

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

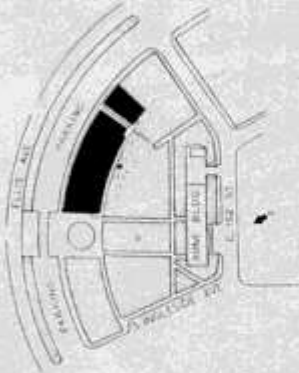
29. *Essential services for 1,500 families*

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