could benefit many.

We at Preservation Chicago are also requesting that the City of Chicago encourage a reuse of St. Martin's Church, as part of the INVEST South/West initiatives and programs, while also designating the building a Chicago Landmark. Noting the building's current conditions, perhaps other municipal and county agencies could assist in potential reuse visions for this magnificent building.

Chicago 7: St. Martin de Tours Church



St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Photo Credit: Deborah Mercer



St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



St. Martin de Tours Church, 1895, Henry J. Schlacks, 5848 S. Princeton Avenue. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District

Peterson Avenue between Pulaski Road and Oakley Avenue



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, Peterson Corporate Center, 3525 W. Peterson Ave. Photo Credit: Max Chavez / Preservation Chicago

OVERVIEW

The Peterson Avenue has one of the finest neighborhood commercial collections of Midcentury Modern architecture in the City of Chicago. The Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District extends over approximately a two-mile distance that stretches from North Park to West Ridge. It consists mostly of low-rise structures that today house dentist and doctor offices, dry cleaners, schools, and even a fire station.

Peterson Avenue's Midcentury buildings were developed over the course of about three decades, with construction spanning from the late 1940s to 1970. Until the start of this period, Peterson

Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District

Address: Peterson Avenue between Pulaski Road and Oakley Avenue and adjacent commercial streets

Architect: Various architects

Date: c.1950 to c.1970

Style: Midcentury Modern

Neighborhood: West Ridge



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, 3535 W. Peterson and Peterson Corporate Center, 3525 W. Peterson . Photo Credit: Adam Natenshon

Avenue was largely undeveloped, consisting of service stations, billboards, the occasional 1920s storefront or apartment building, along with empty fields. However, that changed with the post-World War II construction boom that spurred a surge of development across Chicago's North and Northwest Sides. During and after this period, Peterson Avenue's sustained growth reflected a very sophisticated modernism and positioned the district as a gleaming, contemporary destination for Chicago's Northwest Side businesses.

While Peterson Avenue was not a formally planned development, many of the buildings lining the corridor were erected by a handful of developers and builders, many of whom also had their offices nearby. As they grew Peterson Avenue from miles of empty lots to one of the most sought-after neighborhood commercial districts in Chicago, the developers recruited a mix of architects, both well- and lesser-known, to further enhance the commercial offerings in the community. Some of the more recognizable names that designed structures on Peterson Avenue during this period are A. Epstein & Sons, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Perkins & Will, Paul Gerhardt, Jr., and Henry L. Newhouse II (son of prolific Chicago architect Henry L. Newhouse).

Today, Peterson Avenue's Midcentury Modernist buildings are threatened by a host of issues and threats stemming from neglect, unsympathetic alterations, abandonment, and demolition. Many significant designs have been razed, with one recent example being The Sapphire Building at 2800 W. Peterson Avenue, despite calls by Preservation Chicago to adaptively reuse the structure. The Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District is also not protected by Chicago Landmark status, nor are any of its structures listed in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. As a result,

Chicago 7: Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, Huebner & Henneberg, 2440 W. Peterson Ave. Photo Credit: Max Chavez / Preservation Chicago

Peterson Avenue's history relating to Chicago's commercial expansion on the Northwest Side in the middle of the 20th century and the significant architectural movement it represents, are in danger of potentially being lost.

HISTORY

Peterson Avenue has been a major North Side arterial street for 150 years. It was named after Swedish immigrant Pehr S. Peterson, whose greenhouse and plant nursery near Rosehill Cemetery supplied the city with new trees after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. In addition, Peterson's plant nursery supplied nearly every tree planted for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. The street was said to be laid out by Peterson himself to help transport trees from his nursery to sites across the city and as a result, greenhouses proliferated in the area around Peterson Avenue. For decades the street was largely undeveloped and used mostly as a means of transportation of goods to and from the city. This remained evident on Peterson Avenue up until the 1940s, when postwar Chicago, much like the rest of the United States, underwent an economic and real estate boom. That same economic boom helped to transform Peterson Avenue into one of the most desirable neighborhood commercial districts in the city.

Modernist architecture had already enjoyed a long history in Europe, the United States, and beyond by the time Peterson Avenue's development came to fruition. However, as the 1940s and 1950s arrived, Modernism started to drastically change American commercial districts and main streets. Existing storefronts were updated and new buildings were fitted with what are today common signifiers of Midcentury Modernism: angled storefronts, neon and aluminum signage, perforated screens, decorative canopies, and a mix of stone and terrazzo. As well, folded-plate, butterfly, and even A-frame rooflines were common sights in the era of Midcentury Modernism. This new contemporary style emphasized an American rebirth: modernity, sophistication, and the future promised by the Jet Age and rapidly emerging technologies.



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, 3414 W. Peterson Avenue. Photo Credit: Max Chavez / Preservation Chicago

The first signs of this new era for Peterson Avenue appeared in the late 1940s as a handful of new construction leaned heavily on Modernism as a building style. These structures are representative of their time and incorporate the pared-back and more modest trademarks of the Art Moderne and International Style movements that were so well-received throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Structures like 2522 W. Peterson (1948), designed by S.H. Morris, and 2655 W. Peterson (1949), designed by Henry L. Newhouse II, are some of Peterson Avenue's earliest Midcentury structures and represent the earliest days of the street's development.

Within a few years, Peterson Avenue's development increased considerably, largely driven by an influx of new residents as well as the 1951 completion of the nearby Edens Expressway. Developers Berkson & Sons oversaw much of this growth, even establishing an office in the aforementioned 2655 W. Peterson. During this first full post-war decade of the 1950s, Peterson Avenue's development and architecture began a transformation into more of a Midcentury vocabulary and design, with buildings resembling Miesian glass boxes and modern California-style post-and-beam homes.

Some of the district's most notable building designs from that decade are the street's most eye-catching. The 3333 Medical Building at 3333 W. Peterson (1956) was designed by A. Epstein & Sons, one of Chicago's most accomplished and prolific design firms. From the street, the building's beautiful stonework, gently sloped roofline, and clerestory windows still stun today, nearly 70 years after its completion. The ranch-style office structure at 3535 W. Peterson (1954) is arguably the most California-inspired building in this district. Notable for its side-gabled roofline which angles itself slightly below the front door, making for an intimately-scaled and shaded entrance. The modest office was designed by Morton Z. Levine for Harris Construction. Harris Construction was also one of many housing developers that set up shop on Peterson Avenue and, as a clever advertising device, as their office greatly resembled the ranch-style homes they built in Chicago's Northwest suburbs.

The 1960s saw development along Peterson Avenue advance at its most rapid pace, filling in almost all of the street's remaining empty parcels. This period is marked by a move towards more daring design elements and materials, experimenting further with new forms and challenging the vocabulary and recognized qualities of Modernism's straight lines and rigid massing. While the dining room and iconic hot dog signage at Wolfy's (1967) incorporated the angled roofline and shimmering neon of a roadside restaurant building, the Furst & Furst Building (c. 1963) at 2300 W. Peterson by A. Epstein & Sons intrigued passersby with an angled stone-clad sawtooth front

Chicago 7: Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, 3550 W. Peterson Avenue. Photo Credit: Max Chavez / Preservation Chicago

wall and a cylindrical, all-glass foyer. Elsewhere, 3414 W. Peterson (c. 1967) plays with a decorative folded-plate roof that allows triangles of light into its interior hallway while 2440 W. Peterson (c. 1964) sports a softly undulating canopy that adds a sense of Space Age futurism to a modest glass and brick office complex.

Mid-rise office towers also came to Peterson Avenue in the 1960s. While many of them employed simple glass skins, developers Schurecht Inc. opted for something more distinct at 3525 W. Peterson which flaunts large, cantilevered floor plates that evoke a mix of Prairie School and Japanese elements. On the building's streetfront is a sunken garden over which visitors cross a suspended walkway to enter the building's lovely interior halls. The office tower at 2320 W. Peterson (1967) is another relic of this mid-rise period. Interestingly, the tower's original renderings indicate it was intended to be encased inside a giant honeycomb screen, further illustrating the fanciful and unique designs that were commonplace on Peterson Avenue during this time.

The pristine offices of Peterson Avenue were advertised heavily, positioned as valuable real estate in a prestigious new district. Chicago businesses took notice and opened additional offices along Peterson Avenue or relocated their operations altogether. Some of these names are recognizable today with companies like McDonald's, Dunkin Donuts, and Walgreens, all having a presence in the district at one time. Arthur Rubloff, arguably Chicago's most famous 20th century real estate figure and the man credited with helping to develop Chicago's Magnificent Mile and Carl Sandburg Village, recognized the potential of Peterson Avenue, establishing offices in The Sapphire Building (1966) at 2800 W. Peterson. Other major Chicago companies commissioned all-new campuses for their relocation to Peterson Avenue. Commerce Clearing House, Inc., a leading tax guide publisher founded in 1892, hired Skidmore, Owings and Merrill to build the largest development in the district at the corner of Peterson and Pulaski in 1956. The Modernist structure was unfortunately demolished in 2018 to make way for a People's Gas office complex with a smaller footprint and large parking lot.

The success of Peterson Avenue's Midcentury Modern design was not just confined to Peterson Avenue, but also extended to adjacent commercial corridors along California and Lincoln Avenues. Congregation Mishne Ugnovo Synagogue (1954) at 6045 N. California, designed by firm Greenberg & Finfer, is one of the many fine examples of



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, 5940 N. Lincoln Avenue. Photo Credit: Max Chavez / Preservation Chicago

Modernism in the vicinity: a pair of handsome brick and glass structures linked by a low vestibule and streetfront canopy. Lincoln Avenue between Peterson and California also boasts a robust array of Midcentury Modern architecture, in addition to the many examples found on Peterson. Other notable examples include: the former Villa Motel (c. 1957) at 5952 N. Lincoln, which has retained its slight butterfly roofline and sawtooth windows; the concave glass facade of 5850 N. Lincoln (c. 1961) which showcases a two-story foyer and a vibrant polychromatic mosaic of a construction scene. Also included in this grouping is Mather High School (1959) at 5835 N. Lincoln, designed by Loeb, Schlossman and Bennett. Mather is one of a dozen new Chicago schools constructed to accommodate the youth of the postwar baby boom era.

THREAT

The Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District is today threatened by a number of issues, all of which are eroding the architectural character of this historic streetscape. Peterson Avenue is suffering from a number of vacancies which leaves these significant buildings neglected and vulnerable to vandalism or weather damage. Two of Peterson Avenue's most architecturally significant buildings, 2300 (1963) and 2606 W. Peterson (1958), both appear to be currently vacant. These two structures exhibit considerable signs of damage that will likely continue to



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, 3455 W. Peterson Avenue. Photo Credit: Max Chavez / Preservation Chicago



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, 2722 W. Peterson Avenue. Photo Credit: Max Chavez / Preservation Chicago

increase, until action is taken by the current or new owners to mitigate this decay. Prolonged vacancies also leave Peterson Avenue's buildings at risk of prolonged exposure to poor weather conditions, where a lack of heating and maintenance results in burst pipes and water damage. This is evident by a recent occurrence in which water was seen leaking from multiple floors of the vacant building at 2320 W. Peterson (1967).

Heavy alterations have also continued to shape the appearance of the Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, drastically remodeling the buildings from their original architectural design intent and chipping away at the district's cohesion. One of the most prominent examples of this erosion is The Office Center at 2534-2544 W. Peterson (c. 1956), a remarkable fusion of Miesian Modernism with the elegance of the Hollywood Regency style complete with a towering obelisk. The building once offered luxury office space inside of a polished stone and glass facade. Today, the building is nearly unrecognizable, with much of its original materials removed or replaced. Likewise, the courtyard office building at 3300 W. Peterson (1960) has lost its original sawtooth canopy which was the structure's most prominent feature. Throughout the district, the loss of original facade material, alterations to rooflines, as well as the loss of light fixtures, signage, and landscaping, along with their replacement with contemporary, unsympathetic substitutions, lessens the visual power of the Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District.

Demolition has also been an ever-present danger to the Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District. Many of the district's most impressive designs have been lost over time, some as recently as last year. The demolition of the Newhouse-designed Sapphire Building (1966) at the corner of Peterson and California Avenues, has been the most high-profile demolition in recent years. The Perkins & Will-designed Peterson Bank at 3232 W. Peterson is possibly the biggest loss, as it was a beautiful brick structure that exemplified the evolving look of Modernism at the start of the 1970s. The building was demolished in the 2000s and today the land is a parking lot. The dual demolitions in 2019 of 2900 W. Peterson (1949), designed by Henry L. Newhouse, and 2906-10 W. Peterson (1956) eliminated one of the district's few fully intact Midcentury streetwalls, replacing them with one-story offices of similar or lesser square footage. As buildings in the Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District continue to remain unattended, partially vacant, and unrecognizable, demolition will become an even more pressing threat in the future.



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, The Sapphire Building / Business House, 1960, Henry L. Newhouse II, 2800 W. Peterson Avenue. Demolished May 2022. Photo Credit: Google Maps

RECOMMENDATIONS

Preservation Chicago enthusiastically endorses the creation of a Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern Landmark District. By establishing an all-encompassing district that honors and protects these significant structures, we can prevent unchecked demolition from further harming and erasing the district's continuity and cohesion. A Chicago Landmark designation could also ignite widespread interest in the district, helping to revitalize and find new tenants for these endangered or abandoned structures. Furthermore, Landmark status could allow for property owners to apply for Adopt-A-Landmark funds which would aid in the necessary restoration and maintenance of these structures, many of which are 60 to 70 years old.

In some instances, a Chicago Landmark designation should be potentially considered for building interiors in the district. Offices like the Holistan Building (c. 1964) at 2545 W. Peterson, the Cardamil Building (1960) at 2600 W. Peterson, and the Furst & Furst Building (c. 1963) at 2300 W. Peterson all feature intact lobbies, with floating staircases, terrazzo floors, and interior courtyards that are representative of the elegant amenities used to entice businesses to Peterson Avenue from across Chicago. These semi-public and accessible spaces symbolize Peterson Avenue's Midcentury allure and should be strongly considered in any future landmarking efforts. Preservation Chicago also believes that the Midcentury Modern structures found along California Avenue from Peterson to Glenlake as well as Lincoln Avenue between Peterson and California are very much an integral part of the district. These areas demonstrate how widespread Modernism came to be in the area's development during the 1950s and 1960s.

Cities across the United States are celebrating their Midcentury architectural heritage through the creation of landmark districts. The Miami area boasts two separate Midcentury Modern historic districts: the Morris Lapidus/Mid-20th Century Historic District in Miami Beach and the MiMo Biscayne Historic District in Miami. Both districts honor the impact that Midcentury Modernism had on their respective areas' development, acknowledging them as important historic resources meant to be celebrated and understood. Elsewhere, areas like Las Vegas's Beverly Green Historic District and New Jersey's Wildwood Shores Resort Historic District, along with dozens of landmarked buildings in Palm Springs, are all testaments to the long-lasting legacy of Midcentury Modern architecture in America. The Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District is an essential part of this legacy and deserves to be recognized with the same enthusiasm seen in other American cities.

Chicago 7: Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, 3333 W. Peterson Avenue. Photo Credit: Epstein Architects

However, a pervasive unawareness of Midcentury Modernism's status as a historic architectural movement continues to threaten the existence of buildings from this era. Midcentury Modernism's effect on the built environment stretched from the vistas of the Hollywood Hills to small town American main streets cannot be overstated. Yet, there remains a belief that it is too recent and lacks the ornate signifiers of other more easily recognizable and popular historical styles.

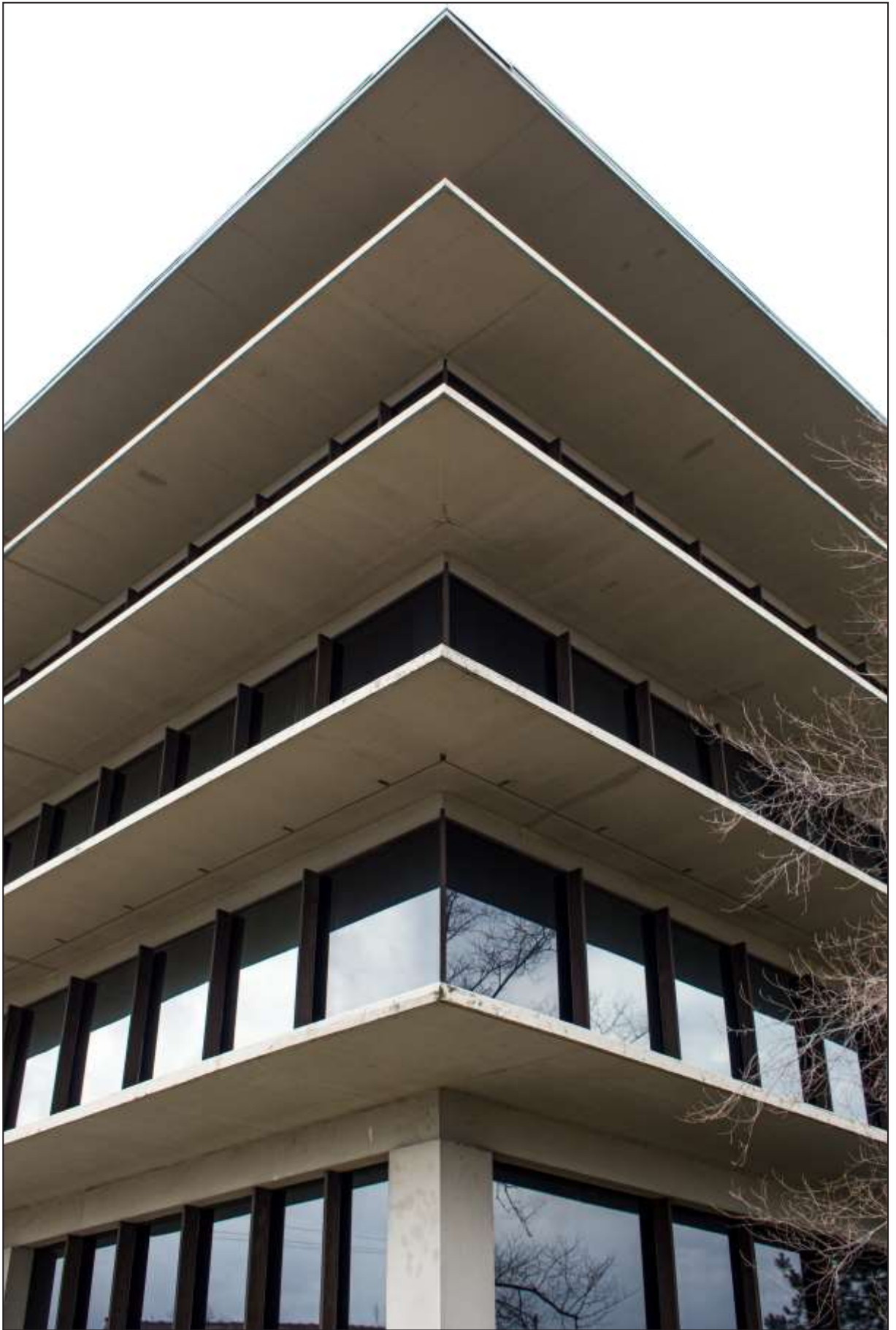
One way to address this issue in Chicago is to update the Chicago Historic Resources Survey (CHRS) used as a guide by the city to classify buildings by historic importance or significance. There are many issues with the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, one of the most significant being that at the time of its completion and publication in 1996, the survey only covered Chicago's built environment up to 1940. Today, 25 years later, the Chicago Historic Resources Survey has never been revised and publicly updated, suggesting that over 80 years of Chicago's architectural history is deemed potentially unprotected and potentially not of historic value or consideration. Such assumptions would also include every building in the Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District.

By updating the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, the City of Chicago can consider granting decades worth of Chicago buildings the ability to be potentially placed on a 90-Day Demolition Hold in response to a demolition request. This would also recognize and acknowledge that Chicago's architecture during the second half of the 20th century can be as important as well.

Chicago's accomplishments in Modernism, Postmodernism, New Formalism, and Brutalism are celebrated worldwide, yet in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, these accomplishments remain unacknowledged. In an effort to update this survey, the guide by which historic buildings in Chicago are often judged, will permanently establish these significant sites and buildings. Peterson Avenue's wealth of Midcentury Modernism, are important and like many of the other buildings in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, that they are also worthy of preservation.



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, Huebner & Henneberg, 2606 W. Peterson Avenue. Photo Credit: Max Chavez



Peterson Avenue Midcentury Modern District, Peterson Corporate Center, 3525 W. Peterson Avenue. Photo Credit: Max Chavez

Promontory Point

Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets, Chicago



Promontory Point, 1937, Alfred Caldwell, Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

OVERVIEW

Last year, Preservation Chicago named the Chicago Lakefront as one of Chicago's 7 Most Endangered sites, noting the threats facing the city's many heritage sites along with the parks, bridges, buildings and significant features encompassing the shoreline of Lake Michigan.

This year, we have selected Hyde Park's Promontory Point, also known as "The Point," and also as one of last year's highlighted Lakefront sites, as one of our 2022's Chicago 7 Most Endangered. This year's selection of The Point is due to the continued threat facing the historic limestone revetments, which wrap the perimeter of this Lakefront peninsula, separating it from the waters of Lake Michigan. The City of Chicago, along with the Chicago Park District, intend to replace The Point's natural limestone with a mass of concrete, destroying not only the historic stepstone revetment, but also the naturalistic aesthetic of this Alfred Caldwell-designed park.

Promontory Point

Address: Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets

Landscape Architect: Alfred Caldwell

Date: 1937

Style: Naturalistic Style

Neighborhood: Hyde Park and the Chicago Lakefront



Promontory Point, 1937, Alfred Caldwell, Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets. Photo Credit: Colin Boyle / Block Club Chicago

This irreversible alteration will adversely affect the open and naturalistic landscape as well as the diverse community culture that has thrived for decades at Promontory Point. In the process this historic site will be negatively impacted from its original design intent, and setting a precedent for future unsympathetic alterations.

HISTORY

Lake Michigan is part of Chicago's own beautiful wilderness, and the Lakefront is where this nature and the complex urban city and environment converge. Burnham Park, a 600-acre expanse of waterfront parkland extending from the southern edge of Grant Park and the Downtown Lakefront, to the South Side, is one of the city's finest examples of this. The park was the brainchild of architect and planner Daniel H. Burnham, designer of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, who envisioned a meandering chain of greenspaces that would link the fairgrounds' remnants with downtown Chicago. An 1896 presentation to members of the South Park Commission including its President, James Ellworth, and other influential Chicagoans, including Marshall Field and George Pullman, helped to first popularize the concept among the city's decision makers, setting into motion the process to bring the park to fruition.

Burnham, with the help of architect Edward H. Bennett, developed and honed this immense vision over the course of the following decade, incorporating the parkland into his influential 1909 Plan of Chicago. The Plan of Chicago outlined a wide-reaching overhaul of the Chicago landscape, including additions to the boulevard system, ample parkspace, elegant civic structures, and public plazas. As part of this layout, it called for the establishment of cityfront green space buffered by interior lagoons formed by offshore islands along the city's South Side.

Although the South Park Commission was granted permission by the State of Illinois to move forward with the park's creation in June 1910, just two weeks after Burnham's death, the construction process was delayed for years to come. Finally, by the early 1920s, landfilling moved ahead by way of engineering practices that are impressive even by today's standards. Massive bulkheads made of timber and rocks were installed to form the new park's

Chicago 7: Promontory Point



Promontory Point, 1937, Alfred Caldwell, Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets. Photo Credit: Adam Natenshon / Preservation Chicago

eastern boundaries while the parkland itself emerged from the lake by depositing sand, earth, and construction debris between these bulkheads and the already existing shoreline.

To complete this process, protect the land from erosion, and allow people to be near the lake and access the water, eight miles of limestone stepstones were installed along Lake Michigan, managing this meeting place of lakefront wilderness and city parkland. While the interior lagoons and offshore islands outlined in Burnham's Plan of Chicago were never realized, one small segment did come to exist, Promontory Point, a small peninsula that jutted out from the lakeshore near 55th Street.

By the early 1930s, the landfill process was nearly complete and, following the establishment of the Chicago Park District in 1934, attention soon turned to the construction of new park facilities made possible by funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Under Chicago Park District architect Emanuel Valentine Buchsbaum, plans were prepared for the 55th Street Promontory Pavilion. Designed in an eclectic French Revival style, the building is faced with Lannon stone and features a prominent tower with a conical roof. The Pavilion's construction occurred simultaneously with the final grading and planning of Promontory Point itself and, to carry out this considerable task, the Chicago Park District selected Alfred Caldwell, one of their junior staff members.

Underappreciated for decades, Caldwell today is acknowledged as one of the greatest Prairie School landscape designers of his time. His distinguished work still exists outside of Promontory Point, most notably at Lincoln Park's Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool which is today a Chicago Landmark, a National Historic Landmark, and has been entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Caldwell also worked closely with famed landscape architect Jens Jensen, for years before coming on as a Chicago Park District employee after facing financial difficulties in the wake of the Great Depression.

The Point's pavilion had already been designed by the time Caldwell was brought on, so it bears none of his Prairie School signature, in contrast to the heavily Prairie School landscape he would soon bring to The Point's untouched



Promontory Point, 1937, Alfred Caldwell, Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets. Photo Credit: Colin Boyle / Block Club Chicago

terrain. The Point's main meadow was adorned with native shrubs and foliage while gaps were laid out that allowed vistas of the water's expanse, connecting the beauty of Lake Michigan with the man-made engineering of Promontory Point. Curved walkways around The Point's perimeter led park visitors along its outer edge, granting them views of additional native plants and access to the limestone revetments leading down to the water.

Even before its completion, Promontory Point was an immediate success. Much as it is today, The Point quickly became a popular gathering spot for Chicagoans. The YWCA, YMCA, and University of Chicago student organizations, among many others, found a home at Promontory Point, drawn there by comfortable recreational space. By 1948, the park had officially earned the name Promontory Point, although the name's origin has never been entirely confirmed. The Point continued to be an important site in Chicago for decades to come; in particular, the park played a prominent role during the Cold War when Nike Missile radar towers were erected along the park's southern shore in 1953. After years of protest, the facilities were demolished in 1971.

In the 1980s, fear of damage to Lake Shore Drive from then-rising lake levels prompted the City to begin replacing the limestone revetments with massive concrete and steel structures everywhere along the Chicago lakefront, except Promontory Point. When the City's attention turned to Promontory Point in the early 2000s, the community, with the help of then-Senator Barack Obama, resisted the demolition so that, in 2006, the City's concrete project was stalled. Still, plans persist from the City and the Chicago Park District to remove these revetments once and for all. Today, the historic revetment at Promontory Point is all that is left of a once-eight mile long stretch of beautiful limestone transitions between nature and the city.

THREAT

Even after 84 years, the existing limestone revetment at Promontory Point continues to protect the parkland behind it, serving as a beloved place of recreation for park visitors. The revetment does, however, need major repair as well

Chicago 7: Promontory Point



Promontory Point, 1937, Alfred Caldwell, Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

as rehabilitation to allow better access for all to the lake and to the water. Twenty years ago, the community paid for its own independent engineers, architects, and mediators, and discovered that preservation, repair, and rehabilitation of The Point's historic limestone revetment is feasible and cost-effective. Although a preservation approach to repairs and rehabilitation is still viable, the City has recently revived its plan to demolish the historic limestone revetment and to reconstruct a concrete revetment in its place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Preservation Chicago calls on the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District to consent to the designation of Promontory Point as a Chicago Landmark, decisively ensuring the protection of The Point's historic revetments for all time. In 2018, Promontory Point was put on the National Register of Historic Places, making it more difficult to destroy the historic revetment, but not impossible. Designating Promontory Point an official Chicago Landmark, and specifically highlighting The Point's limestone revetments as an integral part of the designation, would make demolition almost impossible and would make certain that repair and rehabilitation of The Point's revetment preserves its historic integrity and beauty. Fifth Ward Alderman Leslie Hairston has supported preservation in the community's fight to save The Point since 1996. U.S. Congresswoman Robin Kelly and State Senator Robert Peters have also recently spoken out for preservation at The Point.

Preservation Chicago sees no reason for demolition of the original structures and does not support the use of textured concrete as a substitute for the existing limestone. We also support the Promontory Point Conservancy's wish to hire its own independent engineers, architects, and community organizers to prove once more that preservation is doable, cost-effective and desirable. We are confident that this is an opportunity for the City to work cooperatively with a passionate community to find the best preservation plan to protect and preserve a beloved public landmark. In doing so, they can enhance lake access with creative ADA compliance, avoid environmental hazards by repositioning the original limestone material instead of concrete, and invest equitably in South Side parks overall. Preservation Chicago urgently recommends the City of Chicago and the Chicago Parks District seize this opportunity to preserve the remaining original features of this historic park.



Aerial View of Promontory Point looking southwest, ca. 1940. Photo Credit: Chicago Park District Records: Photographs, Special Collections, Chicago Public Library



View of Promontory Point from its Step Stone edge, 1940. Photo Credit: Chicago Park District Records: Photographs, Special Collections, Chicago Public Library

Chicago 7: Promontory Point



Promontory Point, 1937, Alfred Caldwell, Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Promontory Point Pavilion and Fieldhouse, 1936, Emanuel V. Buchsbaum, 5491 South Lake Shore Drive. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Promontory Point, 1937, Alfred Caldwell, Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

Central Park Theater

3535 W. Roosevelt Road, Chicago



Central Park Theater, 1917, Rapp & Rapp, 3535 W. Roosevelt Road. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

OVERVIEW

The Central Park Theater in North Lawndale is Chicago's first movie palace and the forerunner of a remarkable vision and partnership between theater developers Balaban & Katz and architects Rapp & Rapp. While both entities would continue to develop and build grander and more remarkable movie palaces, with live entertainment and special features, it all began with the innovations introduced at the Central Park Theater which opened to great fanfare in 1917.

The Central Park Theater closed after 54 years of operation in the North Lawndale Community as a movie theater and entertainment venue in 1971. At that time, the theater was acquired by the House of Prayer Church of God in Christ's congregation and leadership, which has stewarded the

Central Park Theater

Address: **3535 W. Roosevelt Road**

Architect: **Rapp & Rapp**

Date: **1917**

Style: **Classical Revival**

Neighborhood: **North Lawndale**



Central Park Theater, 1917, Rapp & Rapp, 3535 W. Roosevelt Road. Photo Credit: © Tom Harris

historic theater building in the years since. Without the intervention of the church ownership, this theater and building would have likely joined the many demolitions that swept through North Lawndale in the 1970s, 1980s and continuing into the 21st Century. The congregation at House of Prayer is diminishing at a time when the historic theater's repairs continue to grow. The church has maintained the building for over 50 years and requires additional assistance to renovate and restore this historic theater building, which is a cornerstone of this West Side Community.

Tangible progress towards a restoration program has been accomplished in the recent past, in collaboration with City agencies, and the team of partners who serve on the Central Park Theater Restoration Committee, and prospective investors. The church is committed to a majority owned-interest in the theater to maintain community control and honor the legacy of their founder, Pastor Lincoln Scott. The church's vision includes a cultural center with concerts and programs in the auditorium, cultural tenants on the second and third floor, and retail uses on the first floor, which would support residents and visitors, as well as patrons of the Central Park Theater. Pastor Robert Marshall and his family continue to carry on the phased restoration and maintenance work at the Central Park Theater, but with limited capacity. With flexibility and creativity, the City of Chicago can further assist in these efforts to revision the Central Park Theater as a tremendous community asset and Designated Chicago Landmark.

HISTORY

North Lawndale is located on the West Side of Chicago, bounded by Western Avenue to the east, Cermak Road to the south, Cicero Avenue to the west, and the Eisenhower Expressway to the north. It became part of the City of Chicago in 1889 and local industry in the neighborhood helped to grow the community in a substantial way. This included the Sears Roebuck & Company world headquarters and administrative offices, along with its massive mail order warehouses and fulfillment center. Between 1910 and 1920, the neighborhood population more than doubled with an influx of Eastern European and Russian immigrants, many of the Jewish faith, comprising the majority of the community by 1930.



Central Park Theater, 1917, Rapp & Rapp, 3535 W. Roosevelt Road. Photo Credit: Deborah Mercer

It was during this early part of the 20th century in North Lawndale that a partnership formed between Sam Katz and brothers Barney and A.J. Balaban. The Balaban's interest in the world of cinema began when their family was involved in operating a modest North Lawndale nickelodeon, where they screened short silent films in cramped spaces and small storefronts, filled with uncomfortable folding chairs. In 1916, the Balaban brothers decided to partner with Sam Katz, A.J.'s brother-in-law, also a local theater owner, and the Central Park Theater became their first project.

The concept of a movie palace was then largely unfamiliar to the general public. Today, we recognize them often as a type of early cinema and entertainment venue, characterized by vast structures with large theatrical environments and spaces, with immense seating capacities. These theaters of the early part of the 20th Century, were often outfitted in opulent luxury, and modeled after palaces, castles and public spaces, far away in distant lands, and often reflecting visually beautiful and exotic places and environments. However, before the advent of the movie palace, films were usually screened in small nickelodeon storefronts and were regarded as an inferior form of entertainment. Balaban & Katz envisioned something different, with a democratic space where people of all income levels and backgrounds could be entertained for an afternoon, or perhaps for a day or evening, and for the price of a single ticket. To make this new vision a reality, Balaban & Katz commissioned architects, Rapp & Rapp, to design this prototype theater and building. Office and retail space was also added to this design to help financially support the theater's operations.

Born in Carbondale, Illinois, brothers Cornelius Ward Rapp and George Leslie Rapp, were noted as being from a family of architects. One of their early projects, the Al Ringling Theatre (1915) in Baraboo, Wisconsin, offered a combination of vaudeville and short films and its design was said to be inspired by the Royal Theatre at Versailles.



Central Park Theater, 1917, Rapp & Rapp, 3535 W. Roosevelt Road. Photo Credit: © Tom Harris

Its incredible opulence convinced the newly formed Balaban & Katz partnership to hire Rapp & Rapp to design the Central Park Theater.

Rapp & Rapp used the Ringling Theater design as a basis for designing this new commission, adding and refining details that would maximize the customer experience. The refinements included improving the lobby circulation, addressing the theater's acoustics, and improving sightlines and capacity, while introducing a column-free, cantilevered mezzanine or balcony for additional seating. These were all incorporated into the theater's overall design.

In addition, Barney Balaban's prior experience working at Western Cold Storage Company, brought about the concept of a completely mechanized air-conditioned theater, as opposed to inferior systems employed at the time that provided uneven cooling. This was especially important to the theater patrons and the general public, in an age when air conditioning on hot summer days was not generally available to many people and their homes. This brought about comfort and relief from Chicago's warm summer months, while also providing entertainment and often community engagement, highlighting local talent, along with programmed performances in the era before television's debut.

In order to convey an overwhelming sense of luxury, architects Rapp & Rapp took a more eclectic approach to the theater's design. The Central Park Theater's facade is classified as Mediterranean Revival while the theater's lobby and auditorium are a mix of French Baroque, Neoclassical, and Renaissance Revival. This mixing of architectural styles and themes was often later employed in theaters, and gave a sense of a more eclectic design.

On October 27, 1917, the Central Park Theater opened its doors and Chicago's first movie palace was unveiled to the public. Enticed by affordable splendor and mechanized air cooling systems, which was a unique feature and the first of a new prototype for American cinemas, local residents flocked to this new venue. The Central Park Theater in Chicago's North Lawndale and on Chicago's West Side, became a great destination.



Central Park Theater, 1917, Rapp & Rapp, 3535 W. Roosevelt Road. Photo Credit: © Tom Harris

The great success of the Central Park Theater, along with its revenue streams and name recognition, proved very profitable for Balaban & Katz's movie palace operations. In the years that followed, and aided by Rapp & Rapp's remarkable design skills, there was no other name more associated with grand movie palaces than Balaban & Katz. The design and construction of the Riviera Theatre (1917), the Chicago Theater (1921), the Tivoli Theater (1921), the Uptown Theatre (1925), the Palace Theatre (1926), along with the Oriental (now Nederlander) Theatre (1926) all but guaranteed and assured the Balaban & Katz firm's prominence in the history of movie and entertainment venues. By 1930, just 13 years after opening their first theater, Balaban & Katz owned more than 50 movie palaces in the Chicago area, with the great majority of them designed by Rapp & Rapp.

The Central Park Theater was always a theater reflecting and serving its community. During its earliest years of the 20th century, when the North Lawndale community had a majority-Jewish population, it was a popular destination for movie patrons and even hosted the legendary Benny Goodman in his first ever performance as a solo act. Following World War II in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Jewish and Eastern European residents transitioned to a majority African-American population. With these changes, The Central Park Theater continued to excel at catering to North Lawndale's patrons. In addition to movie screenings, the theater offered a vast lineup of live musical performers, which included soul, Rhythm & Blues, and Gospel artists. Among the many artists that performed on the stage of the Central Park Theater were Jerry Butler, Barbara Acklin, and gospel group The Mighty Clouds of Joy. Most notably, the Central Park hosted an early performance of the Jackson 5 before the 1969 release of their debut album *Diana Ross Presents The Jackson 5*.

Chicago's West Side riots following the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., impacted many businesses and buildings nearby, including those on Roosevelt Road, with many destroyed by fire. In the following months, many of the businesses that survived the fires and looting, shuttered their operations and left the neighborhood. Following these events and a period of uncertainty, the Central Park Theater's facade was also altered. Over the past century, the theater's marquees were replaced and later removed, along with the decorative ornamental structures atop the theater's two tall towers, and also the original ground-floor storefronts and entry. Despite these



Central Park Theater, 1917, Rapp & Rapp, 3535 W. Roosevelt Road. Photo Credit: © Tom Harris

changes over time, which could be restored, the building possesses incredible integrity on its exterior principal elevation, as well as its magnificent auditorium which was recently restored.

The population of North Lawndale has continued to decline and economic development has been challenging. While the INVEST South/West program and other redevelopment projects led by groups such as the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, have had a positive impact on community revitalization, the extent of disinvestment in the area has left North Lawndale in need of additional support. Despite significant challenges, the North Lawndale community is committed to continuing progress and restoring its commercial corridors and residential areas. The effort to restore the Central Park Theater is evidence of this commitment.

Blanche Killingsworth, the president of the North Lawndale Historical and Cultural Society, has long been an advocate for the Central Park Theater since the 1960s, after relocating to Chicago from Mississippi. Over the past decade, Blanche and Dio Alridge, of The School of the Art Institute, began their outreach, which ultimately led to the creation of “The Central Park Theater Restoration Committee.” Representatives from Preservation Chicago, Jewish United Fund, Future Firm, The School of the Art Institute, The House of Prayer, and The North Lawndale Historical and Cultural Society comprise the Restoration Committee which also once included Landmarks Illinois, has been working together and assisting the church with its restoration and repair plans for the Central Park Theater.

THREAT

While the Central Park Theater is endangered, it also very much faces a potentially bright future. For many decades, the North Lawndale community and business district experienced devastating disinvestment. Businesses closed their doors and buildings were demolished along many of the commercial and residential corridors. However, on Roosevelt Road, one of the main commercial arteries of North Lawndale, the Central Park Theater has endured and survived. It is a community landmark and cornerstone, with the hope by many that one day, it will be



Central Park Theater, 1917, Rapp & Rapp, 3535 W. Roosevelt Road. Photo Credit: © Tom Harris

recognized and designated as an official Chicago Landmark.

If not for the congregation's tireless work to maintain and restore this magnificent community asset, it is likely that the building would not be standing today. However, with a dwindling congregation, maintaining and restoring the theater has become a challenge too great for the House of Prayer Congregation. Much like the North Lawndale community, the church is committed to stewarding the theater long-term and with the involvement of the residents, wherever possible. Given its 51-year history of stewarding the theater and the thousands of congregant hours that have been invested in the maintenance of the building, as well as the church's continued presence in the community, the House of Prayer is seeking a development partnership. This partnership could allow the current owners to maintain some control of the theater upon its restoration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Central Park Theater Restoration Committee has continued to be an active community participant. In 2021, the Committee participated in partnership with Open House Chicago, organized by the Chicago Architecture Center and the Chicago Architectural Biennial. In addition, architects and structural engineers have worked together and in the recent past, offered pro-bono assistance to assist in efforts to move pre-development planning forward.

The Central Park Theater Restoration Committee is working to:

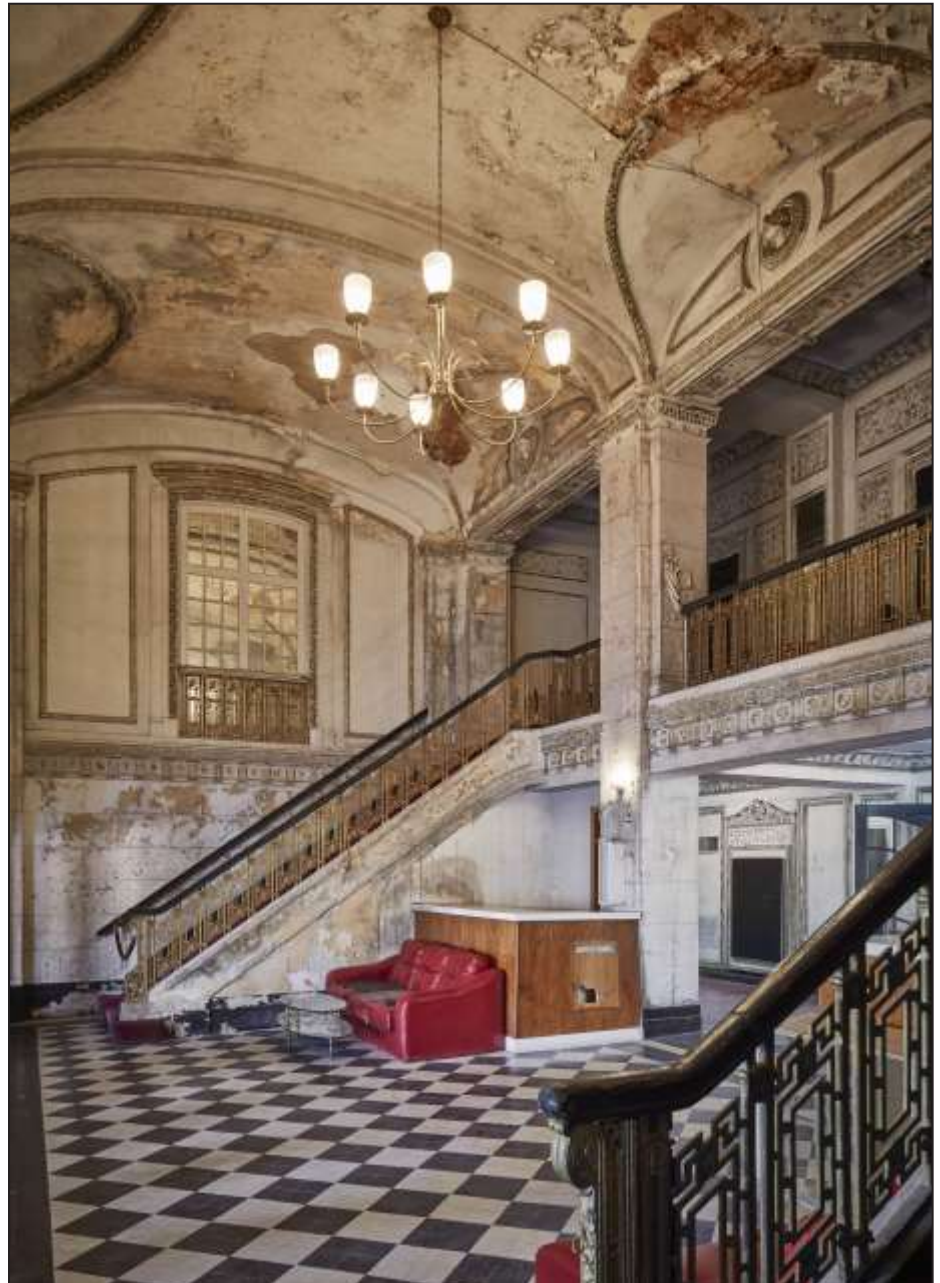
1. Establish a separate 501(c)(3) Friends group to assist with fundraising and restoration of the Central Park Theater.
2. Finalize budget estimates for the phased redevelopment.
3. Engage with the community to ensure this community-centered cultural center is improved by a community-driven planning process.
4. Negotiate with potential tenants for the first floor storefront spaces and available rental spaces of upper floors

of the theater building.

5. Plan for a leasing agent to coordinate rental of the auditorium for concerts and special events. The House of Prayer only has a limited use of the auditorium for Sunday services.

Additionally, the Central Park Theater requires the following:

1. A commitment from the City of Chicago, along with investors, bankers, developers and community leaders to join the collaboration to fully restore and revision the Central Park Theater. The proposed conversion of a two-mile section of the elevated CSX Railroad Freight line nearby, to the "Altenheim Line Nature Trail" includes highlighting the Central Park Theater. Such a development would further promote redevelopment of areas in the vicinity of the Central Park Theater and within the North Lawndale Community. A combined commitment with the City of Chicago and this new proposed rails-to-trails project, could help realize that vision and offer Chicagoans and visitors alike, a chance to experience the historic Central Park Theater.



Central Park Theater Lobby, Photo Credit: © Tom Harris

2. A Chicago Landmark designation of the Central Park Theater should be considered and implemented. Such an idea could be in tandem with the INVEST South/West program by the Department of Planning & Development and the City of Chicago. Both the Chicago and the Uptown Theaters are Balaban & Katz and Rapp & Rapp collaborations, so it is logical and reasonable to consider a Chicago Landmark designation of the Central Park Theater that precedes each of these other theaters. Such a designation would allow for the application of potential Adopt-A-Landmark funds, along with other potential incentives and programs, which would ensure the building would not be demolished or severely altered.
3. Emergency stabilization funds to address immediate and necessary repairs, including life-safety and building code violations (estimated at \$100,000).
4. Approval to perform incremental or phased preservation of the building, as funds become available. When life safety and code violations have been fully addressed in the entire building, we would request the City of Chicago allow occupancy of available space beyond the auditorium to be leased for offices, retail and other possible cultural uses.
5. Former 24th Ward Alderman Michael Scott, had issued a letter in support of a Chicago Landmark designation for the Central Park Theater. We look forward to continuing to work with the Alderperson, their Staff, the City of Chicago and others, to see this theater remain intact and restored with the involvement of the community to a vibrant center.

North DuSable Lake Shore Drive

From Grand to Hollywood Avenues, Chicago



North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, c.1890 to c.1950, Nelson, Simonds, Burnham, Atwood, Bennett & Others, Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

OVERVIEW

For the first decades of its existence, North DuSable Lake Shore Drive was a slow-paced, boulevard parkway that allowed Chicagoans to enjoy the ride along the Chicago Lakefront by horses or bikes and later by automobiles. The original design was strongly influenced by the City Beautiful movement. In fact, the original builders of the Drive were the Lincoln Park Commissioners who sought a pleasure drive to help people access and enjoy the expanded and improved Lincoln Park and lakeshore coastline. Graceful, curving, tree-lined boulevards along with the expanded parklands soon attracted beautiful new homes and buildings.

North DuSable Lake Shore Drive

Address: Chicago Lakefront from Grand to Hollywood Avenues

Architects: Nelson, Simonds, Burnham, Atwood, Bennett & Others

Date: c.1890 to c.1950

Style: Naturalistic/Romantic

Neighborhood: Chicago's North Lakefront



North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, c.1890 to c.1950, Nelson, Simonds, Burnham, Atwood, Bennett & Others, Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

This pastoral, naturalistic quality witnessed major changes over time and was also impacted in the post-war era after President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. In the midst of the Cold War, many highways were created or envisioned, including in some cases existing streets improved to create a high-speed, high-capacity Interstate Highway System, to allow the rapid evacuation of cities and deployment of troops in the event of nuclear threats. The highway engineers had very different priorities than the parks commissioners which is reflected in post-war changes to DuSable Lake Shore Drive. The roadbed was widened, traffic speeds were increased, traffic lights and grade-crossings were removed, and highway-style on and off ramps were added. During the 1950s, highway engineers planned to formally convert the southern portion of the Drive into Interstate 494, but the project never advanced past the preliminary design stage. Traffic engineers continued to make incremental changes over the decades with the long-term goal of bringing the Drive up to interstate highway standards.

Today, North DuSable Lake Shore Drive's character is a unique blend of parkway and highway, a pleasure drive and interstate. However, this character will change dramatically if the proposed multi-billion-dollar construction project called "Redefine the Drive" is completed. Many years in the making, it's an incredibly complex plan with a wide variety of objectives. However, the core goals have been determined by the highway engineers who seek to increase traffic speeds, increase capacity, and increase safety. Interstate highway standards offer a clear path for how to achieve these goals.

Preservation Chicago strongly supports investment in infrastructure, increased green space, bike lanes, and expanded transit. Project renderings tend to focus on the enlarged and improved Lakefront parks, however this plan at its core, is a highway project. There is a concern that these more popular elements are being used to deflect criticism of a vast road project that is largely an effort to bring it up to interstate highway standards, and dramatically change the character of North DuSable Lake Shore Drive from its original Lakefront parkway intent.

To impose interstate highway standards on North DuSable Lake Shore Drive would fundamentally change the character of this important and historic parkway. Destroying the pastoral qualities, slower speed and meandering pleasure drive qualities of the roadway in order to increase the average traffic speed. In reality, this all will have

Chicago 7: North DuSable Lake Shore Drive



North Lake Shore Drive block, Chicago, IL, c.1885. J.W. Taylor, photographer. Historic Architecture and Landscape Image Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago. Digital file #19839

little impact, as the string of traffic lights at Grant Park near the Loop and further to the south of the project, will remain unchanged.

Preservation Chicago would like to encourage no widening to occur with the existing roadway or further incursions into Lincoln Park. We would like to encourage the existing historic Art Deco and other bridges, including the Passerelle Bridge, to be restored and not demolished. We would very much like to see the existing green medians, with their mature trees protected and maintained, along with huge sections of Lincoln Park, currently endangered. This plan is highly complex and robust public participation is essential for good outcomes. Sensitive plans, worthy of North DuSable Lake Shore Drive and the park and Lakefront that encompasses this historic and beautiful roadway are essential and necessary.

HISTORY

North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, like many other thoroughfares across Chicago, developed over many decades following the City's growth. Portions of Lake Shore Drive and the Outer Drive, as it was known until 2020, began in stages, with most of what was Lake Michigan's submerged lands being reclaimed from the Lake by Chicago in various phases of massive landfill projects.

In the early days of Chicago, Michigan Avenue, which itself has been refigured, both to the south and north, actually bordered the Lakefront and Lake Michigan's shoreline, hence its name. After the Chicago Fire of 1871, and continuing into the 1920s and 1930s, the development of Grant Park and what is now the Museum Campus in the



Outer Drive, Lincoln Park, Chicago, IL, c.1910. Henry Fuermann, photographer. Historic Architecture and Landscape Image Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago. Digital file #14601

Central Area led to broader landfills. This occurred with the expansion of the lakefront railroads, including the Illinois Central and others, and the City of Chicago's desire to expand the eastern sections of Grant Park. Similar landfill projects also occurred north of the Chicago River, adding land to the Near North Side and places such as Streeterville, which was a partially infilled sandbar, and extending northward, along the majority of the lakefront.

These grand and visionary expansions of North DuSable Lake Shore Drive and other infill projects were heavily influenced by Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett's 1909 Plan of Chicago. After publication, the plan's beautiful renderings and visionary concepts inspired the City leaders and civic organizations which implemented these bold construction projects.

The unification of many different plans and conceptualizations together into one singular document proved transformative. These grand plans and big ideas linked both the South and North Sides of the City of Chicago together. They incorporated broad thoroughfares, and they were envisioned and planned with monumental and inspiring developments. This all occurred in a manner which would further enhance a growing American industrial city, thought to eventually be the largest city in the United States, noting Chicago's projected growth in the first decades of the 20th century.

Parts of what was to become Lake Shore Drive date to the city's earliest years, but the arrival of Potter Palmer, a city father, former retailer and wholesaler, investor and founder of the Palmer House Hotel, helped to further the street. In 1883, Palmer decided to move to the Near North Side and build a palace on the North Lakefront. Then known as Lincoln Parkway, in reference to President Lincoln and nearby Lincoln Park, named in his honor, Potter

Chicago 7: North DuSable Lake Shore Drive



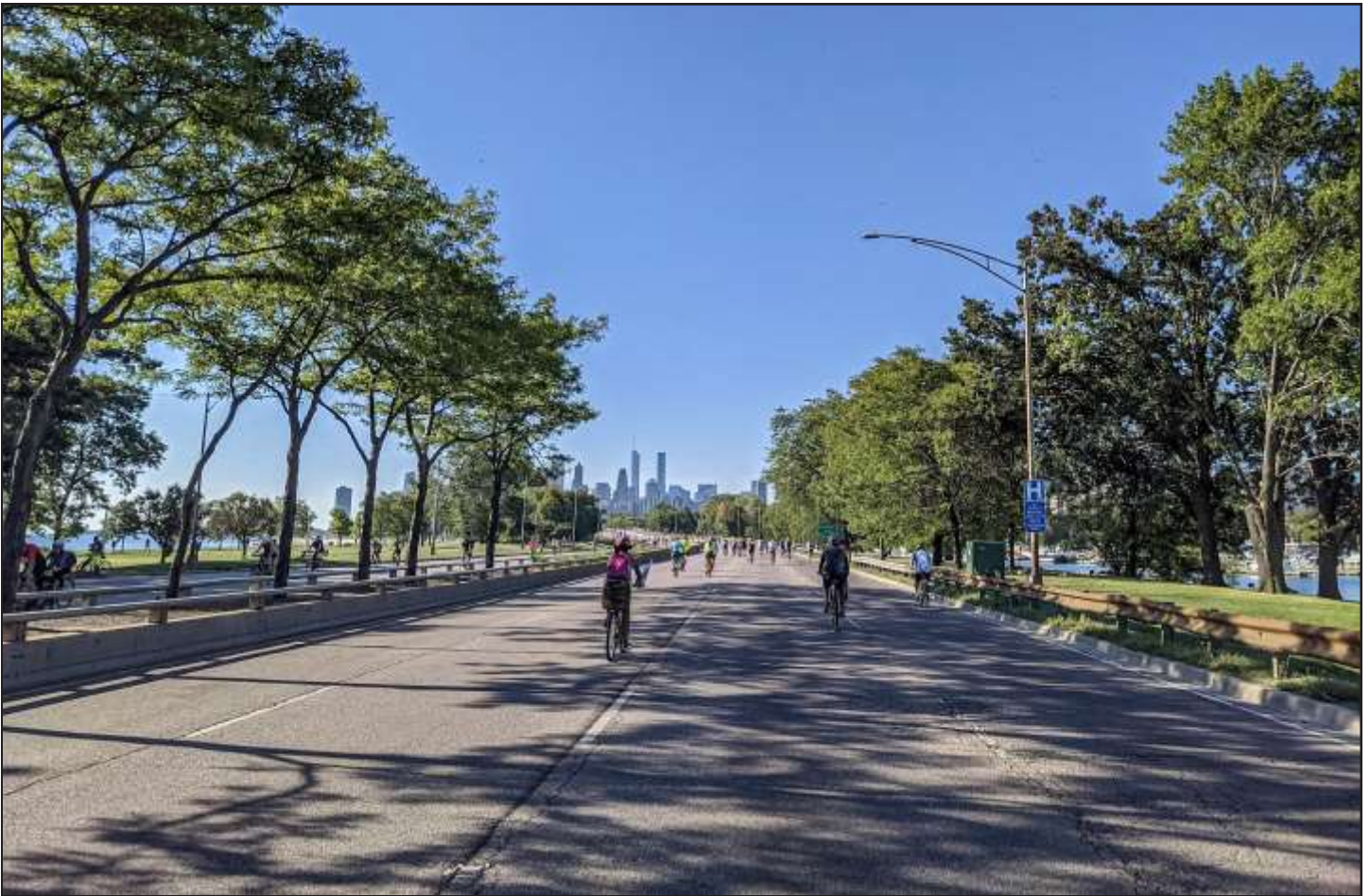
North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, c.1890 to c.1950, Nelson, Simonds, Burnham, Atwood, Bennett & Others, Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

Palmer and his wife Bertha constructed a tremendous castle of a mansion designed by architects Cobb & Frost in an area that had few developments prior. This house, along with other nearby developments supported by Potter and Bertha Palmer, often designed by Charles M. Palmer (said to be no relation), really helped to establish what's known as the "inner drive" of North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, and what would come to be referred to as the Gold Coast Community of the Near North Side.

Over time, Lincoln Parkway, which connected to such streets as Stockton Drive, portions of Cannon Drive and Lincoln Park West, was revised to become Lake Shore Drive or Inner Lake Shore Drive, as it remains today.

Expansion of Lake Shore Drive, now DuSable Lake Shore Drive occurred, beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, with the creation of the Outer Drive, which was envisioned as more of a throughway and picturesque drive, allowing traffic to move at higher rates of speed. The more established Lake Shore Drive — the original carriageway, fronting many residences and later many tall buildings, continued to be referred to as Inner Lake Shore Drive or simply by an address on Lake Shore Drive. This expansion of an Inner and the creation of the Outer Drive, both sharing the same name, and interconnecting at many points, almost created two parallel streets with the same name. One being a more local street, serving residents and visitors, with the other being a boulevard drive, which over time has expanded to be perhaps one of the country's most scenic inner-city boulevard expressways.

The roadway continued to expand northward into the 1950s, absorbing additional lands to Hollywood Avenue, the current terminus. Despite these modifications, the boulevard-like design and overall character continues to be unique. North DuSable Lake Shore Drive continues to be both an expedient and efficient means to travel across the city on a beautiful and picturesque lakefront drive.



North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, c.1890 to c.1950, Nelson, Simonds, Burnham, Atwood, Bennett & Others, Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

THREATS

In recent years, various City of Chicago agencies put together a project called “Redefine the Drive: North DuSable Lake Shore Drive,” with studies and proposals conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), which have been tasked with a rethinking of historic Lake Shore Drive. Examining various traffic studies, including Rush Hour congestion, in both the morning and evening hours, the team has worked to consider options toward the resolution of a host of issues.

The result has been a series of ideas which threaten the overall character of Lake Shore Drive, turning a boulevard drive into a superhighway, which will need to meet modern highway standards with such an update. The plans call for extensive landfill into Lake Michigan, tunneling large portions of Lake Shore Drive while also creating incursions into Lincoln Park. Also, many of the distinctive features—including historic bridges, vistas, underpasses and trees—will be removed for this massive project. A general straightening of the gentle curves, the rolling inclines and perspectives are all to be reconfigured and changed.

Preservation Chicago is of the opinion that many of these changes and modifications will dramatically impact and adversely affect the character of this world-renowned drive, making it resemble the Dan Ryan/Kennedy or Eisenhower Interstate highways. While this may not seem imaginable, just look no farther than to the past reconstructions of Lake Shore Drive, near McCormick Place and near the I-55 interchange, or another example at the former “S-Curve” extending from Randolph Street to Grand Avenue. These areas have been part of past revisioning projects and employ highway standards in their reconstruction which is very unfortunate for a Lakefront boulevard.



Foster Avenue Bridge on North DuSable Lake Shore Drive. Photo Credit: Serhii Chrucky

RECOMMENDATIONS

Preservation Chicago realizes the need for efficient transportation across our city. We also realize the need for repairs to many of our roadways and North DuSable Lake Shore Drive is no exception.

We therefore encourage all of the municipal agencies involved and their consultants to work together to preserve and repair the many special features of North DuSable Lake Shore Drive. This would include restoration and repair, in lieu of demolition of many of the bridges and underpasses. This was accomplished in a thoughtful way on South DuSable Lake Shore Drive at the Art Deco 47th Street Bridge and underpass, more than a decade ago. We encourage the City to maintain the many unique features, vistas, gentle curves and character of North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, keeping it more like a boulevard than a superhighway.

We also need to avoid the tunneling of DuSable Lake Shore Drive, as noted between Grand Avenue/Navy Pier and Walton Street, and also north of Belmont Avenue, which would create essentially a dry-river bed prone to flooding and other hazards. We are of the opinion that some of these proposed tunneling concepts and plans may lead to life-safety issues in the future.

In the past, the current Oak Street access to the express lanes of Lake Shore Drive have often become flooded, and we feel that a series of long and deeply-trenched tunnels anywhere near Lake Michigan is not a safe plan.



Lincoln Park Passerelle Pedestrian Bridge, 1940, Ralph H. Burke. Photo Credit: Serhii Chrucky

Pedestrian access does not necessarily need to occur at grade level, but a series of fine-quality bridges and safe and clean underpasses can be designed to alleviate such problems. We have seen snowstorms and floods impacting the Chicago lakefront and DuSable Lake Shore Drive over time, which have resulted in dangerous and hazardous conditions for motorists and pedestrians alike, along with closures. In some cases, these lakefront conditions and high winds, along with extreme precipitation, have placed individuals in perilous situations with some being in harm's way for more than hours on end.

We are also noting extensive incursions into the beautiful parklands and greenspaces of Lincoln Park, as well as the removal of the planted medians separating north and southbound traffic. Proposed plans to date would require the removal of thousands of trees along these medians and in Lincoln Park. We are also concerned about plans for buses to be stacked for long hours at locations like Belmont and Sheridan along North DuSable Lake Shore Drive and the impact on quality of life issues for nearby residents. This could substantially increase noise and carbon dioxide levels in certain areas where buses may idle for hours at a time.

The issues along North DuSable Lake Shore Drive are many. However, let's take a more sensitive and holistic approach to preserving and – where required or needed – rebuilding bridges and underpasses. Let us continue to maintain and honor those remarkable features that make traveling on North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, or adjacent to it, pleasurable experiences. After all, this is a very special boulevard drive and we should not squander its beauty and natural qualities nor its historic resources.

Moody Triangle

North Federal Savings Bank / Moody Church / Archway Standard



Wintrust Bank © Ward Miller



Moody Memorial Church © Ward Miller



Archway Standard © Lynn Becker

North Federal Savings Bank/Wintrust Bank

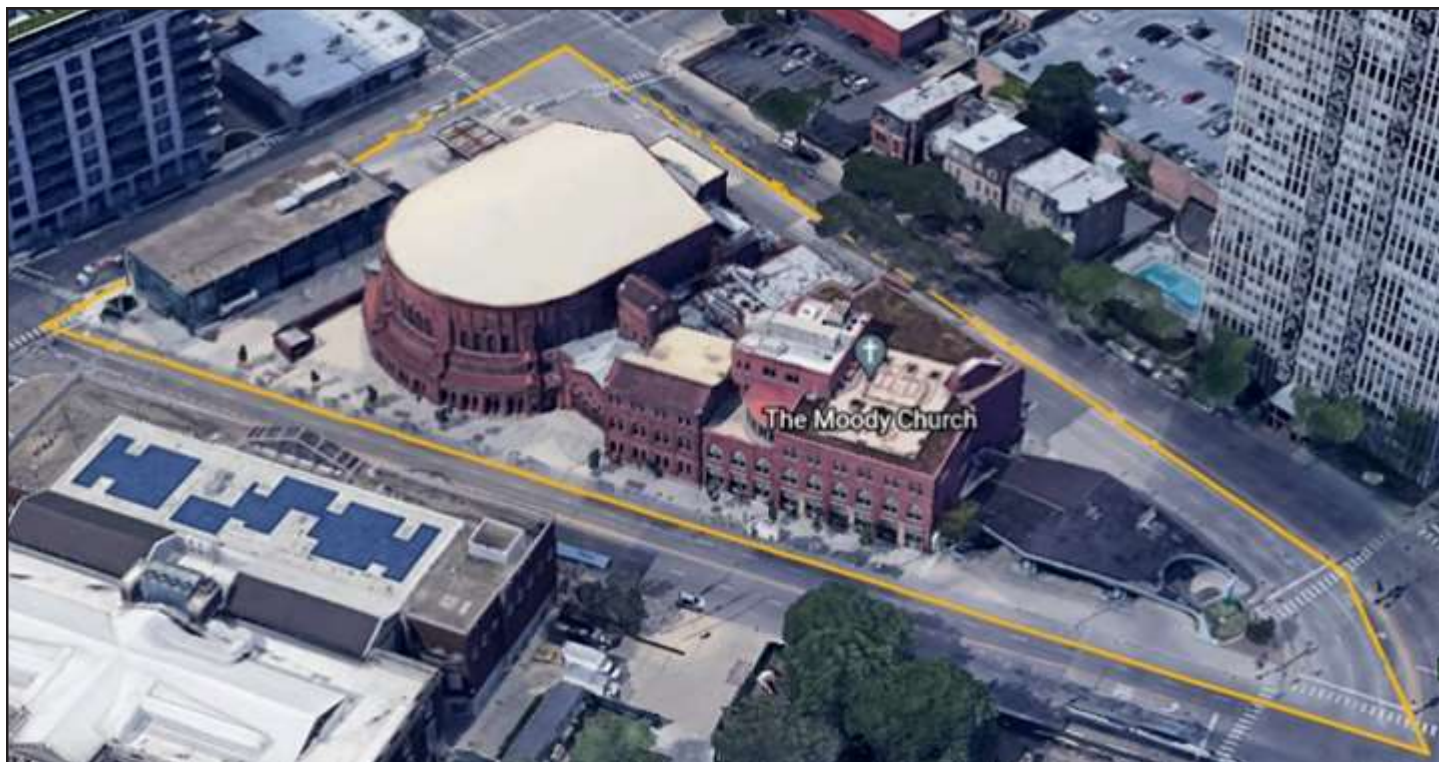
Address: **100 W. North Avenue**
Architect: **Naess & Murphy**
Date: **1961**
Style: **Midcentury Modern**
Neighborhood: **Lincoln Park**

D.L. Moody Memorial Church & Sunday School Building and Offices

Address: **1630 N. Clark Street / 1635 N. LaSalle Drive**
Architect: **Fugard & Knapp**
Date: **1924**
Style: **Moorish**
Neighborhood: **Lincoln Park**

Archway Standard Station/BP Service Station

Address: **1647 N. LaSalle Street**
Architect: **George Terp**
Date: **1971**
Style: **Jet-Age**
Neighborhood: **Lincoln Park**



Moody Triangle; North Federal Savings Bank / Moody Memorial Church / Archway Standard. Image Credit: Google Earth

OVERVIEW

The Moody Triangle site, in the Old Town neighborhood of the Lincoln Park Community Area, is formed by North Avenue to the south and the convergence of Clark Street and LaSalle Drive to the north. This highly-visible parcel fronting Lincoln Park and the Chicago History Museum has emerged as endangered by a potential revisioning and redevelopment site by Moody Church and Fern Hill Company.

The proposed scope of development includes many nearby parcels to the west along North Avenue and sites along the 1600 blocks of LaSalle and Wells Streets in addition to the triangular parcel of land that we are referring to as the Moody Triangle. However, due to the significant architecture and design of the structures located on this site, Preservation Chicago has focused and included just the triangular parcel as one of our 2022 Chicago 7 Most Endangered.

This triangular site contains three buildings which we at Preservation Chicago feel are extremely noteworthy. These structures include the former North Federal Savings Bank (1961) by Naess & Murphy, now known as the Wintrust Bank Building, and the Moody Memorial Church (1924-1925) by architect John Fugard of Fugard & Knapp. Also included, at the apex of the triangular site, is a sculptural building constructed as Archway Standard Station, later known as Archway Amoco, and now a BP Service Station, with a sweeping hood and overhanging steel canopy that gently transitions to a hyperbolic curve of concrete, sloping down to the ground.

Noting that these parcels have been included in some of the lists of properties eligible for redevelopment, Preservation Chicago wishes to encourage the preservation of these three structures. While the Shell Station at 130 W. North Avenue is part of this triangular parcel of land, it is not architecturally significant and may be considered, without objection, an eligible development site for Moody and Fern Hall.

North Federal Bank/Wintrust Bank

HISTORY: North Federal Bank/Wintrust Bank

The North Federal Savings Bank, later Diamond Bank and now Wintrust Bank, was designed by the firm of Naess & Murphy in 1961. This Midcentury Modern structure was not included in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey

Chicago 7: Moody Triangle



North Federal Savings Bank/Wintrust Bank, 1961, Naess & Murphy, 100 W. North Avenue. Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

(CHRS), as the building was too new and under 50 years of age when the area was surveyed. However, the building was so well-regarded by experts in the field and the City of Chicago, that the City's Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Planning & Development had sought the building for possible Chicago Landmark designation in 2007.

This bank was considered an excellent representation of a Modernist community bank by a significant firm, executed in the International Style, influenced by the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and was considered as a viable candidate for The Neighborhood Banks District. However, the owner at the time, Diamond Bank, opposed landmark designation. Instead of viewing this potential designation as an honor, bank leadership chose to challenge and push back with such intensity that this building was dropped as a candidate for landmark designation, which included five other neighborhood banks. This was disappointing and alarming to many within the preservation movement. It is a small site and could have been a great source of pride but that opportunity was unfortunately squandered. The building remains an outstanding candidate for a potential Chicago Landmark designation, but this would most likely require owner consent.

THREAT: North Federal Bank/Wintrust Bank

The North Federal Savings Bank Building, now Wintrust Bank Building, is a modest, two-story, Midcentury Modern building at a great location on a valuable parcel of land. Previous efforts with the former owners and bank to designate the building as a Chicago Landmark failed, despite support from the architecture and preservation community. At this time with a proposed development planned for all of the Moody sites in partnership with Fern Hall, and under the leadership of renowned Ghanaian-British architect, David Adjaye, many are concerned about the bank building and the potential redevelopment of this triangular parcel of land.

RECOMMENDATIONS: North Federal Bank/Wintrust Bank

Despite some preliminary assurances that the bank is not part of the redevelopment plans at this time, we are concerned for the long-term preservation of this Midcentury Modern structure. Wintrust Bank is a Chicago-based institution and we would like to see the owner and the bank consent to a Chicago Landmark designation of their building which was determined by the City of Chicago to be worthy of Landmarking.



North Federal Savings Bank/Wintrust Bank, 1961, Naess & Murphy, 100 W. North Avenue. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



D.L. Moody Memorial Church, 1924, Fugard & Knapp, 1630 N. Clark Street. Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

The D.L. Moody Memorial Church & Sunday School Building and Offices

HISTORY: Moody Memorial Church

The D.L. Moody Memorial Church & Sunday School Building is a remarkable Romanesque and Byzantine Style structure with a 3,740-seat auditorium and sanctuary. This building, designed and constructed from 1924-1925 by John Fugard of the architecture firm of Fugard & Knapp is a fabulous and extraordinary building, as well as a local community landmark. Situated in the middle of the block on this triangular site, this large, rounded drum-shaped building, with its rich red brick and polychromed terracotta details, captures the imagination of everyone that passes the complex. The western elevation of Moody Church fronting LaSalle Drive, in the center of the triangular parcel, showcases stepped, semicircular arches in red brick which beautifully reflect qualities of Romanesque and Norman architecture. Later additions were added to both the Clark and LaSalle elevations in recent decades, which are sensitive reflections of the historic 1920s structures.

Now referred to as Moody Church, the church building was built to replace an earlier church located at Chicago Avenue and LaSalle Drive. This earlier church was demolished in 1939 for the widening of LaSalle after a long debate as well as legal challenges beginning in the 1920s. That earlier church co-joined the Moody Bible Institute Campus, dating back to 1874-1876. More recently, the Moody Bible Institute has begun selling its extensive real estate holdings for a large scale redevelopment project.

Moody Church was founded by Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-1899) in Chicago in 1864, originally establishing the congregation in what was then known as the Illinois Street Church, which burned in the Chicago Fire of 1871. Moody was a great orator and evangelist, attracting large crowds at gatherings during religious revival tours throughout the nation and Britain. He worked closely with Ira Sanky, a popular evangelical gospel singer and composer. In 1886, Moody returned to Chicago and established the Chicago Evangelization Society, later becoming



D.L. Moody Memorial Church, 1924, Fugard & Knapp, 1630 N. Clark Street. Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

the forerunner of the Chicago Bible Institute and Moody Bible Institute. Dwight Moody established the now-demolished Chicago Avenue Church (1873-1876, Johnston & Edelmann, with interior fresco-secco decorations by Louis Sullivan), at the northwest corner of LaSalle Drive and Chicago Avenue, later renamed Moody Church upon his death. He also established Chicago as an evangelical center and founded the Chicago Bible Institute, which also was renamed Moody Bible Institute, following his death.

THREAT: Moody Memorial Church

While sources have assured us that at this time there is no immediate threat to the Moody Church Building or its ancillary attached structures, Moody Church is actively liquidating most of its extensive nearby real estate holdings, including many parcels directly to the west of Moody Church. It is conceivable that at some future time, after all of the current sites have been successfully sold and revisoned by a world-renowned architect and a developer, that the large Moody Church campus with its expansive park and lake views, would become a highly desirable potential development site. While the current church decision makers and development team have indicated that the Moody Church campus is not “in play,” future decision makers might take a different approach to this large, valuable, centrally-located parcel of land, fronting Lincoln Park with unparalleled views of Lake Michigan.

Moody Bible Institute, the church’s affiliate a mile or so to the south, is also selling many of its blocks of historic buildings and vacant lands—approximately 8.1 acres for a decade-long project containing 2,680 apartments, condominiums and townhomes—to another developer, JDL. This large development of buildings, to be called North Union, will contain at least three proposed towers estimated to be over 500 feet in height. It is to extend from Chicago Avenue to Oak Street and from Wells Street to the Brown Line, near Orleans Street; the project has also



D.L. Moody Memorial Church Interior, 1924, Fugard & Knapp, 1630 N. Clark Street. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

received approvals from the City. There will also be 30,000 square feet of retail and 1.3 acres of open space. While some historic buildings are to be reused as part of the North Union project, others will be demolished. As part of the redevelopment of these expansive sites, a handful of architecturally significant historic buildings should be protected and several historic buildings are to be retained.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Moody Memorial Church

As Moody Church and Fern Hill are in discussions with the community and elected officials on several prominent sites on the Near North Side and within the Old Town community, we would like to recommend that Moody Church and its adjoining church, community, and offices become designated Chicago Landmarks as part of the overall development plans. This would honor Moody's long history of evangelism, its buildings, and the institution's presence in Chicago from the mid-19th century to present day. Additionally, it would protect this remarkable Romanesque building and complex well into the future.

While there may not be an immediate threat to the 3,740-seat sanctuary, auditorium, and building, now is the optimal time for this building to be protected and designated as a Chicago Landmark. It would easily meet four of the City's Landmark Criteria, including: important architects; association with someone of great note (in this case, Dwight Moody); importance to the city's history; and important architecture, as Moody Church is an exceptional building with marvelous detailing and craftsmanship.

Perhaps the Moody Church's Landmark designation could result in zoning variances for greater height and density for the adjacent sites. Such ideas could even include selling or transferring the church's air-rights bonuses to other adjacent sites and nearby projects, beyond this triangle of land bounded by North Avenue, LaSalle Drive, and Clark Street.



Archway Standard Station/BP Service Station, 1971, George Terp, 1647 N. LaSalle Street. Photo Credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

Archway Standard Station/BP Service Station

HISTORY: Archway Standard Station

The Archway Standard Station, later renamed Archway Amoco and now known as the BP Station, is situated at the apex of this triangular site, where the confluence of two arterial streets, LaSalle Drive and Clark Street, merge. It is a very dynamic and special intersection, near the beginnings of Lincoln Park and with direct access to DuSable Lake Shore Drive and Lake Michigan.

Archway Standard was the design of architect George Terp (1910-1998) and was opened in 1971. Terp attended the Armour Institute of Technology, now known as the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT/Illinois Tech), and was said to have designed nearly 14,000 gas stations over his 25-year career as an architect for the Amoco Oil Company. Retiring from Amoco two years after the construction of the station in 1973, Terp continued a small architectural practice in the South Suburb of Flossmoor, Illinois. This project was likely completed at the zenith of his career.

THREAT: Archway Standard Station

This Midcentury Modern structure may be in harm's way due to the planned redevelopment project. From a development perspective, this triangular site would provide outstanding and unparalleled views of Lincoln Park and the Chicago Lakefront, from upper stories of any new building proposed for this site. New construction at this site could greatly impact this much beloved service station—a one of a kind and unique feature which delights those passing by. Noted for its long extending canopy which extends from the ground with concrete feet, the structure rises upward to form a large protective cover to shield patrons from the wind, rain, sun and snow at a very windy

Chicago 7: Moody Triangle



Archway Standard Station/BP Service Station, 1971, George Terp, 1647 N. LaSalle Street. Photo Credit: Ward Miller

corner location close to Lake Michigan. Over time, the once patriotic colors of Standard Oil's red, white and blue have changed to the green and yellow colors of BP. However, much of the station remains as it was originally designed by Terp.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Archway Standard Station

Noting that this service station building is a unique design and feature, Preservation Chicago believes that this structure could become the first service station to be designated a Chicago Landmark. While Chicago has many service and gas stations, it is rare to find one with a landmark worthy design. If the service station can no longer operate as a gas and service station or upgraded as an electric charging station, we urge that the elongated extending canopy be reused and incorporated into the new construction design which engages much of the historic structure.





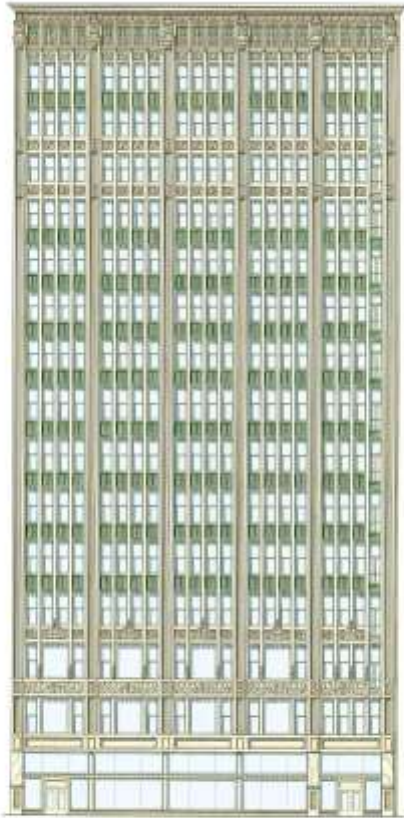
Archway Standard Station/BP Service Station, 1971, George Terp, 1647 N. LaSalle Street. Photo Credit: Lynn Becker



Archway Standard Station/BP Service Station, 1971, George Terp, 1647 N. LaSalle Street. Photo Credit: Ward Miller

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