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Unveiled Obama Presidential Library Design in Jackson Park to be Located on Site of World's Columbian Exposition Woman's Building



Eastern Veranda of the Woman's Building, Photo Credit by The Dream City, A Portfolio of Photographic Views of the World's Columbian Exposition



Woman's Building at the World's Columbian Building, Photo Credit The White City, Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition of 1983, Chicago Historical Society/Chicago History Museum

On May 3rd before a packed meeting held at the South Shore Cultural Center, President Obama unveiled plans for the Obama Presidential Center. To be located on nine acres on Jackson Park, Obama intends the library initiative to be a "transformational project for this community." He hopes the Presidential Center creates a dynamic hub on the South Side that will serve as a training institute for young people and the next generation of leadership.

The planned three building campus surrounding a plaza space includes two low-slung buildings with landscaped rooftop gardens and a monumental 180-foot tall stone-clad building. To provide some context, the 11-story Reva and David Logan Center for Arts at the University of Chicago is 168 feet tall, and the 11-story historic landmark Hyde Park Bank Building at 53rd and Harper is 135 feet tall. The proposed Obama Presidential Library would be taller than both of these structures.

While much of the plan received positive review, the tower element received more critique. Blair Kamin wrote, "In its current form, the tower suggests an expanded version of a truncated obelisk. It's too heavy, too funereal, too Pharaonic, too pyramid-like."

The design team includes architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, and Brooklyn-based landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh. The Foundation and design team has indicated that they are aware that they are designing within the context of a one of the most important landscapes, designed by one the worlds' greatest landscape designers. Jackson Park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, who also designed New York's Central Park.

If the library is built in Jackson Park, Preservation Chicago would like to see the Obama Library and Foundation formally adopt all of Jackson Park's upkeep and to restore a number of historic buildings within the park that have fallen into significant disrepair, such as the Comfort Station located at 6600 S. South Shore Drive, the Iowa Building located near 57th and Lake Shore Drive, and others.

The current plan calls for the closure of Cornell Drive as it winds through Jackson Park. The original Frederick Law Olmsted plans called for this parkway drive. Preservation Chicago supports the narrowing of Cornell Drive to more closely follow the original design intent which

would create a slower, more pastoral boulevard along the western shore of the Lagoon. This would reverse much of the impact caused by widening Cornell Drive in the 1960's.

Preservation Chicago supports the Obama Library coming to Chicago's South Side and the economic stimulus it will generate. Additionally, we believe that some adjustments to the location could significantly mitigate many of the negative impacts without compromising the projects benefits and goals.

During an interview with WTTW's Chicago Tonight, Ward Miller suggested, if the library is built in Jackson Park, that a more appropriate location for the presidential library within the Park would be a few blocks further south, the site of the former rail yards that serviced the World's Columbian Exposition. Also, this would bring it into closer proximity to Theaster Gate's highly dynamic Stony Island Arts Bank adaptive reuse development.

A better location within Jackson Park is just a few blocks south on 64th and Stony Island where a rundown storage facility and service yard, a 1950's-era field house, and overgrown tennis courts could be cleared for the Obama Presidential Library with less impact to the Frederick Law Olmsted design and the loss of fewer old-growth trees.

"This could be a middle ground here. This is a part of the park that could welcome the building without impacting it in a huge way," said Miller.

The currently selected location by the Obama Presidential Library in Jackson Park was the site of several extraordinary buildings from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition including, the Woman's Building, the Children's Building, the Horticulture Building, and the Transportation Building. The foundations of these structures remain hidden just below the soil line.

The Women's Building [from the World's Columbian Exposition] was so important on so many levels and designed by architect, Sophia Hayden, her first and only commission. This was the beginning of the recognition of many achievements of women and a platform, which still impacts us today. It should be a celebrated site, to this remarkable history, and the achievement of a magnificent Beaux-Arts building." (Ward Miller, Letter to Editor, Hyde Park Herald)

The environmental impact of building on the currently proposed site would be significant. This site is highly wooded with many old-growth trees. "We're looking at the [loss of] hundreds and hundreds of trees in Jackson Park either diminished or lost or cut - in addition to numerous baseball diamonds and a really first-class football field with a running track that's relatively new and well used," said Ward Miller. These features would be lost or need to be relocated elsewhere in the Park.

Preservation Chicago remains concerned over the precedent being set by converting public park land to other uses. One alternate location outside of Jackson Park that could be considered is the South Shore Cultural Center.

President Obama envisions the library as a cultural hub and a training institute for the next generation of Chicagoans and leaders. The South Shore Cultural Center already provides many of these services, but programming and maintenance of the large historic buildings is a potential ongoing challenge for the budget constrained Chicago Park District.
The Obama Presidential Library could make an excellent reuse of these historic features and buildings at a fraction of the cost and impact of the current proposal.

While the South Shore Cultural Center enjoys 60 spectacular acres of lakefront property, the grounds are dominated by a golf course and the South Shore Nature Sanctuary in the southeast corner of the grounds.

The South Shore Cultural Center building itself is a remarkable Mediterranean Revival historic landmark designed by Marshall & Fox in 1916. The formal ballrooms and meeting spaces already feel "presidential" with their formal classical revival detailing and ornament. Not surprisingly, the unveiling of the Library plan was held at the South Shore Cultural Center which easily accommodated the 300 attendees and created an elegant backdrop to the press conference. The site is already fenced which would better control access and security for presidential and diplomatic functions.

Additionally, the Obama's have a strong personal connection with the South Shore Cultural Center, as this was where they held their wedding reception in 1992.

The Metra Electric Line/Illinois Central Station is steps from the South Shore Cultural Center's Gatehouse. The Metra Electric is already an unofficial cultural transit connection, originating at Millennium Park/Chicago Cultural Center, with stops at the Art Institute, the Museum Campus, Prairie Avenue, McCormick Place, Museum of Science and Industry, University of Chicago, and the South Shore Cultural Center.

The commercial corridor along 71st Street would profoundly benefit from the proximity to the Library. Unlike the current location in Jackson Park which borders a residential district, the existing 71st Street commercial corridor would more easily allow the beneficial economic impacts to be transferred into the surrounding communities in the form of new restaurants, shops, and jobs. 71st Street could become a bustling commercial corridor again.

Jackson Park was part of Preservation Chicago's 2017 Most Endangered list.

Additional Reading

Letter to the Editor: Could the Obama Presidential Center be moved several blocks to the south?, Ward Miller, Hyde Park Herald, 5/31/17

Groups Push Back against Obama Library's Jackson Park Location, WTTW Chicago Tonight, Paris Schutz, 5/23/17

Preservation group proposes moving OPC farther south, Tonia Hill, Hyde Park Herald, May 31, 2017

Column: Tower at Obama center (don't call it a library) needs tweaking, Blair Kamin, Chicago Tribune, 5/5/17

The Obama Center: New Views for Whom?, Zach Mortice Landscape Architecture Magazine, 5/22/17

One Big Problem With Obama's Presidential Library, CityLab, Kriston Caps, May 5, 2017

Obama Center design: A promising, populist start, Blair Kamin, Chicago Tribune, 5/4/17

Blair Kamin's First Impressions of the Obama Library Plans, WTTW Chicago Tonight, May 5, 2017

South Siders on Obama Library: Listen to Us! Stan West Chicago Defender, May 5, 2017

More Say From the South Side, by Yunhan Wen, South Side Weekly, May 23, 2017

Obama Says Presidential Library Will Be 'Transformational' (PHOTOS), Sam Cholke, DNAinfo, 5/3/17

Union Station Redevelopment Proposed



Chicago Union Station Concourse Building formerly located along the Chicago River, Demolished in 1969, Photo credit by Jack Delano, The Library of Congress Collection

A massive $1 billion redevelopment proposal has been presented by Amtrak for Chicago Union Station. On May 25th, Mayor Emanuel and Amtrak CEO Wick Moorman unveiled a plan which includes five new high-rises, public plazas, a rooftop garden, and a food court. The plan is expected to take six years to complete and will be completed in three phases.

The project was designed by Chicago-based Goettsch Partners and the Chicago-based Riverside Investment and Development was selected to lead the project with joint venture from Convexity Properties. Riverside Investment recently finished the 150 N. Riverside Plaza office tower. Convexity Properties recently completed the Robey Hotel in Wicker Park's historic Northwest Tower.

Of paramount concern to Preservation Chicago, the plan includes a pair of residential towers atop the historic landmark Daniel Burnham/Graham, Anderson, Probst and White-designed Union Station Headhouse. The Beaux-Arts Union Station, with its magnificent Great Hall and massive Corinthian-order travertine columns were widely celebrated when it was opened in 1925 after over ten year of planning and construction. The dramatic space remains as compelling today as it was when it first opened. It's an ideal set for movies and the grand staircase featured prominently in *The Untouchables*. The impact of new construction on The Great Hall/Waiting Room in unclear.

One of the original Graham, Anderson, Probst and White design renderings contemplated a single, limestone-clad, approximately 12-story tower over the Headhouse. Though the tower

was never built, the building structure was designed to accommodate them. In 1985, a plan for two-towers was proposed but never materialized which was based upon the original Burnham design and continued the building's materials, ornament, window size and spacing, and cornice treatment.

Until the 1970's, Chicago was a center for passenger railway service with six major rail stations including the Illinois Central Station, La Salle Street, North Western, Grand Central, Dearborn/ Polk Street, and Union Station. The first four were demolished and the surviving Dearborn Station suffered a fire in 1922 and it was rebuilt with truncated rooflines. It later lost its railroad shed to demolition during its transformation into a shopping arcade in the 1970's.

Union Station is Chicago's finest and last connection to an era and an industry that played a major role in Chicago's growth and history. Union Station's interior spaces and commuter experience have never recovered from the demolition of the soaring Union Station Concourse in 1969 immediately east of the Headhouse, to make way for an office building. Therefore, any changes to this important landmark must be handled with the utmost sensitivity.

Significant and very positive restoration work has been underway at Union Station over the past couple years and has returned several important interior spaces and features to public use, such as the Women's Lounge, now known as the Burlington Room, and the Men's Lounge and Barber Shop, now a series of passenger lounges. The restoration of the Great Hall Skylight and a restoration of the Great Hall is soon to be underway. Preservation Chicago has played an active role as a consulting partner in this process with Amtrak and the City of Chicago and applauds their accomplishments.

Preservation Chicago is concerned that the proposed contemporary towers will be an inappropriate addition to a highly significant historic landmark building. Additionally, we're concerned about the new construction negatively impacting the existing historic fabric and integrity of the Headhouse and Great Hall. We would prefer to see the other three proposed high-rises to grow larger which would allow Union Station, a designated Chicago Landmark, to be protected in its current form.

Additionally, the Art Deco Union Station Power House located at 301 W. Taylor Street, also by Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, was shuttered in 2011 and is one of Preservation Chicago 2017 Most Endangered Buildings. This river front building is now threatened with a $13 million demolition to be replaced with a surface parking lot.

Additional Reading

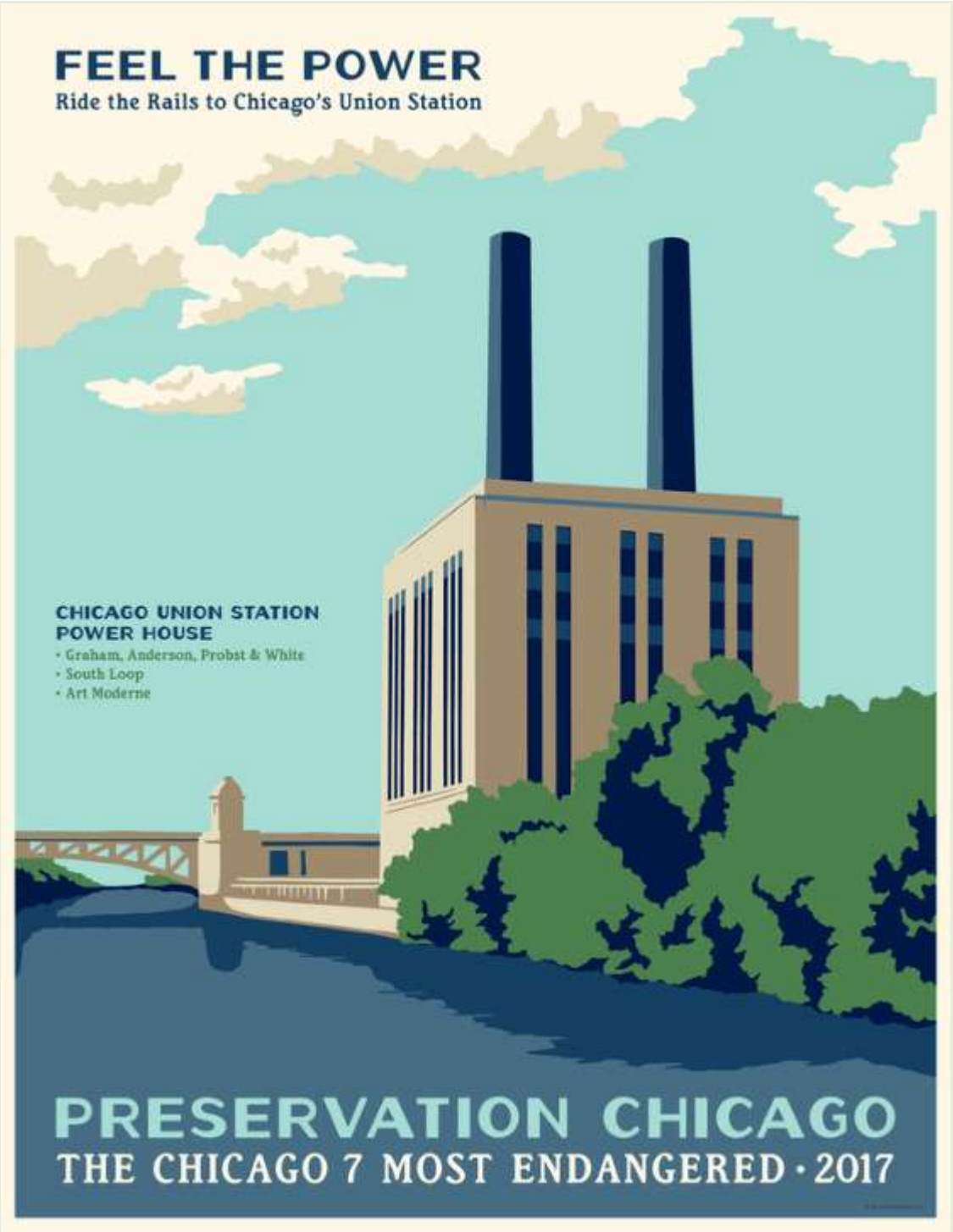
At the End of the Line Towers to Surmount City's Last Great rail Terminal. (Fascinating article from the Chicago Tribune archives) Chicago Tribune, 12/8/1985

Column: Union Station plans fail to live up to lofty rhetoric, Blair Kamin, Chicago Tribune, 5/25/17

Union Station Redevelopment Includes 5 New Towers, Food Hall, Rooftop Plaza, DNA info, David Matthews, 5/25/17

Union Station slowly moving into 21st century, Blair Kamin, Chicgo Tribune, 11/27/16

Preservation Chicago 2017 Chicago 7 Coach Tour...SOLD OUT!



Preservation Chicago "2017 Chicago 7 Most Endangered" Original Poster

Preservation Chicago is thrilled by the interest and enthusiasm for the 2017 Chicago 7 Bus Tour Most Endangered". Even with the larger coach, the tour has sold out.

We will visit the Madison-Pulaski Commercial District, Chicago's 20th Century Public Sculptures in the Loop, a stop at Jackson Park and the South Shore Cultural Center, the Union Station Power House, Cornell Store and Flats and Altgeld Gardens.

The tour will be conducted by Ward Miller, Executive Director of Preservation Chicago and Jacob Kaplan of Forgotten Chicago (and Preservation Chicago Board Vice-President), two experts on the history of Chicago and its architecture.

Full Chicago 7 write-ups are available on our website at www.preservationchicago.org

If you would like a complimentary copy of the bound printed Chicago 2017 booklet, please email us at *info@preservationchicago.org*. And please be sure to include your mailing address.

Keep an eye out for the original Poster Art for "2017 Chicago 7 Most Endangered" to be available soon on the Preservation Chicago website!

Rapid Response Advocacy Saves Historic Berwyn Ave Two-Flat!



1436 W. Berwyn Avenue, Photo Credit by Redfin

The pending demolition of the elegant Greystone located at 1436 W. Berwyn has been avoided for now. This beautifully ornamented limestone building is nestled between the Andersonville Historic District, the Lakewood-Balmoral Historic District and the Bryn Mawr Historic District. Its double-barreled bay windows overlook a double-wide 50' lot. The well-maintained two-flat was built in 1908 by two local Swedish immigrant brothers, Christ and John Christiansen.

The property was recently sold to a developer. When news broke of the planned demolition and replacement with a six-flat, the community quickly mobilized to oppose it. Community members, neighbors, the East Andersonville Residents Council, the Edgewater Historical Society, Concerned Citizens of East Andersonville, Preservation Chicago, and other stakeholders contacted 48th Ward Alderman Harry Osterman, organized public meetings, and created an online petition that quickly received over 500 signatures of support.

Petitions work. At time of publication, the current petition signature count was 558. PLEASE take a minute and add your name to support the effort. Click here for link to petition.

Preservation Chicago applauds Alderman Osterman and his staff for their support and leadership. Alderman Osterman and his staff agreed with the community and were able to convince the developer to change his plans to include preservation of the historic building.

"I agree wholeheartedly with the concerns that have been raised and that the building should be preserved," Osterman said in a statement.

The Alderman said "the developer and architect "have agreed to put the proposed development project on hold, including the proposed demolition of 1436 W. Berwyn Ave." and that they "have agreed to work with my office on a revised plan that would include preservation of the existing building as part of the development." (DNAinfo, 5/11/17)

The leaderships of Alderman Osterman at 1436 Berwyn was especially important because, in this case, the developer could have proceeded "as-of-right". The extra-large 50' x 125' lot and generous R4 zoning, which allows for a new multi-family building, made the historic building at 1436 Berwyn a perfect candidate for a tear-down. Despite it being a wonderful historic building, it was not included in the C hicago Historic Resources Survey (CHRS) and has no orange-rating, so a demolition permit application would not have triggered the 90-Day Demolition Delay.

It is highly fortunate that, in this case, the community and Alderman were able to convince the developer to spare the building. The specifics remain unknown and like so many side yards in historic neighborhoods, will likely be lost to new construction.

While the outcome of this rapid response advocacy preservation effort appears positive, Preservation Chicago is highly concerned about the increasing number of historic building demolitions happening throughout the city. For every save, many, many more historic homes are being lost. Whether for renovation or demolition, developers are consistently able to out-spend prospective home-owners and in the absence of more aggressive historic landmark protection, down zoning, or demolition fees, there is little that the community can do except to "beg" developers to spare historic buildings, many of which have been part of their neighborhood fabric for over 100 hundred years. This structural imbalance is cause for concern and will cause many more demolition threats in the near term.

Additional Reading

Andersonville Residents Save Historic Home From Demolition, Josh McGhee, DNAinfo, 5/11/17

Demolition of Historic Andersonville Home Put On Hold After Community Backlash, Its Future Still Unclear

Aldermen Propose Demo Fee to Discourage Tear-Downs Near The 606/Bloomingdale Trail



The 606/Bloomingdale Trail (prior to adaptive reuse), Photo Credit Courtesy BloomingdaleTrail.org

The adaptive reuse of the decommissioned elevated Bloomingdale Trail rail line has been widely recognized and celebrated. However, its success has been noticed by the development community as well. The result has been a huge surge of property appreciation/inflation, tear-downs, new construction and deconversions of multi-families in the neighborhoods close to the trail. This is putting significant pressure on the existing community of home owners and renters.

Since ground was broken on the *606* in 2013, housing prices west of Western Avenue rose by 48.2% according to a study published by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University. (Chicago Sun-Times, 3/10/17)

This rapid increase in gentrification caused by the *606's* success has prompted 1st Ward Alderman Proco "Joe" Moreno and 26th Ward Alderman Roberto Maldonado, to introduce an ordinance that would significantly increase demolition fees for residential properties and create a deconversion fee when multi-unit buildings are deconverted into single-family homes in proximity to the trail.

"Alderman Maldonado said the aim is to preserve existing housing stock and affordable housing in the area near the *606*. He said, "it's twofold - to slow down the pace of gentrification and to create a fund for those existing homes to be improved for home and building owners and their tenants."

Additionally, he said, "if the developers are really willing to buy existing properties and want to demolish them to build higher-end now properties, making it almost impossible for neighborhood people to afford them, they will have to pay a premium demolition fee." (Chicago Tribune, 5/23/17)

Alderman Moreno said, "the goal is to provide a financial incentive for people to restore their homes rather than have them torn down. That's the carrot part of the ordinance. The [stick] part of the ordinance is to dramatically increase demolition fees, so that developers think twice before [demolishing] buildings around the *606*. Now that the *606* has been built, it's a great asset, we want people of all economic levels to be able to live near it and enjoy it." (Chicago Sun-Times, 3/10/17)

Preservation Chicago sees a tear-down trend, similar to those affecti ng the neighborhoods along the *606*, throughout neighborhoods and districts of historic homes throughout Chicago. The pace of tear-downs has been on the increase. As market forces have grown stronger, many more historic buildings are being sold as potential "tear-down candidates". All too frequently when historic homes sell, developers are able to outbid prospective homeowners.

Of the approximately 820,000 buildings in Chicago, only 1.2% are protected within local historic landmark districts. This represents considerable effort and success by the Chicago preservation community, but in the vastness that is Chicago, the majority of Chicago's historic built environment remains unrecognized, unprotected and highly vulnerable.

As one possible strategy, Preservation Chicago has been working to create a *Historic Home Demolition Fee Ordinance*. Similar to the proposed *606* Demo Fee, this would help to "level the playing field" and allow prospective homeowners to more effectively compete with developers intent on demolition.

Additional Reading

Aldermen propose hefty fees to stop 606 gentrification, Chicago Sun-Times, Fran Speilman, 5/23/17

Aldermen want to 'put a brake' on gentrification along The 606, Corilyn Shropshire, Chicago Tribune, March 10, 2017

"Beautiful 19th Century Homes on Borrowed Time", a fascinating and troubling analysis by John Morris, ChicagoPatterns.com



1944 N Sedgwick, Photo Credit: John Morris/Chicago Patterns



742 W Buckingham, Photo Credit: John Morris/Chicago Patterns



2120 N Seminary, Photo Credit: John Morris/Chicago Patterns

From *"Beautiful 19th Century Homes on Borrowed Time"* by John Morris, ChicagoPatterns.com.

"In Chicago, as it is nationwide, demand for housing is outstripping supply. Speculators and wealthy individuals are eagerly rushing in to meet the top-end demand, leaving a trail of destroyed historic housing stock in their wake. Meanwhile, the supply of low and mid-range housing stock remains largely unaddressed.

This is often evident in real estate listing descriptions that say "the value is in the land," for properties that exceed a million dollars with the implicit understanding that the home will be razed and replaced. This is playing out heavily in North Side neighborhoods like Lake View and Lincoln Park, where blocks of mostly new construction mega-mansions dot the landscape.

While the city's Demolition Delay Ordinance creates a delay and minor hassle for those eager to erase the city's historic housing stock, it rarely prevents it. More successful in preventing demolition are cases where the house is in a historic district. In rare cases, outcry from neighbors may lead the local alderman to push back.

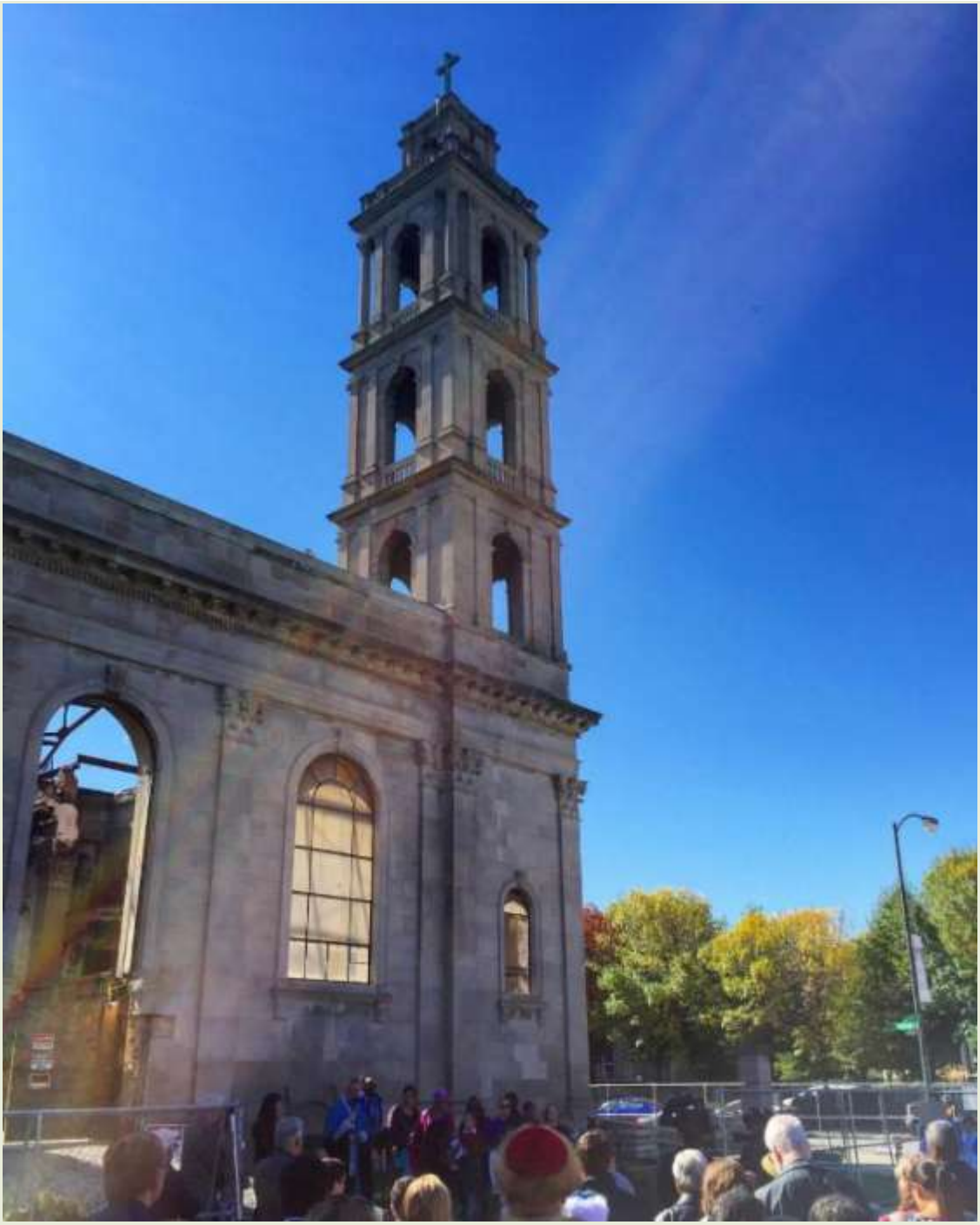
But in neighborhoods like Lincoln Park and Lake View such outcry is rare, and homes are lost to those with a lot of money.

Let's look at four examples of homes which will likely be lost in the coming months. Because none are orange-rated on the Historic Resources Survey, these houses won't be added to the Demolition Delay List."

Link to full text and with many photos of Beautiful 19th Century Homes on Borrowed Time

This article and much more at www.ChicagoPatterns.com

Shrine in "People Saving Places" Video Series!



The Shrine of Christ the King, Photo Credit by Eric Allix Rogers

The 1920's Chicago Landmark Shrine of Christ the King in Woodlawn, which Preservation Chicago has twice led the effort to save from demolition, is one of eight preservation projects featured in the People Savings Places Video series recently produced by Landmarks Illinois.

The videos were made by film students at Kennedy-King College and received funding from Illinois Humanities and the Richard and Julia Moe Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

The series highlights "how people are leveraging historic preservation to boost economic development, attract cultural heritage tourism and increase pride of place."

The videos premiered at a screening in Ottawa, Illinois on April 29th and a Chicago screening on Kennedy-King's campus on May 2nd was attended by many Shrine supporters, including Preservation Chicago's Ward Miller and Board Member Emily Nielsen.

The series will also be shown at Landmarks Illinois' Annual Meeting on June 29th and all videos are available now on YouTube.

Please take a moment to watch and be uplifted by these inspiring stories!

Additional Resources

People Savings Places The Shrine Video

Redevelopment of Former Children's Memorial Hospital Site Breaks Ground



Boiler House at Lincoln Common, Rendering Credit by McCaffery Interests

The redevelopment of the former Children's Memorial Hospital site officially broke ground in May, 2017. This $350 million redevelopment plan has been in planning since 2011 when McCaffery/Hines was awarded the project.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel called this a "new chapter in the history of Lincoln Park". Twice a Chicago 7 (in 2011 and again in 2016), Preservation Chicago has been very active in advocating for historic preservation and would have preferred to have seen greater levels preservation and adaptive reuse. However, there has been a sincere effort to accommodate historic preservation and to recreate historic buildings whose functional obsolescence required replacement.

The design team lead which included Antunovich Associates, in collaboration with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), is preserving and adaptively reusing a number of historic buildings. The 1931, Holabird and Roche, red brick boiler house & laundry building at 2365 N. Lincoln is

being adaptively reused. The former White Elephant Building is being renovated, while a second terra cotta building has been demolished and will be recreated using new material. The seven-story Nellie Black Building has been demolished, but will be rebuilt with size, scale and materials similar to the original building.

Additional Reading

Lincoln Park's massive mixed-use "Lincoln Common" project formally breaks ground

First new building cleared to rise at the former Children's Memorial Hospital site

The Lincoln Common Development Website

Art Deco Lawson House YMCA to be Fully Renovated



Lawson House YMCA, 30 W. Chicago Avenue, Photo Credit by Eric Allix Rogers

The 23-story Art Deco Lawson House former YMCA Building at 30 W. Chicago Avenue will be fully overhauled into 400 affordable apartments. Completed in 1934, Lawson House YMCA was designed by Perkins, Chatten & Hammond. Since 2013, when the YMCA moved their headquarters from Lawson house the Near West Side, there has been some uncertainty over the future of this important Chicago Avenue skyscraper.

The proposal by affordable housing developmer Peter Holstein's was selected by the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago in 2013. They agreed to sell the building for $1 with a guarantee that the developer would engage in a comprehensive renovation, estimated at $100 million, and maintain affordability for 50 years.

The building's Art Deco historic elements will largely be preserved. The exterior fire escapes will be replaced with a pair of enclosed stair towers. The alley on the building's north side will be

landscaped and another entrance added. Existing office and commercial spaces within the building are expected to remain.

Preservation Chicago hopes that the intact historic art deco lobby and interior circulation spaces will be preserved and restored as part of the building renovation.

Additionally, we think that Lawson House would make a great candidate for a Chicago Landmark, which would both protect this great building and provide significant tax credit benefits to the development.

Additional Reading

Chicago's 1930 Art Deco "Lawson House" set for major overhaul, Curbed Chicago, Jay Koziarz, May 26, 2017

Historic Former Lawson YMCA Finally Gets a Rehab Plan, Chicago Architecture.org, May 5, 2017

The Anti-Gentrifier Who's Saving the Former Lawson YMCA, Micah Maidenberg, February 21, 2015

Lifetime Achievements of Charles G. Staples Honored by Mayor



Chicago Cultural Center (old Chicago Public Library) , 78 E. Washington St., Photo Credit by Eric Allix Rogers

The commitment and contributions of long-time Chicago preservation activist, Charles G. Staples, 87, were celebrated at the Chicago Cultural Center, a building he personally helped to save from demolition.

Mayor Emanuel and Mark Kelly, Commissioner of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, designated May 3rd, 2017 as "Charles G. Staples Day" during a ceremony at the Chicago Cultural Center.

The Chicago Cultural Center/old Chicago Public Library located on Michigan Avenue is a hugely popular cultural attraction and heavily visited by Chicagoans and tourists alike. The spectacular 38-foot, Tiffany Favrile art glass dome (the largest Tiffany glass dome in the word) in the glorious Preston Bradley Hall is a not-to-be missed destination experience for visitors to Chicago. While today it is difficult to comprehend, there was a time when this extraordinary building was threatened with demolition.

"Charles G. Staples played a significant leadership role in the preservation campaign to save the magnificent Chicago Cultural Center from possible demolition in the 1960s and 1970s. He successfully led an effort to landmark the Chicago Cultural Center, which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places." Said Jamey Lundblad, a spokesman for the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (Hyde Park Herald, May 10, 2017)

"I was not going to let this beautiful building fall to the wayside," recalled Staples. "I'm proud to see my efforts paid off." (Hyde Park Herald, May 10, 2017)

Preservation Chicago applauds Charles Staples for all of his lifetime achievements including his efforts to try to save the old Federal Center by Henry Ives Cobb and other efforts to protect some of Chicago's great landmark buildings.

Additional Reading

Hyde Park resident, longest serving volunteer honored, Wendell Hutson, Hyde Park Herald, 5/10/17

Chicago's Last Remaining Stable Demolished



Noble Horse Theater, 1410 N. Orleans Street, following 2015 Arson Attack. Photo Courtesy Chicago Tribune

The Noble Horse Theater at 1410 N. Orleans Street, reportedly Chicago's last standing stable has been demolished. The stable and many of the horse carriages that it housed were severely damaged by a targeted arson attack in 2015. The last of the carriages were moved out in 2016 and the property was later sold for development. A new seven-story, 252-unit apartment building is planned for the site.

"The stable dated to the Great Chicago Fire in 1871 and originally housed 60 coach and riding horses. It was renovated in 1922 and became a riding hall and academy, and later a theater for performing horses" (DNAinfo, Ted Cox, 5/22/17)

Additional Reading

Noble Horse Theatre fire, Video from Chicago Tribune, Antonio Perez 2/6/15

City's Last Stable, Noble Horse Theater, Demolished, DNAinfo, Ted Cox, May 26, 2017

Fire Devastates Noble Horse Theater; 'Free the Horses' Graffiti Discovered, DNAinfo, Mauricio PeÃ±a and Paul Biasco | February 6, 2015

La Lucé Building Demolition Looms



La Lucé Building, 1393-1399 W. Lake Street, Photo Credit by Adam Natenshon

La Lucé, the old-school Italian restaurant beside the 'L' at Lake, Ogden and Loomis is slated for demolition. This wonderful 1892 Queen Anne four-story building at 1393-1399 W. Lake Street includes a copper-clad three story turret and an ornate copper-clad projecting bay window.

Concern first emerged in summer 2016 when the restaurant was shuttered after 27 years in business. More recently, a "pre-demolition sale" was held to auction off antiques, historic fixtures, the La Lucé neon sign, and other restaurant artifacts.

The movement towards demolition has been slow which has provided additional time for preservation advocacy. Both during and after the expiration of the 90-Day Demolition Delay, Preservation Chicago continued to do outreach to potential preservation-oriented buyers.

Despite some initial interest from buyers, the sellers have not been inclined to consider new offers. Future plans for the site are not known at this time.

Additional Reading

Buy A Piece of West Loop History At La LucÃ© Auction Next Month, DNAinfo, Stephanie Lulay, March 28, 2017

La Luce Co-Owner Reflects After 27 Years in West Loop, Ashok Selvam, Eater Chicago, 7/15/16

Demolition Imminent for 19th-Century West Loop Victorian, Curbed Chicago, Jay Koziarz, July 13, 2016

Preservation Chicago is an activist organization that advocates for the preservation of historic architecture, neighborhoods and urban spaces throughout the city of Chicago.