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PRESERVATION CHICAGO

STRENGTHENING CHICAGO BY PROTECTING HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

August 2026 Month-in-Review Newsletter



Penthouse View of 333 N. Michigan Avenue. Photo credit: Chris Cullen

Penthouse View of 333 N. Michigan Avenue

By Chris Cullen

“From Impossible to Inevitable” Preservation Chicago Catalyzes Change

Preservation Chicago leverages the power of historic preservation to create healthy, vibrant, diverse, and sustainable communities.

And it's working. We catalyze change.

Preservation Chicago is the catalyst behind Chicago's unprecedented surge in high-profile, transformational efforts to recognize, protect, and transform long-neglected historic assets into dynamic neighborhood anchors.

The stabilization and revitalization of historic community assets is a proven powerful economic engine to anchor reinvestment and catalyze healthy, sustainable, equitable communities through job creation, heritage tourism, and community wealth building.

Additionally, by uplifting culturally significant historic places, the successes and sacrifices of past generations can inspire a more just and equitable future.

Our innovative "Leveraged Impact" model of Amplification, Protection, and Investment creates the necessary pre-conditions to enable transformational change. By mobilizing widespread goodwill through extensive media coverage, and deploying robust Chicago Landmark protections against demolition, we create the stability necessary to secure significant public and private philanthropic funding.

Your donation sustains our advocacy and helps catalyze meaningful, tangible, impactful change.

Support a Nonprofit that Delivers Outstanding Results

Please Donate Today

Measuring the Economic Development Impact of Historic Preservation: Downtown Chicago Office-to-Residential Conversions



The City of Chicago Released a List of 25 Downtown Chicago Office-to-Residential Conversions totaling $1.8 Billion project cost and nearly 4k units. Image credit: Chicago DPD

The City of Chicago released a list in June 2026 of 25 Downtown Chicago Office-to-Residential Conversions representing an economic investment of $1.8 Billion in project costs and nearly 4,000 new residential units.

Preservation Chicago has advocated for 23 of these 25 projects.

The more challenging the process, the greater our advocacy involvement. We're active at every step of the way of the entitlement process until these projects have the necessary approvals to proceed. Our efforts include conversations with stakeholders, public testimony, letters of support, speaking at public meetings, and amplification through this newsletter and our social media channels**.**

Remaking Downtown, Post-pandemic work patterns have left Chicago's urban core with more empty office space than ever before. Now developers are turning vacant, outmoded properties into housing, hotels, and more. And downtown's revival is counting on them, Danny Ecker, Crain's Chicago Business, 8/11/26

Preservation Chicago Has Earned Top Nonprofit Ratings

Platinum Transparency 2025

Candid.

Charity Navigator

FOUR-STAR

2025

GREATNONPROFITS TOP-RATED NONPROFIT

CRAIN'S GUIDE TO STRATEGIC GIVING

benevity

Cause IQ

Value our work? Spread the word. Post a review.

Love our work? Love this monthly newsletter? You're in good company with thousands of others who *Love Chicago Fiercely!*

Real voices from real people make a difference. Your reviews and opinions are key for new people to discover Preservation Chicago, our mission, and our impact.

Growing the community of supporters will help us generate an even bigger impact on Chicago moving forward. Sharing your voice is a great way to support the effort.

Please help us raise the visibility of our work by sharing a review. Content will be visible to potential donors and volunteers. It's fast and easy…and we really appreciate it!





Preservation Chicago: Love Your City Fiercely!®

Having trouble viewing the newsletter as an email? Many email programs will cut, crop, and block photos, and generally struggle with a content rich newsletter but a solution exists. Please allow a moment for all the content to load.

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We always welcome your reviews, comments, and suggestions. Please drop us a message at info@PreservationChicago.org

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Table of Contents

Preservation Chicago Launches

- Chicago Landmark Reports website to create an online, fully searchable repository of Chicago Landmark Designation Reports and the Chicago Historic Resources Survey
- Chicago Historic Hotels: Embrace Authenticity Website to Promote and Support Chicago's Historic Hotels
- Chicago Historic Plaque Program to help homeowners recognize and celebrate the architectural and historical significance of their home

Chicago 7 Most Endangered Petitions

- PETITION: STOP the Demolition of the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room!
- PETITION: Save the Pope's Church!

ADVOCACY

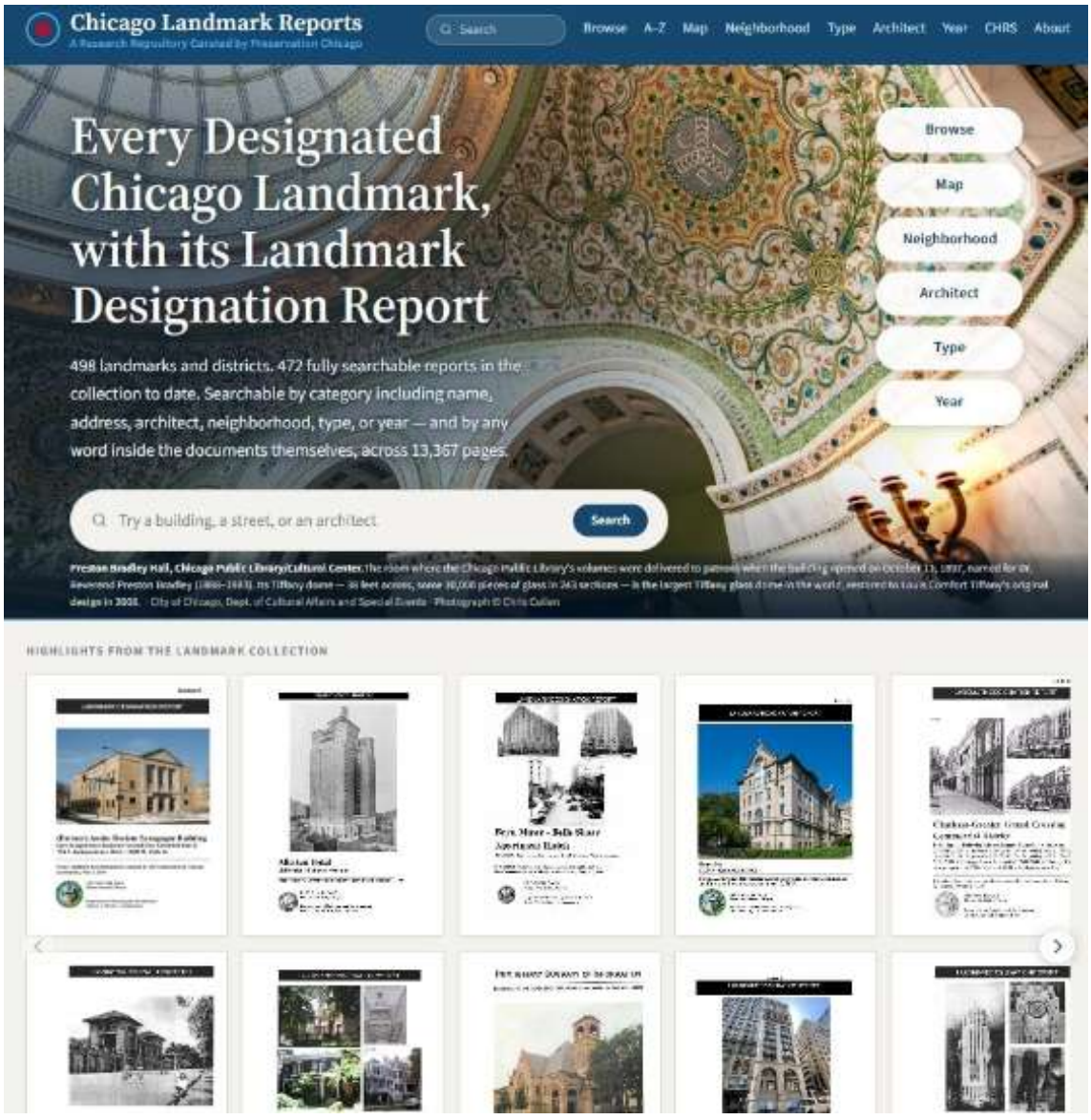
1. WIN: Austin Coming Together Acquires the J.J. Walser House
2. WIN: Media Coverage Builds for St. Mary of the Assumption
3. WIN: Landmark and Class L Approved for the Daily News Building
4. LOSS: DePaul Demolishes the Sheffield-Belden Group
5. WIN: Landmark Designation and Renovation for Altgeld Gardens Up Top Building
6. THREATENED: Move to Rescind Landmark Status of the Cortland Street Bridge
7. THREATENED: Chicago Loop Synagogue, Hiding in Plain Sight
8. WIN: Leasing Underway at The Bellwether in the Rector Building
9. WIN: Terra Cotta Restoration Underway at the Pittsfield Building
10. THREATENED: Data Center Conversion Approved at 300 W. Adams Street
11. LOSS: Demolition Permit for the Meat Cutters Building at 2800 N. Sheridan
12. WIN: Albert Friedman Plans the Next Reuse of Medinah Temple
13. PARTIAL WIN: Exterior Nears Completion at Second Church of Christ, Scientist
14. WIN: Leahy Building at 226 W. Ontario Sold for 70 Apartments
15. THREATENED: Foreclosure Stalls the Pioneer Trust & Savings Bank Building
16. WIN: Steven Holl Architects Selected to Renew Ida Noyes Hall
17. WIN: Earle School in West Englewood Reopens as 50 Affordable Apartments
18. THREATENED: Loyola Proposes Demolition of Rebori's St. Ignatius Gymnasium
19. WIN: Adaptive Reuse Moves Forward at Immaculata High School
20. WIN: Atrium Work Begins at Humboldt Park's Stable and Receptory
21. WIN: Sears Sunken Garden Pergola Restoration Back on Track
22. WIN: Portage Theater Launches a $3 Million Restoration Campaign
23. WIN: The 400 Theater in Rogers Park Reopens
24. THREATENED: Building Permit Issued to Replace the Holiday Club Building
25. THREATENED: Art Deco Mann Furniture Building Listed for Sale
26. POTENTIAL WIN: Adaptive Reuse Proposed for the Milshire Hotel
27. POTENTIAL WIN: Residential Reuse for the Illinois Bell Building
28. WIN: Renovation Permit for the Former Precious Blood Church and School
29. THREATENED: Unpermitted Alterations Continue at the Wacker House
30. THREATENED: The "Big Jim" O'Leary Mansion Heads to Demolition Court
31. WIN: Landmark Plaques Installed at the Phebe and John Gray House
32. WIN: Riverwalk and Dining Completed at the Reid Murdoch Building
33. WIN: Surge Billiards Opens at 1734 W. Chicago Avenue
34. LOSS: Demolition Permits for the Torstenson Glass Company Building
35. CHICAGO LEGACY BUSINESS: Lou Mitchell's Celebrates 103 Years
36. CHICAGO LEGACY BUSINESS: The Last Barrel of Schlitz at Glunz Tavern
37. THREATENED: 90-Day Demolition Delay List
38. LOSS: Spotlight on Demolition August 2026

PRESERVATION IN THE NEWS

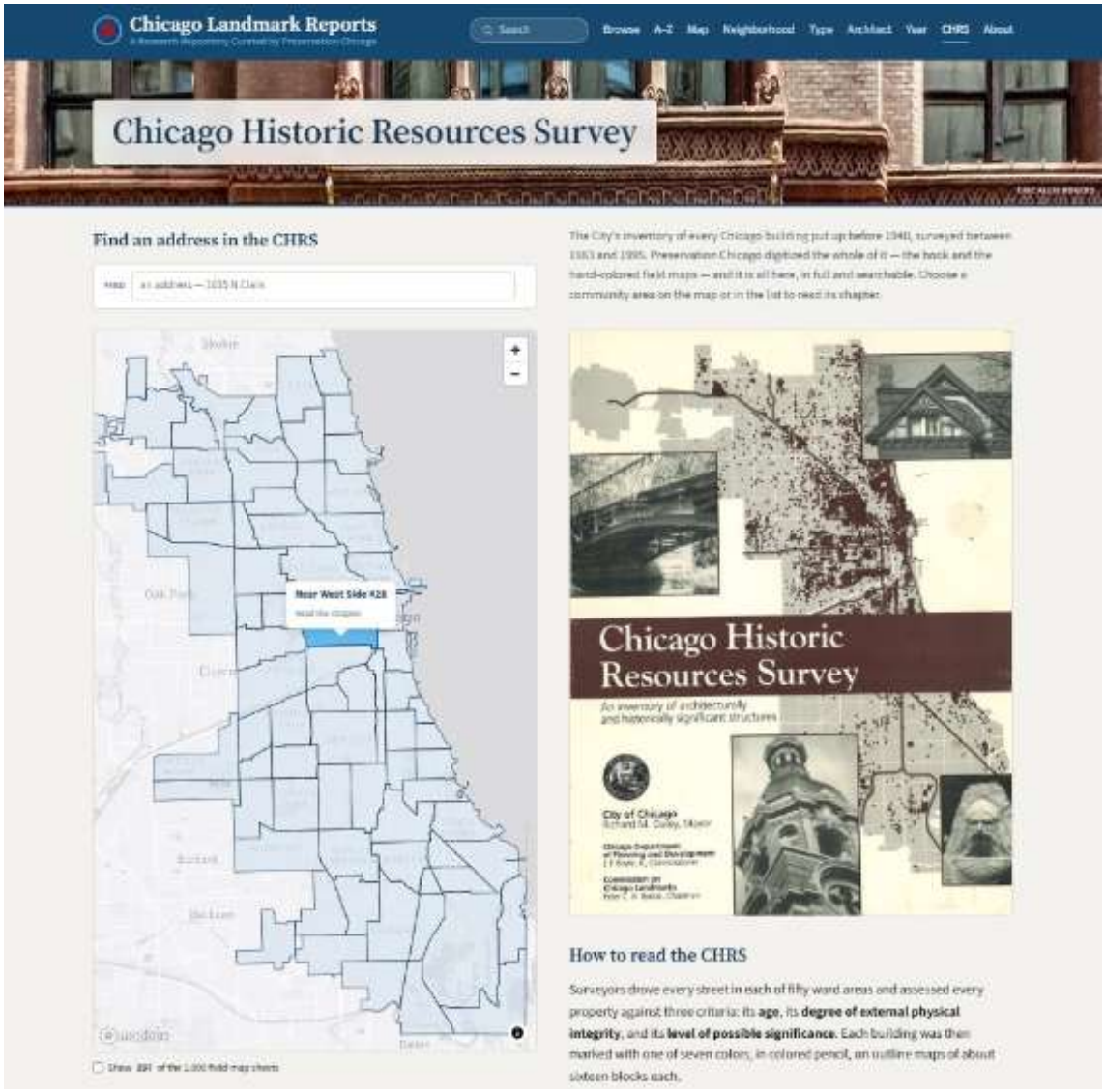
- WGN Radio: Advocating for Chicago's Historic Architecture
- Crain's Chicago Business: A New Study Questions Chicago's TIF Payoff
- WBEZ Chicago: What's That Building? Promontory Point
- Crain's : The Properties Nobody Wants Could Rebuild Cook County

www.ChicagoLandmarkReports.org

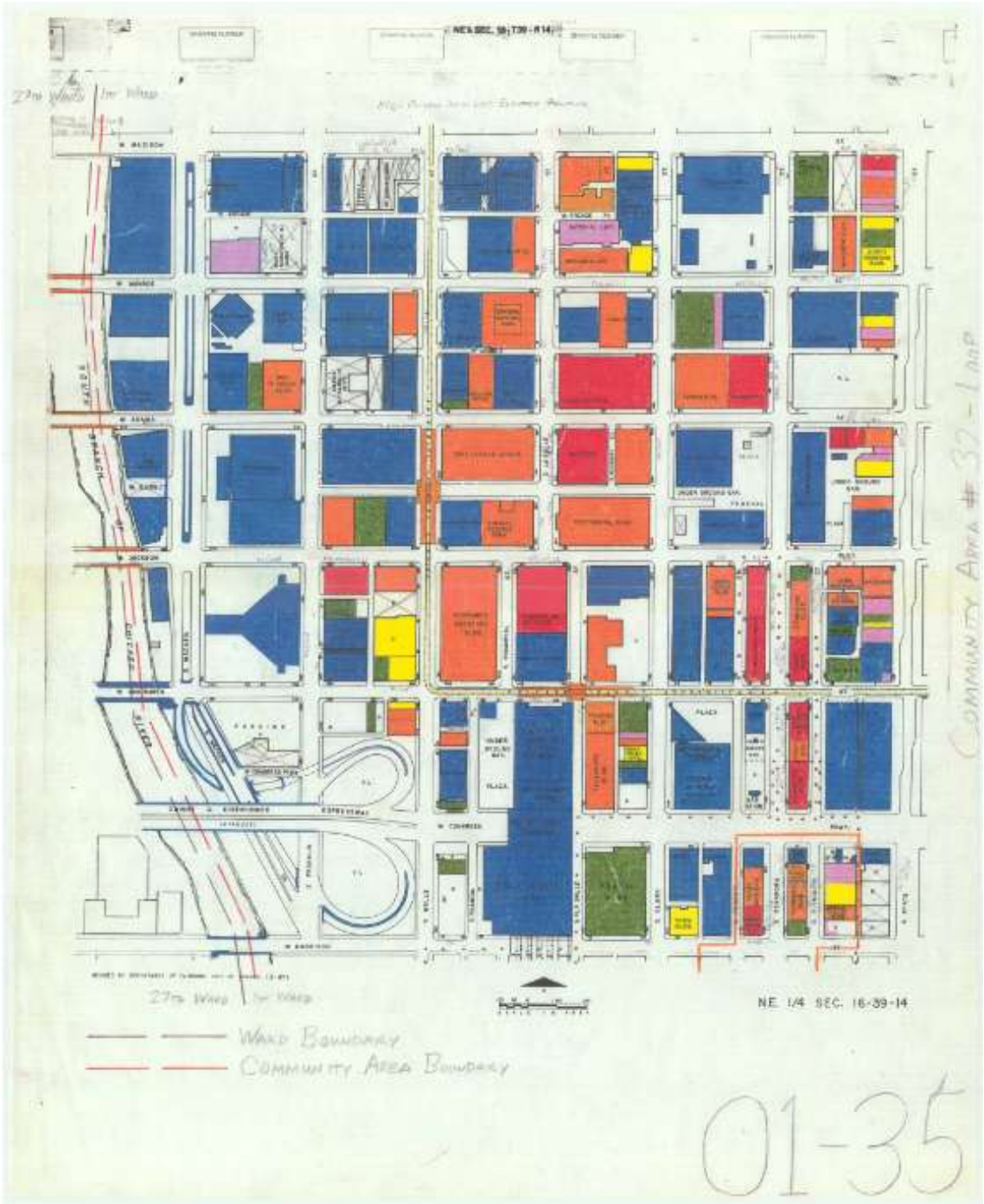
Preservation Chicago Launches *Chicago Landmark Reports*, a Free and Fully Searchable Comprehensive Digital Collection of over 60 Years of Chicago Landmark Designation Reports



ChicagoLandmarkReports.org, a research repository holding all 498 Chicago Landmarks and Landmark Districts together with their Landmark Designation Reports, presented by Preservation Chicago. Image credit: Preservation Chicago



The Chicago Historic Resources Survey at ChicagoLandmarkReports.org, searchable in full for the first time, with chapters for each of Chicago's 77 community areas. Image credit: Preservation Chicago



Chicago Historic Resources Survey field map, hand-colored by the surveyors. The Loop between Madison and Jackson. Surveyors marked each building by hand. All 1,090 original sheets are published in color at ChicagoLandmarkReports.org. Image credit: Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Why We Built This
A landmark is the city's argument for itself, and the designation report is where that argument is written down — the research, the criteria, and the case for protection, set out at the moment Chicago decided a place mattered. No single repository held all of them, comprehensive and accurate and covering the nearly sixty years the program has been active. Preservation Chicago chose to step forward and build one — free and definitive, a permanent home on the web where every report is at hand for researchers wherever they are.

Chicago Landmark Count to Date: 498
The collection holds 498 Chicago Landmarks, including 428 individual landmarks and 70 landmark districts. To our knowledge, this is the most complete and current count of Chicago Landmarks that exists. Every record is held separately and tied to its own designation, so the total is counted rather than estimated. As new Chicago Landmarks are designated, their reports are added to the website

Searchable Inside, Down to the Page
Reports are browsable by name, address, architect, neighborhood, building type and year of designation, and are mapped across the city. They are also searchable by any word inside the documents themselves, across 13,367 pages of full text.

This allows a researcher anywhere in the world to search the contents of a Chicago Landmark Designation Report, and not merely its title.

26 Reports Are Still Missing
To date we have assembled, digitized and made searchable 472 of the 498 reports. Twenty-six remain, and we are actively working to locate them. Every one of those records is clearly marked and carries a contact link, so a reader who knows where a copy survives — an archive, an office, a shelf — can tell us from the page about that specific building.

The Complete Chicago Historic Resources Survey, in Color and Searchable for the First Time

The site also holds the entire Chicago Historic Resources Survey, the City's inventory of every Chicago building constructed before 1940. Between 1983 and 1995, surveyors drove every street in fifty ward areas and assessed each property for its age, its physical integrity and its possible significance, marking every building with one of seven colors in colored pencil on outline maps.

The survey is a public document of the City of Chicago, produced by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks. Preservation Chicago did not publish it, but digitized it from hard copies collected in our library over many years. The volume has long been out of print, and as far as we know this is the only digital copy and the first that can be searched.

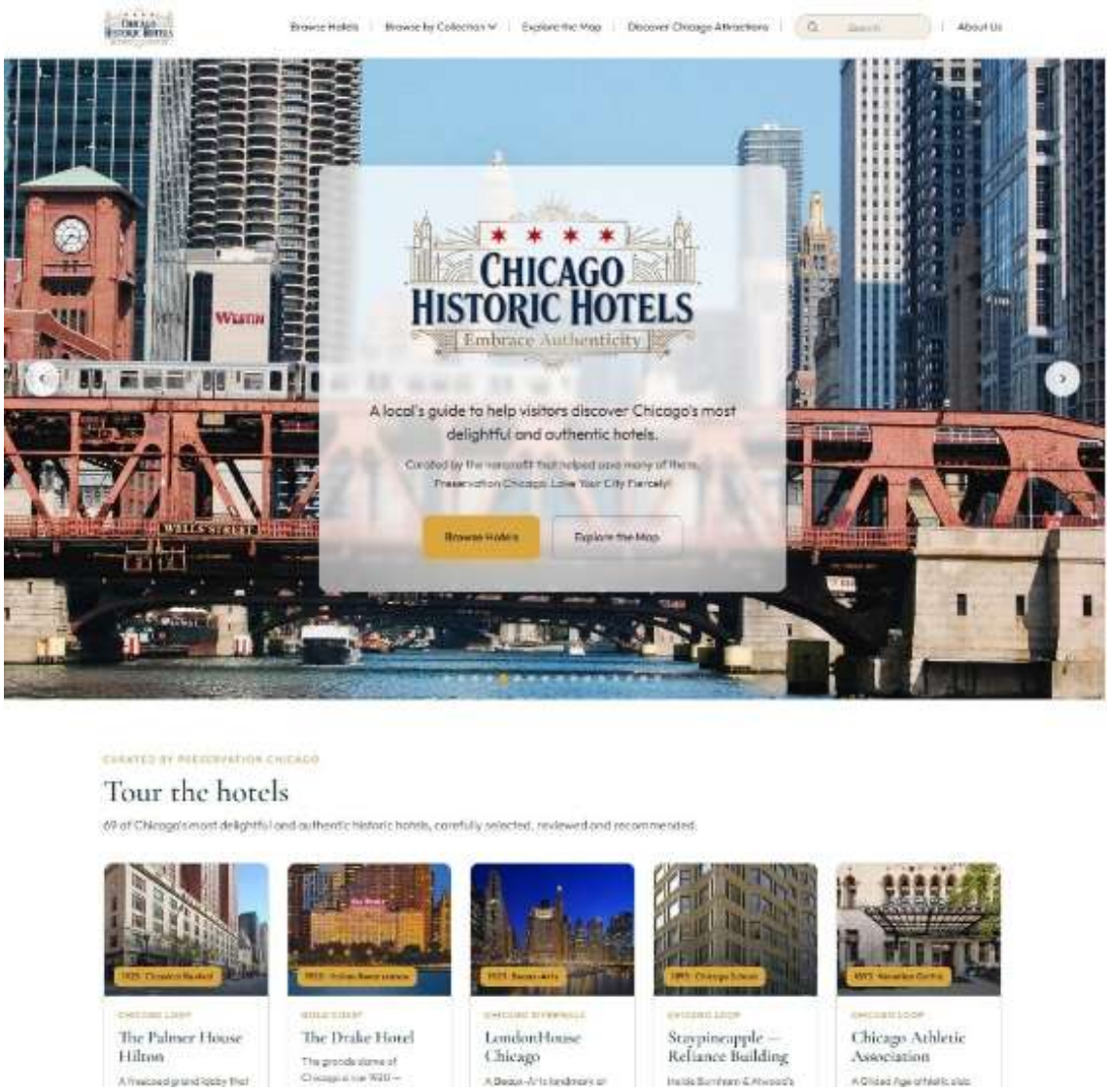
When the survey was published, printing its maps in color was beyond the budget, and the book says so plainly: the colors, it notes, "appear here as black or gray tones." The original hand-colored sheets survive. All 1,090 of them are published here in the colors the surveyors actually used, with 906 bound into the seventy-seven community area chapters as documents a reader can page through, alongside the Address, Architect, Building Style and Building Type indexes.

With Sincere Thanks to Our Partners
The City of Chicago, whose open data underpins the index, and the Commission on Chicago Landmarks staff, who research and write the designation reports that are the substance of this collection. Mapping Chicago Preservation, our partner at the University of Chicago, whose independent copies contributed to 160 records. The Chicago Architecture Center, whose Buildings of Chicago is a valued reference alongside this collection.

Preservation Chicago built and maintains this website free of charge. This is a resource that needs to exist, to make research into Designated Chicago Landmarks accessible to everyone.

www.ChicagoLandmarkReports.org

Preservation Chicago Launches *Chicago Historic Hotels: Embrace Authenticity* Website to Promote and Support Chicago's Historic Hotels



The Chicago Historic Hotels: Embrace Authenticity website is a lovingly curated guide to Chicago's most authentic and architecturally significant hotels, presented by Preservation Chicago: Love your City Fiercely! Photo credit: Preservation Chicago

Why We Built This
The Chicago Historic Hotels: Embrace Authenticity website is a lovingly curated guide to Chicago's most authentic and architecturally significant hotels, presented by Preservation Chicago: Love your City Fiercely!

Chicago is a world-class city and a top-rated tourist destination. Chicago has won the "Best Big City in the U.S." 9 years in a row by Condé Nast Traveler readers!

Approximately 55 million tourists visit Chicago annually. Visitors enjoy Chicago's world-class architecture, incredible parks and lakefront, renowned museums, outstanding theaters, and vibrant restaurants and neighborhoods. Authenticity is the trait that connects them all.

A Virtual Concierge
ChicagoHistoricHotels.org offers heritage travelers high-quality, well-researched guidance from local architectural historians and preservation advocates. Think of this as your virtual concierge: our goal is to provide you with the information and recommendations to enable a marvelous stay. We love this city and its buildings, and we're thrilled to share that energy with you.

Your hotel is more than a place to sleep — it's your home base, your launching point for the city's restaurants, museums, architecture, and neighborhoods. With over 500 hotels in Chicago, it's a challenge for heritage tourists to find one that is genuinely special and that fits your interests, priorities, and budget.

After years of informally steering friends and family toward great places, we decided to harness our collective expertise in Chicago's historic hotels into a website that would reach a wider audience and help find a great place to stay for their Chicago visit.

This is a lovingly curated selection of approximately 70 of Chicago's most delightful and authentic historic hotels that meet our criteria. We hope that this site will make it easy to find Chicago hotels based on their unique value propositions, including quality, authenticity, uniqueness, and historic interest.

How Hotels Are Selected
These are hotels we treasure and have long recommended to the people closest to us — and now we're sharing those recommendations with you. Every hotel is personally reviewed and documented so that each is a place we'd genuinely recommend. Many of these hotels, we helped save them from demolition, alongside developers and city officials to reimagine them as hotels.

The list spans the full range: purpose-built grand hotels and recent adaptive-reuse conversions, decadent luxury and hip energy, top-dollar suites and affordable hostels, and everything in between. They sit across a variety of prices and neighborhoods, though most cluster in and around the Loop.

Hotels cannot buy their way onto this site. To qualify, a hotel must occupy a historic building at least 50 years old, must be unique and authentic, and must be charming enough to enhance a visit to Chicago. The test we apply is simple: would we send an old friend here on their first trip to the city? If the answer is an enthusiastic yes, then the hotel makes our list.

In fact, many are so special that we encourage you to visit even if you're staying elsewhere — step into their glorious lobbies, have a drink in their beautiful bars, linger over a meal in their restaurants. As we like to say, everything is just a little bit better in a historic building.

Who We Are
Preservation Chicago: Love Your City Fiercely! harnesses the power of historic preservation to create healthy, dynamic, and vibrant communities — and over our 25-year history, we've directly advocated for many of the hotels featured on this site.

In a large city like Chicago, it's surprising that one small advocacy nonprofit can have such an oversized impact. Yet we have a remarkable track record of hundreds of successful outcomes. Many buildings would have been demolished if not for our direct intervention and advocacy.

A Second Life: Adaptive Reuse from Office to Hotel
As it turns out, early skyscrapers make wonderful hotels. Today, many of Chicago's most striking and historically important towers have been adaptively reused as hip, vibrant, and genuinely delightful places to stay.

These adaptive-reuse hotels join the ranks of Chicago's grand historic hotels — the ones purpose-

Chicago Historic Plaque Program

Preservation Chicago Pilots Chicago Historic Plaque Program in Lincoln Park



Chicago Historic Plaque Program from Preservation Chicago will help homeowners recognize and celebrate the architectural and historical significance of their home. Example of 7" x 10" oval bronze plaque for Chicago Historic Plaque Program. Image credit: Preservation Chicago



Chicago Historic Plaque Program from Preservation Chicago will help homeowners recognize and celebrate the architectural and historical significance of their home. Image credit: Preservation Chicago

Chicago Historic Plaque Program from Preservation Chicago will help homeowners recognize and celebrate the architectural and historical significance of their home.

The homes between the landmarks matter too. Chicago's historic neighborhoods are defined not only by landmark buildings, but by the many individual homes that together create a distinctive architectural fabric. Each year, historic residences are lost to demolition, redevelopment, or significant alteration.

The Chicago Historic Plaque Program is designed to help homeowners and neighbors better understand the history of these properties — and recognize the importance of preserving them. Participating homeowners may receive a short researched summary of their home's history, based on available records.

This pilot is expected to begin in selected historic areas of Lincoln Park, including the Sheffield Historic District and nearby historic residential blocks.

Homes will be designated with a dignified marker with a timeless format. Each plaque is a cast bronze oval, approximately 7" x 10", designed to be mounted on a building or displayed on a freestanding stake — a permanent recognition of the home's place in Chicago's history.

To learn more, check out the Chicago Historic Plaque Program

2026 Chicago 7 Petitions

PETITION: STOP the Demolition of the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room!



PETITION to STOP the Demolition of the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room! Miraculously saved from the wrecking ball in 1972, shockingly it's once again threatened with demolition. Image credit: Preservation Chicago / Bill Zbaren

STOP the Demolition of the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room!

Miraculously saved from the wrecking ball in 1972, shockingly it's once again threatened with demolition.

Designed in 1893 by architects Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler, the Chicago Stock Exchange Building was celebrated as an architectural masterpiece.

And its crown jewel was the breathtaking Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room.

Despite a passionate effort to save it, the Chicago Stock Exchange Building was demolished in 1972. It was an immense loss. But it catalyzed the historic preservation movement in Chicago and throughout the world.

The demolition claimed more than a revered building. Richard Nickel, the legendary architectural photographer, lost his life during the demolition while photographing and rescuing building fragments.

Richard Nickel has since become the martyred prophet of the historic preservation movement.

The precious architectural fragments he helped save from the Chicago Stock Exchange made their way into the collections of the world's leading museums - including MOMA, the Met, the Musee d'Orsay, the Victoria and Albert Museum - where the ornate staircase balustrades, ornamental terra cotta, decorative elevator grilles and polychrome stenciled panels are permanently displayed with reverence.

But none of the fragments compare with the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room – which incredibly was saved and rebuilt in its entirety at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Making this seemingly impossible project happen took the dedication of two passionate architects, five years, the unwavering support by the Art Institute and over one million philanthropic dollars. The resurrection of the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room in 1977 was celebrated around the world.

The ability to step into the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room today is a powerful experience. The two-story, 100-foot by 75-foot trading hall includes massive Sullivan ornamental columns, intricate stained-glass skylights and beautiful organic wall stenciling with 52 distinct hues in muted tones of gold, green and yellow in stylized patterns that reference the natural world.

But now, nearly 50 years later, the Art Institute of Chicago appears to no longer appreciate or value the precious legacy with which they have been entrusted.

Investigative reporting by the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Sun-Times have verified the rumors: there are closely guarded plans underway for a new wing that will be built on the site of the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room.

Demolition would be a terrible mistake.

The Art Institute of Chicago is an important cultural institution that Preservation Chicago has supported for decades, and we want to see it grow and thrive. After a year of unproductive private conversations to encourage them to change course, we had no choice but to bring this issue to the public's attention.

Fortunately, there is a win-win solution which allows the new wing to be built without destroying the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room.

The best location to build the new Art Institute wing is over the sunken railroad tracks which the museum wraps around. Filling in this gaping hole would improve museum circulation, hide the railroad tracks, and protect the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room and McKinlock Court from demolition.

This is a proven strategy for success. Directly across the street, Millennium Park was built over the same railroad tracks and has since become the most popular tourist destination in Chicago.

Please sign this petition to stop the demolition. Only a Chicago Landmark Designation will permanently protect the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room from demolition.

PETITION: Save the Pope’s Church!



Petition to Save the Pope’s Church!. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago and Serhii Chrucky / Esto

Pope Leo XIV's Childhood Church and School, St. Mary of the Assumption, is now vacant and with a large hole in the roof.

Chicago Landmark Designation of St. Mary of the Assumption / St. Mary's Church and campus would protect the church from demolition and unlock funding options to restore these buildings that were so formative for Pope Leo XIV during his childhood.

In the 1960's, St. Mary's Church and School was at the center of the vibrant Catholic community in the Riverdale neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. It was here that a young Robert Francis Prevost and future Pope was an active member of the parish where he attended mass and served as an altar boy.

This midcentury modern church was designed by George S. Smith and built in 1957 and the first mass was celebrated in the church on August 15, 1957. St. Mary's / St. Mary of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church at 310 E. 137th Street between 138th and Leyden Avenue in Chicago.

Overview: St. Mary's Church, also known as St. Mary of the Assumption Church and School, was organized in 1886 to initially serve 30 German Catholic families. It's in the Riverdale community in the furthest southern part of Chicago. An early one-story combination of church and school building, constructed in 1918, was designed by Hermann Gaul. The mid-century church structure, designed in a simplified Renaissance style, was completed in 1957 by Chicago architect George S. Smith.

With the election of Pope Leo XIV (Robert Prevost) in 2025, the St. Mary's Church and School complex gained national and international historic significance as his childhood parish. Pope Leo lived in Dolton, a village adjacent to Riverdale and the southern border of Chicago. He grew up in the parish, where he served as an altar boy, sang in the choir and attended the parish elementary school. The church campus played a key role in the early life and formation of the first American-born pope.

Threat: Unfortunately, the parish has been out of operation since 2011 and merged with nearby parishes due to its declining membership. The vacant church and school buildings have experienced significant deterioration because of a damaged roof and windows. Efforts are being made to preserve the property. In May 2025, Preservation Chicago formally requested designation of the church as a Chicago Landmark to protect it from demolition and support its restoration.

Originally known simply as "St. Mary's," St. Mary of the Assumption Church and School suffered over time from consolidation of the church and parish and closure of the school and campus. The buildings stood vacant for over a decade and were finally sold. Unfortunately, extensive deterioration occurred and funds are needed today to restore the seven buildings on the campus. Capital improvements must be made to all of the structures, dating from 1917 to 1957. This is particularly important today given the significance of the site as the childhood church and school of the first American Pope in history.

For a half century, Chicago's Riverdale neighborhood has experienced disinvestment and demographic changes that left behind a community with fewer and fewer resources. At the far southern corner of Chicago near Dolton, Illinois, Pope Leo's childhood home is a place which many Chicagoans probably never visited before. It's far from downtown Chicago and the more dense and popular Lakefront communities, which have so many resources.

We believe there is a path toward renewal. However, funds must be secured in the immediate future or the buildings are at risk of further deterioration – and perhaps demolition in the future. We're encouraging all parties and stakeholders to work together, along with the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois, to help move preservation and restoration forward quickly.

Recommendations: St. Mary of the Assumption Church and School is a remarkable campus located in the Riverdale neighborhood of Chicago that has experienced a half-century of disinvestment. It requires partnerships to be formed and a large infusion of capital funds to stabilize and restore this campus of buildings that dates back to 1917.

All of this is possible. The fact that Pope Leo XIV, a respected world leader, head of state and first American-born Pope, spent his most formative years at this church and school can spur revisioning of the site. It could also provide opportunities to encourage reinvestment in this far south-side community overall.

Realizing that Pope Leo holds incredible influence over many aspects of world diplomacy and is the respected leader of over 1.3 billion Catholics across the globe, this campus could easily

Advocacy

1. WIN: Austin Coming Together Acquires Frank Lloyd Wright's 1903 J.J. Walser House and Launches a Restoration Campaign (Chicago 7 2025)



J.J. Walser House, a 2025 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Joseph Jacob (J.J.) Walser House, 1903, Frank Lloyd Wright, 42 N. Central Avenue. Photo credit: Cristen Brown



Preservation Chicago was happy to provide the champagne for a celebratory toast with Walser House preservation partners on July 28, 2026 after a lengthy and intense two-year advocacy effort. Photo credit: Austin Coming Together

“In the Austin community on Chicago’s West Side sits the J.J. Walser House, designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright and built in 1903. A local organization is working to preserve the landmark and transform it into a community asset for generations to come.

“‘This is a house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the world-famous architect. It’s one of five surviving standalone Frank Lloyd Wright homes in the city of Chicago,’ Darnell Shields, executive director of Austin Coming Together, told WTTW News on a recent tour.

“‘This is one of his first representations of the Prairie style, this open concept that you see here where we literally have the separate spaces, but you can stand from one end of the home and just see through the living room, dining room, all the way to the backyard,’ Shields said. ‘It was just really cutting-edge for the time.’

“For Shields, preserving the home isn’t just about saving an architectural treasure. It’s about investing in the neighborhood where he grew up.

“Despite years of wear and tear, pieces of Wright’s original vision remain throughout the property. The home’s original brick fireplace still stands, showcasing one of the architect’s signature design elements.

“‘Coming into this home and seeing this fireplace and hearth still intact with the original bricks, these bricks are very difficult to find,’ Shields said. ‘They were made in the 1900s.’

“Bringing the home back to life won’t happen overnight. Austin Coming Together’s first priority is stabilizing the property before winter. Shields estimates it will take close to $3 million to restore the home.

“‘It can actually serve a purpose for the community as a center where we can gather, we can take part in different kinds of events or forums or educational seminars and things like that,’ Shields said. ‘We can partner with our schools to introduce young people to preservation, history and architecture.’

“‘I want them to feel the beauty of something majestic that is theirs and that is here for them to experience and take part in and they can brag about, like, “Hey, that’s in my neighborhood. I live on that block. We have a Frank Lloyd Wright. People come from all over the world to see something in my community,”‘ Shields said.” (Hernandez, WTTW News, 7/16/26)

“Wright designed the Walser house for printing executive Joseph Jacob Walser. Built in 1903, it’s one of only five structures from Wright’s Prairie period still standing today in the city the architect lived near for 20 years.

“By 2019, after the Teagues died, the Walser House fell into disrepair, burdened by the couple’s reverse mortgage. Last March, it landed on Preservation Chicago’s annual list of endangered historic buildings.” (Benzine, Artnet News, 6/24/26)

“The Joseph Jacob (J.J.) Walser Jr. House located at 42 N. Central Avenue in the Austin neighborhood of Chicago, is a significant structure to both the West Side Chicago neighborhood and city at large. Today, the J.J. Walser Jr. House has accrued additional significance as one of only five extant Prairie School structures designed by Frank Lloyd Wright within the city of Chicago. It is also the only single-family house designed by the renowned architect on the city’s West Side.

“The Walser House was listed as a City of Chicago Landmark in 1981, with the Landmark Designation Report later revised in 1983. In 2013 the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its significant design by Frank Lloyd Wright, which is exemplary of the design philosophies practiced by the Prairie School of Architecture. The J.J. Walser House is one of Wright’s experiments with employing the tenets of Prairie School design to more affordable residences.

“J.J. Walser Jr. and his wife Grace purchased the property at 42 N. Central Avenue for their new home in early 1903. It is not known how Walser, the son of Jacob Joseph Walser, a founder of the Goss Printing Company and a real estate developer in Austin, came to commission architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) for the design of his home. Proximity to Wright’s home and studio in Oak Park, Illinois, is one possible explanation. The scope of the commission included ‘not only a modern style house but also custom-designed interior built-in furniture and specially designed leaded art glass windows.’ For a cost of $4,000, the house was built and occupied by the Walser family by the end of 1903.

2. WIN: Ongoing Media Coverage Generates Awareness Regarding the Challenge and Vision of St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church (Chicago 7 2026)



“The Pope’s Church,” St. Mary’s / St. Mary of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church, 1957, George S. Smith, 310 E. 137th Street. Photo credit: Cristen Brown



Ward Miller Interviews by Mark Irons regarding the push to preserve Pope Leo XIV's childhood parish in Chicago. Photo credit: EWTN News



"The Pope's Church," St. Mary's / St. Mary of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church, 1957, George S. Smith, 310 E. 137th Street. Photo credit: Joe Hall



“The Pope’s Church,” St. Mary’s / St. Mary of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church, 1957, George S. Smith, 310 E. 137th Street. Photo credit: Joe Hall

“Just over one year since the world greeted a new pope, a pope born in America’s heartland, Chicago. Since the elevation of Pope Leo XIV to the Chair of St. Peter, his hometown has gone all in to celebrate its famous native son. His childhood home is now owned by the suburban village of Dolton, Illinois, so it can be preserved as a historic landmark and museum. And there’s a similar desire to preserve the building where the Prevost family went to church, though it was deconsecrated as a place of worship years ago.

“‘To think that standing in the very spot that the Pope actually went to school or went to church and was an altar boy — it’s still surreal,’ Cynthia Donohoe, former parishioner, said.

“With the church sitting empty for a decade and falling apart, Joe Hall bought the property hoping to revitalize the space into a community center to serve an ailing neighborhood that has seen jobs move out and crime go up.

“‘Understanding the significance of owning such a significant piece of history now, I feel like it’s my responsibility and my job to preserve as much as I can,’ Hall said. “The stained glass windows beautifully remain in the abandoned darkness. As if prophetically, one colorful window depicts the dome of Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome, and the keys Jesus gave to Peter, the first pope.

“Walking on the faded hardwood floor beneath the rusted hoops and lifeless scoreboard, providing evidence of what became the church gymnasium, we spoke with Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago. The nonprofit, non-religious group fights to preserve or repurpose historic buildings in the city. The Pope’s childhood parish made the group’s 2026 Most Endangered List.

“‘This was the original 1917 church. Until 1957, this was the sanctuary,’ Miller said. ‘That brought people together, and the bleachers over there — I could imagine families watching their children. He was baptized here. His first communion was here.’

“‘There was a point in time where people really identified where you lived by your parish, and that’s truly a Chicago thing,’ Miller said. “He says the loss of a house of faith like this affects more than just the people who worship on Sunday.

“‘You’re losing a school. You’re losing a counseling center. You’re losing food pantries. You’re losing that sense of community which really comes together in these houses of worship,’ Miller said.” (Irons, EWTN News, 7/31/26)

“When white smoke rose from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City in May 2025, it was like lightning struck the Far South Side of Chicago. The revelation that the newly selected Pope Leo XIV hailed from Dolton brought media and onlookers from all over the world to his childhood home just south of the city. They also flocked to the church and parish school in Chicago’s Riverdale neighborhood that the pontiff, born Robert Prevost, attended growing up.

“A year later, as some of that attention has subsided, efforts to restore and establish as historic sites the properties where Prevost grew up and received his religious education are slowly moving forward amid financial and structural challenges.

“The church where the Prevost family worshipped throughout the future pope’s adolescence, St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church, is a modernist building constructed in 1957 and sits on a property at East 137th Street and South Leyden Avenue that also includes the parish school Prevost attended. … [Owner Joe Hall] wants to open up the church as a historic site with exhibits about the pope and the church’s background. Ultimately, Hall envisions working with a developer on a $16 million project that would include a boutique hotel on the site, a theatre in the basement of the school and a hub providing social services.

“‘My personal pledge is to make sure I do whatever I can to preserve the legacy of the first American pope that happens to be from Dolton, Illinois,’ Hall said. ‘The second thing, and what has always been our main and top priority, is the community and providing these skills and providing employment for locals.’

“In the meantime, the church’s roof has been tarped to protect the property from more damage. Dan Dorman, president of construction company Metropolitan, did the work for free. As a Dolton native who attended the church for about 20 years, he felt like he had to do something, he said. Dorman said he plans to do more work on the property and hopes others will contribute to the effort, since getting the church fixed and operational would be a relatively small project.

“Hall is in the process of pursuing city and federal landmark status for the property, which Preservation Chicago named to its annual list of most endangered structures in March.” (Herzog,

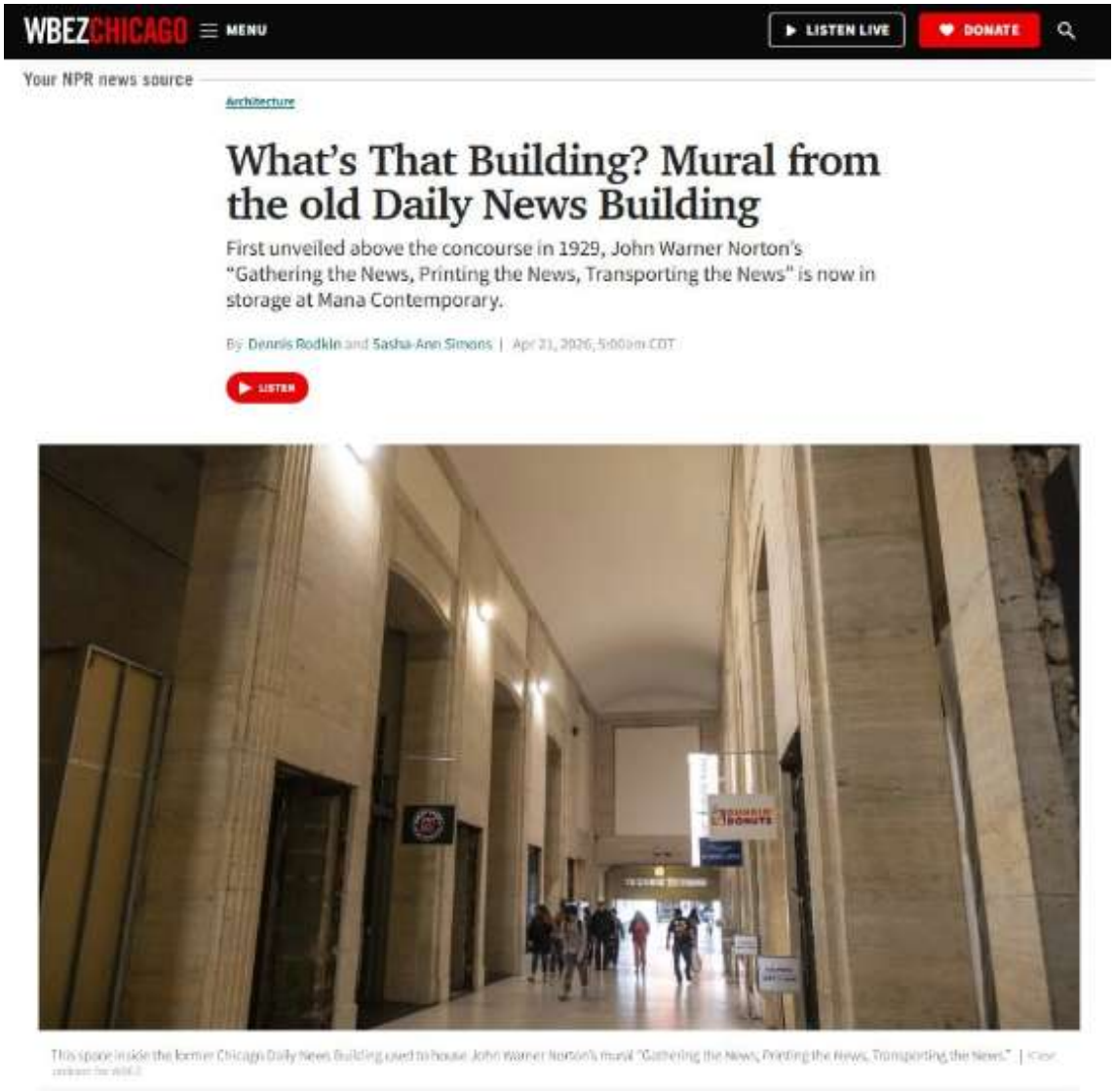
3. WIN: City Council Approved Landmark and Class L for Holabird & Root's 1929 Chicago Daily News Building at 2 N. Riverside Plaza (Chicago 7 2008)



Chicago Daily News Building, 1929, Holabird & Root, 2 North Riverside Plaza, a 2008 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: LoopNet



Chicago Daily News Building, 1929, Holabird & Root, 2 North Riverside Plaza, a 2008 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Image credit: Preservation Chicago Postcard Collection



What's That Building? Mural from the old Daily News Building; First unveiled above the concourse in 1929, John Warner Norton's "Gathering the News, Printing the News, Transporting the News" is now in storage at Mana Contemporary, Dennis Rodkin and Sasha-Ann Simons, interview with Ward Miller, WBEZ Chicago, 4/21/26. Image credit: WBEZ K'Von Jackson



“Gathering the News,” “Printing the News,” and “Transporting the News”, murals by John Warner Norton, at the Chicago Daily News Building / Riverside Plaza from 1928. Photo credit: Ryerson and Burnham Archive

“The Chicago City Council has approved the landmark designation and Class L tax incentive for the Chicago Daily News Building. Located at 2 N. Riverside, the 26-story Art Deco-style office building was built in 1929 by Holabird & Root. Now owned by Bluestar Properties, the developer is planning a rehab of the building and its office space inside.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 8/19/26)

“‘It’s a building that was incredibly important for a number of reasons: architecturally but also urbanistically and culturally to the city. Because of where it is and what is across the river from it, it never really has received the kind of star treatment that it deserves,’ Thomas Leslie, the Ralph E. Johnson professor of design at the Illinois School of Architecture at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, said. ‘It’s great to see it getting landmarked, and probably long overdue.’

“According to the city, the Near West Side building is undergoing a nearly $70 million commercial rehabilitation by the owner, 2 N. Riverside Owner LLC. The building, designed by Holabird & Root, was completed in 1929. It was the first office structure in the city built above railroad tracks and the first with a public plaza.

“‘It’s a really important piece of urbanism. It was one of the first buildings in the city to face the river, which for a long time had just been an industrial sewer. It’s an important piece of the Downtown landscape in that it’s a building that really does try to connect the city with the riverfront, and that’s a tradition that goes on today,’ Leslie said.

“‘It was built on top of the active rail yards that were west of the Loop, and the structure is literally woven down through the tracks which were existing at the time. You can’t see any of that steelwork but it held up all of the newspaper’s printing presses, literally suspended over the tracks when it opened,’ Leslie said. ‘It’s really an important landmark for its engineering prowess, in addition to its style. This is a building that encapsulates so much about what the city is all about, how the city relates to the river, its history with writing, with journalism, and then also, if you look really closely, its really long history with structural engineering.’

“Ward Miller, executive director of the nonprofit Preservation Chicago, said the designation for the building is the result of a nearly 20-year effort.

“‘The old Chicago Daily News building was one of our most endangered buildings,’ Miller said. ‘We’re hoping that this landmark designation really does bring a spotlight to this building that it protects it in perpetuity and it encourages a reinvestment in this structure.’” (Puente, WBEZ, 7/21/26)

“Designed by noted architecture firm Holabird & Root and completed in 1929, the building is known as the first in Chicago built over railroad tracks, with innovative features such as a special venting system for railroad locomotive exhaust, according to a city report submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks. The public plaza has the distinction of being the first privately developed open space in the city and one of the first nationally.

“Golden is also working to secure Chicago landmark status for the building, a move that would end decades of uncertainty and permanently protect it from demolition — an option Zell once explored, along with adding another tower on the adjacent riverfront plaza.

“‘The prior owner didn’t want to landmark it because they had entertained tearing it down. I love this type of building because they really express who Chicago is, and I’m not that ambitious to build a skyscraper.’

“‘We’re trying to modernize something while paying respect and giving a nod to what the original builders built.’” (Ori, CoStar News, 5/11/25)

Preservation Chicago is thrilled that the Chicago Daily News Building has finally been designated a Chicago Landmark. This is the culmination of a nearly twenty-year preservation campaign — from our 2008 Chicago 7 Most Endangered listing, when the threat of demolition and replacement was real and active, through our formal Landmark Designation recommendation submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks on May 16, 2025. Preservation Chicago and Landmarks Illinois have pushed for this designation since 2008. The Chicago City Council’s vote makes permanent what advocacy and political will only temporarily secured.

Ward Miller was in active communication with Tyler Quast, Chief Operating Officer at Blue Star Properties and Craig Golden, Chief Executive Officer, Blue Star Properties throughout this process, encouraging Landmark Designation, Class L classification, and the return of the building’s missing monumental murals. Blue Star Properties was open to the conversation and proved a committed partner in the landmark process.

4. LOSS: DePaul University Demolishes the Sheffield-Belden Group for Practice Gym (Chicago 7 2024)



Demolition of Sheffield-Belden Group, northwest corner of Sheffield and Belden Avenues. 2310 N. Sheffield, John Morrell and others, 1890-1893. Photo credit: Peter Fynmere



Demolition of Sheffield-Belden Group, Sheffield-Belden Townhouses, 2308, 2310, 2314 & 2316 N. Sheffield Ave., John Morrell and others, 1890-1893. Photo credit: Peter Fynmere



Demolition of Sheffield-Belden Group, northwest corner of Sheffield and Belden Avenues. Courtyard building, 1000-1012 W. Belden and 2300-2302 N. Sheffield Avenue, Maher & McGraw, 1926. Photo credit: Ward Miller



Demolition of Sheffield-Belden Group, northwest corner of Sheffield and Belden Avenues. Courtyard building, 1000-1012 W. Belden and 2300-2302 N. Sheffield Avenue, Maher & McGraw, 1926. Photo credit: Peter Fynmere



Demolition of Sheffield-Belden Group, Sheffield-Belden Townhouses, 2308, 2310, 2314 & 2316 N. Sheffield Ave., John Morrell and others, 1890-1893. Photo credit: Ward Miller



Fox news interview with reporter Bret Buganski and Ward Miller regarding the Demolition of Sheffield-Belden Group, Photo credit: Fox News 32 Chicago

“DePaul University demolished five campus buildings over the summer to make way for its $42.3 million athletics practice facility that is expected to open in fall 2027. The demolished buildings, some over 100 years old, included student housing.” (Russomanno, The DePaulia, 9/14/26)

“Construction crews are demolishing a group of row homes and apartment buildings in Lincoln Park to make room for DePaul University’s new practice facility.

“But making room for the facility means demolishing historic row homes and apartment buildings that were mainly used for student housing. Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago, says the buildings should have been saved.

“‘We see this as the undermining of the community,’ he said.

“Miller says some of the buildings date back to the 1880s and 1890s. Two of them are rated as significant in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, which was created after a decade-long effort to document the city’s historic buildings. He says the buildings are also part of the fabric of Lincoln Park’s history.

“‘We’re losing part of the fabric of Lincoln Park. And these buildings predate DePaul University’s founding,’ said Miller.

“Miller says Preservation Chicago suggested building the practice facility on a former grocery store site and a paved parking lot about a block north instead.

“‘Why not build there instead of demolishing these really beautiful buildings?’

“The demolition also means the loss of about 90 apartments and housing units, some of which were later used for student housing. Miller says that is especially concerning as Chicago continues to deal with a shortage of housing.

“‘We’re demolishing these buildings for a basketball practice and athletic facility. In our mind’s eye, that doesn’t seem to work with plans for our growing healthy neighborhoods.’

“Miller says the issue goes beyond one construction project. He says Lincoln Park is losing historic buildings throughout the neighborhood, particularly in areas without the stronger protections provided by a Chicago landmark district. He also says the demolition could eventually threaten the character of the Sheffield National Register District.

“Miller says the city and institutions should look for creative ways to build new facilities without destroying historic structures.

“‘Why are we demolishing historic fabric that makes our city special?’

“Miller also questioned whether DePaul could have found another location for the practice facility, especially given the university’s financial challenges and other recent changes, including the closure of its art museum and the sale of the Merle Reskin Theatre in the Loop.

“‘What is going to be left of the character of DePaul University and the Lincoln Park neighborhood in this particular vicinity?’” (Buganski, FOX 32 Chicago, 7/24/26)

“Demolition permits have already been issued for all of the existing buildings on the project site, allowing Heneghan Wrecking & Excavating to demolish all of the structures in preparation for new construction.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 8/12/26)

The Sheffield-Belden Group was a Preservation Chicago 2024 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. We advocated with urgency in close partnership with the community and preservation partners for more than two years to prevent this unnecessary demolition. Unfortunately, these ornate stone and brick buildings which beautifully defined this block for over a century have been demolished.

What was lost was not a collection of individual buildings but an intact historic streetwall — four freestanding Romanesque Revival greystone townhouses and a well-scaled courtyard building at the corner, together forming half a block along Sheffield and Belden. All five were contributing structures in the Sheffield National Register Historic District. Two were orange-rated in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey.

Despite sustained opposition from neighborhood organizations, preservation advocates, and DePaul’s own students, the alderman approved the demolition.

5. WIN: City Council Approves Landmark Designation and Renovation of Up Top Building at Altgeld Gardens (Chicago 7 2017 & 2022)



Altgeld Gardens, Commercial Buildings, "Up Top", 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Avenue. Altgeld Gardens Housing Center and Commercial Center, photographed on October 31, 1945, Keck & Keck, HB-08854-A Photo credit: Chicago History Museum / Hedrich-Blessing



Proposed restoration of Altgeld Gardens, Commercial Buildings, “Up Top”, 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Avenue. Rendering credit: By The Hand Club for Kids / Present Future Architects



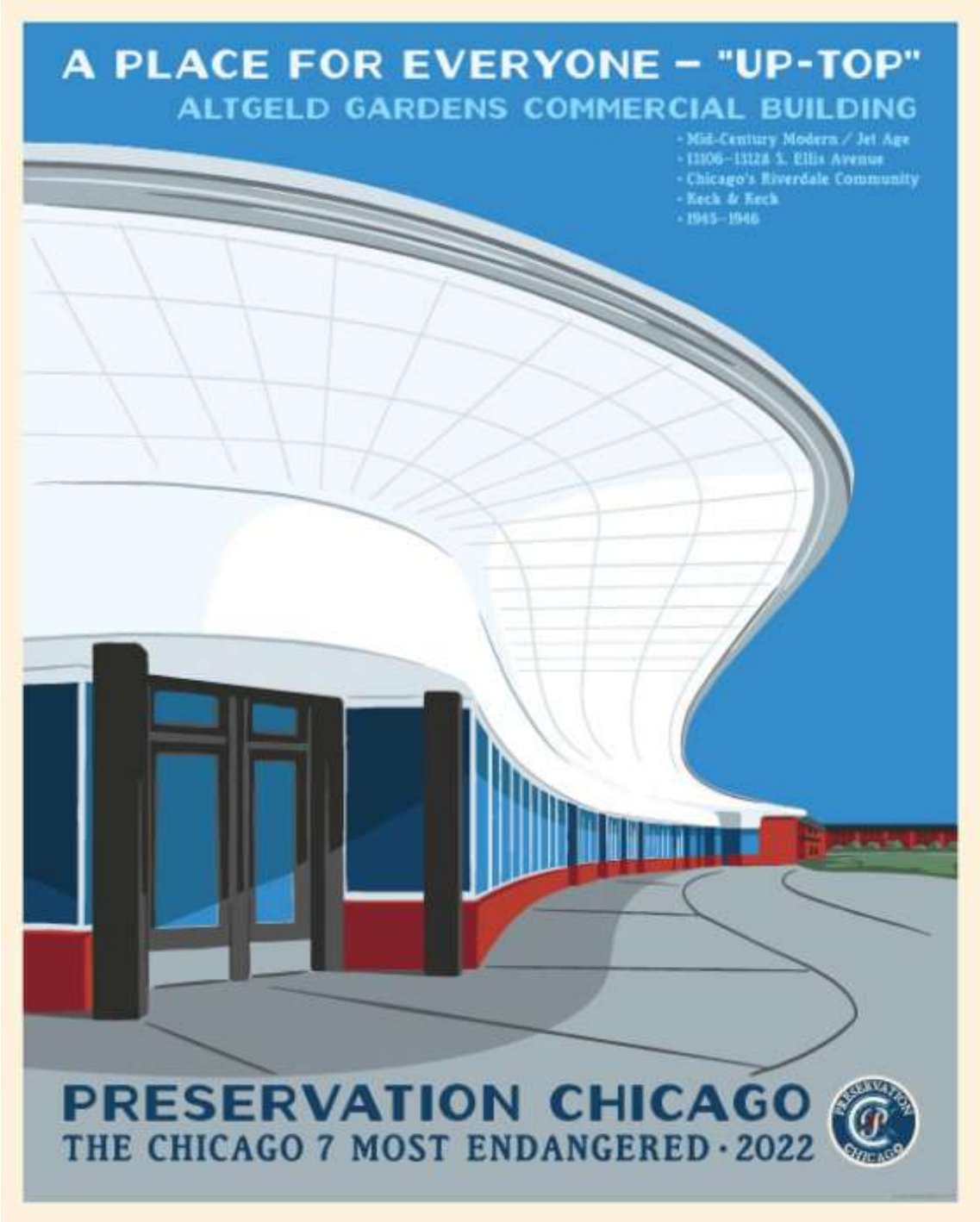
Proposed restoration of Altgeld Gardens, Commercial Buildings, “Up Top”, 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Avenue. Rendering credit: By The Hand Club for Kids / Present Future Architects



Altgeld Gardens, Commercial Buildings, “Up Top”, 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Avenue. Photo taken in 2022. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago



Proposed restoration of Altgeld Gardens, Commercial Buildings, “Up Top”, 1946, Keck & Keck, 13100 S. Ellis Avenue. Rendering credit: By The Hand Club for Kids / Present Future Architects



Altgeld Gardens 'Up-Top' Commercial Building, 1945-46, Keck & Keck, 13106-13128 S. Ellis Avenue. Image credit: Preservation Chicago. Altgeld Gardens 'Up-Top' Commercial Building Preservation Chicago 2022 Chicago 7 Most Endangered Poster. Posters available at Preservation Chicago's webstore.

POTENTIAL WIN: Chicago Plan Commission Approves By The Hand Club For Kids' Renovation of Altgeld Gardens' Historic "Up Top" Building, Home to the Birthplace of the Environmental Justice Movement (Chicago 7 2017, 2022)

"A $23.3 million effort to turn an architecturally significant 81-year-old former Altgeld Gardens commercial building into an after-school center has been approved by the Chicago Plan Commission. The panel last week approved the By The Hand Club For Kids' project to convert and expand the dilapidated one-story modernist building at 13100 S. Ellis Ave. into a facility with classrooms, a gymnasium and meeting space. The development represents quite a potential turnaround for one of the city's less recognized but historically important buildings.

"Designed by noted modernist architects Keck & Keck — and nicknamed the 'Up Top' building by Altgeld residents — the distinctive fan-shaped brick structure with an overhanging curved roof was built in 1945 as stores, offices and services for the then-new Far South Side public housing development. The Up Top was granted preliminary city landmark status earlier this month.

"The building became the birthplace of the environmental justice movement in the 1980s when the late Altgeld resident Hazel Johnson's People for Community Recovery set up shop there.

"'We just think that there's so much great history in the building, and we know it's something the community wanted us to do,' By The Hand Club For Kids Chief of Partnerships and Development Andraya Yousfi said. 'Lots of incredible history in the building that's really meaningful for the community.'

"By The Hand Club has been active at Altgeld for 25 years. The housing development's Local Advisory Council President Bernadette Williams was instrumental in getting the organization to reuse the building. 'With them preserving it, it's going to be a new amenity [that helps with the] beautification of Altgeld Gardens,' Williams said. 'It's an eyesore right now.'

"The renovation would convert the long-vacant building into a K-12 after-school center with computer labs, nine classrooms, a kitchen, offices and a multipurpose room. And a breezeway that contains a memorial with the names of Altgeld residents handwritten on a yellow brick wall will be preserved. The city's landmarks designation report said the wall dates back to the 1960s. 'They're going to encase those names,' Williams said.

"The Up Top was designed by architects George Frederick Keck and his brother William. It's a straight-up modernist structure — more apparent in early photos — quite in contrast to the more traditional-looking Altgeld homes and buildings designed by Naess & Murphy.

"George Keck gained fame by designing the House of Tomorrow, a futuristic 12-sided glass [house] for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. The home, relocated to Beverly Shores, Indiana, after the fair, is currently under restoration. At Altgeld, the Kecks designed 'a high-quality, cost effective and energy efficient commercial building,' the city's designation report said.

"Storefronts with large shop windows face south to take advantage of natural sunlight and the warm rays of the low winter sun. The renovations would bring back the big windows, giving the building a transparency and a visual weightlessness that hasn't been seen there in at least a generation.

"The landmarks commission's preliminary designation — which protects the building from demolition and unsympathetic alterations — is supported by the By The Hand Club, Yousfi said. The designation honors the building for its architecture and architects but also for its connection to the groundbreaking environmental activism of Johnson and the People for Community Recovery." (Bey, Chicago Sun-Times, 6/29/26)

The "Up Top" building — named by Altgeld Gardens residents for its elevated position at the northeast corner of the complex — is one of Chicago's most important and least celebrated examples of mid-century modernism, and Preservation Chicago is proud to have been an active voice for its preservation over many years.

The building has appeared on Preservation Chicago's Chicago 7 Most Endangered list twice: in 2017, as part of a broader designation of Altgeld Gardens Blocks 11, 12, and 13, and again in 2022, as part of the "Public Housing Sites" designation alongside the Cabrini-Green Rowhouses and Lathrop Homes South Campus. Long before these Chicago 7 designations, it had appeared on our watchlists beginning as early as 2011.

On June 4, 2026, Preservation Chicago was proud to testify in strong support of By The Hand Club

6. THREATENED: Aldermen Move to Rescind the Chicago Landmark Status of the 1902 Cortland Street Drawbridge at 1440 W. Cortland Street (Chicago 7 2026)



Cortland Street Drawbridge, 1902, John Ernst Ericson, 1440 W. Cortland Street. Designated a Chicago Landmark: July 24, 1991. Photo credit: Chris Cullen

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'We're getting stonewalled'

Aldermen blast Bally's for construction halt, casino says City Council sparked the pause

By Jake Sheridan
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Chicago aldermen were frustrated Wednesday at a lack of answers as they sharply questioned and criticized top representatives of the Bally's Chicago casino amid a construction slowdown on the $1.7 billion River West project.

City Council members probed the embattled company's finances and grilled executives over the early-August decision to pause building a hotel and nearly all other non-gambling amenities at the site.

But critics of the pause complained they couldn't get straight information from casino leaders or Mayor Brandon Johnson's top deputies during the License and Consumer Protection Committee meeting.

"We're getting stonewalled top to bottom," said downtown Ald. Brendan Reilly, 42nd, who accused Johnson of failing to enforce the city's contract with Bally's to maintain construction. "We're allowing folks to play games with union jobs, people's livelihoods and, honestly, our police and fire pensions, which require this casino to be incredibly successful."

And committee Chair Ald. Debra Silverstein said it was "very disappointing, very embarrassing, very insulting, any adjective you can

See BALLY'S on Page A6



Right: Ald. Brendan Reilly, 42nd, gets frustrated with the answers to his questions from Bally's Corp. representatives during a committee hearing at Chicago City Hall on Wednesday discussing Bally's decision to stall construction on their River West casino. EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE



A person walks atop a concrete median that leads up to the Cortland Street Bridge over the Chicago River on Sept. 2.
CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A PRECIOUS LANDMARK OR TRAFFIC ALBATROSS?

Aldermen want Cortland Street Bridge's status revoked, an effort spurned by preservation advocates

By Talia Soglin
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The Cortland Street Bridge has been closed to vehicles for the last year, lengthening drives across the river, snarling bus commutes and generating a daily mess of traffic North Side residents describe as a "huge inconvenience" and a "total nightmare."

The 124-year-old bridge — which predates Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago, the construction of Wrigley Field and the publication of Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" — is also a protected city landmark. It's said to be the oldest model of a trunnion bascule bridge, an iconic drawable bridge design native to Chicago's landscape. The Chicago Department of Transportation shut the bridge down a year ago for what officials said would be an 18- to 24-month-long rehabilitation project.

But with the bridge in worse shape than previously thought and its closure now indefinite, two fed-up aldermen told the Tribune they want to revoke its city landmark status in hopes of speeding up the process toward a new, functional bridge at Cortland Street. CDOT, meanwhile, cautioned that removing its city landmark status wouldn't eliminate the need for state or federal historical review of planned work on the bridge.

The aldermen's push, spurned by historical preservation advocates, highlights an urban philosophical debate: What's a city to do when its architectural heritage and aging infrastructure are one and the same?

When CDOT shut the Cortland bridge down last September, officials estimated it would reopen sometime in 2027. But now, CDOT says a structural assessment of the bridge has revealed it's not capable of safely carrying vehicle traffic, necessitating "more extensive" work than originally anticipated. The effort, CDOT said, is now expected to last multiple years, and various options are on the table — including replacing the historic bridge entirely.

Ald. Brian Hopkins, who represents the 2nd Ward and would like to see the bridge de-landmarked, described the situation as "an abdication of duty" by CDOT.

"Their job is to make sure people can get from point A to point B," said Hopkins, who

See BRIDGE on Page A7

Judge must untangle questions in Burge cases

Some of them may end up back under purview of the state's attorney

By Madeline Buckley
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

For more than two decades, the Cook County state's attorney's office has been conflicted from handling certain cases involving former Chicago police Cmdr. Jon Burge or detectives working under him, with an outside prosecutor or other agencies stepping in to try the cases instead.

But more than 30 years after Burge was fired from the Chicago Police Department as allegations of torture began to come to light, some cases may end up back under the purview of State's Attorney Eileen O'Neill Burke — though not before a judge untangles knotty questions about whether a conflict of interest still remains.

Even though Burge died nearly eight years ago, the long tentacles of the scandal continue to reverberate at the Leighton Criminal Court Building, where defendants alleging that they were tortured continue to fight for their innocence.

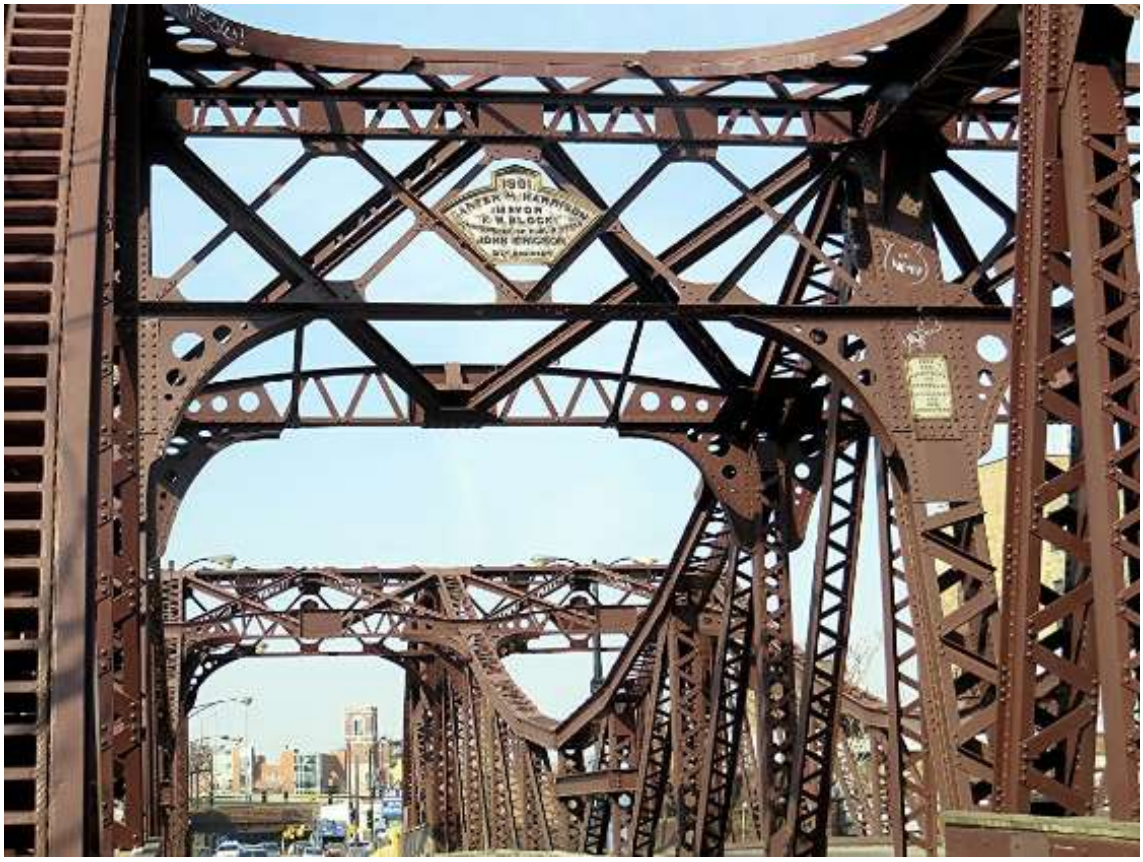
The most recent issue has emerged because Robert Milan, a special prosecutor handling a number of the cases, has informed the court that he would like to withdraw after he was appointed in 2017 to oversee the cases in lieu of the county's top prosecutor.

In his motion to withdraw, Milan wrote that the "Cook County state's attorney's office ... is ready, willing and able to assume prosecutorial responsibility for each of these cases."

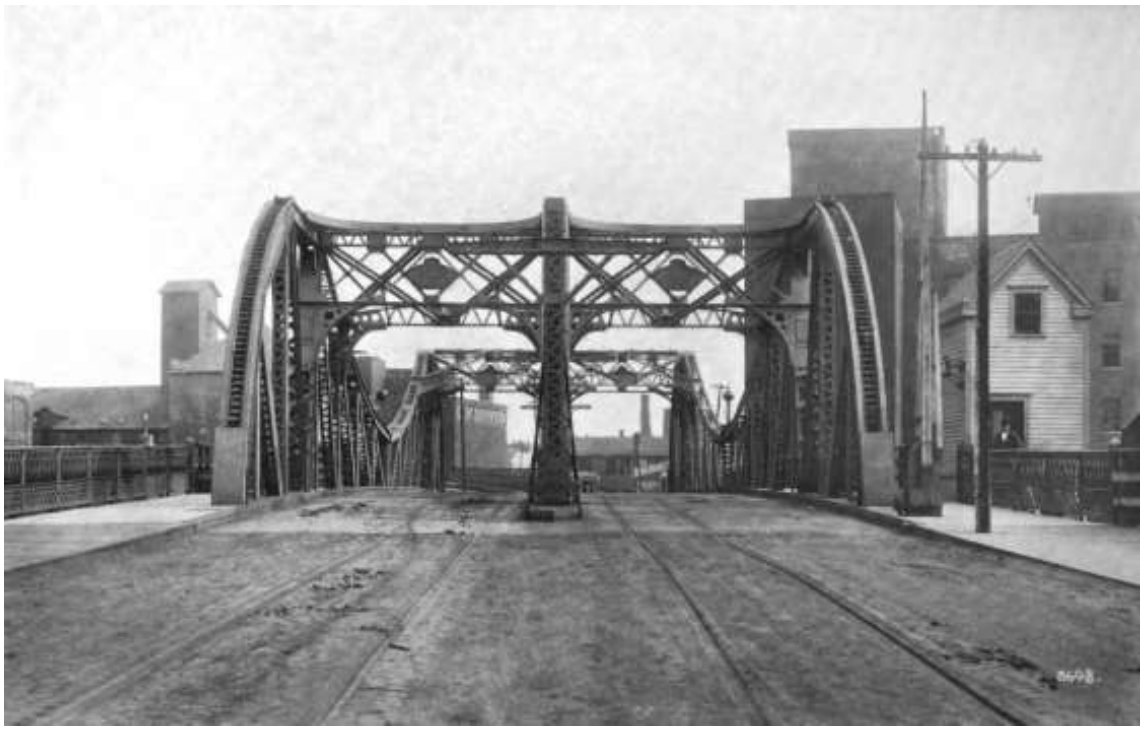
But the court filing set off a flurry of motions and hearings before Judge Erica Reddick, the presiding judge of the court's criminal division, as some attorneys cited concern over how the change would impact ongoing cases and whether or not a conflict still precluded Cook County prosecutors from handling

See BURGE on Page A2

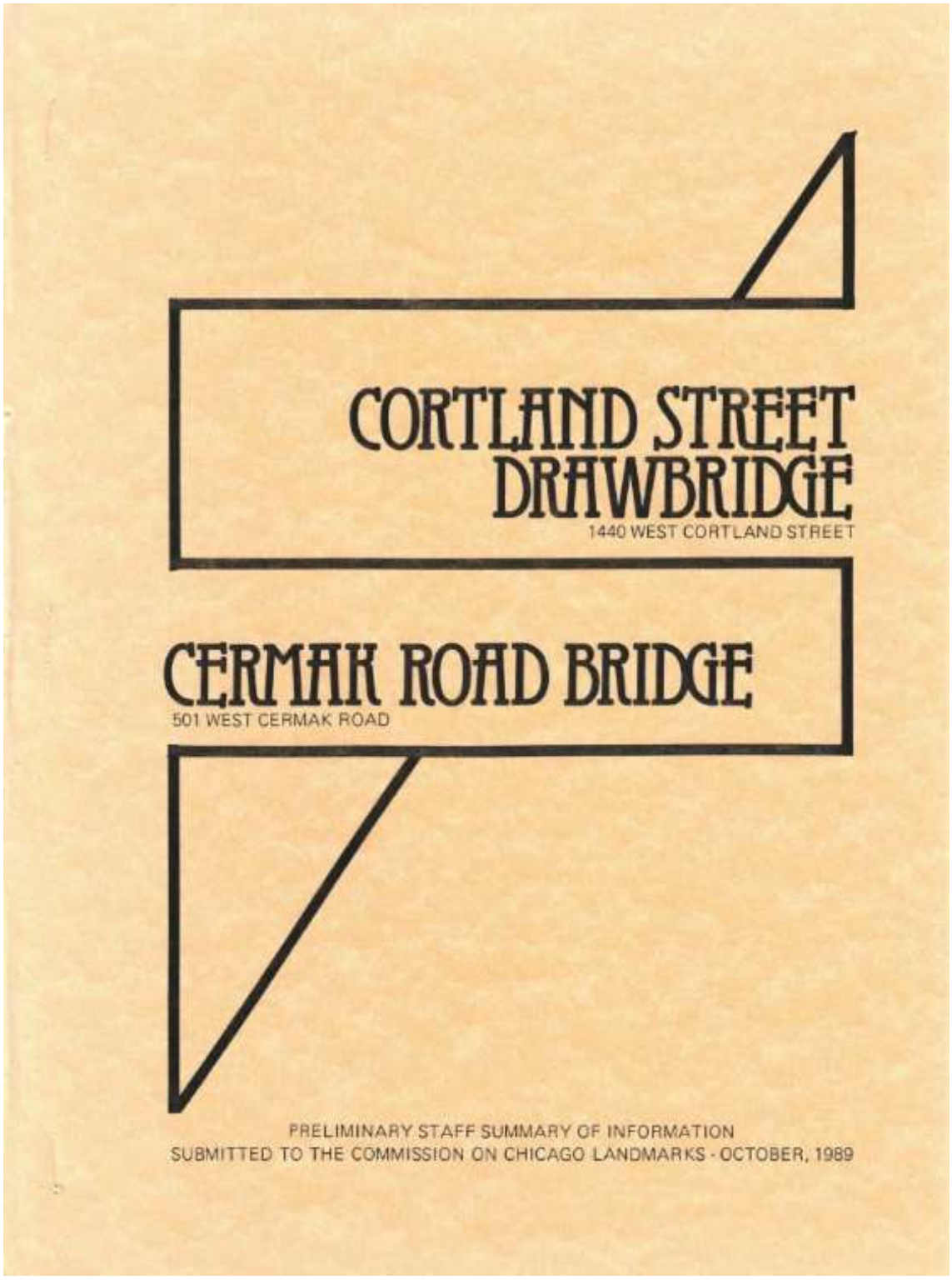
Is the Cortland Street Bridge a precious landmark or a traffic albatross? Aldermen want Cortland bridge's landmark status revoked, an effort spurned by preservation advocates, Talia Soglin, Chicago Tribune, 9/9/26. Image Credit: Chicago Tribune



Cortland Street Drawbridge, 1902, John Ernst Ericson, 1440 W. Cortland Street. Designated a Chicago Landmark: July 24, 1991. Photo credit: Debbie Mercer



Cortland Street Drawbridge, 1902, John Ernst Ericson, 1440 W. Cortland Street. Designated a Chicago Landmark: July 24, 1991. Photo credit: 1902 Annual Report of the Department of Public Works to the City Council of the City of Chicago



Chicago Landmark Designation Report. Cortland Street Drawbridge, 1902, John Ernst Ericson, 1440 W. Cortland Street. Designated a Chicago Landmark: July 24, 1991. Photo credit: Commission on Chicago Landmarks / www.ChicagoLandmarkReports.org

“As frustrations mount over the city’s indefinite closure of the 124-year-old Cortland Street bridge, some alderpeople want to see the structure’s landmark status rescinded so a new bridge can be built in its place, while others hope the bridge can remain or even be reused elsewhere.

”Alds. Brian Hopkins (2nd) and Scott Waguespack (32nd) told Block Club last week they are planning to introduce legislation to the City Council this month to remove the bridge’s landmark protections, which it has held for more than 30 years.

”The Cortland Street bridge has been closed to cars for the past year, when the Chicago Department of Transportation shut it down for a long-term rehabilitation project originally slated to last 18-24 months. The project was further delayed this summer because of the discovery of new issues with the more-than-century old bridge, and the rehab is now expected to take years — and no new completion timeline has been announced.

”In the meantime, the bridge remains open to pedestrians and cyclists.

”The situation has led Hopkins and Waguespack to begin taking the rare step of rescinding a structure’s landmark status, something that hasn’t been done for 40 years, preservationists and city officials said.

”But local preservationists are worried a landmark rescission could create a problematic precedent for the future of preserving important historical structures in Chicago. Instead, they’d like to see a new bridge built close by or, possibly, the existing structure on Cortland reused elsewhere. Some have floated the idea of using it for the long-planned extension of the 606’s Bloomingdale Trail over the Chicago River.

”A transportation department spokesperson said last week, however, that while the city is considering both rehabbing or replacing the bridge, removing the local landmark protections alone would not allow them ‘to immediately move forward with replacement.’

”Originally built in 1902, the Cortland Street Bridge’s fixed trunnion bascule design was developed by city engineers and later copied across Chicago and all over the world.

”’So identified with the city is the trunnion bascule bridge that it is known internationally as the “Chicago style,”’ according to a 1989 landmark report.

”Ward Miller, executive director at advocacy group Preservation Chicago, said his organization is in full agreement that something needs to be done to resume car traffic on Cortland as soon as possible.

”But Miller said the issue with the bridge is really about poor maintenance over the years by the city, not its historical protections.

”A building’s landmark status in Chicago has not been revoked since the 1980s, when the McCarthy Building Downtown was torn down to make way for Block 37 — something Miller called a ‘huge embarrassment.’

”’This too could be a huge embarrassment,’ Miller said. ‘Do we want to open the door to suddenly removing buildings or structures from landmarks? Which I think is a dangerous precedent and a place we don’t really want to go.’

”Instead, Miller believes other solutions could be found. Among ideas like relocating the bridge, the group proposes building a new bridge next to or close by the existing one. Cars and other vehicles could use that structure, while pedestrians and cyclists could continue to use the landmarked one, Miller said.” (Myers, Block Club Chicago, 9/8/26)

”The 124-year-old bridge — which predates Daniel Burnham’s Plan of Chicago, the construction of Wrigley Field and the publication of Upton Sinclair’s ‘The Jungle’ — is also a protected city landmark. It’s said to be the oldest model of a trunnion bascule bridge, an iconic movable bridge design native to Chicago’s landscape.

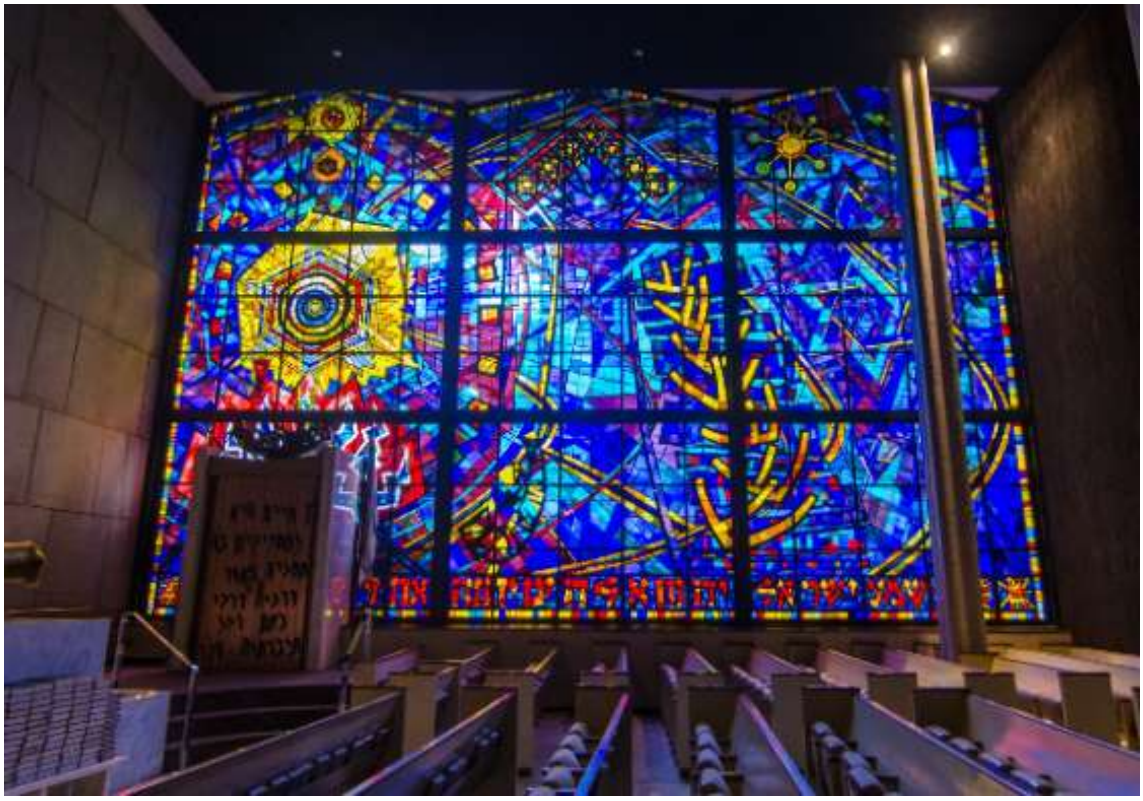
”The aldermen’s push, spurned by historical preservation advocates, highlights an urban philosophical debate: What’s a city to do when its architectural heritage and aging infrastructure are one and the same?

”’Chicago’s bridges are a defining part of our city’s identity,’ said Frank Butterfield, interim CEO and president of Landmarks Illinois. ‘The bridges have been a visible reminder of Chicago’s history as a

7. THREATENED: Chicago’s Jewish History Is Hiding in Plain Sight: Chicago Loop Synagogue (Chicago 7 2026)



Chicago Loop Synagogue, a 2026 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Chicago Loop Synagogue, 1957, Loebl, Schlossman & Bennett, 16 S. Clark Street. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Chicago Loop Synagogue, a 2026 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Chicago Loop Synagogue, 1957, Loebl, Schlossman & Bennett, 16 S. Clark Street. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Chicago Loop Synagogue, a 2026 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Chicago Loop Synagogue, 1957, Loebl, Schlossman & Bennett, 16 S. Clark Street. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

“What strikes me most about the first generation of Jewish architects in Chicago is how seamlessly they moved between the commercial skyline and the communal institutions of their own community — not two separate careers, but one.

“The same thread runs through the Chicago Loop Synagogue at 16 South Clark, designed in 1957 by the firm of Loebl, Schlossman and Bennett — with Richard Bennett as lead architect — for a congregation founded in 1929 to serve Jewish professionals working in the Loop. Jerrold Loebl and Norman Schlossman were both Armour graduates, sons of Hungarian and German Jewish immigrants respectively, and the commission reflects the pattern the tour traces throughout: the same architects building the commercial skyline and the communal institutions of Jewish life, often in the same career.

“Inside the main sanctuary, the east wall holds Let There Be Light, a stained glass composition by American artist Abraham Rattner — three years in the making in a Paris studio, its ancient Hebraic symbols, Tree of Life, Menorah, and Star of David, rendered in luminous color and installed personally by the artist before the High Holy Days of 1960. In 2026, Preservation Chicago named the Loop Synagogue one of the city’s most endangered buildings. The same people who built Chicago’s commercial skyline built this. It deserves to survive.”

A skyline is not just a collection of buildings. It is a collection of stories — the people who imagined them, engineered them, and built them, each one a chapter in the larger story of a city and a community. Chicago’s skyline is one of the most celebrated in the world. Look closely and you will find Jewish stories hiding in plain sight, in the facades and foundations of buildings you may have passed a hundred times without knowing what was there.” (Spiegel, The Times of Israel, 7/20/26)

The Chicago Loop Synagogue holds a special place in the Jewish community. For almost 100 years, it’s where the faithful went to worship downtown, but now the temple is navigating its way through a difficult time, with declining attendance and a broken boiler. Nonetheless, the synagogue’s top official is optimistic about its future.

“The synagogue at 16 S. Clark St. has an enormous 30-foot by 40-foot stained-glass window that was manufactured in Paris.

“‘It’s considered just a magnificent work of art. It’s one of the largest pieces of religious stained glass in the country, if not the world, and the reason is because it’s a single image,’ said Chicago Loop Synagogue president Lee Zoldan.

“‘We were founded in 1929,’ Zoldan said. ‘It says in our charter to be a place for people to say kaddish — which is prayers for their departed relatives — when they were downtown working.’

“Earlier this year, Preservation Chicago included the synagogue on its annual ‘Most Endangered Buildings’ list, citing its declining attendance and broken boiler. But Zoldan is glad to be on the most endangered list.

“‘We got the attention of people who care about preserving architecture in Chicago, and preserving buildings that are worth our history,’ she said. Despite the challenges facing the synagogue, Zoldan is hopeful, pointing to more residential housing coming to the downtown area, which could help the synagogue’s membership. ‘I believe that our best days are still ahead of us,’ she said.” (Kozlov and Spector, CBS Chicago, 5/11/26)

The Chicago Loop Synagogue is a Preservation Chicago 2026 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. We’re amplifying the uncertain future of this significant midcentury religious building to mobilize the stakeholder support necessary to revitalize and reactivate it.

Organized in 1929 by attorney Maurice J. Nathanson, the Chicago Loop Synagogue was the first businessmen’s synagogue in the world, established to serve commuters seeking kosher food and a place to pray during the workday. It remains the only Loop venue offering both. The congregation grew from roughly 1,000 members in the 1930s to some 8,000 in the 1950s. After a fire destroyed the earlier building on the site in 1953, the congregation commissioned Loebl, Schlossman & Bennett — the leading Chicago Jewish architects of Modernism — to design the current three-story building, completed in 1957. It is among the last buildings constructed in the Loop as a dedicated house of worship, and it appears in Chicago’s Famous Buildings as one of the city’s architectural gems.

Two works of art make the building extraordinary. Abraham Rattner’s Let There Be Light, the colossal stained-glass window on the sanctuary’s east wall, took three years to complete. Rattner studied the Old Testament, Jewish symbolism, and theosophy before arriving at the composition,



8. WIN: Leasing Underway at The Bellwether, the Adaptive Reuse of the Landmark 1905 Rector Building at 79 W. Monroe Street, as the Iconic Weather Bell Returns



Restored Weather Bell at the Rector Building. Rector Building / Chicago Trust Building / Chicago Title and Trust Building / Bell Federal Savings & Loan Building, Jarvis Hunt in 1906. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1924, Subsequent modifications by others. 79 W. Monroe Street. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago



The Bellwether at 79 W. Monroe. Rector Building / Chicago Trust Building / Chicago Title and Trust Building / Bell Federal Savings & Loan Building, Jarvis Hunt in 1906. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1924, Subsequent modifications by others. 79 W. Monroe Street. Image credit: R2 Companies/Ware Malcomb



Restored Weather Bell at the Rector Building. Rector Building / Chicago Trust Building / Chicago Title and Trust Building / Bell Federal Savings & Loan Building, Jarvis Hunt in 1906. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1924, Subsequent modifications by others. 79 W. Monroe Street. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago



The Bellwether at 79 W. Monroe. Rector Building / Chicago Trust Building / Chicago Title and Trust Building / Bell Federal Savings & Loan Building, Jarvis Hunt in 1906. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1924, Subsequent modifications by others. 79 W. Monroe Street. Image credit: R2 Companies/Ware Malcomb



The Bellwether at 79 W. Monroe. Rector Building / Chicago Trust Building / Chicago Title and Trust Building / Bell Federal Savings & Loan Building, Jarvis Hunt in 1906. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1924, Subsequent modifications by others. 79 W. Monroe Street. Image credit: R2 Companies/Ware Malcomb



The Bellwether at 79 W. Monroe. Rector Building / Chicago Trust Building / Chicago Title and Trust Building / Bell Federal Savings & Loan Building, Jarvis Hunt in 1906. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1924, Subsequent modifications by others. 79 W. Monroe Street. Image credit: R2 Companies/Ware Malcomb

“Leasing is underway for The Bellwether, an office-to-residential conversion of the former office building at 79 W. Monroe. Planned by R2 Companies, the landmark building stands at the corner of W. Monroe St and S. Clark St. Originally built in 1905, the property went through a major expansion in 1924, and over the years has served as office space and a major bank headquarters. RMK Management Corp. has been enlisted to oversee leasing and property management for the project.

”’This truly is a landmark building that offers elevated urban living steps from some of Chicago’s most iconic attractions and is convenient to so many employers in the central business district,’ said Anthony Rossi Jr., president of RMK Management Corp. ‘The redevelopment of The Bellwether demonstrates how historic architecture can be preserved while also adapting to the needs of a modern downtown by transforming underutilized office space into vibrant housing that supports a more active, mixed-use neighborhood.’

”Designed by Ware Malcomb, the adaptive reuse and conversion will measure approximately 100,000 square feet within the building, including the basement and floors 7 through 14. The Bellwether features studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments with one to two baths. Residences measure 425 to 1,178 square feet, with rents ranging from $1,996 to $4,887 per month. The property includes 41 Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) units.

”In 2025, joint venture contractors Leopardo Companies and GMA Construction Group began construction on the redevelopment. It is the first office-to-residential conversion to be completed as part of the city of Chicago’s LaSalle Street revitalization initiative, which invests in the Loop’s LaSalle Street corridor with private funding and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance for mixed-income residential projects and other neighborhood-oriented amenities.

”The community is already 57% leased and first move-ins are expected to begin in late August/early September.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 8/20/26)

”There’s a warm nostalgic spot in Chicago’s brick, concrete and glass heart for those big vintage outdoor signs that were once plentiful in this town, especially the signage that told us the time and temperature. It’s a shame that signs like these have been vanishing from the city’s urban landscape since the 1990s.

”But we still have the old Bell Federal Savings weather sign that’s stood sentinel at the northwest corner of the Rector Building, 79 W. Monroe St., since the 1950s. The sign also has a lighted, acrylic bell that changes color to alert passersby of coming weather conditions — invaluable back in the days before cellphones and smartwatches gave us this information at a glance.

”The Bell Federal sign hasn’t worked for years. But that’s now changing as the device undergoes a renovation aimed at making it look and function as it did when it was new.

”’It’s an icon for the city,’ said Gary Stoltz, principal and chief design and development officer for R2 Companies, which is redeveloping the Rector Building. ‘Everybody who’s spent time in the Loop, walking through the Loop, recognizes the building by the bell.’

”Built in 1905 for businessman and restaurateur Charles Rector and designed by architect Jarvis Hunt, the 14-story brick skyscraper blends into the background, thanks to tacked-on midcentury modernizations on the first and second floor exterior and the loss of an ornate cornice.

”The Rector was a better-looking building in its early years. And its nice details still exist — if you’re patient enough to look — such as the terra cotta ornament near the building’s top, and the way the structure’s window bays all arch at the 10th floor. By the 1920s, the Rector was home to the Chicago Trust Co., which added a Holabird & Roche-designed south addition to the building in 1923.

”Then in 1951, Bell Savings & Loan took over the building. The company, founded in 1925 by Illinois Bell Telephone Co. employees, put the lighted weather bell on the building and even came up with a jingle for it.

”R2 and Luxembourg’s Lagfin S.C.A. are handling the $64 million residential conversion of the Rector building. The project, which is part of City Hall’s LaSalle Corridor Revitalization plan, is being helped along by $28 million in tax increment financing funds from the city.

”Stoltz said the project includes upgrading the bell’s lighting, installing controls that can better anticipate the weather, then recladding the whole thing over the next few weeks. The sign’s digital clock will be rehabbed as well. And the bell’s name will change to reflect the building’s new

9. WIN: One of the Largest Terra Cotta Restorations in the Country Is Underway at the 1927 Pittsfield Building at 55 E. Washington Street



Pittsfield Building, 1927, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, 55 E. Washington Street. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 2002. Photo Credit: Adam Natenshon / Preservation Chicago



Pittsfield Building, 1927, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, 55 E. Washington Street. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 2002. Photo Credit: Skyscraper Media



Pittsfield Building Vestibule, 1927, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, 55 E. Washington Street. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 2002. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Pittsfield Building Observation Deck, 1927, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, 55 E. Washington Street. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 2002. Rendering Credit: Pappageorge Haymes Partners

“One of Chicago’s most historic skyscrapers—the Pittsfield Building—is entering a new chapter. The 38-story Gothic Revival tower, completed in 1927, is being transformed from largely office space into hundreds of apartments, in what is described as one of the largest historic terra cotta façade restorations in the United States.

“Located at the corner of Washington Street and Wabash Avenue in the heart of Chicago’s busy Loop, the tower was among the tallest buildings in the city when it opened and helped define the city’s emerging skyline in the 1920s.

“Originally designed by Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White, the Pittsfield Building became known for housing doctors’ and dentists’ offices.

“The Pittsfield Building’s exterior is one of its defining features. The building is clad in polished black granite at street level and gray terra cotta above, with Gothic ornamentation concentrated around its lower floors, setbacks, and tower crown.

“‘The extensive multi-million dollar exterior masonry and terra cotta restoration effort at the Pittsfield has begun, and construction is now underway,’ architect Robert Harris, a senior associate at Pappageorge Haymes Partners, told Newsweek. Harris said the building’s façade ‘represents one of the finest remaining terracotta clad high-rise examples of the era’ and is currently undergoing one of the largest terra cotta restoration projects in the country.

“The property’s landmark status is central to the project. Harris noted that the Pittsfield is both a City of Chicago Landmark and part of a downtown historic district, while also pursuing National Historic Landmark status. Those designations require preserving many of the building’s most important historic features, including its façade, entry lobbies, atrium, and common corridors.

“Among the building’s most remarkable surviving features are its ornate, hand-painted coffered ceilings, cast-bronze elevator doors, and intricate marble finishes. Harris said these elements showcase a level of craftsmanship that would be extraordinarily difficult to reproduce today.

“‘One of the most fascinating aspects of historic buildings of this era and earlier is that they were designed and constructed to such a high level of intricacy and quality without the benefit of so many modern technologies we have now come to rely on today,’ he said.

“While the architects continue refining aspects of the interior design, Harris said the historic elements will be restored and preserved, serving as inspiration for new design features introduced as part of the conversion.

“Harris described the project as a ‘unique and inspirational challenge,’ with the broader vision for the building entailing a mix of various uses. This could include a subterranean speakeasy, retail spaces, restaurants, event venues, a public museum, and a rooftop observation deck, in addition to the new apartments.” (Kim, Newsweek, 9/2/26)

“At the top of the building, the uppermost four floors within the building’s crown will be converted into an observatory with multiple levels of viewing space, an outdoor terrace space, and a cafe/bar for visitors.

“To allow for the $160 million project, the developer is seeking to rezone from DR-10 to DX-16 with an overall Planned Development. With City Council approval secured, the site will be rezoned, and the developer can move forward with permitting and construction.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 10/6/25)

Preservation Chicago has long been concerned about the Pittsfield Building as it suffered through years of vacancy, legal complications, foreclosure, and deferred maintenance. We are thrilled to see the adaptive reuse effort led by Tom Liravongsa now under construction, and we have testified multiple times in support.

The Pittsfield Building was designed by Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, completed in 1927, and designated a Chicago Landmark in 2002. Its hybrid of Gothic and Art Deco detailing, its five-story interior atrium, and its terra cotta crown made it the tallest building in Chicago when it opened. The scaffolding that has stood at Washington and Wabash for roughly a decade is finally coming down for the right reason.

That this is described as one of the largest historic terra cotta restorations in the United States is worth pausing on. Terra cotta is the material that gives the Loop much of its character, and it is also the material most often cited as the reason a historic building supposedly cannot be saved. A

10. THREATENED: Permit Review Committee Approves Data Center Conversion of the Chicago Landmark Office Building at 300 W. Adams Street, Days Before Mayor Johnson Called for a Citywide Data Center Moratorium



300 West Adams Street Office Building, Jens J. Jensen, 1927, 300 W. Adams St. Designated a Chicago Landmark: May 13, 2009. Photo credit: LoopNet

“The Permit Review Committee, a subcommittee of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, has approved the adaptive reuse of a historic office building at 300 W. Adams into a data center. Planned by Chilled AI, the project would convert about half of the historic structure built in 1920 by architect Jens Jensen that stands at the northwestern corner of W. Adams St and S. Franklin St.

“Designed by C+K Architecture and ZPD+A, the proposed adaptive reuse would convert office space on floors two through six into a data center while floors seven and above would remain as office space. As part of the project, backup generators would be added onto the roof.

“On the ground floor, the building’s ground floor will remain largely the same, but three retail storefront bays will be eliminated to create a ComEd vault along S. Franklin St.

“The existing building has a center light court starting at level two and extending up to the sky. As part of the project, the light court will be filled in on floors three through five for the data center and a new cargo elevator will be added inside the light court up the entire height of the building.

“On the rooftop, a large new dunnage steel platform will allow for the installation of 10 backup generators. As part of exterior work for the project, terracotta repairs will be performed on the building facades as necessary.

“With Permit Review Committee approval secured, the project can proceed with the permitting process. The developer has already received a permit for interior demolition and is awaiting the issuance of renovation permits for the project. A timeline for the project has not been announced.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 8/26/26)

“Preservation Chicago was supportive of the building’s landmarking in 2009, which recognized the site as a symbol of the Loop’s transformation from industrial to office use.

“But allowing the data center conversion could set a ‘dangerous precedent’ that leads to other landmarked buildings being converted to industrial use, Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago, said in the meeting.

“He called for more creativity in how the office building finds its second life during a time when Chicago desperately needs more housing — especially affordable units.

“‘Preservation Chicago feels that a historic and Chicago landmark building should be adaptively used in other ways, specifically for residential reuse, and not for a conversion of a Loop office building across the street from the Sears Tower, in the heart of the financial district,’ Miller said.” (Miller, Chicago Sun-Times, 8/13/26)

“‘A historic and Chicago landmark building should be adaptively reused in other ways,’ Miller said during the meeting. ‘Specifically residential re-use and not for conversion of a Loop office building for an industrial use. We feel that’s really a dangerous precedent for (Chicago’s) other world-renowned buildings in the future. That really concerns us.’

“Gabal’s purchase price for the building in 2023 was a staggering 89% less than the property’s appraised value when it previously changed hands in 2012.

“The Gabal-led entity sold the property last month for $12.5 million to a new joint venture he formed with Greenwich, Conn.-based Strategic Value Partners, according to Illinois property records.” (Ecker, Crain’s Chicago Business, 8/7/26)

Preservation Chicago opposes the conversion of the lower floors of 300 W. Adams Street to a data center. The 300 West Adams Street Office Building was designed by architect Jens J. Jensen, completed in 1927, and designated a Chicago Landmark on May 13, 2009. A landmark office building in the heart of the Loop should be adaptively reused as residential, hotel, or another use that brings people downtown, not converted to an industrial use that brings servers.

The precedent is the concern. Chicago’s Loop holds one of the most significant concentrations of historic commercial architecture anywhere, and a great many of those buildings are underleased and searching for a next use. If the conversion at 300 W. Adams is approved, the same argument will be made for the next landmark, and the one after that. Downtown Chicago is at a decisive moment in determining what it becomes over the next generation, and the answer should be a downtown of residents, workers, students, and visitors.

The economics deserve a closer look. The ownership acquired this building for $4 million in December 2023 — roughly a tenth of what it last traded for — and sold it last month for $12.5

11. LOSS: Demolition Permit Issued for the 1951 Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America Building at 2800 N. Sheridan Road (Chicago 7 2026)



Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America Building, 1951, Everett F. Quinn & Associates (original building); Loebl Schlossman & Hackl (rehabilitation), 2800 N. Sheridan Road. Photo credit: Serhii Chrucky / Esto



Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America Building, 1951, Everett F. Quinn & Associates (original building); Loebl Schlossman & Hackl (rehabilitation), 2800 N. Sheridan Road. Photo credit: Serhii Chrucky / Esto



Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America Building, 1951, Everett F. Quinn & Associates (original building); Loebl Schlossman & Hackl (rehabilitation), 2800 N. Sheridan Road. Photo credit: Serhii Chrucky / Esto

“A demolition permit has been issued to make way for a proposed mixed-use development at 2800 N. Sheridan. Planned by Chicago Development Partners and Continuum Capital, the project site is located at the northwest corner of W. Diversey Pkwy and N. Sheridan Rd. Designed by Antunovich Associates, the mixed-use development is proposed to take shape as a 28-story structure with 355 units.

“In addition, the development team has committed to preserving the two historic Egon Weiner ‘Brotherhood’ sculptures currently located on the site. They will either keep the sculptures on site as part of the new development, or partner with the Chicago Park District or another organization to place them on display elsewhere in the city.

“To allow for the scope of the project, the developers are seeking to rezone the site to B3-5. The site is currently part of a Planned Development and will likely need its own new Planned Development or amend the existing one to move forward. The proposal will require aldermanic approval from 44th Ward Alderman Lawson as well as city approvals from the Chicago Plan Commission, Committee on Zoning, and City Council.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 7/13/26)

“Set to become the first new tower in the area in recent years, the team plans to relocate an existing sculpture on-site to the UFCW offices in the Near West Side. Per the latest alderman presentation, the team also plans to utilize the existing zoning rights of the adjacent Elks Memorial, providing additional funds for the memorial’s restoration.

“The project is now seeking approval from the alderman ahead of going to the city, with a phased demolition of the existing site set to take place from August 3 to October 19.” (Achong, Chicago YIMBY, 7/16/26)

The Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America Building is a Preservation Chicago 2026 Chicago 7 Most Endangered Building as part of the Chicago Labor Union Hall category. Built in 1951 to the designs of Everett F. Quinn & Associates, with a later rehabilitation by Loebl Schlossman & Hackl, the building at 2800 N. Sheridan Road is a significant work of Chicago mid-century modern architecture and one of the most important surviving labor union headquarters in the city. It occupies a prominent corner site at Sheridan Road and Diversey Parkway, facing Lincoln Park and Lake Michigan, and it has anchored that corner for seventy-five years.

The Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America was among the most consequential unions in American labor history, and its story is inseparable from Chicago’s. The union organized the stockyards and packinghouses that made Chicago the hog butcher for the world, and it did so across racial lines at a time when few unions did. The Meat Cutters later merged with the Retail Clerks International Union to form the United Food and Commercial Workers. A headquarters building of this significance, in this city, is not a generic mid-century office building.

Chicago’s labor union halls are a category of building that Preservation Chicago has identified as broadly at risk. These buildings tell the story of how working people in this city organized, bargained, and built the middle class. They are rarely landmarked, rarely surveyed with the attention given to commercial and residential architecture, and they are disappearing steadily. The loss of 2800 N. Sheridan would be a significant subtraction from that already thin record.

We acknowledge that the development team has committed to preserving the two Egon Weiner “Brotherhood” sculptures. Weiner, the Austrian-born sculptor who fled the Nazi annexation of Austria and taught for decades at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, created works of real distinction, and these sculptures are meaningful. Preserving them is the right thing to do. But sculptures relocated to a union office on the Near West Side are not a substitute for the building they were made for. Public art loses much of its meaning when severed from its site.

Preservation Chicago urges the development team, 44th Ward Ald. Bennett Lawson, and the City of Chicago to consider an alternative that incorporates the historic building into the new construction. The new construction still requires a zoning change, a Planned Development, and approvals from the Chicago Plan Commission, the Committee on Zoning, and City Council. The demolition permit has been issued, but the tower has not been approved. There is still time for decision-makers to encourage a better outcome.

Read the full story at Urbanize Chicago and Chicago YIMBY

Revised design unveiled for development at 2800 N. Sheridan; The 28-story mixed-use development still needs city approval, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 7/22/26

12. WIN: Owner Albert Friedman Plans the Next Adaptive Reuse of the Landmarked 1912 Medinah Temple as Bally's Prepares to Move Out



Medinah Temple, 1912, Huehl and Schmidt, 600 N. Wabash. Photo credit: Friedman Properties



Medinah Temple, 1912, Huehl and Schmidt, 600 N. Wabash. Photo credit: Chris Cullen



Medinah Temple, 1912, Huehl and Schmidt, 600 N. Wabash. Photo credit: Chris Cullen



Medinah Temple, 1912, Huehl and Schmidt, 600 N. Wabash. Photo credit: Chris Cullen

“For more than a century, historic Medinah Temple has stood as Chicago’s exotic monument to adaptive reuse.

“The Moorish-style amphitheater topped by two massive copper onion domes has hosted the annual Shrine Circus, recording sessions for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and, after flirting with demolition at the dawn of the new millennium, a furniture store.

“Operating as a temporary casino since September 2023, the ornate 132,600-square-foot building on Wabash Avenue will soon need to reinvent itself again after Bally’s moves into its permanent facility next year.

“‘I’m completely open-minded,’ said Albert Friedman, 77, who is on his second run as owner of the landmarked Medinah Temple. ‘I want to come up with the highest and best use for the future of the property.’

“A prolific real estate developer dubbed the ‘Mayor of River North’ for his extensive renovation and repurposing of historic buildings lining the once-dilapidated Near North Side neighborhood, Friedman is already reimagining Medinah Temple as an experiential palace, with everything from a boutique hotel to a brick-and-mortar mall for online retailers on the table.

“‘These buildings could have all been lost. Those histories could have been lost,’ said Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago. ‘He really did infuse a vision and a huge amount of capital into restoring these buildings and revisioning them, rethinking them for a variety of different purposes.’

“Built by the Shriners in 1912, Medinah Temple was designed by architecture firm Huehl and Schmid. Over the years the venue hosted everything from concerts and high school graduations to the annual Shrine Circus. Amenities included a 30,000-pound pipe organ installed in 1915.

“But the building fell into disrepair and disuse. In 1996, Landmarks Illinois added Medinah Temple to its list of the 10 most endangered historic places in the state. There was good reason for concern. Medinah Temple had not yet been granted landmark status by the city and a developer was planning to raze it to make way for a new building.

“In 2000, politicos from then-Mayor Richard M. Daley to then-first lady Hillary Clinton intervened, recruiting Friedman to save Medinah Temple. Friedman came up with an inventive plan for adaptive reuse: getting Federated Department Stores to buy into redeveloping the building as a home furnishings store.

“The city named Medinah Temple as a Chicago landmark in 2001, protecting it from demolition.

“Friedman has launched a worldwide search to find new tenants, rolling the dice once again on the next adaptive reuse of one of Chicago’s most unusual historic buildings. That will entail reconfiguring the space while preserving its historic details, such as stained glass windows and the theater proscenium, which long framed the auditorium stage.

“‘It’s not just a warehouse, it’s not a box,’ Friedman said. ‘It’s an architectural landmark.’

“Miller, who was part of Landmarks Illinois when it led the call to save Medinah Temple three decades ago, said its transformation from auditorium to furniture store to casino shows how flexible historic buildings can be.

"Under the stewardship of Friedman, Miller is confident that Medinah Temple will have a future as well, something that was once very much in doubt.

“‘We’re all really interested to see what becomes of Medinah Temple,’ Miller said. ‘Thanks to the landmark designation and Friedman’s acquisition of the site, we know that it’s not going to be demolished.’” (Channick, Chicago Tribune, 7/31/26)

Medinah Temple is a great Chicago preservation success story that demonstrates the flexibility granted to Chicago Landmark buildings. A building once slated for demolition has since served as a furniture store and a casino, and will now find a fourth life.

Preservation Chicago applauds Albert Friedman for decades of responsible, preservation-oriented stewardship in River North. The former Cook County Criminal Courts building at 54 W. Hubbard Street, the Reid Murdoch Building at 325 N. LaSalle Street, Tree Studios, and Medinah Temple itself are all standing and beautifully restored because Friedman saw value where others saw

13. PARTIAL WIN: Exterior Nears Completion at the Second Church of Christ, Scientist, Where Solon S. Beman's 1901 Facades Have Been Integrated Into New Construction



Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Solon S. Beman, 2700 N. Pine Grove Avenue, Lincoln Park. A Preservation Chicago 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: [Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY]



Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Solon S. Beman, 2700 N. Pine Grove Avenue, Lincoln Park. A Preservation Chicago 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: [Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY]



Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Solon S. Beman, 2700 N. Pine Grove Avenue, Lincoln Park. A Preservation Chicago 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: [Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY]



Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Solon S. Beman, 2700 N. Pine Grove Avenue, Lincoln Park. A Preservation Chicago 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: [Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY]



Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Solon S. Beman, 2700 N. Pine Grove Avenue, Lincoln Park. A Preservation Chicago 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: [Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY]



Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Solon S. Beman, 2700 N. Pine Grove Avenue, Lincoln Park. A Preservation Chicago 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: [Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY]



Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Solon S. Beman, 2700 N. Pine Grove Avenue, Lincoln Park. A Preservation Chicago 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: [Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY]



Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Solon S. Beman, 2700 N. Pine Grove Avenue, Lincoln Park. A Preservation Chicago 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo credit: [Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY]

“In Lincoln Park, one of the more unique facadectomies in the city is moving closer to exterior completion. At 2700 North Pine Grove Avenue, the former Second Church of Christ, Scientist was gutted while its east, west, and south Beaux Arts facades were shored up for preservation, and has been rebuilt to hold 22 dwelling units.

“The six-story addition has long been topped out, and now looks nearly polished from the outside. All windows are installed and brickwork is done, with open terraces on the corner units still in need of finishing touches.

“Ogden partners is redeveloping the church, which was designed by architect Solon Beman and completed in the early 1900s. Booth Hansen drew up the plans for the construction. The church’s congregation will have 4,700 square feet of space in which to meet once construction is completed.” (Schell, Chicago YIMBY, 8/19/26)

Preservation Chicago had long advocated to save the Second Church of Christ, Scientist and it was a 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Second Church of Christ was designed by Solon S. Beman in 1901 and was eligible for a Chicago Landmark designation.

While we are happy that the facade is being preserved and incorporated into the new construction, the building’s beautiful interior and magnificent dome presented a unique opportunity. We made significant progress towards a community-oriented, preservation alternative that would have saved and reused the interior and dome.

In 2020, Preservation Chicago was able to secure the interest of a major philanthropic foundation to purchase and restore the magnificent church building and convert it into a community cultural arts center. Additionally, the congregation would have continued to have access for religious services. The congregation flatly rejected the offer, preferring to monetize the value of the land.

Ward Miller, Executive Director of Preservation Chicago, spoke at the public meeting in November 2017 to encourage preservation and landmarking of the historic building and a cultural use for the historic gem. As reported by Peter von Buol in the Skyline:

“‘We do not need another residential high-rise at this site. It will adversely affect the quality of life, sunlight, air and throw shadows on adjacent buildings. What we do need collectively, is a great and amazing resource and cultural center, for an already dense neighborhood. This is a once-in-a-life-time chance. Let’s not blow it, with another embarrassing loss and demolition of one of Chicago’s great architectural treasures.’

“‘The church mentioned they would consider a donation of the building to a good steward, so let that steward be all of us collectively and let’s all advocate for a collective reuse that benefits all Chicagoans, looking to the near future,’ said Miller, who added that Preservation Chicago will work with the congregation and the community to help make the community-center vision a reality.

“Built in 1901, the classical façade of the building recalls one of Beman’s most celebrated designs, the ‘Merchant and Tailors’ Building’ of Chicago’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. ‘The World’s Fair building had received numerous awards for its designs. Beman worked with members of the Christian Science Movement and its leaders, including Mary Baker Eddy, the faith’s founder and leader, to design “a most perfect church prototype” for subsequent Christian Science buildings. Beman included few, if any, traditional religious symbols and symbolism, in designing a beautiful light-filled sanctuary and with an auditorium and assembly-space as a sanctuary,’ added Miller.

“‘The sanctuary of the church, with its art glass and gilded dome, its magnificent column-free space, with wide arches and honey-colored art windows; its rare Austin organ, could be an unparalleled space for concerts, cultural events, music, lectures, presentations affiliated with the local museums and institutions, including The Lincoln Park Conservatory, the Lincoln Park Zoo and The Peggy Notebaert Nature Center. This would all be located a mere half-block from Lincoln Park, and would be an amazing resource for the Lincoln Park community, and for all of Chicago,’ suggested Miller.

“‘The Chicago Cultural Center was constructed as the Chicago Public Central Library in 1897. It was rethought as the Chicago Cultural Center in 1977 and has been one of the best reuse projects in the city’s history. It’s still a remarkable center and proof of a visionary series of decisions that were made in the 1970s, by elected officials, city leaders, and philanthropic organizations. Let’s continue to have that visionary outlook and reuse the church building for everything both cultural and imaginative. Let’s ask the church, city, elected officials to work together with our Chicago philanthropy community to make this vision a reality,’ Miller said.” (Von Buol, Skyline, 11/22/17)

Nine years after that meeting, the outcome is a partial one. Beman’s Beaux Arts facades on Pine

14. WIN: Vintage Loft Leahy Building at 226 W. Ontario Street in River North Sold for Conversion to 70 Apartments



Leahy Building, L.G. Hallberg, 1914, 226 W. Ontario Street. Photo credit: CBRE



A rendering of Concord Capital's planned apartment conversion of the office building at 226 W. Ontario St. Rendering credit: Concord Capital

“A Chicago developer is adding another midsize office-to-residential project to the growing list of conversions downtown, one that will add two stories to the top of a vintage building in River North.

“Concord Capital paid $4.1 million for the 48,000-square-foot building at 226 W. Ontario St. and plans to convert it into 70 rental apartments, Principal Drew Millard said. Sixty of those units will be built within the existing building’s six floors, and 10 more are planned for a two-story addition Concord envisions on top of the 113-year-old property.

“Concord has already secured an approximately $16 million construction loan to finance the development from First Bank Chicago, Millard said. The firm plans to start the project in December and complete construction in February 2028. The conversion and addition are allowed under the property’s current zoning.

“Vintage office buildings have become prime conversion targets as demand for older workspace fades and developers look to take advantage of Chicago’s strong rental demand.” (Herzog, Crain’s Chicago Business, 7/20/26)

“Millard said the firm also was attracted to the Leahy Building for its prime River North location and size. Many office buildings don’t work for residential because the floors are too wide, Millard said, which limits how many windows can be put in each unit.

“The Leahy Building joins an emerging pipeline of River North office buildings going residential. Concord is finishing the conversion of 223 W. Erie St., next door to the Leahy Building. And in May, Path Construction and WindWave Real Estate welcomed the first residents at 111 Point, the former Salesforce office building in River North.

“Concord is working on nine office-to-residential conversions in Chicago, Millard said. The projects span from River North and Streeterville to one in Printers Row.

“‘The competition is definitely stepping up. However, there’s only so many office buildings to convert,’ Millard said. ‘We’ve got our eye on a bunch of others, but this isn’t going to last five years because we’ll run out of them.’” (Miller, Chicago Sun-Times, 7/21/26)

Preservation Chicago welcomes the sale of the Leahy Building and the plan to convert this vintage River North loft building to 70 residential apartments.

Chicago’s older commercial loft buildings, designed before fluorescent lighting and air conditioning when daylight and operable windows were structural requirements, are ideally suited to residential conversion a century later.

Preservation Chicago supports the proposed two-story rooftop addition. Preservation-sensitive additions are complementary to the historic building when they are set back from the primary facade, use compatible materials, and respect the expression of the historic fabric. We recommend that the development embrace the existing exterior colors and not paint the brick.

Preservation Chicago congratulates Concord Capital and Drew Millard, and we look forward to supporting the process to adaptively reuse the Leahy Building for residential. We encourage the development team to retain and restore the building’s historic exterior features and any significant remaining interior elements, and to consider pursuing Chicago Landmark Designation for the building.

The Leahy Building was built in 1914 as a six-story factory and laundry, part of a two-building development with the adjoining Deahl Building (220-22 W. Ontario St.). According to a July 1914 Chicago Tribune building permit listing, the permit was issued to T. F. Leahy and Deahl Bros. for both buildings, at 220-232 W. Ontario St. Both buildings were designed by architect L. G. Hallberg.

Lawrence Gustav Hallberg, Sr. (1844-1915) was a Swedish-born and -educated architect who practiced in Chicago from the 1870s until he died in 1915. Born in Sweden, he earned a civil engineering degree from the Chalmers Polytechnic Institute in Gothenburg and studied architecture at the Fine Arts Academy in Stockholm. Early in his career, he helped rebuild the Swedish city of Gävle following a devastating fire. He was practicing in London when he learned of the 1871 Great Chicago Fire, and the resulting rebuilding opportunities drew him to Chicago.

In Chicago, Hallberg built a career along two major lines of work. He designed finely crafted single-family residences for the city's upper- and upper-middle-class families, including mansions along the Gold Coast and in fashionable neighborhoods on the West and South Sides, such as the Mason Brayman Starring Mansion at 1254 N. Lake Shore Drive. He was also an important

15. THREATENED: Foreclosure and Lost Financing Stall the Redevelopment of the Landmark Pioneer Trust & Savings Bank Building at 4000 W. North Avenue in Humboldt Park



Pioneer Trust and Savings Bank Building, 1925, Karl M. Vitzthum, 4000 W. North Ave. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 2012. Photo Credit: City of Chicago



Pioneer Trust and Savings Bank Building, 1925, Karl M. Vitzthum, 4000 W. North Ave. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 2012. Photo Credit: City of Chicago

“The redevelopment of the abandoned Pioneer Trust & Savings Bank is in limbo as its owners continue to seek financing for the long-stalled project after falling into foreclosure in 2024.

“The property, a landmarked building at 4000 W. North Ave., went into foreclosure after owners defaulted on their loan agreement with another development company based in Jefferson Park, according to court documents. Owners failed to pay the initial $1 million for the $3 million mortgage loan before July 31, 2023, throwing them into a legal battle for almost two years, according to court documents.

“Owners Luis Puig and Juan Gabriel Moreno, co-founder of JGMA Architects, alongside former owner Matt Mosher and their contractors, have tried to secure financing for the project since the foreclosure lawsuit, said Ald. Jessie Fuentes (26th). The project cannot move forward until they get new financing, she said.

“The plan for the 1920s bank building is to turn it into offices, a community space, a cafe, a library, housing and a health clinic, according to the ownership team, called Team Pioneros, who won a bid from the city in 2021 to revive the building back into a ‘center for Latino commerce.’

“BTEC, a center that specializes in workforce management and career training, and Arquitectos, an organization that provides networking and resource for Latino architects, will be ground-floor tenants of the bank building, which has sat vacant for about 20 years. JGMA will move its headquarters into the upper floors.

“While the City Council approved $13 million in tax-increment financing dollars for the Invest South/West project in 2023, that money was never used and a redevelopment agreement has yet to close, a city spokesperson said.

“Pioneer Bank was built in 1925 during the ‘golden age’ of banking, when grand buildings signaled to customers ‘the notion that their money would be safe and the bank was here to stay,’ city officials wrote in the building’s landmark designation report in 2012.

“Puerto Rico-based bank Banco Popular took over the building in the mid-’90s as Humboldt Park’s Puerto Rican population grew. Banco Popular called the building home until 2008, when it moved across the street.

“The bank building has languished over the past decade. Its former owner struggled to redevelop the building and the surrounding lots after Banco Popular’s departure, a city official previously said. The current owners purchased the property May 2023, according to the foreclosure lawsuit and property records.” (Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 8/13/26)

Preservation Chicago is deeply concerned about the future of the Pioneer Trust & Savings Bank Building. Designed by Karl M. Vitzthum and designated a Chicago Landmark in 2012, this five-story Neo-Classical Revival bank is one of the finest surviving examples of the neighborhood banks built across Chicago’s outlying communities during the 1920s, when a grand building was how an institution communicated strength and security to its customers.

Landmark designation protects this building from demolition, but it does not protect it from vacancy and deferred maintenance. The Pioneer Bank has been vacant for roughly twenty years, and Chicago winters are tough on long-vacant buildings. Five years have now passed since Team Pioneros won the Invest South/West bid in 2021, and in that time the project has produced a foreclosure, two lawsuits, a cost estimate that climbed from $53.9 million to roughly $74 million, a $13 million TIF allocation that was approved but never drawn, and a redevelopment agreement that has never closed.

Preservation Chicago continues to support a reuse vision for this building. A Latino cultural center, an entrepreneurial incubator, a health clinic, a library branch, and seventy-five affordable apartments on the parking lot to the north would be a genuinely transformative outcome for North Avenue and Pulaski Road.

We continue to advocate for preservation and restoration of the the interior main great lobby hall. A public or cultural use in that space, including a library branch would be ideal. Our hope is that the current development team takes decisive steps to move forward, and that if it cannot, it steps aside so that a different developer can transform the building from vacant to vibrant.

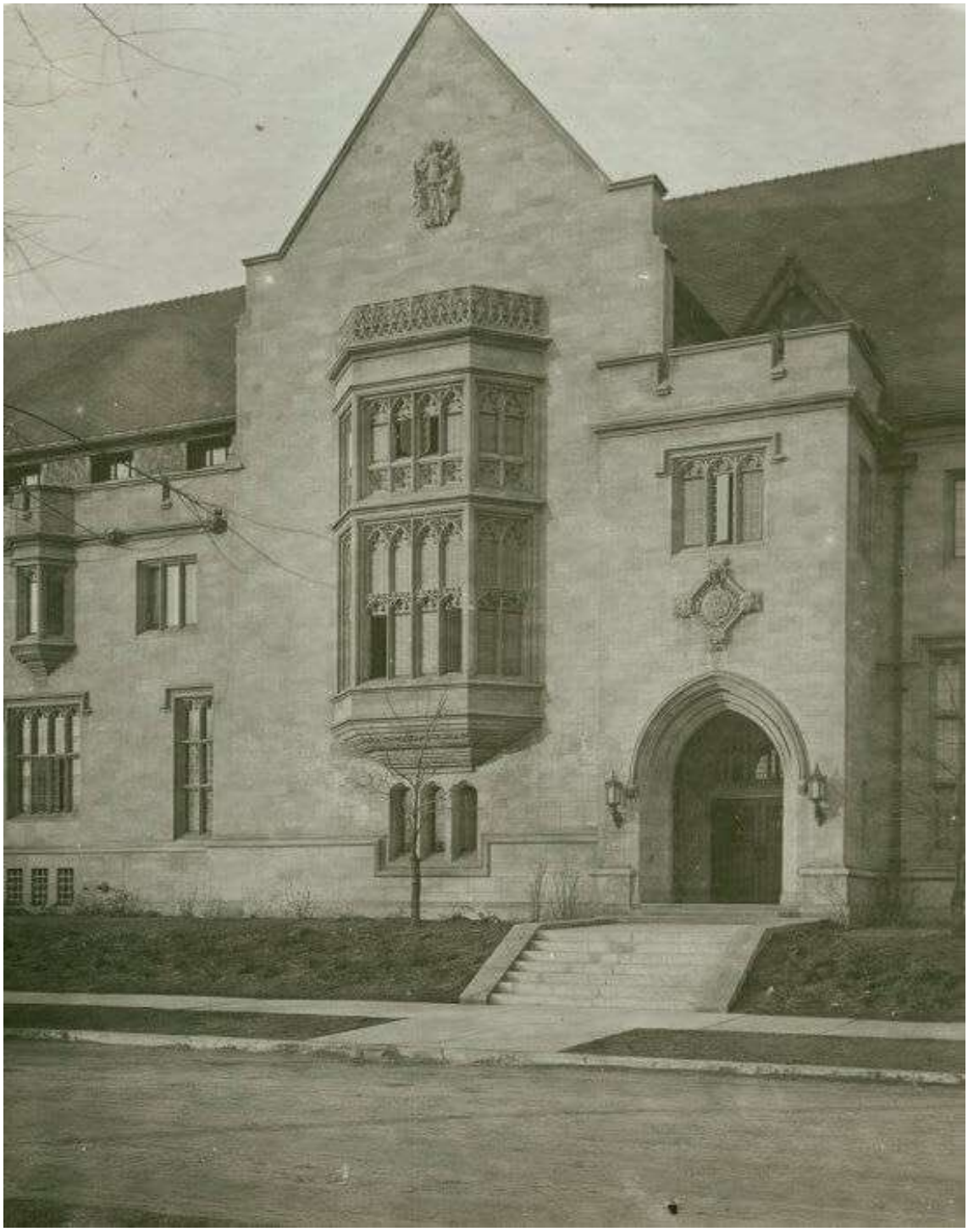
Read the full story at Block Club Chicago

Pioneer Bank’s Future Uncertain As Owners Seek Financing To Get Out Of Foreclosure; The

16. WIN: University of Chicago Selects Steven Holl Architects and JLK Architects for the Renewal of the 1916 Ida Noyes Hall at 1212 E. 59th Street in Hyde Park



Ida Noyes Hall opened in 1916 equipped with everything the men's facilities had, including a gymnasium, a pool, a locker room, a cafeteria, meeting rooms, and a theater. Ida Noyes Hall, 1916, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, 1212 E. 59th Street, Hyde Park. Image credit: Curt Teich Postcard Archives Digital Collection/ Newberry Library/PDM 1.0



Industrialist and inventor La Verne Noyes financed a women's clubhouse in 1913 in honor of his late wife, Ida. Ida Noyes Hall, 1916, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, 1212 E. 59th Street, Hyde Park. Image credit: Percy H. Sloane/Newberry Library/PDM 1.0

“The University of Chicago has selected Steven Holl Architects (SHA) to lead the renewal of Ida Noyes Hall, a 111-year-old building on the Midway Plaisance that has served as a women’s clubhouse, a dining hall, a movie theater, and a campus bar.

“SHA will oversee the modernization of the building’s infrastructure. Accessibility will be improved. New spaces for programs, events, and informal gathering will be added, all while maintaining the historic building’s architectural integrity.

“The project is supported by a $50 million gift from David M. Rubenstein, chair of the University of Chicago’s board of trustees. The historic building will retain the Ida Noyes name, and new construction will be called the David M. Rubenstein Commons.

“Designed by Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge (now Shepley Bulfinch), Ida Noyes Hall reads like a Tudor House. (Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge also designed the university’s masterplan.)

“Described as ‘domestic in feeling,’ the building has bay windows that push out from the west facade in tiers of leaded glass and a cloistered courtyard lined with pointed arches.

“Ida Noyes Hall was conceived as a clubhouse, and it was built to feel like one.

“The University of Chicago had been co-ed since its founding in 1890, well ahead of peer schools such as Yale and Columbia, but had done little to help women feel welcome. Male students had a gymnasium and pool table at the Reynolds Club, and their own cafeteria.

“Women, many of whom commuted due to the lack of on-campus housing, had no comparable space.

“Industrialist and inventor La Verne Noyes financed a women’s clubhouse in 1913 in honor of his late wife, Ida. The building was dedicated, according to its cornerstone, to a woman ‘wise in philanthropy, democratic in friendship, skillful in leadership,’ and opened in 1916 equipped with everything the men’s facilities had, including a gymnasium, a pool, a locker room, a cafeteria, meeting rooms, and a theater.

“None of these original amenity spaces remain today.

“The pool became a Booth School of Business study room in 2008, the gymnasium became the Max Palevsky Cinema in 1986 and a portion of the women’s locker room became a pub in 1974.
“JLK Architects will serve as historic preservation architects on the project, and Workshop Architects will lead student-life programming and operations planning.

“No detailed design has been made public, and the University of Chicago has not said how much of the building will be unavailable during construction, a question that has drawn attention from the student organizations, publication, and campus media.” (Amselem, The Architect’s Newspaper, 8/20/26)

Preservation Chicago applauds the University of Chicago for choosing to reinvest in and restore Ida Noyes Hall, rather than pursuing demolition and new construction. This demonstrates a growing recognition of the important role historic buildings play in creating an attractive, appealing campus.

JLK Architects is a highly experienced historic preservation firm which brings preservation expertise to the design team. Preservation Chicago looks forward to contributing constructively during the design process to help ensure a good preservation outcome. We encourage an addition that is respectful of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge’s building and of its setting on the Midway Plaisance.

Read the full story at The Architect’s Newspaper and ArchDaily

“Domestic in Feeling”: Steven Holl Architects to lead renewal of Ida Noyes Hall at the University of Chicago, Ilana Amselem, The Architect’s Newspaper, 8/20/26

Steven Holl Architects Selected to Renew Historic Ida Noyes Hall at the University of Chicago, Reyyan Dogan, ArchDaily, 8/26/26

University of Chicago Selects Steven Holl Architects for the Revitalization of Historic Ida Noyes Hall; Steven Holl Architects

17. WIN: The 1897 Charles Warrington Earle School at 6121 S. Hermitage Avenue in West Englewood Reopens as 50 Units of Affordable Housing After Twelve Years Vacant



Charles Warrington Earle School, 1897, William August Fiedler, with a 1900 addition by William Bryce Mundie, 6121 S. Hermitage Avenue, West Englewood. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo credit: Gorman & Company

“Mayor Brandon Johnson recently joined Chicago DOH Commissioner Lissette Castañeda, Gorman & Company, the Phoenix Foundation and community partners to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the Charles Earle School Apartments. Located at the southeast corner of S. Hermitage Ave and W. 61st St, the former Charles Warrington Earle School was built in 1897 and served Chicago students until its closure in 2014.

“Planned by developer Gorman & Company, the development has adaptively reused the school building, converting it into 50 units of affordable housing with 50 parking spaces.

“Designed by local firm Beehyyve, the 1974 portion of the building was demolished, with the rest of the school rehabbed. The historic school building had its exterior cleaned and new windows were installed to enclose the facade.

“The Phoenix Foundation will provide residents with access to on-site supportive services for individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The development includes a community room, computer lab, exercise room, playground, community garden, green space and on-site property management.

“The $34.9 million development was supported by $4.2 million in TIF funding and $540,000 in Chicago Recovery Plan Permanent Supportive Housing funding granted by the Chicago Department of Housing. Additional financing was provided through the Illinois Housing Development Authority, Federal Home Loan Bank’s Affordable Housing Program, ComEd energy incentives, private financing, Low-Income Housing Tax Credit equity, and federal and state Historic Tax Credit equity.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 9/2/26)

“Designed in the Renaissance Revival style by Chicago school board architect William August Fiedler in 1897, with a 1900 addition by William Bryce Mundie, the Earle School is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. That historic designation made the building eligible for federal and state historic tax credits, which helped fund the conversion.

“The redevelopment team demolished an unsalvageable 1974 auxiliary wing while restoring the original brick structure, and converted the old school gymnasium into an indoor sports court for residents.” (Sheffield, Hoodline, 8/27/26)

“‘My father was actually a teacher; he passed away 20-something years ago. So I kind of look at this as a gift from him,’ Peters said.

“‘These 50 apartments will be for residents who are earning less than $50,000 if they’re on their own or less than $73,000 a year if they are a family of four,’ said Lisette Castaneda, commissioner of the Department of Housing.” (ABC7 Chicago, 8/26/26)

Preservation Chicago applauds Gorman & Company, the Phoenix Foundation, the Chicago Department of Housing and the West Englewood community on the reopening of the Charles Warrington Earle School. We have advocated for the adaptive reuse of this building, and it is deeply gratifying to see it occupied again.

William August Fiedler’s 1897 Renaissance Revival schoolhouse, enlarged in 1900 by William Bryce Mundie, is among the finest buildings in West Englewood. It sat vacant for twelve years after Chicago Public Schools closed it in 2014, one of nearly fifty schools shuttered in a single wave. The financing deserves particular attention. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places made the project eligible for federal and state Historic Tax Credits, which contributed $6.8 million toward the $34.9 million cost. Historic designation is often characterized as an obstacle to development. Here it was the instrument that made the development possible.

Dozens of closed Chicago public schools remain vacant, most of them on the South and West Sides, and most of them substantial masonry buildings of real architectural quality. The Earle School demonstrates what is achievable. Preservation Chicago encourages the City, Chicago Public Schools and the development community to pursue this model for the shuttered schools that remain, and we encourage National Register listing wherever these buildings qualify.

Read the full story at Urbanize Chicago

Ribbon cutting celebrated for Charles Earle School Apartments; The shuttered school at 6121 S. Hermitage is now 50 apartments, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 9/2/26

Shuttered Englewood School Reborn as 50 Apartments After 12-Year Wait, Damon R. Sheffield, Hoodline, 8/27/26

18. THREATENED: Loyola University Proposes Demolition of the Former St. Ignatius School and Andrew Rebori Designed Gymnasium and Auditorium from 1931



St. Ignatius school sits closed at 1320 W. Loyola Avenue in Rogers Park on July 20, 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



St. Ignatius school sits closed at 1320 W. Loyola Avenue in Rogers Park on July 20, 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps

“Loyola University Chicago and the Ignatian Mission Center are proposing a redevelopment of the St. Ignatius campus that would include housing for over 200 students and a social services center. The campus includes a church and rectory that have been empty since 2021, after the Archdiocese of Chicago announced it would merge with nearby parishes, and a school building that has been vacant for nearly 10 years.

“The Ignatian Mission Center, a layperson-led Catholic nonprofit, is proposing to turn the church and rectory part of the campus into a center with a shelter for Spanish-speaking women facing domestic violence, a day care for the children of the women at the shelter and potentially neighborhood kids, a space for religious gatherings and the group’s food pantry.

“Loyola is proposing to demolish the adjacent school and construct a 64-unit building that would house upperclassmen and graduate students who typically live off campus, which could free up more of the neighborhood’s privately owned apartments that are rented by students, university officials have said.

“Loyola explored the possibility of reusing the school buildings rather than demolishing them, but the university couldn’t make converting existing buildings into housing economically feasible, said Kana Henning, Loyola’s vice president for facilities and campus management.

“Loyola would need a zoning change and a special use permit to build its five-story student housing building, while the Ignatian Mission Center would also need a special use permit to operate the women’s shelter and other social services on the campus.

“Ald. Maria Hadden (49th), whose ward includes the shuttered St. Ignatius campus site, will be accepting feedback from neighbors on the proposal for about two weeks, she said Monday.

“Hadden said Monday she shares some neighbors’ frustrations over how Loyola has handled recent acquisition of properties in the direct vicinity — specifically its purchase and demolition of 1226-1234 W. Loyola Ave., which housed small businesses and affordable apartments — but this is the only solid plan for the empty campus that has been brought to her office.

“‘As your alderperson, I want to save this church, and I think this is a proposal worth hearing,’ she said to the large crowd of neighbors Monday night.

“‘I don’t see a way forward for us without this Loyola plan,’ [Ignatian Mission Center executive director Liam] Ford said. ‘This would be a great way for the parish’s legacy to live on in a new organization.’

“St. Ignatius was formed by the local Jesuit order, which bought the lakeshore land bounded by Devon Avenue, Sheridan Road and Pratt Boulevard in 1906. That same year, Jesuits began work on the first St. Ignatius Church, which opened in 1907 at 6435 N. Sheridan Road, according to the Rogers Park West Ridge Historical Society.

“To make way for the university, St. Ignatius Church moved from its lakeshore space to Glenwood Avenue in 1917, inhabiting a classical Roman church that has protections against demolition or significant alterations under the city’s historical survey.

“In 1993, St. Ignatius grammar school closed and merged with Northside Catholic Academy. The school building was then used by Waldorf School, which moved to Andersonville in 2018.” (Savedra, Block Club Chicago, 7/21/26)

Preservation Chicago welcomes the proposed reuse of St. Ignatius Church and rectory by the Ignatian Mission Center. Finding a new steward for a closed Catholic church is difficult, and a shelter for Spanish-speaking women facing domestic violence, a day care, and a food pantry represent exactly the kind of continued community service that keeps a religious building meaningful after the parish has closed. The church is included in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, and its retention is a good outcome.

We have serious concerns about the proposed demolition of the school buildings. The original school was completed in 1915, and incredibly, the gymnasium and auditorium, built in 1931, were designed by Andrew Rebori.

Andrew Rebori (1886–1966) is among the most accomplished and distinctive Chicago architects of the twentieth century. His work includes the Fisher Studio Houses on State Parkway, a Chicago Landmark; the Racquet Club of Chicago on Dearborn Parkway; the Roanoke Building at LaSalle and Madison; the LaSalle-Wacker Building; the Elizabeth Arden Building at 70 E. Walton; the Fine

19. WIN: Adaptive Reuse of the Chicago Landmark Immaculata High School Moves Forward at 640 W. Irving Park Road



Immaculata Living / Immaculata High School / American Islamic College, 1922; Barry F. Byrne, 640 W. Irving Park Rd. and 4030 N. Marine Dr. Date Designated a Chicago Landmark: July 27, 1983. Rendering credit: Perkins Eastman/Level Architecture

“Years after being approved by the city, the redevelopment of the former American Islamic College campus in Uptown is moving forward, albeit with some changes to the plans. Development firm K Giles has for years planned to redevelop the American Islamic College property at Irving Park Road and Marine Drive, including turning the former school buildings into apartments and constructing a senior living tower on its parking lot.

“These plans were officially greenlit by the city in 2022, though no progress has been made as the campus was used as an emergency migrant shelter. The project is once again moving forward, but the senior living tower is no longer part of the plans, according to Ald. Angela Clay’s 46th Ward office.

“The American Islamic College sold its parking lot, which was to house the senior apartments, to another developer, CityPads, in July, according to property records and Clay’s office.

“K Giles is still proceeding with the plans to adapt the school building into residential apartments, the developer confirmed. They’ve recently applied for building permits — according to city records.

“Plans approved by the city in 2022 included a 22-story senior-living building with 192 units, including both independent living and memory care options. The existing, historically protected school buildings would be converted into 245 apartments.

“The former school campus opened in 1921 as Immaculata High School, an all-girls Catholic institution. It was designed by Barry Byrne, who worked under Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1983, the school complex received Chicago Landmark status. The high school shuttered in 1981, with the American Islamic College moving into the campus two years later.

“The Uptown campus also had a temporary life as a migrant shelter starting in 2023, when thousands of migrants were arriving to the city. It was one of the city’s biggest migrant shelters, with between 500-600 at a time housed there during the crisis. In June 2025, the campus closed as a city shelter.” (Savedra, Block Club Chicago, 8/27/26)

“Designed by Level Architecture, the first phase of the project would convert the three attached buildings of the Immaculata School into 245 apartments, made up of studios, one-beds, and two-bed units.

“Common amenities will include the conversion of the existing 5,000 square foot gymnasium into a modern exercise facility which will include the retention of one of the existing basketball courts.

“The dramatic 1,000-seat auditorium will be partially retained, serving the tenants and the neighborhood on a limited basis, with most of the space retrofitted as a multi-purpose amenity space. The auditorium balcony will also be transformed with tiered workstations and a business center.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 9/2/25)

“Barry Byrne began his architectural career with Frank Lloyd Wright. Using Wright’s teachings as the basis for developing a personal style, Byrne established new precedents for modern ecclesiastical architecture, creating original expressions in a genre usually associated with historic forms and long-established traditions. The later building, designed by Byrne, is a model of a compatible, yet distinctive addition to a historic structure.” (Chicago Landmark Commission, Department of Planning and Development)

Preservation Chicago is encouraged that the adaptive reuse of the Chicago Landmark Immaculata High School is moving forward and that K Giles has applied for building permits. Barry F. Byrne’s 1922 campus at Irving Park Road and Marine Drive is among the most significant works by an architect who trained with Frank Lloyd Wright and went on to reshape modern ecclesiastical design in America. It was designated a Chicago Landmark on July 27, 1983, and this project has been delayed for a number of years.

We applaud the developer’s recognition of the value of the historic interior elements. This is a proven best-practice and we celebrate the decision to incorporate these historic elements into the new project.

Read the full story at Block Club Chicago and Urbanize Chicago

Plans To Redevelop Uptown’s Islamic College Move Forward — Without Proposed Senior Living Tower; Plans to turn the landmarked school building into residential apartments are ongoing, but CityPads took over the parking lot that was set to become a high-rise for seniors, Madison Savedra, Block Club Chicago, 8/27/26

20. WIN: Glass Atrium Work Begins at Humboldt Park's Historic Stable and Receptory Building as National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture Earns National Accreditation



Humboldt Park Receptory Building and Stable, 1896, Frommann & Jebsen, 3015 W. Division Street. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Use of concrete pad as a sculpture garden behind Humboldt Park Receptory Building and Stable, 1896, Frommann & Jebsen, 3015 W. Division Street. Rendering credit: National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture



Creation of a glass-enclosed courtyard, inspired by the Three-Arts Club, in the historic structure to allow for year-round programing and to eliminate the current temporary tent in thee courtyard of the Humboldt Park Receptory Building and Stable, 1896, Frommann & Jebsen, 3015 W. Division Street. Rendering credit: National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture

“The only Puerto Rican museum in the continental United States is now nationally recognized by a reputable museum organization, which its leaders are touting as a win for preserving the island’s art and culture.

“After about five years of work, The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture, 3015 W. Division St., received accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums last week. It’s the highest national recognition available to museums in the United States.

“The recognition, which has been a goal for museum leaders since it launched in 2000, opens the door for more grant and artistic opportunities, like working with other museums to partner on exhibits and borrow artwork.

“The American Alliance of Museum reviewers praised the Puerto Rican museum’s staff, educational programs, bilingual interpretation, community accessibility and stewardship of Puerto Rican collections, museum leaders said.

“The accreditation makes the museum the only Puerto Rican one to earn the accolade and the fourth Latino museum in the nation to be on the list.

“Last year, the museum completed its outdoor sculpture garden on land previously intended to be the museum’s archives center, a controversial project shut down by the city in 2022 and demolished in early 2024. The garden also helped the museum get the national recognition, per the alliance’s museum listing.

“At the end of August, work will start to enclose the courtyard and make it into a glass atrium, creating 6,000 square feet of year-round program space.” (Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 7/31/26)

“Native plants reflective of the prairie-style landscape will be put in place in tribute to famed architect Jens Jensen, who designed Humboldt Park’s prairie garden. Jensen served as the park’s superintendent; in the 1890s, he worked out of the stables building that became the museum.

“The garden and community area was presented to the community late last year and received approval from city officials, the Park District, Preservation Chicago and city and state agencies.” (Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 7/21/25)

“The solution also included the retention of the foundation of the illegal building, for possible use for future programming. In addition, Ocasio said he would pursue suggestions made by Preservation Chicago to top off the museum’s courtyard with a glass roof and remove the tent currently used as an event space.

“‘We’re here to help and we want to be your partner,’ said Ward Miller, executive of Preservation Chicago, who declared himself ‘very pleased with the outcome’ of the negotiation.” (Wetli, WTTW Chicago, 10/4/23)

Preservation Chicago congratulates Billy Ocasio and the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture on earning American Alliance of Museums accreditation. This is the highest recognition available to an American museum, and it affirms both the institution’s stewardship of its collections and its care for the landmark building it occupies. We are especially pleased that the glass-enclosed courtyard — an idea Preservation Chicago proposed during the 2023 negotiations — is now moving to construction.

Preservation Chicago is thrilled with this outcome. We played a central role in helping to amplify and document this illegal construction. We worked closely with neighborhood partners including Humboldt Park resident Kurt Gippert who launched the Change.org petition, and like-minded organizations including Juanita Irizarry, executive director of Friends of the Parks.

Ward Miller met with leadership from the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture and their design team to help them try to find a workable way forward. Many of these creative alternative ideas were incorporated and were presented at the public meeting as the path moving forward.

We applaud Ald. Jessie Fuentes for her leadership and commitment to a good outcome. We also appreciate architect Larry Kearns, FAIA of Wheeler Kearns Architects, for meeting with us several times with PC over a two-year period, to discuss various options and solutions, as well as the vision of an enclosed courtyard with a lightweight steel and glass structure. This also allows for the visitor to see some of the many high gables and architectural features of the building and

21. WIN: Restoration of the 1907 Sears Sunken Garden Pergola Is Back on Track in North Lawndale with Additional Driehaus Foundation Funding



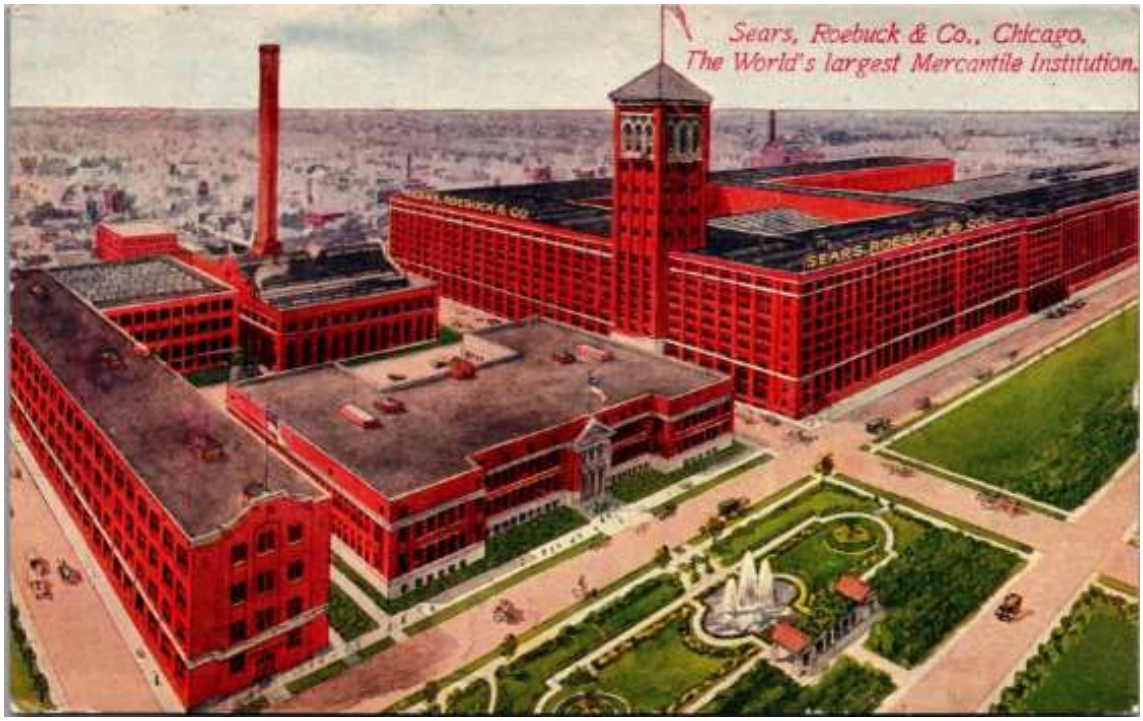
Sears Sunken Garden, 1907, Nimmons & Fellows, 3330 W. Arthington Street, North Lawndale. Image credit: Preservation Chicago Postcard Collection



Sears Sunken Garden, 1907, Nimmons & Fellows, 3330 W. Arthington Street, North Lawndale. Image credit: Preservation Chicago Postcard Collection



Sears Sunken Garden, 1907, Nimmons & Fellows, 3330 W. Arthington Street, North Lawndale. Image credit: Preservation Chicago Postcard Collection



Sears Sunken Garden, 1907, Nimmons & Fellows, 3330 W. Arthington Street, North Lawndale. Image credit: Preservation Chicago Postcard Collection

“As Chicago’s Sears, Roebuck and Co. started to grow more than a century ago, its farsighted leaders wanted a green space for their headquarters. They commissioned the Sears Sunken Garden, an unlikely oasis across the street from the retailer’s main administration building on the West Side’s Homan Avenue.

”The 1907 garden was ‘sunken’ below street level to provide peace and quiet as horse-drawn wagons and early motor vehicles clattered by. Ornamental fountains, a reflecting pool, ponds stocked with goldfish and carefully designed plantings nestled just below the garden’s defining feature — a dramatic, 100-foot-long row of classical columns known as a pergola.
”A slice of the Mediterranean had come to a busy city street.

”Today, Sears is a memory, much of its Homan Square complex is boarded up and the once-marvelous garden is a wreck. April brought welcome news that this neglected landmark finally would be getting a face-lift, thanks largely to a $1 million pledge from the city’s Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.

”Turns out, the pergola’s columns were in worse shape than expected. As work began, crews discovered the concrete had disintegrated and the structure needed to be replaced rather than repaired. The restoration halted until the Driehaus Foundation stepped up — again — with additional funding.

”’We are now back on track,’ declared Caroline O’Boyle, who serves on the nonprofit board supervising the renovation. A new timetable calls for the pergola restoration to be finished by mid-November and work on the garden itself to begin next year, she told us.

”That pattern is familiar to anyone involved in rebuilding neighborhoods that have endured decades of disinvestment. North Lawndale certainly has: It lost major employers, population and investment over generations.

”It also has an amazing history, and potential. When Sears made Homan Square the heart of its fast-growing retail empire, North Lawndale was among the hottest neighborhoods in the city.
”By the 1960s, it had become a focus of the Civil Rights Movement. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. famously made North Lawndale a centerpiece of his fair-housing campaign, moving his family into a rundown apartment to protest slum conditions.

”In the 1970s, Sears left for its downtown tower, marking a retreat of money and influence that devastated the neighborhood.

”The retailer’s Homan Square complex is an important Chicago landmark, and a couple of its prominent buildings have been impressively restored. The big red-brick office complex across from the Sears Sunken Garden, however, continues to rot. Timetables for shoring it up have kept slipping.

”Given the monumental challenges, could fixing up a small-ish garden really do anything to turn things around? Yes.

”A beautiful green space can indeed transform an urban neighborhood. Those efforts inspire neighbors to take pride in their communities, which in turn inspires hope for a better future — a missing element in the most troubled parts of the city.

”And we believe the late Richard Driehaus, a gregarious financier, would have loved the Sears Sunken Garden restoration. Hats off to his foundation for backing a project that fits with this one-of-a-kind local character’s legacy.

”The foundation’s financial commitment to the garden stands at $1.5 million so far today, a spokeswoman told us. Even with that, the nonprofit Friends of Sears Sunken Garden has unmet fundraising goals to see the project through. Here’s hoping the rest of Chicago does what it takes to raise up the West Side’s sunken treasure.” (Editorial Board, Chicago Tribune, 8/24/26)

”’It’s the classical centerpiece of [the] garden, and to have that restored is going to be amazing,’ said the Rev. Reshorna Fitzpatrick, chairperson of Friends of Sears Sunken Garden board. ‘It’s something you could see when you’re driving down the street — and it is going to be eye-catching to have it redone.’

”The pergola is composed of 20 classically designed columns set in tandem with a footpath through them and flanked by two Greek Revival porticos. The structure is topped by a red clay tile roof.

22. WIN: Portage Theater Foundation Launches a $3 Million Restoration Campaign with Marquee Repairs Beginning and a Reopening Targeted Within a Year (Chicago 7 2012)



Portage Theater, 1920, Mark D. Kalischer and Henry L. Newhouse, 4050 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Portage Park. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 2013. Photo credit: Josh Lipnik



Portage Theater, 1920, Mark D. Kalischer and Henry L. Newhouse, 4050 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Portage Park. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 2013. Photo credit: Josh Lipnik

“After sitting vacant for years and being named one of Illinois’ most endangered historic sites in 2024, the 106-year-old Portage Theater at 4050 N. Milwaukee Ave. is set to undergo a major restoration aimed at reopening its doors within a year.

”The historic venue was acquired last fall by Chris Bauman’s Zenith Music Group. Bauman organized events at the venue from 2014 to 2018. To bring the Portage Park mainstay back to life, he’s launching a nonprofit foundation with an initial goal of raising $3 million for repairs, followed by phased modernizations over time.

”First opened in 1920 as a grand movie palace, the Portage Theater served as a gathering place for filmgoers, later evolving to host concerts, silent film screenings, live performances and local events. The new restoration plan focuses on honoring that legacy while updating the space for modern audiences.

”The first priority is repairing the iconic exterior marquee, which currently suffers from structural damage; work on the metal and brickwork is slated to begin within 30 to 60 days. Fortunately, interior damage is largely cosmetic. Planned upgrades include expanding the restroom facilities from eight stalls to 24 (plus an ADA-accessible family bathroom), adding dedicated green rooms, installing decorative lighting to highlight the auditorium’s ornate ceiling designs and creating a music-themed bar in an adjacent storefront. The project will also add custom walk-of-fame stars in the lobby honoring sold-out artists.

”Once completed, the venue will boast a capacity of roughly 1,499. Bauman envisions a dynamic mix of uses, ranging from concerts and film screenings to indoor markets, local theater and broad community programming.

”To achieve this vision, the foundation is actively seeking public support, offering perks like personalized entry tiles, custom marquee messages and collectible certificates for donors, while also welcoming volunteers to assist with fundraising and cleanup.” (Lopez, Time Out Chicago, 8/31/26)

”’The goal when we open Portage again is not just to get it open but to have it ready for the next 100 years,’ Bauman said. ‘We want to maintain its beauty and its history but also make sure it’s ready to host the events of the next century.’

”’A lot of really wonderful people have already reached out wanting to help,’ Bauman said. ‘It’s been amazing to see how much people care about it.’” (DeVore, Block Club Chicago, 4/13/26)

Preservation Chicago is thrilled to see the Portage Theater reach this stage. Chris Bauman and Zenith Music Group paid off more than $500,000 in back taxes, took over the emergency canopy under the damaged marquee, began cleaning the interior, and have now launched the Portage Theater Foundation with a $3 million initial goal. The 1920 Portage Theater is one of Chicago’s finest surviving neighborhood movie palaces, and it anchors the Six Corners commercial district.

Preservation Chicago has advocated for the restoration and reactivation of the Portage Theater for many years. The Portage was named to our Chicago 7 Most Endangered list in 2012, and we played a leadership role in the Chicago Landmark designation that followed in 2013. Ward Miller spoke in support of resolving the building’s issues and moving forward with restoration at multiple Building Court hearings, and we have continued to work closely with neighborhood partners throughout the receivership and litigation.

Years ago, Preservation Chicago also encouraged the church interested in buying the Portage Theater property to convert it into a religious use, to instead pursue the purchase of the old Bel-Park Theater of 1927, located at 3231 N. Cicero Avenue in the Belmont Cragin Community. It was then known as the Golden Tiara Ballroom and Bingo Hall. Preservation Chicago considered this to be a good alternative, aligned with the Portage Park Community’s desires, as the Bel-Park property was soon also facing a sale and an uncertain future. Ironically, the former Bel-Park has been restored and revisioned as a church (The Chicago Tabernacle), while the Portage Theater has lingered, despite its Chicago Landmark status.”

The Portage Theater Foundation is seeking donations and volunteers. We encourage our readers to visit portagetheaterfoundation.org and support this campaign. A 1920 movie palace with 1,499 seats, dark for most of a decade, is now on track to be reopened.

Read the full story at Time Out Chicago

This century-old Chicago theater could reopen next year after being closed for a decade — but it

23. WIN: The 400 Theater in Rogers Park Reopens After Three Year Closure



Regent Theater / Village North/ New 400 Theaters, 1913, 6746 N. Sheridan Road. Photo credit: The New 400 Theaters

“Three years ago, the New 400 Theater went dark after more than a century-long run in Rogers Park. But on Friday, the projectors were back up and running, the popcorn was popping and excited moviegoers were lining up for showings of the latest ‘Spiderman’ sequel.

“‘It felt weird because people always say, “You can never go home again.” You can never relive an old memory,’ said Rogers Park resident Jesse Borrower, who was a regular at the theater before it closed. ‘But it felt like nothing had changed. We were just coming back, watching another movie.’

“Inside the theater, owner Jordan Stancil swept up popcorn before the next crowd poured in that afternoon. Stancil takes a hands-on approach to his job as the new operator of The 400 Theater, which it is now called after he dropped the ‘new’ from the name.

“The chaos of the movie theater business is familiar to Stancil, who operates three cinemas in Michigan, including the Rialto Theater in Grayling, Michigan, which his great-grandfather founded in 1915. His great-grandmother played the piano in that theater and Stancil learned how to play after they moved it to their family’s living room.

“‘We have a long historical memory of pretty much everything in this industry since its inception,’ he said.

“‘People are seeing that COVID didn’t kill these businesses and I think that there’s going to be a positive narrative because people are going to see that the public comes in here, as you’re seeing right now,’ he said, pointing to guests queuing up at the concession stand. ‘So it’s not really true that this is a dying thing, because the public doesn’t think that.’

“Isaac looked around at the vintage theater, gesturing at the curtains and terra cotta harp on the wall. ‘What I like about this theater is all the theaters like AMC are all so futuristic,’ Isaac Swartz said. ‘But this is just like basic, nice. And you can see, look at the architecture.’

“When The 400 shuttered in 2023, constituents implored Ald. Maria Hadden (49th) to help revive the space’s original purpose as a movie house.

“‘People loved it,’ Hadden said. ‘They loved the programming, they loved the memories, and “We didn’t want to see it go away,” that was what they told me.’

“He plans to work with Nicola McCafferty, who received a PhD from Northwestern University’s screen cultures program, on the theater’s programming, and in the coming months he’ll bring in a 35-millimeter projector.

“He’s also betting that his prices — $11 for evening shows and $6 for children under 11 — will draw a steady crowd in a K-shaped economy.

“‘If you turn this into a splurge, it’s just stupid. I love movies and I love movie theaters, but it’s just not a Taylor Swift concert,’ he said. ‘This is not a bucket list thing to go to this movie. But it’s one of those simple things that people always remember.’” (Giangreco, Block Club Chicago, 7/31/26)

Preservation Chicago congratulates Jordan Stancil, thanks Ald. Maria Hadden and the Rogers Park residents who insisted the space remain a movie house, and credits building owner Tony Fox and the Lord Companies for the long search that found an operator rather than a different use. Historic theaters survive when owners are committed to their success.

Built in 1913 and operating under the names Regent, the 400, the 400 Twin, the Village North, the Visionary and the New 400 across its history, this is the oldest movie house in Chicago. Its closure left the Chicago’s far northside without a neighborhood theater. We’re thrilled to see it reopened.

Read the full story at Block Club Chicago

The 400 Theater Reopens To Lines Of Moviegoers In Rogers Park: ‘Like Nothing Had Changed’; When The 400 shuttered in 2023, neighbors called for it to be revived and preserved as its original purpose as a movie house, Leigh Giangreco, Block Club Chicago, 7/31/26

Rogers Park’s Historic 400 Theater, Closed Since 2023, Reopening This Month Under New Owner; Tickets for the July 31 opening of the theater — which had a 111-year run as Chicago’s oldest movie palace — will be on sale soon, Madison Savedra, Block Club Chicago, 7/22/26

The next iteration of the 400 Theater; The New 400 Theaters closed in 2023, leaving the far north side without a cinema. This year, the historic Rogers Park institution will reopen, Rob Silverman

24. THREATENED: Full Building Permit Issued for 4006 N. Sheridan Road New Construction as Demolition Permits Remain Pending for the Ornate Terra Cotta Holiday Club Building (Terra Cotta: Chicago 7 2023)



Holiday Club Building, 4000-4006 N. Sheridan Road and 1002-1016 W. Irving Park Road, Uptown. Residential portion 1905, David Robertson; retail portion 1925, Adolph Woerner. Photo credit: Google Maps



Holiday Club Building, 4000-4006 N. Sheridan Road and 1002-1016 W. Irving Park Road, Uptown. Residential portion 1905, David Robertson; retail portion 1925, Adolph Woerner. Photo credit: Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY



Traffic Intersection at Sheridan Road and Irving Park Road (image 05), Illinois Department of Transportation Chicago Traffic photographs, University of Illinois at Chicago. Library. Special Collections Department, IDOT_2f_173_6040

“The full building permit has been issued for the residential redevelopment of 4006 North Sheridan Road in Uptown, as three demolition permits continue to pend in the Chicago Data Portal to clear space for it. After receiving a caisson permit on April 3, developer Catapult Real Estate Solutions got permission to build out the entire project that’s slated to take over the northwest corner of Sheridan and Irving Park Roads.

“There are still permits pending to tear down the three buildings that occupy the site, including the now-closed Holiday Club bar on the corner. Once those come through, Precision Excavation has been tapped to do the razing.

“The full permit calls for a seven-story building, the upper six levels of which will hold its 91 dwelling units. An express permit issued on July 21 designated Summit Design + Build as the new general contractor. There has been no indication as to when demolitions can begin, and a timeline for construction and unit delivery has not been confirmed.” (Schell, Chicago YIMBY, 8/16/26)

“Holiday Club will be closing its doors on May 17, 2026 to make way for an apartment complex, the popular Uptown bar announced on Instagram.

“The closing date announcement comes after owner Sonny Domingo confirmed in February that the bar would not be renewing its lease for the building at 4000 N. Sheridan Road, which has been the bar’s home since 2001.

“The Rat Pack-themed bar has been a late-night hotspot known for its ’80s and ’90s weekly dance parties and Wednesday karaoke nights. It houses one of the city’s last analog photo booths.

“The bar’s Instagram announcement has amassed over 2,000 likes and comments from regulars expressing their sadness and disappointment that the corner building will be replaced by an apartment building with retail space.

“‘My boyfriend and I met at Holiday Club,’ one commenter said. ‘We’re so incredibly sad.’

“The impending closure prompted dozens of people dressed in black to gather on the corner of Irving Park and Sheridan roads on April 18, where they set up a memorial of sorts with a framed picture of Holiday Club, candles, flowers and beer cans.

“‘It’s been a place that’s helped me find everything I was looking for and missing,’ she said. ‘A place of camaraderie, community, fantastic music and love.’” (Preziosi, Block Club Chicago, 4/27/26)

Preservation Chicago has been advocating with the community to find a preservation-oriented outcome. Despite the significant architecture of these buildings, they were overlooked by the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. Lacking an orange rating, they are not subject to a 90 Day Demolition Delay.

In 1925, the Gothic terra cotta storefront was constructed, designed by architect Adolph Woerner as a development by owner Abe Gumbiner. Woerner is the architect responsible for the Landmarked Village Theatre. During the 1930s, this ornately ornamented building was home to a Walgreens Drug Store.

The residential segment of the 4000-4006 N. Sheridan building was built as part of a larger development that includes a row of six-flats setback from the street. It was designed by architect David Robertson and was completed 1904-1905. David Robertson has a few structures listed in the CHRS, but these buildings are not orange rated. It was a Colin & Morris development who were successful developers in turn-of-the-century Chicago. Original address was roughly 1333-1341 N. Sheridan.

Preservation Chicago named Terra Cotta Buildings Throughout Chicago to our 2023 Chicago 7 Most Endangered list precisely because of buildings like this one. Chicago has more architectural terra cotta than any other American city, and the Gothic storefront at Sheridan and Irving Park is a superb example of what a 1920s neighborhood commercial building could be. It cannot be replicated. Once the wrecking ball reaches it, the craftsmanship, the molds, and the trades that produced it are gone with it.

The demolition has not started, so there is still time for the developer to reconsider the treatment of the corner. Facade retention has been achieved on many Chicago projects, and incorporating the 1925 terra cotta storefront into the base of the new building would give the development a distinction that no new construction can buy. We urge Catapult Real Estate Solutions and Built Form LLC to explore that option before the razing begins.

25. THREATENED: The 1940 Art Deco Mann Furniture Building at 6130 N. Broadway in Edgewater, Home of the Broadway Antique Market, Is Listed for Sale as a Redevelopment Opportunity



Broadway Antique Market, former Mann Furniture Store, 1940, 6130 N. Broadway, Edgewater. Orange-rated in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. Photo credit: LoopNet



Broadway Antique Market, former Mann Furniture Store, 1940, 6130 N. Broadway, Edgewater. Orange-rated in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. Photo credit: LoopNet

“The owners of a popular Edgewater vintage store are retiring, but they hope a buyer keeps the nearly 30-year-old business going.

”Broadway Antique Market, 6130 N. Broadway, has been a Chicago destination for antique and vintage shoppers since co-owners Duane Scott Cerny and Jeff Nelson bought the Art Deco building and founded the business in 1998. The multi-dealer shop, which is the largest and oldest of its kind in the city, stocks everything from furniture and dishware to clothing and artwork.

”The antique shop and its two-story, 21,000 square-foot building are listed for sale at $2.5 million through the commercial real estate firm SVN Chicago Commercial.

”Cerny and Nelson got their start in the antiques industry by opening Wrigleyville Antique Mall in 1988. The business partners outgrew their Clark Street space and in 1998 bought the Broadway building, naming the new store the Broadway Antique Market.

”The business has grown to include 50 independent vintage dealers, and it also acts as a prop supplier for local television, film and theater productions.

”The steady increase in the building’s property taxes was also a factor in the owners’ decision to retire, Cerny said. Cook County records show the building’s taxes have more than doubled from 2020 to 2024, when the building owners paid over $101,000 in property taxes.

”’It’s over six figures, and that’s just not sustainable,’ he said.

”Cerny said he hopes the next buyer will preserve the building and the business.

”’I know this place is very important to so many people,’ he said. ‘People come in and say, “This is my happy place. I get away from everything and just look at objects and see what speaks to me.”’

”If sold, the historic building’s fate could be up in the air.

”The building and business are being advertised as a potential redevelopment opportunity, and the stretch of Broadway it occupies was recently rezoned to allow for taller and denser buildings. But the existing building does have some protections against demolition.

”The building was constructed in 1940 to house the Mann Furniture store, and it includes one of the only Art Deco building facades in the area, according to the Edgewater Historical Society.
”It isn’t an official Chicago landmark, but the building does have an orange rating from the city’s Chicago Historic Resources Survey. This means the property possesses ‘some architectural feature or historical association that made [it] potentially significant in the context of the surrounding community,’ according to the city.

”If a demolition permit is applied for to tear down an orange-rated building, a 90-day delay is automatically triggered to give city officials extra time to review the permit and ‘explore options, as appropriate, to preserve the building, including but not limited to landmark designation,’ according to the Department of Planning and Development.” (Savedra, Block Club Chicago, 8/12/26)

Preservation Chicago applauds Duane Scott Cerny and Jeff Nelson for nearly three decades of stewardship at Broadway Antique Market, a Chicago legacy business. They purchased the building in 1998, maintained it, filled it with vintage treasures, and established a joyful and beloved destination for locals and visitors.

The 1940 Mann Furniture Store is one of few surviving Art Deco commercial facades in Edgewater. It is orange-rated in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, and it is being marketed as a redevelopment opportunity on a stretch of Broadway that was upzoned last year for greater height and density.

Preservation Chicago notes that the 90-day demolition delay typically serves as a minor delay for developers, before the demolition bulldozers are mobilized to clear a site. We encourage the Department of Planning and Development and the Commission on Chicago Landmarks to be prepared to act if a demolition permit is filed.

Preservation Chicago encourages a preservation-oriented buyer to step forward who will retain both the building and the business.

Read the full story at Block Club Chicago

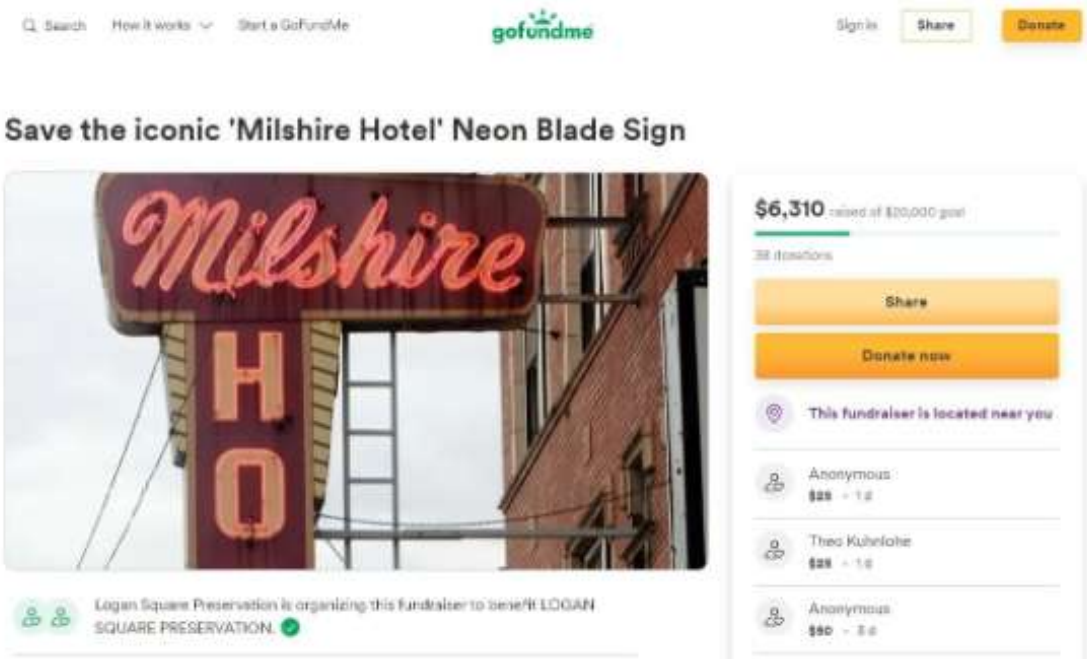
26. POTENTIAL WIN: Adaptive Reuse Proposed for the Vacant Milshire Hotel at 2525 N. Milwaukee Avenue in Logan Square, with the Historic Neon Sign to Be Restored



Milshire Hotel, 1920s, 2525 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Logan Square. Photo credit: M. Fishman Co.



Milshire Hotel, 1920s, 2525 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Logan Square. Photo credit: Google Maps



GoFundMe Effort to Save the Milshire Hotel Neon Sign. Image Credit: Logan Square Preservation

“A redevelopment of the former Milshire Hotel is being planned at 2525 N. Milwaukee. Planned by the current building owner Milshire Hotel LLC, the property formerly served as a Single Room Occupancy residence. The building is located midblock along N. Milwaukee Ave between N. Sacramento Ave and N. Kedzie Blvd.

”Designed by Kennedy Mann, the redevelopment will convert the building’s interior into 30 residential units and ground floor commercial space. The building’s ground floor will have two retail spaces fronting N. Milwaukee Ave split by a central residential lobby. The back of the ground floor will include three residential units.

”On the exterior, the existing building’s envelope and massing will be retained. Existing windows will be replaced, and new aluminum storefronts will be added for the two commercial spaces on the ground floor. The existing hotel sign is intended to remain and will be restored.

”To allow for the scope of the project, the developer is seeking a rezoning of the site. Approvals will be needed from Alderman La Spata, the Committee on Zoning, and City Council.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 8/23/26)

”The four-story brick structure, midblock between N. Sacramento Ave and N. Kedzie Blvd, has sat empty for 12 years since closing as a single-room occupancy residence in 2014.

”The Milshire’s history stretches back to the 1920s, when it opened as a weekly transient hotel before eventually becoming a 70-unit SRO.

”The Milshire’s 15-foot-tall vintage neon blade sign, believed to date to the 1930s or 1940s, is one of the few original neon corridor signs still standing on Milwaukee Avenue. In May 2022, M. Fishman & Co. listed the sign for public auction with a $5,000 starting bid, but withdrew it after public outcry and a fundraising drive by Logan Square Preservation aimed at keeping the sign local. The new proposal’s plan to restore that same sign gives the preservation fight a resolution years later.

”La Spata has scheduled a First Look community zoning meeting for September 1, allowing neighborhood residents to review the conceptual plans and weigh in before formal aldermanic review begins.” (Sheffield, Hoodline, 8/23/26)

”The Milshire Hotel’s neon sign is no longer for sale after the building’s owner bowed to community pressure and reversed his plans, agreeing instead to work with neighbors on a plan to keep the historical sign in Logan Square.

”Well-known property investor Mark Fishman listed the 15-foot-tall sign on Live Auctioneers at the end of May with a starting bid of $5,000, rattling community leaders who feared the sign would be ‘shipped out’ of Logan Square when the Milshire Hotel is redeveloped.

”The sign is believed to be at least 80 years old, and is a Milwaukee Avenue staple. Local leaders with the neighborhood group Logan Square Preservation launched an online fundraiser May 29 to buy the sign and preserve it.

”Now, Fishman’s company is pledging to work with Logan Square Preservation to make sure the sign stays in the neighborhood.

”’They saw our campaign, and indicated to us that Mr. Fishman was concerned that the sign would end up sold to somebody and removed from the neighborhood,’ Schneider said. ‘He felt that was not a desirable outcome and that, no matter what, the sign should remain in the neighborhood. I think that’s the correct impulse, and that’s something we appreciate and applaud.’” (Bloom, Block Club Chicago, 6/8/22)

”The sign was installed sometime in the 1930s or 1940s. It was one of many similar signs on Milwaukee Avenue at the time, but few remain today, Logan Square Preservation’s president Andrew Schneider said.

”’We only have a few survivors left,’ Schneider said. ‘To see one of them removed when I don’t know that it’s strictly necessary, it’s a tremendous disappointment and a huge loss. If we can do something to prevent that loss, I think we should.’

”’When you take something out of its context, it becomes a piece of collected ephemera in someone’s private collection,’ Schneider said. ‘When that happens, our city’s streetscape is impoverished … the city, as a whole, loses.’” (Bloom, Block Club Chicago, 6/1/22)

27. POTENTIAL WIN: Residential Adaptive Reuse Moves Forward for the 1918 Illinois Bell Telephone Company Building at 3601 W. Cortland Street in Logan Square



Illinois Bell Telephone Company Building, 1918, 3601 W. Cortland Street, Logan Square. Rendering credit: Space Architects



Illinois Bell Telephone Company Building, 1918, 3601 W. Cortland Street, Logan Square. Photo credit: Ariel Google Maps

“A redevelopment plan for an empty Logan Square building in the making since 2018 is moving forward with the latest proposal from a developer.

”Key Development Partners LLC has tried to overhaul a former substance abuse recovery center at 3601 W. Cortland St. since 2022. The latest proposal for the site calls for turning the building into a 42-unit apartment building and 34 parking spaces, the second proposal from the same developer.

”Chris Sotos, of Key Development Partners, and Rolando Acosta, his zoning attorney, presented the updated plans to neighbors at a community meeting last week hosted by Ald. Jessie Fuentes (26th), months after the March introduction to the City Council of the zoning variances needed for the project.

”The project doesn’t need a full zoning change but needs a sign off from Fuentes and the city on six zoning variances to the building, which include a building setback for additions to the upper floors, landscaping, a parking reduction from 38 to 34 spots, eliminating a loading berth and a green space modification.

”The variances were approved in 2023 but expired in 2024 since there was no movement on the building, which is why the process needed to restart, Acosta said.

”Neighbors had issues about parking, trash and lighting, but most were in favor of the project that would add density to the area and restore a vacant building that’s seen fly dumping and vandalism in recent months.

”Fellow neighbor Monika Lozinska is glad the facade and exterior will remain more or less the same.

”’It’s gonna be nice to see there is something happening with the building, and that the building itself is being preserved because it’s really pretty outside,’ Lozinska said.

”At the end of the meeting, Fuentes said she was leaning toward renewing the zoning classification amendment at the Zoning Committee since no one expressed opposition.

”Pending city approval, the project could kick off construction in early spring 2027 and last a little over one year.

”An initial proposal to convert the building into 44 one-bedroom apartments in 2018 by another developer fell through.

”Sotos bought the building — originally built in 1918 for the Illinois Bell Telephone Co. — in November 2020, according to Cook County property records.

”The building was home to faith-based organization Adult & Teen Challenge, a center for adults and teens undergoing substance abuse treatment. The organization moved out after the building sold in 2020 after a 25-year run.” (Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 9/8/26)

”The current plans are being led by the same team behind the last redevelopment attempt, that being Key Development Partners along with OKW Architects. The proposal encompasses the four-story building along with its adjacent surface parking lot, which would be preserved. The U-shaped structure would have its side lightwell filled in for additional unit space.” (Achong, Chicago YIMBY, 9/9/26)

Preservation Chicago supports the adaptive reuse of the Illinois Bell Telephone Company Building at 3601 W. Cortland Street. Chicago’s early telephone exchange buildings are a distinctive and under-appreciated building type. Built by the phone company to house switching equipment, they were designed to look permanent and civic, with masonry walls, restrained classical detailing, and a solidity out of proportion to their size. They were also built to carry heavy equipment loads, which makes them unusually well suited to conversion.

This building has been vacant since 2020 and has attracted dumping and vandalism. The proposal retains the exterior, and neighbors at the community meeting said they desire the building to be reused. We encourage Alderwoman Jessie Fuentes, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the City to approve the variances so that this long-empty building can be reactivated.

Read the full story at Block Club Chicago and Chicago YIMBY

Conversion Of Former Logan Square Recovery Center Into Apartments Finally Moving Forward;

28. WIN: Renovation Permit Issued for the Adaptive Reuse of the Former Precious Blood Church and School at 2401 W. Congress Parkway



Precious Blood Church and School, 2401 W. Congress Parkway. Photo credit: Google Maps



Precious Blood Church Rectory Building, 2411 W. Congress Parkway. Photo credit: Google Maps

“A renovation permit has been issued for the residential development at 2401 W. Congress. Planned by 4Corners LLC, the project site is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of W. Congress Pkwy and S. Western Ave. The four-story building that will be adaptively reused is a former church building for the Catholic Bishop of Chicago.

“Designed by Kennedy Mann, the residential conversion will add 52 residential units, 24 bike parking spaces, and zero car parking space with no commercial space component.

“The building’s ground floor will retain the main entries at the north end of the building and have 10 apartments in addition to a fitness room, bike parking, and mechanical spaces. The second floor will have a large lobby and lounge space at the top of the stairs with 12 more apartments.

“The third and fourth floors will each have 15 more apartments. In total, the 52 residential units will be made up of 34 studios and 18 one-beds. All of the units will be built within the original shell of the building with no additions, cutouts, or added balconies.

“With the interior demolition permit already issued, the issuance of the renovation permit will allow general contractor H&S Remodeling Inc to proceed with the residential buildout once interior demolition is complete. A timeline for the project has not been announced.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 8/12/26)

Preservation Chicago is pleased that the Precious Blood Church and School at 2401 W. Congress Parkway is moving forward toward adaptive reuse for residential. The issuance of the renovation permit means the conversion is now cleared to proceed.

We are particularly encouraged that all 52 units will be built within the original shell of the building, with no additions, cutouts, or added balconies. That is exactly the right approach to a building of this character. Too many conversions of institutional buildings punch new openings through masonry walls and hang balconies off historic elevations in pursuit of a marketable unit mix. Here the building will keep its exterior, and the design has been made to work within it.

It remains unfortunate that the highly ornamented Mediterranean-style Precious Blood rectory building at 2411 W. Congress Parkway could not be incorporated and saved as part of the new development. A rectory of that quality, immediately adjacent to a building being carefully restored, was a candidate for reuse rather than demolition.

Preservation Chicago encourages 4Corners LLC, Kennedy Mann, and H&S Remodeling to retain and restore the building’s significant historic features as the interior work proceeds, and to document the rectory thoroughly before it comes down.

Read the full story at Urbanize Chicago

Renovation permit issued for development at 2401 W. Congress; The four-story building will be converted into 52 apartments, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 8/12/26

Interior demo permit issued for development at 2401 W. Congress, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 6/12/26

City Council approves residential development at 2401 W. Congress, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 12/26/25

Residential development proposed at 2401 W. Congress, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 10/31/25

PARTIAL WIN: Former Precious Blood Church and School at 2401 W. Congress to Be Adaptively Reused for Residential, But Adjacent Rectory Will Be Demolished; Preservation Chicago, 11/2025

29. THREATENED: Years of Unpermitted Alterations Continue at the 1874 Wacker House at 1838 N. Lincoln Park West in the Old Town Triangle District



Wacker House, 1874, 1838 N. Lincoln Park West Photo credit: Google Maps



The Wacker House in 2026 at 1838 N. Lincoln Park West has undergone extensive exterior alterations in recent years, prompting preservationists to call for stronger city enforcement of landmark rules. Photo credit: Patrick Filbin/Block Club Chicago

“Known as the Wacker House, the home has been a hallmark of the city’s North Side for more than 150 years, dating back to the Great Chicago Fire. The property has historical protections both locally and nationally, which — on paper — should mean that projects are well-vetted and, if approved, conducted with its longstanding tenure in mind.

”Unauthorized work, however, is overrunning the structure, according to neighbors and city records. Since 2023, the contested construction has spurred more than two dozen requests for service to various city departments, three stop work orders and an inspection by federal officials.

”For the Cases, who live next door, the changes go beyond a fight for preservation. The work has encroached across property lines and into their everyday lives.

”Around the outset of construction nearly three years ago, the couple’s then 1-year-old daughter suffered from lead poisoning, according to medical records reviewed by the Tribune. The Cases allege their daughter was exposed to the notoriously toxic metal after their neighbor improperly stripped layers of lead paint from his historic property.

”The years since have been a series of pleas to anyone with authority to get the construction to stop. But Elizabeth and Hunter say they’ve been met with repeated indifference and deflection.

”Lately, local preservationists, too, have tried their hand at imploring action. The Old Town Triangle Association — an advocacy group for the neighborhood — has been raising a more public fight over the construction this summer. Construction persists, neighbors say.

”The owner, listed as Michael Gancarz in Cook County property records, did not return multiple requests for comment. Cook County circuit court records show he’s been in foreclosure since April 2025.

”The Cases have lived in Old Town since 2021. They chose the neighborhood, and their home in it, for the character and charm.

“‘It pulled on our heartstrings,’ Elizabeth said, speaking with the Tribune alongside Hunter in a recent interview.”

There were the stained glass windows that framed their entryway, the high ceilings with original light fixtures. And then there was the history.

”The area was settled back in the 1850s by German immigrants. Among those early proprietors was Frederick Wacker, a German-born beer baron who was one of Chicago’s most prominent early brewers. For Wacker and his family, home was 1838 North Lincoln Park West.

”The brick and frame, Swiss-chalet style house that survives at that same lot today stands at some 154 years old. It’s not quite the original Wacker House — that perished in the Great Fire — but the Wackers were quick to rebuild. The Wacker House was later owned by Wacker’s son Charles, who went on to become one of the most influential pioneers of modern Chicago (think Wacker Drive).

”The Wacker properties anchor what was eventually named the Old Town Triangle District, one of the oldest landmarked areas in the city. The district is also listed on the National Register of History Places.

“’This is history,’ Diane Gonzalez, of the Old Town Triangle Association, said. ‘You lose them, then that’s it.’

”Under Chicago’s landmark ordinance, all building permit applications for protected properties must generally go through the Commission on Chicago Landmarks before work can move forward. Projects are reviewed, per the ordinance, to ensure work will not adversely affect any ‘significant historical or architectural feature’ of landmarked buildings.

”Since 2012, the Department of Buildings has issued two building permits for 1838 North Lincoln Park West, one in June 2022 and a second in October 2023. They were both issued for largely similar work: paint removal from brick, removal of aluminum siding and restoring of original wood siding and replacement of water damaged wood on the porch.

“But since June 2023 to date, city data shows that 25 requests for service have been made to various departments alleging a host of complaints and violations at the Wacker House. A bulk of those calls have gone to the Department of Buildings, asserting paint stripping, work encroaching on neighboring properties, alterations to a landmark building and jobsite safety issues, among

30. THREATENED: The 1888 “Big Jim” O’Leary Mansion at 726 W. Garfield Boulevard in Englewood Is Vacant, Boarded, and Headed to Demolition Court



O’Leary Mansion, 1888, Zachary Taylor Davis, 726 W. Garfield Boulevard, Englewood. Photo credit: RedFin

“A colossal mansion on Garfield Boulevard with links to the Great Chicago Fire, the Union Stockyards and Wrigley Field is boarded up and seemingly vacant six years after a longtime owner put it up for sale.

”With the house now headed to demolition court proceedings, its fate is uncertain, but because of its rock-solid brownstone construction, it appears to be holding up while left empty.

”The crumbling former home of ‘Big Jim’ O’Leary — son of the woman who used to get the blame for starting the devastating fire in October 1871, and himself a notorious character who ran a huge gambling hall — went up for sale in November 2020. The asking price was a little under $600,000.

”It had not sold by August 2024, when the asking price was down to $450,000 and was taken off the market.

”Now plywood covers some doors, weeds and debris choke the front and back yards, and the 12-bedroom house looked abandoned when Crain’s took a look over the weekend.

”’It really needs to be buttoned up and watched over,’ said Eric Nordstrom. A Chicago preservationist and architectural historian who salvages and documents historical architecture, Nordstrom showcases objects at his museum and store called Urban Remains on Grand Avenue in West Town.

”’We can’t lose this one,’ Nordstrom said. “Even so, ‘I think it could absolutely be stabilized and saved.’

”The richly carved stone exterior is visibly sturdy, and once-sumptuous interior finishes were still in good condition in photos from several years ago seen in the now-expired listing.

”After this story was published, the Department of Buildings told Crain’s the property is headed for demolition court proceedings within the city’s law department. It’s the first step in a long process whose final possibility Nordstrom, among others, would like to prevent.

”On July 23, a Chicago Department of Buildings inspector issued six citations against the building. They include failure to register an abandoned building and to post the owner’s contact information on the exterior of an abandoned building and failure to ‘maintain building so it does not constitute actual and imminent danger to public.’

”The house’s present condition belies its grandeur. The facade is imposing, with stairs leading up to a columned and roofed porch, bays of windows and a pair of stately, stone-framed windows flanking a round window at the top.

”All around are carved details: botanicals, geometricals, dragons and in one case an image of a woman’s face that legend claims is a representation of star-crossed Catherine O’Leary. (In 1997 the City Council officially cleared Mrs. O’Leary of any blame for the catastrophic fire.)

”The old listing’s interior photos show extensive wood trim, including an opulent carved staircase made of quarter-sawn oak, ceiling beams and window trim.

”Built in 1888, the Renaissance Revival facade was the design of Zachary Taylor Davis, the architect of the old Comiskey Park and Weeghman Park, still standing as Wrigley Field, race tracks, courthouses and churches.

”The house was built for James O’Leary, who was two years old at the time of the great fire and grew up to become ‘the gambling king of the stockyards,’ according to historian John Schmidt.” (Rodkin, Crain’s Chicago Business, 9/1/26)

”Ward Miller, president of Preservation Chicago, said the mansion is not currently landmarked but the group would like a new owner to seek landmark protections especially if they plan major changes to the interior.

”’Ideally we would like it to remain single family, but if the only means of preservation is to convert it into condominiums it would have to be done carefully, with certain interior rooms kept intact,’ Miller said. ‘These are the wonderful stories that are sometimes overlooked. We would like to see the city be more proactive in protecting these buildings and promoting them.’” (Nesbitt Golden, Block Club Chicago, 2/16/21)

Preservation Chicago has been concerned about the O’Leary Mansion since it was listed for sale

31. WIN: Chicago Landmark Plaques Installed at the c.1856 Phebe and John Gray House at 4362 W. Grace Street, the Oldest Residence in Old Irving Park



Phebe and John Gray House, c.1856, architect unknown, 4362 W. Grace Street, Old Irving Park. Designated a Chicago Landmark: March 20, 2024. Photo credit: City of Chicago DPD

“A new Chicago Landmark plaque tells the history of the Phebe and John Gray House in Old Irving Park, but the homeowners decided there was more of the story to tell.

”Kris and David Cloud commissioned a second bronze plaque to accompany the city-issued marker at their circa-1856 home, 4362 W. Grace St. The second plaque adds details about the Grays’ antislavery views and civic contributions, as well as neighborhood lore linking the house to the Underground Railroad.

”’This [house] is a window to our past,’ Cruz said. ‘And how do we preserve history for future generations to come? Both of you are doing this. Thank you for not allowing somebody to demolish this house and bring other properties here, but, rather, retaining that history.’

”The Clouds began seeking landmark recognition after learning about the property’s historical significance from friends and neighbors. It was the only house in the immediate area when it was built, and residential development grew around the original farmstead as Irving Park developed into a railroad suburb. It remains the oldest residence in Old Irving Park.

”The Clouds started the landmarking process in 2022, leading to City Council granting the status in 2024. In remarks at the gathering, David Cloud credited William Tyre and Keith Bringe with helping guide the couple through the process.

”Both plaques are 18-inch-square bronze plates mounted at an angle on concrete foundations. The official plaque describes the Italianate-style farmhouse, the Grays’ arrival as early settlers from New York and John Gray’s service as Cook County’s first Republican sheriff. It also highlights the home’s likely pattern-book design and original architectural features remaining intact including its three-story tower and wood trim molding.

”The second plaque’s additional historical context relates John Gray’s antislavery views and mentions a contemporary account praising his treatment as sheriff of men jailed for antislavery actions. It also addresses unconfirmed rumors connecting the house to the Underground Railroad and describes the Grays’ contributions of land for a township hall, church and railroad, as well as their role in developing the Grayland suburb.

”’(John Gray) apparently was an antislavery guy, and so, in a sense, he was a participant in that struggle nationally,’ Cloud said. ‘I mean, he was not a major cog, he was just a guy, but I think that’s worth remembering.’

”Bringe said the previous owner wasn’t interested in having the property landmarked. The large parcel also could have made the property attractive for redevelopment.

”’The incredible gift that Kris and Dave have given is that this house, if the laws remain the same, will be protected in perpetuity and remain a cornerstone and a touchstone for the community,’ Bringe said.

”Neighbor Laird Larsen said he was among those who asked about the Clouds’ plans for the property when they moved in because he valued its presence in the neighborhood. At the gathering, he thanked them for protecting it.

”’Walking past this house, it’s one of the largest parcels in our neighborhood, it brings a sense of peace and calm to us,’ Larsen said. ‘It’s been more than just a house. As a gardener, it’s just a beautiful garden; it’s a refreshing place to be in.’” (Brinckerhoff, Nadig Newspapers, 8/2026)

”The oldest home in the Old Irving Park neighborhood was designated as an official Chicago landmark by City Council today.

”The Phebe and John Gray House at 4362 W. Grace St. was built in approximately 1856 by John Gray, who served as the first Republican sheriff of Cook County from 1858-1860. The Italianate-style, wood-frame home consists of two main floors and a third-story cupola.

”Designed by an unknown architect, the house originally anchored a large farmstead outside of Chicago’s city limits prior to the area’s annexation in 1889. The Grays were among its early settlers, having moved to Illinois from upstate New York.

”The house’s landmark designation protects its exterior elevations and rooflines from significant alteration or demolition.” (Department of Planning and Development, City of Chicago, 3/20/24)

Preservation Chicago congratulates Kris and David Cloud for this wonderful achievement. We also

32. WIN: Riverwalk Reconstruction and New Dining Completed at the Chicago Landmark 1914 Reid Murdoch Building at 325 N. LaSalle Street in River North



Reid Murdoch Building, 1914, George C. Nimmons, 325 N. LaSalle Street, River North. Designated a Chicago Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo credit: Friedman Properties



Reid Murdoch Building, 1914, George C. Nimmons, 325 N. LaSalle Street, River North. Designated a Chicago Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo credit: Friedman Properties



Reid Murdoch Building, 1914, George C. Nimmons, 325 N. LaSalle Street, River North. Designated a Chicago Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo credit: Friedman Properties / Group LV Hospitality



Reid Murdoch Building, 1914, George C. Nimmons, 325 N. LaSalle Street, River North. Designated a Chicago Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photo credit: Friedman Properties / Group LV Hospitality

“Friedman Properties has announced it completed reconstruction of the riverwalk at the Reid Murdoch Building in Chicago’s River North neighborhood. Together with renovations at River Roast, the forthcoming opening of The Carlyle Club and prior ground-level improvements and activations, the updates represent approximately $15 million in recent investment at the landmark property.

”Originally constructed in 1914, the Reid Murdoch Building long served as the office, warehouse and manufacturing facilities for Reid, Murdoch & Co., one of the country’s largest wholesale grocers. The building hosted traffic courts and other municipal offices for decades, following the city of Chicago’s purchase of the property in 1955.

”The Reid Murdoch Building features a 300-foot riverwalk connecting Clark Street to LaSalle Drive. Friedman Properties’ latest renovation nearly doubled the width of the previous riverwalk and introduced a series of 10-foot-tall double doors in the south elevation, creating new opportunities for outdoor dining and improving pedestrian circulation. The work also included new precast piers, railings, lighting, integrated planters and improved access from the river level for visitors arriving by boat.

”Coinciding with the redevelopment of the riverwalk, operator Levy Restaurants has completed renovations of River Roast, the 28,000-square-foot riverfront venue located in the Reid Murdoch Building. The restaurant’s main event space, which has been rebranded RR Events, now features a new riverside entrance with a curved grand staircase, dual-sided bars and upgraded lighting fixtures, furniture, flooring, tableware and features to improve the guest experience. The renovation also added Corner Roast, a new coffee concept with its own entrance that further diversifies the building’s food and beverage lineup.

”Friedman Properties also closed a lease with The Carlyle Club, scheduled to open at the Reid Murdoch Building in September. Developed by Group LV Hospitality, The Carlyle Club will feature classic American fare and a curated drink menu.

”The restaurants are joined at the building by ‘Theater of the Mind,’ an experiential installation co-created by musician and artist David Byrne that debuted in March 2026. Collectively, these offerings reflect a commitment to programming the building and its riverfront in a way that supports the kind of mixed-use, activated neighborhood that draws people to River North to work, live and visit.

”Over the past year, Friedman Properties has completed interior renovations at the Reid Murdoch Building to support office tenants. These include a lobby transformation, 5,388-square-foot speculative office suite and fourth-floor lounge with kitchen, flexible seating areas, conference rooms and a fitness center with locker rooms, showers and towel service.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 8/21/26)

”325 N LaSalle, constructed in 1914, was designed by George C. Nimmons for Reid, Murdoch & Co. one of the country’s largest wholesale grocers. The riverfront site enabled Reid, Murdoch & Co. to ship and receive goods via a supply chain that connected steamers on the building’s south side to railroad spurs on the northside. Under LaSalle Street, the building’s shipping platform was used to load trucks that delivered to merchants all over the city. The building even connected with the city’s downtown freight tunnel system, 60 feet below street level.

”A notable example of the ‘Chicago School’ of Architecture, the building’s design features a red brick façade with decorative terra-cotta embellishments covering a steel and concrete skeleton. Originally the building was symmetrical, with 6 bays of windows flanking the center tower on both sides. In 1926, one bay on the west end was removed allowing the City to widen LaSalle Street.” (Friedman Properties)

Preservation Chicago applauds Albert Friedman and Friedman Properties for their continued investment in the Reid Murdoch Building. George C. Nimmons’s 1914 Chicago School masterwork, with its red brick facade, terra cotta ornament and commanding clock tower, is one of the great buildings on the Chicago River, and Friedman Properties has been its steward since 1998.

The riverwalk reconstruction has yielded a meaningful public benefit. Doubling the width of a 300-foot public riverwalk, adding river-level access for boats, and opening the south elevation to outdoor dining connects the building to the river in a way that serves both the property and the city. Preservation Chicago has long advocated for an accessible, continuous riverfront, and the Reid Murdoch Building is an excellent example of a Chicago Landmark contributing to that vision.

Read the full story at Urbanize Chicago

33. WIN: Surge Billiards Opens in the Ornate Former Grocery Store at 1734 W. Chicago Avenue in East Village with the Historic Facade Retained



Surge Billiards in West Town,1734 W. Chicago Avenue prior to renovation. Photo credit: Google Maps



Surge Billiards in West Town,1734 W. Chicago Avenue. Photo Credit: Surge Billiards / Anthony Barlich

“Surge Billiards is opening its third pool hall in the city to give neighbors something fun to do in addition to having a meal in an area that’s already home to a booming restaurant scene, its owners say.

”The pool hall will occupy a space previously home to a Catholic Charities grocery store at 1734 W. Chicago Ave. in West Town’s East Village neighborhood.

”’We really want to be a spot that people can go to before and after dinner, and … give them other things that they can do in the area, rather than eat and then have to leave,’ said Wahib Merchant, who co-owns Surge with wife Kareeshma Ali.

”The duo already operates pool halls in Logan Square, 3716 W. Fullerton Ave., and Albany Park, 3241 W. Montrose Ave.

”Unlike its other locations, however, the West Town Surge will also feature seven golf simulators alongside more than two dozen pool tables.

”Surge has undertaken an extensive renovation of the Chicago Avenue building’s interior, but left its unique facade in place. A mural painted by local artist Mauricio Ramirez adorns the building’s eastern exterior wall along Hermitage Avenue.

”Merchant said he hopes the new Surge will be embraced by neighbors for all manner of events and get-togethers, from leagues to casual hangs to community events.

”’I think of [billiards] as not only a game but also a social hub,’ Merchant said. The pool hall is ‘a space where people can use it however they need to use it, whether it’s a fundraiser, whether it’s a charity event, whether it’s a corporate party. It opens itself up to multiple things.’” (Myers, Block Club Chicago, 8/25/26)

Preservation Chicago congratulates Wahib Merchant and Kareeshma Ali on the opening of Surge Billiards at 1734 W. Chicago Avenue. It’s a great project that combines an extensive interior renovation with the ornate historic facade left fully intact, which will reactivate a vacant storefront to active neighborhood use.

We have worked with Wahib Merchant extensively. In 2022 he was planning an adaptive reuse billiards hall in the highly ornamented Smashy’s Garage building at 5006 N. Clark Street in Andersonville. The project stopped after a devastating fire which destroyed the building just before the closing and adaptive reuse. We helped to save some of the terra cotta during the emergency demolition, and which has recently be returned to Mr. Merchant as his rebuilding effort is finally beginning to move forward after an extensive legal process with the prior owner. We look forward to the day when Smashy’s Garage billiards hall will reopen. In the meantime, Chicago Avenue is an excellent example of the vibrancy adaptive reuse brings to a community when an operator embraces the historic building an asset, not an obstacle.

Read the full story at Block Club Chicago

Surge Billiards Brings Pool Hall, Golf Simulators To West Town; The billiards hall, with 14 pool tables and seven golf simulators, will offer cocktails and other drinks but does not have a kitchen. Its owners want to complement an already thriving food scene in the neighborhood, Quinn Myers, Block Club Chicago, 8/25/26

Surge Billiards In West Town Aiming For Late Summer Opening; The local billiards chain aims to open its third location in August or September, owner Wahib Merchant told neighbors at a community meeting Wednesday, Quinn Myers, Block Club Chicago, 4/10/25

Andersonville Businesses, Community, Start Recovering From Devastating Fire That Canceled Neighborhood Festival; Smashy and Star Auto were demolished in the days after the fire. Now, officials and locals are trying to figure out how to rebuild, Francesca Mathewes, Block Club Chicago, 4/29/22

After Tragic Fire, Facade Elements at 5006 N Clark Potentially Saved for Reuse, Uptown Update, 4/26/22

WIN: Surge Billiards Will Open in Ornate Former Grocery Store on Chicago Avenue; Preservation Chicago, 4/2025

34. LOSS: Demolition Permits Issued for the Torstenson Glass Company Building, a 135-Year-Old Chicago Legacy Business, at 3233 N. Sheffield Avenue in Lake View



Torstenson Glass Company Building, 3233 N. Sheffield Avenue. A Chicago Legacy Business since 1889. Photo credit: Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY



Torstenson Glass Company Building, 3233 N. Sheffield Avenue. A Chicago Legacy Business since 1889.
Historic photo credit: Torstenson Glass Company



Torstenson Glass Company Building, 3233 N. Sheffield Avenue. A Chicago Legacy Business since 1889.
Photo credit: Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY



Torstenson Glass Company Building, 3233 N. Sheffield Avenue. A Chicago Legacy Business since 1889. Photo credit: Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY

“Two Chicago real estate companies’ plan to demolish the former Torstenson Glass building and build luxury apartments is moving forward.

“North Park Ventures and SNS Realty Group first announced their redevelopment project for the Lake View site last summer. The companies purchased the property at 3233 N. Sheffield Ave. in July for $6.3 million, according to CBRE, who represented Torstenson Glass Co. in the sale.

“The sale, and subsequent zoning change approved by the City Council in February, clears the way for the companies to turn the site into a new apartment building. Demolition permits were issued in mid-July, city records show.

“Torstenson, a family-owned glass manufacturer, left the building after more than 100 years at the location. The company moved to Morton Grove in February 2025, after announcing the departure in late 2024.

“CBRE’s Land Services Group said there were more than 12 offers on the building.

“The project, dubbed Sheffield Apartments, will become a five-story, wood-framed apartment building with 99 units. Plans submitted to the city show the building will have studios, one- and two-bedroom apartments. It will also include 25 parking spaces, a fitness room, club room and roof deck.” (Miller, Chicago Sun-Times, 8/7/26)

Tim Warren of Torstenson Glass Co. shared the company’s history in a message announcing the move:

“To think that Torstenson Glass has been in continuous operation in Chicago for 135 years is quite remarkable. There are not many companies that can point to a history like that.

“I often get the question where the name ‘Torstenson’ comes from. The company was started by Elmer Torstenson in 1889 on Fletcher St in the Lakeview neighborhood. In 1910, the business was moved to 3233 N. Sheffield which is where it would remain for 114 years. Beginning in the early 1900s and to this day, the operational success of Torstenson Glass has been spearheaded by multiple generations of the Studt family. Alfred Studt was the first to begin working at TG in 1912. His son, Don Studt, began working there and eventually purchased the company outright from the Torstenson family in 1963. Following in his footsteps were Don’s sons Doug and Brad, and then eventually Doug’s son Drew who carries on the tradition. Four generations of Studt’s ensuring the success of Torstenson Glass.

“So, as we leave our home of 114 years on Sheffield Ave, I am eager to reveal the next home of TG at 8270 Austin Ave in Morton Grove.” (Warren, Torstenson Glass Co.)

Preservation Chicago is disappointed that Torstenson Glass Co has relocated out of Chicago and their the longtime home is scheduled for demolition. Founded in 1889 and located at 3233 N. Sheffield since 1910, Torstenson Glass is a Chicago Legacy Business, family-owned and family-operated across four generations of the Studt family, and one of a small number of Chicago companies that can claim 135 years of continuous operation. Torstenson glass and glazing work is found throughout Chicago’s building stock.

The building tells that story on its exterior. The painted signage on the east elevation, visible from the street and from the CTA Brown Line, is a surviving example of the hand-painted industrial signs that once identified working buildings across the city. Vintage industrial buildings like this one are increasingly rare on the North Side commercial corridors, where they anchor the streetwall and carry the record of the neighborhood’s manufacturing past.

Read the full story at Chicago Sun-Times

Lake View’s former Torstenson Glass building will be demolished, replaced by luxury apartments; A pair of Chicago real estate companies will transform the former manufacturing site into 99 luxury apartments, Abby Miller, Chicago Sun-Times, 8/7/26

Three Demolition Permits For Torstenson Glass Buildings Signal Start Of Residential Redevelopment In Lake View, Daniel Schell, Chicago YIMBY, 8/3/26

A Message From Tim Warren, Torstenson Glass Co.

Developers propose luxury apartments at former Torstenson Glass building in Lake View, Chicago Sun-Times, 8/28/25

35. CHICAGO LEGACY BUSINESS: Lou Mitchell's, The First Stop on America's Mother Road, Celebrates 103 Years in the Loop



Lou Mitchell's restaurant, 565 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago. A Chicago Legacy Business since 1923. Photo credit: Chris Cullen

CHICAGO LEGACY BUSINESS: Lou Mitchell's — The First Stop on America's Mother Road — Celebrates 103 Years at the Heart of the Loop

"An old circular neon sign is tucked away in a corner of Lou Mitchell's, the first stop for travelers heading west on Route 66. The sign watches over the 103-year-old diner, 565 W. Jackson Blvd., with the flicker of colorful memories. Route 66 turns 100 years old this year. Mitchell's owner, Nick Thanas, turned 66 last month.

"On a recent weekday morning, the diner had a few Route 66 tourists, office workers and a couple of regulars, but no Caleb Williams. In December, the Bears quarterback snuck in under his hoodie for a scrambled-egg sandwich before the Bears beat Green Bay.

"'Every year since COVID has been better,' Thanas said as he sat at the diner counter with paperwork. 'Route 66 has been helpful. We have a great local following. We just don't want to be a tourist place. When we took this place over 34 years ago from Lou Mitchell, Route 66 was not that relevant. It was decommissioned in 1985. After that, there was a huge change in the hunger for this Americana.'

"William Mitchell opened the diner in 1923 in a railroad car across the street from its current location on Jackson Boulevard. Route 66's original starting point was at Jackson and Michigan Avenue; it later moved to Adams and Michigan due to a change in street directions, according to the Route 66 Association of Illinois.

"William Mitchell named the business after his son, Lou. Lou became a shoe salesman, but in 1936 he partnered with his father and eventually took over the diner, which attracted foot traffic from nearby Union Station.

"In late March, the city of Chicago declared Navy Pier as Route 66's 'centennial starting point' to tie in with the road's end point 2,448 miles away at the Santa Monica Pier in California.

"Well, don't get Thanas started. He rolled his eyes and slapped his forehead with his hand. 'How do I say it? Shame on them,' Thanas said. 'They are already a successful tourist spot, so why would they try to jump on the bandwagon with something that has absolutely nothing to do with Navy Pier? Route 66 truly starts at the footsteps of the Art Institute at Michigan Avenue at Adams Street. We are the first restaurant to stop at, which is six blocks up the street from the beginning. Navy Pier is on Grand Avenue. Unless they took a real big turn north, I don't know how that became part of Route 66. These little mom-and-pop shops need tourism more than Navy Pier does. They've got tall ships. They've got the Ferris Wheel.'

"Some older gentlemen still read newspapers from the counter stools. Senator Dick Durbin is a counter regular when he is in town. Other visitors have included former President Jimmy Carter, JB Pritzker before he was governor and former Chicago Bull Dennis Rodman and his dog.

"Lou Mitchell used to say the diner had double-yolked eggs. 'People would ask, "How do you get double-yoked eggs?" I'd say, "The farm we get them from is next to the nuclear plant." They would just look at me with this face. So if you order two eggs here, you get four. That's part of our history.'

"Lou Mitchell started the diner's tradition of handing out mini boxes of Milk Duds to women and children. Donna Fenton has also been part of the Mitchell's culture for decades. Fenton, who celebrated her 98th birthday in May, was hosting regularly on weekends until about a month ago.

"Thanas has not traveled much of Route 66. 'I've cheated,' he said. 'I've taken I-70 and I-80 and bypassed a lot of it. I've done all of Illinois on Route 66, I've been into Missouri but never gone all the way out because of the time frame. I run a business.'

"And really, that mom-and-pop commitment to purpose and posterity is the engine that runs Lou Mitchell's." (Hoekstra, Block Club Chicago, 6/15/26)

"Lou Mitchell's is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Route 66 through Illinois Multiple Property Submission, captures the building and its place in American travel history:

"One of the first stops on the Mother Road, Lou Mitchell's Restaurant in downtown Chicago offers a scrumptious send off to travelers headed out on historic Route 66. A visit to this crowded, urban establishment is not your average main street experience. It serves to remind us that the hundreds of small towns strung along the great arc of the Mother Road were connected to the two metropolitan giants of Los Angeles and Chicago.

36. CHICAGO LEGACY BUSINESS: The Last Barrel of Schlitz in Chicago Is Tapped at Glunz Tavern at 1201 N. Wells Street in Old Town, While Forty-One Schlitz Tied Houses Still Stand Across the City



Southport Lanes bowling alley, a former Schlitz tied house from 1900 with a painted globe logo, 3325 N. Southport Avenue. Photo credit: Adam Natenshon / Preservation Chicago

“In May, Pabst Brewing announced they were discontinuing Schlitz beer after 177 years. Across Chicago, drinkers scrambled for one last sip. Liquor stores quickly sold out. From Electric Funeral in Bridgeport to Schubas and the Long Room in Lakeview, bars gave last rites to the ‘beer that made Milwaukee famous.’

”But over the weekend, Glunz Tavern, 1201 N. Wells St. in Old Town, declared it was tapping what it claimed was the ‘last barrel of Schlitz in Chicago.’

”Few spots in Chicago have a stronger or longer connection to Schlitz than Glunz Tavern. The Glunzes have been in the beer business since 1879, when Louis Glunz emigrated from Germany and began working for Charles Wacker’s brewery.

”In 1888, with savings and a loan from Wacker, Glunz started his own liquor business at Wells and Division streets.

”Right away, he secured a contract to distribute Schlitz. Horse-drawn carriages, with the Glunz and Schlitz names emblazoned across their sides, bolted around the city to meet the demands of thirsty Chicagoans. Business boomed following the Columbian Exposition of 1893, when Schlitz chose Glunz to become Chicago’s first bottler of the beer.

”The Windy City was so obsessed with Schlitz that the brewery built 57 tied houses — bars that exclusively sold Schlitz — to keep up. Forty-one still stand today, displaying the iconic Schlitz globe.

”’Schlitz was integral to our success,’ said [Christopher] Donovan. ‘It became the biggest beer in the world, it was huge. It’s the reason we’re still here today.’

”Schlitz and Glunz continued to prosper into the 20th century. Both survived Prohibition by adapting their businesses. Schlitz pivoted to candy, syrups and ‘near beer,’ while Glunz switched to selling ‘sacramental wines and medicinal products,’ according to its website.

”Glunz, meanwhile, diversified its distribution and continued to grow. In 1999, Schlitz was sold to Pabst. Though Schlitz’s fortunes faded, Glunz stuck by the beer that helped it get its start.

”’Schlitz has always been a part of us,’ Donovan said.

”At 5:28 p.m., that proved true. What appeared to be the final keg of Schlitz anywhere, kicked in a gush of froth and lager. The beer that helped launch Glunz, drunk by generations of Chicagoans, was declared dead.

”Asked what his great-grandfather would think if he saw people drinking the last barrel of Schlitz at Glunz Tavern, Donovan said: ‘He’d be sad to see it go, but he’d be happy to see all these people in the tavern as it always was. It’d be bittersweet.’” (Niendorf, Block Club Chicago, 8/13/26)

”Founded in Milwaukee in 1849 by a German immigrant named August Krug (Joseph Schlitz, who began as Krug’s bookkeeper, took over the company in 1856 and renamed it after himself) the brand’s popularity exploded across the region in the aftermath of tragedy. When the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 destroyed several of the city’s breweries, Schlitz stepped into the void. Some accounts hold that the company sent beer and drinking water to aid residents in the fire’s aftermath; what is certain is that Schlitz’s Chicago sales doubled by 1872.

”This local importance was made clear to international audiences at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition, which for five months turned Chicago into ‘the White City.’ Schlitz spent $20,000 — more than $740,000 in today’s money — on a professionally designed pavilion inside the fair’s massive Agricultural Building, offering patrons pours of Schlitz beers.

”’There was an exhibition piece I needed to do for the Manufacturer’s Building, the Schlitz Brewery trademark of a huge globe with a buckled belt around it,’ wrote Richard W. Bock, the sculptor tasked with the design, in his memoir, according to City of Chicago documents. ‘This globe was supported by four female figures in playful poses representing the four hemispheres. At their feet were gnomes. Flanking this centerpiece were four pedestals constructed of beer kegs, three to a pedestal, and on top of each a herald blowing a trumpet.’

”Art historians have noted that this ornate commission was the genesis for many subsequent high-profile artistic and architectural collaborations around Chicago.

”’It was Bock’s first use of a globe and supporting figures, a motif that he would employ several

THREATENED: 90-Day Demolition Delay List

The Demolition Delay Ordinance, adopted by City Council in 2003, establishes a hold of up to 90 days in the issuance of any demolition permit for certain historic buildings in order that the Department of Planning and Development can explore options, as appropriate, to preserve the building, including but not limited to Landmark designation.

The ordinance applies to buildings rated red and orange in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey (CHRS), but it should be modified to include all buildings included in the survey. These buildings are designated on the city's zoning map. The delay period starts at the time the permit application is presented to the department's Historic Preservation Division offices and can be extended beyond the original 90 days by mutual agreement with the applicant. The purpose of the ordinance is to ensure that no important historic resource can be demolished without consideration as to whether it should and can be preserved.

Preservation Chicago is advocating to extend the existing Demolition Delay Ordinance to at least 180 days or longer, in order to create the time community members, stakeholders, decision makers, and elected officials need to conduct robust discussions regarding the fate of these historic buildings and irreplaceable Chicago assets. The support of the Mayor and City Council is necessary to advance this effort.

Additional Reading
City of Chicago Demolition Delay Hold List (2026)



1939 N. Larrabee St., Lincoln Park. Photo credit: Google Maps

Address: 1939 N. Larrabee St., Lincoln Park

#101086375
Date Received: 07/24/2026
Ward: 43rd Ward Ald. Timmy Knudsen
Applicant: Tir Conaill Concrete Inc.
Owner: Merrion Development Group
Permit Description: Wreck and remove a three-story masonry multi-family residential building.
Status: **Under Review**



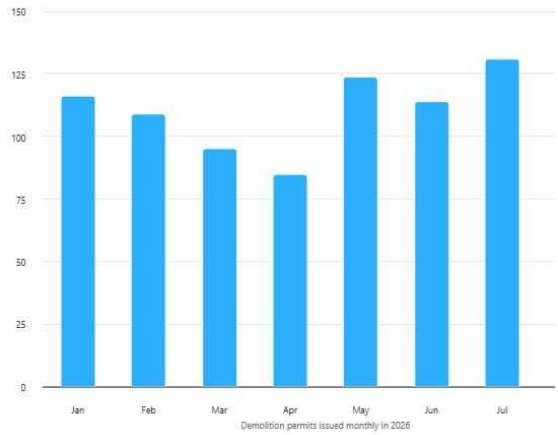
2965 N. Lincoln Ave., Lake View. Photo credit: Google Maps

Address: 2965 N. Lincoln Ave., Lake View
#101082112
Date Received: 04/20/2026
Ward: 32nd Ward Ald. Scott Waguespack
Applicant: RUUK Inc. DBA Maxym Demolition
Owner: Chicago Holdings LLC
Permit Description: Wreck and remove a three-story mixed-use building.
Status: **Under Review**

LOSS: Spotlight on Demolition August 2026

- Holiday Club, 4000–4006 N. Sheridan Road and 1002–1016 W. Irving Park Road, Uptown
- 3619 N. Magnolia Avenue, Lake View
- 909 W. Webster Avenue, Lincoln Park
- 2121 W. Cortland Street, Bucktown
- 1736 W. Farragut Avenue, Andersonville
- 1113 W. Drummond Place, Lincoln Park
- 2438 N. Burling Street, Lincoln Park
- 32 W. 111th Street, Roseland
- 4143 W. 21st Street, North Lawndale
- 5749 S. Laflin Street, Back of the Yards
- 634 W. Aldine Avenue, Lake View
- 4019 W. Monroe Street, West Garfield Park
- 1308 W. Nelson Street, Lake View
- 10627 S. May Street, Washington Heights

"It's an old, common cry in a city where demolition and development are often spoken in the same breath, and where trying to save historic homes from the wrecking ball can feel as futile as trying to stop the snow. My Twitter feed teems with beautiful houses doomed to vanish in the time it takes to say 'bulldozed.' Bungalows, two-flats, three-flats, greystones, workers' cottages. The photos, posted by people who lament the death of Chicago's tangible past, flit through my social media feed like a parade of the condemned en route to the guillotine," mused Mary Schmich in her Chicago Tribune column on July 12, 2018. "Awful! Sad! No More! Stop demolishing Chicago's beautiful old homes"



“Spotlight on Demolition” is sponsored by Chicago Cityscape

See all 90 demolitions during August 2026 at Chicago Cityscape’s Demolitions Tracker

Chicago Cityscape



4000-4006 N. Sheridan Road and 1002-1016 W. Irving Park Road, c.1915, Uptown. A three-story red brick apartment block wrapping the corner above a continuous white terra cotta storefront, longtime home of the Holiday Club. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps

THREATENED: Demolition Looms for Ornate Terra Cotta Holiday Club Building (Chicago 7 2023); Preservation Chicago

Full Permit Issued For 91 Units At 4006 North Sheridan, But Demolitions Still Pending, Daniel Schell, Chicago YIMBY, 8/16/26



3619 N. Magnolia Avenue, 1906, Lake View. A greystone two-flat, the second of two adjacent greystones lost on this block within six months. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Daniel Schell / Chicago YIMBY

Lake View Greystone Next To Demolished Greystone Will Be Demolished, Daniel Schell, Chicago YIMBY, 7/13/26

1910 Wrigleyville Greystone To Be Demolished, Replaced With Two Dwelling Units, Daniel Schell, Chicago YIMBY, 3/2/26



909 W. Webster Avenue, c.1888, Lincoln Park. A three-story rusticated brownstone with raised English basement, arched third-floor window and a wood entry porch with turned columns. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Peter Fynmere



2121 W. Cortland Street, c.1890, Bucktown. A brick residence with a steep front gable and decorative bargeboard, two-story canted bay and contrasting stone banding. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



1736 W. Farragut Avenue, c.1910, Andersonville. A buff brick two-flat with a projecting three-sided bay, bracketed metal cornice and a full-width porch with ornamental ironwork. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Redfin



1113 W. Drummond Place, c.1890, Lincoln Park. A two-story brick two-flat with a projecting bay, bracketed cornice, stone lintels and a wood entry porch with turned posts. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



2438 N. Burling Street, c.1890, Lincoln Park. A two-story rock-faced limestone residence with an arched art glass window, stone stoop and projecting wood entry portico. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Redfin



32 W. 111th Street, c.1915, Roseland. A two-story brick two-flat with a corbelled and stepped parapet, projecting bay, stone accent panels and a carved stone entry hood. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



4143 W. 21st Street, c.1900, North Lawndale. A two-story brick two-flat with a projecting three-sided bay, pressed metal cornice and pedimented parapet. City-owned. Emergency demolition, August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



5749 S. Laflin Street, c.1900, Back of the Yards. A two-story buff brick two-flat with a projecting three-sided bay, corbelled brick cornice and a wood entry porch. City-owned. Emergency demolition, August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



634 W. Aldine Avenue, c.1910, Lake View. A two-story red brick residence with a bracketed and dentiled porch cornice, brick porch piers and a raised entry. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



4019 W. Monroe Street, c.1900, West Garfield Park. A two-story frame two-flat with clapboard siding, a full-height projecting bay, an octagonal attic window and a metal entry canopy. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



1308 W. Nelson Street, c.1890, Lake View. A frame gable-front cottage with fish-scale shingles in the gable, a pedimented entry hood on turned brackets and a boxed bay window. Demolished August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



10627 S. May Street, c.1925, Washington Heights. A brick cottage with a steep hipped roof, corbelled brick chimney and a raised entry. Emergency demolition, August 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps

Preservation in the News

WGN Radio — “Advocating for Chicago’s Historic Architecture and Preserving History” Interview of Ward Miller and Warren Strovel By Steve Dale



Warren Strovel, Steve Dale, and Ward Miller in the WGN Skyline Studio. “Advocating for Chicago’s Historic Architecture and Preserving History” Interview of Ward Miller and Warren Strovel By Steve Dale, 7/12/26
Photo credit: WGN Radio Chicago

“Preservation Chicago is an advocacy organization. It’s a nonprofit that encourages the preservation of historic buildings, and we’re not looking at every historic building. We’re looking at the ones that are most important, that tell a story, that are cornerstones of our community, buildings that are well-published, well-known throughout the world, as Chicago is America’s city of architecture. We work with 77 communities around the city just inside the city limits, and oftentimes we work with Warren and Friedman Properties, and we have a good time doing it.” (Ward Miller)

“Ward’s really out there on the front lines giving these buildings a voice that don’t have a voice, and there’s so many beautiful endangered buildings in our city. You look out the windows even of this studio and you see the mix of architecture. There’s many great things that make Chicago a wonderful place to live, but no doubt architecture plays a critical role in that.” (Warren Strovel)

Asked how many buildings Preservation Chicago has saved:
“Thousands. Thousands between landmark districts and individual landmarks across the city. When you see a landmark district that’s got 300 buildings in it, plus — you get a couple of those, and you’re easily in your thousand mark.” (Ward Miller)

On the Chicago Loop Synagogue and Chicago’s closing houses of worship:
“We see a lot of these houses of worship closing, unfortunately, or consolidating, and that leaves a lot of buildings available. So we’re out there trying to get them landmarked, find other uses for them, something that gives back to the community. But with the Loop Synagogue specifically, you’re looking at a building from the 1950s in the heart of the Loop which is having some struggles. I think they’re committed now to staying downtown because of LaSalle Street and the central Loop being transformed from office to residential or from office to hotels, re-visioning these historic buildings. And in the process we’re getting many of them landmarked. But Loop Synagogue we hope will be with us for a long time to come.” (Ward Miller)

“This is why we’re out there and we reach out to everybody and talk to everybody we can, from aldermen all the way down to community spark plugs, as we like to call them. People that are really interested and have time to work with us, and then we try to work this through the city. And ideally, a Chicago landmark designation is a way of preserving buildings in perpetuity, and we like to go towards that direction, because there’s been a few times where we’ve had to save buildings several times.” (Ward Miller)

On the Church of the Epiphany at Ashland and Adams, now Epiphany Center for the Arts:
“We were trying to save it and landmark it as an Episcopal church, which is what we did, just recognizing its architecture and history. Now it’s Epiphany Center for the Arts, which is an amazing venue. And it still gives back to the community, so that’s really important too. These buildings, we want them to be the hardest working buildings in our city. Our landmarks have to be something for everybody. We really push that.” (Ward Miller)

On Friedman Properties:
“We’ve been around for 55 years. The majority of our portfolio of almost 60 properties are historic properties, many of which were endangered, and that’s how we’ve gotten to know Ward and work together on many different projects over the years.” (Warren Strovel)

“The visions actually occur very quickly, and you have a lot of great ideas. It’s really getting them to pencil out — that’s always really the challenge, finding out how you can make them economically viable. I think that’s always a challenge and why some of them sit and deteriorate around the city and become endangered, because people struggle with that. We consider ourselves stewards of these buildings. We look at it as preserving for future generations of Chicago.” (Warren Strovel)

On Medinah Temple and Tree Studios:
“I’m not originally from Chicago. I came here 15 years ago. I fell in love with the city, and I remember on that first visit to the city seeing Tree Studios and Medinah Temple, the block right there, home of the Bally’s temporary casino. I knew nothing about Friedman Properties. I didn’t have an interest in moving to Chicago. But I just remember how captivated I was with the architecture and the history of that block. The Moorish architecture of Medinah Temple — that building was originally developed by the Shriners as an auditorium. It’s just so uniquely different, and so special in that neighborhood. And to see a relic like that preserved in the heart of our urban environment, I just remember it always sticking with me.” (Warren Strovel)

On the Chicago Daily News Building mural:
“There was this great Art Deco, Art Moderne building on the river, connects the river with Ogilvie Station, formerly Northwestern Station, and it had this beautiful 1930 mural on the ceiling by John Warner Norton. It was 180 feet long, and it was gathering, printing, and distributing the news. And it had airplanes and typewriters and people and reporters and all sorts of things on the ceiling, and it

CRAIN'S CHICAGO BUSINESS: A New Study Questions Chicago's TIF Payoff. Developers Say Growth Wouldn't Happen Without It.



Oak Street Beach. Photo credit: Chris Cullen

“Chicago’s tax-increment financing program was meant to jump-start development in blighted neighborhoods. A sweeping new study argues that after four decades, the incentive has ‘spiraled out of control’ into a financing machine that has mostly boosted downtown and shifted more property taxes onto homeowners.

”But developers who have used TIF heavily to revive long-struggling neighborhoods say the findings paint too broad a picture of a critical tool still helping unlock private investment that conventional lenders and the market alone would not support.

”A deep-dive analysis of the TIF program by University of Illinois Chicago researchers found it has grown ‘far beyond its original intent of helping disinvested communities,’ particularly over the past dozen years as the total balance of all TIF districts skyrocketed to a record $3.4 billion in 2024.

”TIF districts split off property tax gains within a given area to be used for economic development projects in blighted areas of the city, particularly poorer neighborhoods.

”The study also found that since 1986, more than half of tracked TIF spending has backed projects in or near downtown.

”Yet critics of the study raised doubts about such direct connections between TIFs and property tax spikes, arguing that fair measurement of TIF impact requires far more than evaluating property tax growth within districts themselves.

”Among the general public, ‘there’s a fundamental misunderstanding of what TIF is, and the UIC study falls prey to that,’ said David Doig, a former city planning official who leads Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives, the non-profit developer that has spearheaded much of the revival of the Pullman neighborhood on the Far South Side since 2010. A CNI-commissioned report published last year found that redevelopment on and near a 180-acre former Ryerson Steel facility site rebranded as Pullman Park created thousands of new jobs and meaningfully boosted the neighborhood’s median household income.

”’Do you think anything in Pullman would have happened without TIF? Hell no,’ Doig said. ‘We had to have TIF to fund infrastructure costs, put in new roads, water, sewer — it wouldn’t have happened.’

”Doig said TIF’s early purpose in Chicago focused on rejuvenating desolate parts of the Loop and its environs, particularly projects like the theatre district and Millennium Park. More TIF money has also been dedicated downtown over the past decade partly because of unprecedented sweeps of surplus TIF funds to help balance the city’s budget.

”’When you take money out of TIF districts (in blighted neighborhoods) and surplus it, you’re taking the resources out that you need to grow,’ Doig said.

”TIF has been dedicated for major downtown projects since the pandemic battered the vitality of the city’s urban core. The city has approved $322 million in TIF to help developers turn vacant office space in outmoded buildings on and near LaSalle Street into apartments, with an emphasis on affordable units.

”Local taxpayers have had good reason to help bankroll downtown projects: The decimation of commercial property values in the heart of the city has dramatically reduced landlords’ share of the local property tax burden, leaving city homeowners last year with their largest property tax hike in at least 30 years, according to the Cook County Treasurer’s office.

”Other recommendations in the UIC study include pushing the city to be more aggressive about phasing out downtown TIFs ‘that have already accomplished their original goals;’ boosting TIF assistance to small business, neighborhood development and job and workforce development programs; overhauling the city’s TIF data reporting; and creating independent oversight of the TIF program.” (Ecker, Crain’s Chicago Business, 8/28/26)

Preservation Chicago views tax increment financing as an essential tool that has made possible many of Chicago’s most significant preservation successes. TIF is frequently the difference between an adaptive reuse moving forward and a historic building remaining vacant and deteriorating.

David Doig’s observations on Pullman deserve emphasis. Pullman is one of the great preservation and community development stories in Chicago, and it advanced because public investment in roads, water, and sewer made private investment possible. The LaSalle Street corridor conversions

WBEZ Chicago: What's That Building? Promontory Point



Promontory Point, 1937, Alfred Caldwell, Chicago Lakefront between 54th and 56th Streets. Designated a Chicago Landmark in April 2023. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

“Promontory Point, a 40-acre bulb poking eastward into Lake Michigan at 55th Street, is a deliberately picturesque piece of the south lakefront. A peninsula where no cars can go, it feels like a self-contained sanctuary. There’s the red-roofed tower of the stone fieldhouse, the many mature green trees that encircle a big meadow and the stairstep stone revetments that wrap the outer edge of the peninsula.

“It’s easy to see why this beautiful spot has been the scene of many weddings, including one in 2013 where the Hollywood genius behind ‘Star Wars,’ George Lucas, married Chicago financial executive Mellody Hobson. Why in the early 1970s bongo-playing crowds of as many as 600 people would gather here. And why in the early years of the Chicago Marathon this was the halfway point, where runners turned around and headed back north.

“It’s also, at the moment, the most threatened of the south lakefront landmarks WBEZ’s ‘In the Loop’ has toured this summer. A meeting scheduled for July 27 will be the latest front in a battle over the future of the revetments that has been going on for a quarter of a century.

“On one side stand the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Chicago Park District and other government bodies that want to replace the stair-stepping stone revetments that date to the 1930s origin of Promontory Point with concrete, like what is now on most of Chicago’s shoreline. On the other are neighborhood residents and preservationists who say those stones are an integral part of the character and history of this artificial peninsula.

“Progress went in fits and starts over the next two decades, but between 1932 and 1938, the federal Works Progress Administration allocated at least three-quarters of a million dollars — about $18 million in 2026 dollars — for development of what was then called the 55th Street Promontory.

“The fieldhouse, a stone fantasy with a little Juliet balcony over carved wood doors and a sailing ship weathervane flying above the conical tower, is the work of Emanuel Buchsbaum. A park district employee for decades, Buchsbaum was a shape-shifter. He designed this French-inspired fieldhouse, one at North Avenue that looks like a steamship, a classical revival design for Foster Park in Auburn-Gresham and a flat-roofed modernist one in Horner Park in Irving Park.

“Complementing the building is the landscape, a Prairie Style naturalistic layout designed in the 1930s by Alfred Caldwell and revitalized half a century later with help from the very same man.

“Surrounding these elements is the limestone riprap that breaks the waves and provides places for people to sit or launch out into the water for a swim. That’s the part of Promontory Point that has been embattled for most of the present century.

“Even Barack Obama has been involved in this fight. In 2005, when the future president was a U.S. senator living nearby, he sent an aide to a meeting about the project to say ‘historic preservation should be the underlying principle’ of any revetment work there.

“The group Spicer and his wife, Debra Hammond, are part of has held firm, with ample community support, that the limestone is a fundamental piece of the Promontory Point aesthetic. They’ve commissioned studies that show keeping and repairing the limestone can be done for less money and more quickly than building a concrete rim around the peninsula.

“The latest plan by the US Army Corps of Engineers is to close Promontory Point for three to five years beginning in 2027 and replace the limestone with concrete.

“The Promontory Point Conservancy shared with WBEZ results of a poll that shows more than 95% of the 700 people surveyed at the point ‘reported that they would face hardship if [the point] were to be closed for three to five years.’

“Hard as it is to imagine being without this verdant place for so long, it’s even harder to fathom returning to find the whole thing rimmed with concrete instead of the stones that have been there for nine decades.” (Rodkin, Simons, Greaves and Schwabe, WBEZ, 7/27/26)

“‘It’s a Chicago treasure,’ says Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago, who grew up wading in the lake, jumping on the limestone, and lounging in the sun with his dog. ‘It’s one of the last vestiges of stonework and easy access into the water. I think it’s kind of legendary.’” (Lane, Chicago Reader, 3/20/24)

Preservation Chicago applauds the Promontory Point Conservancy for their dedicated advocacy effort to “Save the Point.” Preservation Chicago worked closely with the Promontory Point Conservancy to designated Promontory Point as a Chicago Landmark. We remain strongly

CRAIN'S CHICAGO BUSINESS OPINION: The Properties Nobody Wants Could Help Rebuild Cook County Neighborhoods



Vacant Greystone on the 4300 Block of S. Vincennes. Photo credit: Debbie Mercer

“Cook County has 38,765 severely tax-delinquent properties. But recent property tax reform offers a historic opportunity to transform them from symbols of disinvestment into catalysts of community development. Think of the housing, businesses, jobs, public investments and community wealth these properties can generate, all at a scale once unimaginable in many neighborhoods where they are concentrated. But to return them to productive and taxable use, we must have an adaptable redevelopment plan.

”Fortunately, Cook County has a proactive organization that’s been doing this work all along: Cook County Land Bank Authority, which I lead. We’ve been revitalizing properties the conventional market has left behind, clearing their barriers to redevelopment and connecting them with people who can put them back to productive use since our inception in 2013.

”These are abandoned houses, vacant lots, commercial buildings and industrial sites that sat for years, burdened by back taxes, title problems and other hurdles that make conventional redevelopment financially illogical. What looks like a neighborhood eyesore to many can still be the cornerstone of a family’s, company’s or community’s dream, so we are strategic about which properties to acquire and ready for redevelopment.

”Communities, nonprofits, businesses and developers also bring their vision to us for housing on empty lots, a business in a boarded-up storefront, or a larger development assembled from scattered parcels. We evaluate properties, proposed uses and organizations’ capacity and accept proposals that reflect the highest and best possible use.

”For example, we sold R.A.G.E., the Resident Association of Greater Englewood, a long-vacant restaurant on 59th Street for $35,000 in 2023. With a $2.5 million city grant, R.A.G.E. is transforming it into The Re-Up, a $6.4 million mixed-use development that will house its headquarters and Black-owned businesses, restaurants and other community assets; anchor a commercial corridor; and create jobs.

”For good reason: land banks can do what the conventional market often can’t by eliminating back taxes, penalties and title problems that can make redevelopment financially impossible. By moving qualifying properties through the tax-deed process, we create a path for private or nonprofit development redevelopment projects.

”But nearly 40,000 distressed properties require us to think beyond one parcel at a time. We typically hold and inventory about 2,000 properties, costing roughly $6 million annually as we preserve them for redevelopment. So, we increasingly work with partners to assemble properties into developable sites. One parcel may belong to the City of Chicago, the next to CCLBA and another may be severely tax delinquent.

”Developers and communities do not see separate bureaucratic categories. They see one block. Working with the Chicago Department of Planning and Development and other partners, we can assemble parcels around housing, transit, commercial corridors, schools and community anchors to unlock development that would otherwise be impossible.

”For example, in Roseland we provided 46 parcels to the Hope Center Foundation to support affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization. Our Equity Fund, which provides purchase assistance equal to 6% of the purchase price, up to $20,000, was also available to eligible homebuyers. By requiring buyers to remain in the residence for three years, it also promotes sustained homeownership, not gentrification. Getting people in homes stabilizes communities.

”A third-party analysis of CCLBA’s first decade found it generated more than $1.8 billion in direct and indirect economic impact across Cook County and increased and stabilized nearby property values. Such robust community wealth creation proves these viable properties are transformative resources, and underscores why we must continue to match them with the right partners, clear barriers that keep them frozen and assemble land to scale to change what is possible.” (Caffrey, Crain’s Chicago Business, 8/31/26)

Preservation Chicago views the Cook County Land Bank Authority as one of the most effective instruments available for returning historic buildings to use in disinvested neighborhoods. Back taxes and clouded title are the two barriers that most often doom a vacant historic building, and the Land Bank is uniquely able to clear both.

Vacant lots present a significant challenge to neighborhoods working to recover from decades of disinvestment. Preservation Chicago encourages a heightened focus to prevent the creation of new vacant lots.

WBEZ Chicago: ‘Give while you live’: Who is Museum of Science and Industry founder Julius Rosenwald?



Griffin Museum of Science and Industry / Palace of Fine Arts, Charles B. Atwood, 1893, 5700 S. DuSable Lake Shore Drive in Jackson Park. Restored in 1933 philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

PITN: ‘Give While You Live’ — Julius Rosenwald, the Humble Founder Who Refused to Put His Name on the Museum of Science and Industry

“Rosenwald was CEO of Sears, Roebuck and Co. and one of the greatest philanthropists of the 20th century. Yet the museum he founded never bore his name. Why was the MSI never named after Rosenwald? The simple answer is that he didn’t want it to be. But the longer answer lies in what legacy Rosenwald wanted to leave for communities and his greater philosophy on giving.

“After he retired as CEO in 1924, Rosenwald formed a board to create the museum. At first, the board named the project the Rosenwald Industrial Museum, but he was adamant about going through the two-year process to change the paperwork and remove his name.

“‘If no name is used, it will belong to the people the same as the Art Institute,’ he wrote in a letter, urging for the removal of his name. ‘The people supply the building and will be taxed to support it and then will be solicited to give exhibits and again others contribute money to memberships and special purposes.’

“The renamed Museum of Science and Industry didn’t open until 1933, a year after Rosenwald’s death, but it remained true to his vision: the people’s museum, open to all.

“In the Chicago Journal in 1926, Rosenwald said he wanted a museum ‘free to all where the mysterious processes of industry will be made so plain that every child can understand and learn how the world makes, trades in, and transports its needs.’

“Rosenwald was born in Springfield, Illinois, in 1862 to Jewish immigrants from Germany. He invested in Sears, Roebuck and Co. and became its president and CEO in 1908 after co-founder Richard Sears resigned.

“‘He was indeed a gifted businessman, although he never took a course in business,’ [grandson Peter Ascoli] said. ‘He never finished high school, and he never went to college … Because he was the sort of man he was, he refused to accept an honorary degree from any educational institution that wanted to offer one to him.’

“One of his first major projects was with the YMCA, specifically to build and construct YMCAs for Black people across the U.S. … Although Rosenwald viewed YMCAs as valuable places for recreation and travel, Black people were often not allowed in YMCAs in white neighborhoods. In 1911, he offered to donate $25,000 to groups of Black people in major cities if they could raise an additional $75,000 to cover construction.

“In about a year, coalitions of Black people in six cities had all reached their campaign goals, with other cities well on their way. This is how Chicago got its famous Wabash YMCA — the place that would birth Negro History Week, which would turn into Black History Month.

“Rosenwald then joined Booker T. Washington in a 1912 program to build elementary schools in Southern states, which in just a few decades would educate 1 in 3 Black children.

“‘By 1938, there were over 5,300 of these schools throughout the South with African American communities, sharecroppers, moonshiners, teachers, day laborers, housekeepers donating $4.7 million towards this effort, and Julius Rosenwald donating $4 million to this effort,’ [historian Kimberly] Ransom said.

“Rosenwald’s philanthropy was radical for the time. He pioneered a different way of giving. ‘He created the first foundation in American history to go out of existence voluntarily,’ Ascoli said.

“Instead of saving money for later use, he wanted to spend it on the people and causes that needed it now. His philosophy was to ‘give while you live,’ and his foundation, the Julius Rosenwald Fund, went out of existence in 1948 — exactly how he planned.” (Nettles, WBEZ Curious City, 7/15/26)

Preservation Chicago has been working to support the Rosenwald Campaign to honor Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools with Dorothy Canter for several years. We were the first Chicago organization to sign on as a sponsoring partner and hope to see a strong Chicago presence for the Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park.

Read the full story at WBEZ

‘Give while you live’: Who is Museum of Science and Industry founder Julius Rosenwald?; The

Preservation Events & Happenings

Preservation Chicago Opens Office to Guests for Loop Arts Fest by Chicago Loop Alliance Saturday, October 17, 2026



Preservation Chicago is participating in the Loop Arts Fest on Saturday, October 17. Our office in the Williams Building at 205 West Monroe Street, Suite 400, will be open and hosting guests from noon to 6:00 p.m. Please stop by, meet our staff, and learn about our advocacy work across the city. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

Preservation Chicago is participating in the Loop Arts Fest by Chicago Loop Alliance on Saturday, October 17. Our office in the Williams Building at 205 West Monroe Street, Suite 400, will be open and hosting guests from noon to 6:00 p.m. Please stop by, meet our staff, and learn about our advocacy work across the city.

The Loop Arts Fest is a day-long street festival closing State Street to vehicular traffic between Jackson and Madison from noon to 6:00 p.m. Presented by the Chicago Loop Alliance, the festival combines on-street activations with amplification of existing offsite programming to showcase the breadth of the Loop's cultural community.

"The Loop is the heart of downtown, where arts and culture move on the same grid as the city's business, transit, and everyday life." (Chicago Loop Alliance)

We hope you will include Preservation Chicago in your itinerary.

Loop Arts Fest; Chicago Loop Alliance

RSVP for Loop Arts Fest; Eventbrite

Preservation Chicago; The Williams Building, 205 West Monroe, Suite 400, Chicago, Illinois 60606



Chicago Architecture Center Presents
Open House Chicago 2026
October 17 and 18, 2026



Chicago Loop Synagogue was founded in 1929 to serve the religious needs of Jews who lived, worked and visited downtown, and today it hosts people from around the world. The building was designed by Loebl, Schlossman and Bennett and is considered an excellent example of mid-century modern artchitecture. It was built in 1957 to replace a structure on the same block that had been lost to fire. The entrance is crowned by the Henri Azaz sculpture "Hands of Peace." A wall of stained glass by Abraham Rattner breaks the reserved minimalism of the sanctuary, leading one critic to describe it as "perhaps the most beautiful synagogue interior in the United States." Preservation Chicago has named this architectural gem one of the seven most endangered buildings for 2026. Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

Ward Miller and Preservation Chicago have been invited to lead tours of the Chicago Loop Synagogue during Open House Chicago on Sunday, October 18, 2026. We hope to see you.

Open House Chicago returns on Saturday, October 17 and Sunday, October 18, 2026 for its sixteenth year. Organized by the Chicago Architecture Center, the festival opens more than 200 sites across 30 neighborhoods, many of them rarely accessible to the public. Admission is free and no advance registration is required. Visitors choose their sites and arrive during the listed open house hours.

New this year is “Built on Belief,” a program exploring the intersections of architecture, religion and spirituality. Three Woodlawn sites — the Narrow Bridge Arts Club, First Presbyterian Church of Chicago, and Oak Woods Cemetery — will create site-specific exhibitions and programs telling the story of how the neighborhood has been shaped by faith communities and sacred places over generations.

Several sites return after a hiatus, including the House of Blues, The Plant in Back of the Yards, the Auditorium Theatre, the Center for Native Futures in the Marquette Building, the Park Castle Condominiums in Rogers Park, the Al-Sadiq Mosque in Bronzeville, Birch Road Clubhouse in Lincoln Park, and the Pui Tak Center in Chinatown.

Returning favorites include the Chicago Magic Lounge, Electrical Audio, the Chicago Board of Trade, Apollo’s 2000, the Avalon Regal Theater, the Stony Island Arts Bank, the Walt Disney House and Birthplace, the Irish American Heritage Center, the Bronzeville Forum, and Willie Dixon’s Blues Heaven Foundation at Chess Records.

”We hope that attendees strengthen their relationships with architectural spaces in their own neighborhoods, while also exploring diverse communities across the city and gaining confidence to participate more fully in conversations around architecture, design and civic life,” said Chicago Architecture Center President and CEO Eleanor Esser Gorski.

The festival draws more than 35,000 visitors each year. The OHC Photo Competition also returns, open to all ages and skill levels, with six winners to have their work displayed at the Chicago Architecture Center.

Preservation Chicago encourages our members and readers to take part. Open House Chicago is the single best opportunity each year to see the interiors of buildings that are otherwise closed, and it builds the public constituency that preservation depends on. We are particularly glad to see the Sears Sunken Garden in North Lawndale on the list for the first time, as restoration of its 1907 pergola is underway.

Open House Chicago 2026; Chicago Architecture Center

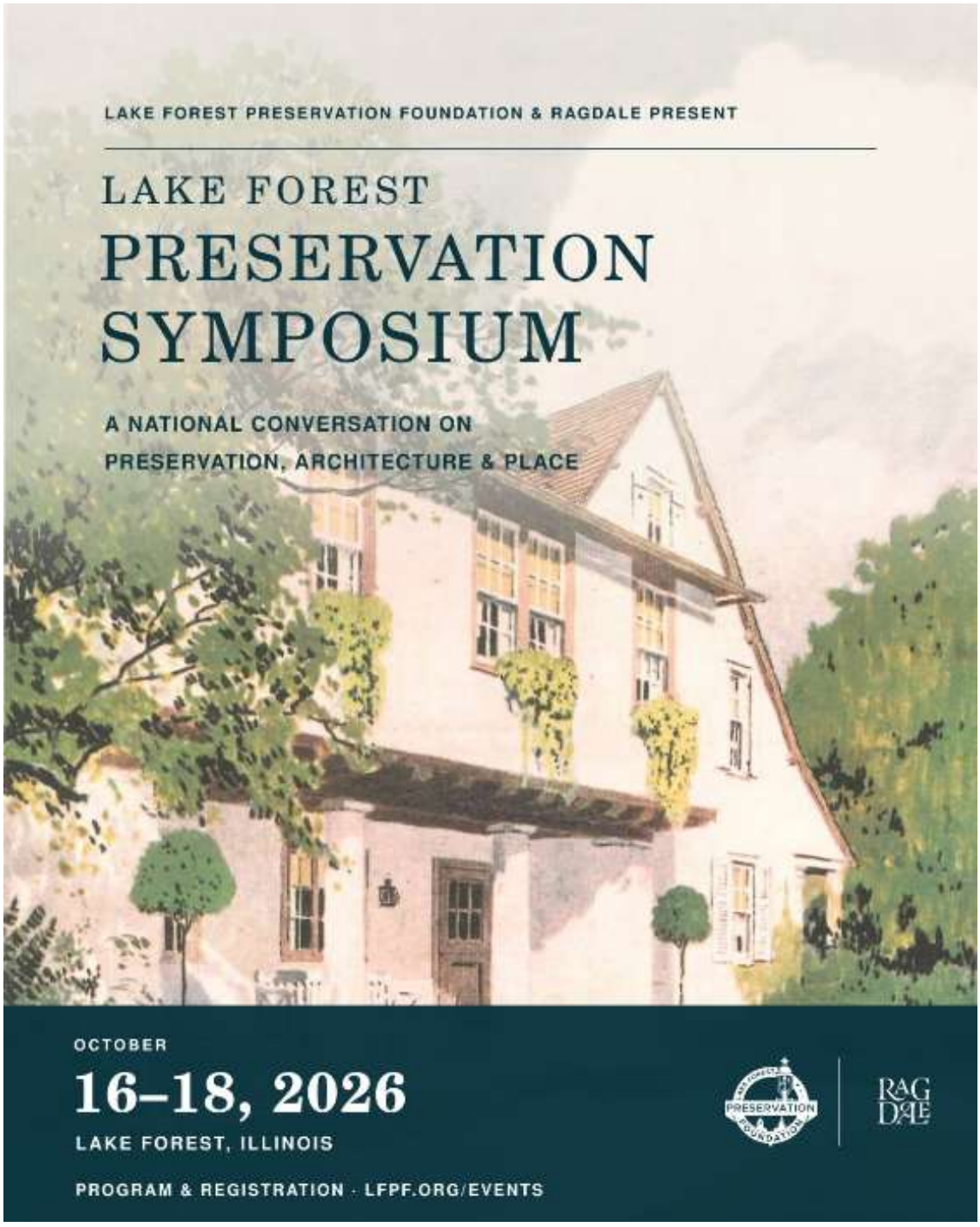
Open House Chicago Full 2026 Lineup Announced, Including 20 New Sites, WTTW News, 9/9/26

Open House Chicago Returns Next Month With Over 200 Sites, Including 20 New Ones, Leen Yassine, Block Club Chicago, 9/9/26

Open House Chicago 2026: dates, schedule, locations, Chicago Sun-Times, 9/9/26

OHC Photo Competition 2026; Chicago Architecture Center

Lake Forest Preservation Foundation Presents Lake Forest Preservation Symposium of Chicago October 16 to 18, 2026



Lake Forest Preservation Symposium. Image credit: Lake Forest Preservation Foundation

The Lake Forest Preservation Foundation and Ragdale present the Lake Forest Preservation Symposium from Friday, October 16 through Sunday, October 18, 2026, marking the 50th anniversaries of both organizations. Sessions take place at Ragdale, the former summer retreat of Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw, at Lake Forest College, and at historic sites throughout Lake Forest.

Friday opens with a Founders' Reception at Ragdale from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. honoring the founders of both organizations and early preservation advocates, with a preview of the exhibition "Fifty Years of Preservation and Art."

Saturday is the main symposium day, at Ragdale and Lake Forest College's Lily Reid Holt Memorial Chapel. "Why Preservation Matters: How is Lake Forest Different?" brings together Bonnie McDonald of Landmarks Illinois, architect Tom Rajkovich, and critic Blair Kamin. Geoffrey Baer moderates a session on the legacy of Howard Van Doren Shaw, David Adler and Stanley Anderson with Stuart Cohen, Stephen Salny and Paul Bergmann. An afternoon session, "Preservation vs. Progress: Who Owns the Future of Our Cities?," features Steven Semes, Richard Economakis, Jason Wicha, Lee Bey and Javier Quintana de Uña, and Bill Kurtis moderates the closing session, "The Future of the Past: What's Next for Preservation?"

Workshops run at Ragdale through the day on tax incentives for historic homeowners, window and roofing repair, and the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission process, alongside a garden luncheon and book signings.

Sunday is Community Heritage Day, with an open house tour of the Holt House and the David Lake House from 10:00 a.m. to noon and a closing reception at the Lake Forest Library.

Preservation Chicago encourages our members and readers to attend. The full three-day schedule and registration are available through the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation.

Lake Forest Preservation Symposium; Lake Forest Preservation Foundation

LF Preservation Symposium — Main Symposium Day Tickets, Saturday, October 17; Eventbrite

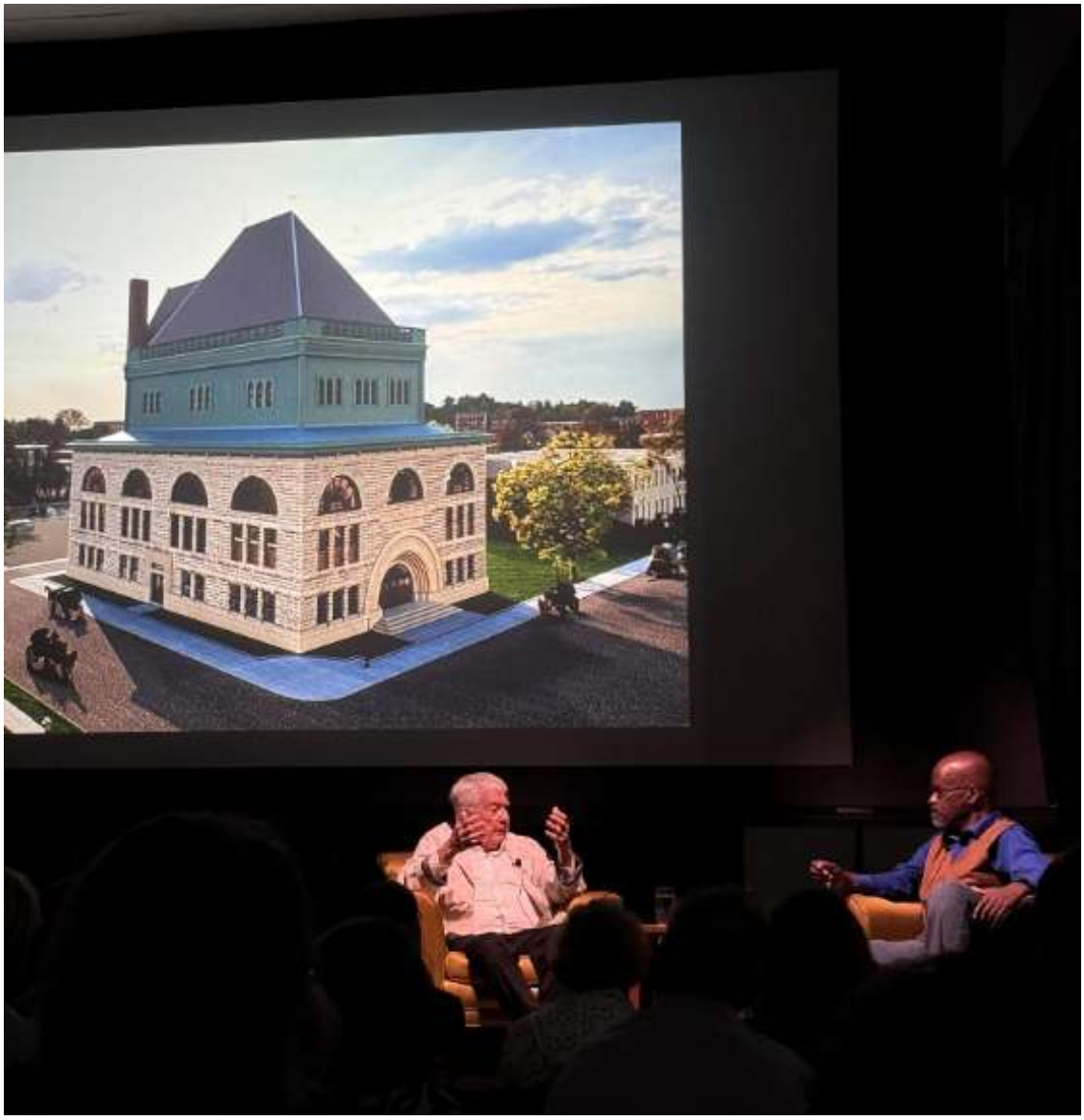
Lake Forest Preservation Symposium Runs October 16-18, 2026 at Ragdale Estate; Traditional Building, 6/12/26

Ragdale

Sold-Out Screening of John Vinci's KAM/Pilgrim Baptist Church Virtual Reality Film at the Arts Club of Chicago, June 30, 2026



John Vinci's KAM/Pilgrim Baptist Church Virtual Reality Film. Image credit: John Vinci



Sold-Out Screening of John Vinci's KAM / Pilgrim Baptist Church Virtual Reality Film at the Arts Club of Chicago, June 30, 2026. John Vinci interviewed by Lee Bey. Photo credit: Yuke Li / Preservation Chicago



Sold-Out Screening of John Vinci's KAM / Pilgrim Baptist Church Virtual Reality Film at the Arts Club of Chicago, June 30, 2026. John Vinci interviewed by Lee Bey. Photo credit: Yuke Li / Preservation Chicago

On June 30, Preservation Chicago was proud to co-sponsor the inaugural screening of a remarkable new virtual reality film by architect and preservationist John Vinci, presented to a sold-out audience at the Arts Club of Chicago. The evening began with a reception at 6:00 PM, followed by a program at 6:30 PM in which John Vinci was interviewed by architectural historian Lee Bey about the making of the film, the significance of the building, and his personal relationship to the building over a period of many decades.

The subject of the film is one of Chicago's most significant, and most heartbreaking, architectural losses: the KAM/Pilgrim Baptist Church at 33rd and Indiana Avenue, designed by Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan and completed in 1891 for the Kehilath Anshe Ma'ariv congregation. It was one of the great buildings of the first Chicago School of Architecture.

In 1927, the congregation sold the building to the Pilgrim Baptist Church, which made it a cornerstone of Chicago's South Side gospel music tradition; the church's modest alterations — a baptismal font, choir platforms, and murals by the celebrated Black artist William Edward Scott — layered new meaning onto Sullivan's extraordinary interior. The building was destroyed in a devastating fire in January 2006, a painful moment in Chicago's history that still hurts decades later.

Vinci's 13-minute virtual reality film project is an extraordinary effort produced in partnership with virtual reality filmmaker Razin Khan, and with project support by Ward Miller and Preservation Chicago. The film uses extensive archival photographs, architectural drawings, and three-dimensional reconstruction to bring the building back to life on screen — allowing viewers to move through and experience the interior as it appeared both as KAM synagogue and later as the Pilgrim Baptist Church.

Preservation Chicago has been a close partner in this project across its multi-year development, and we were honored to sponsor its public debut. We are currently partnering with John Vinci on an even more ambitious virtual reality film recreation of Louis Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange Building.

The sold-out house on June 30 confirmed what Preservation Chicago has long believed: Chicagoans care deeply about KAM/Pilgrim Baptist Church and remain optimistic that one day it will be rebuilt. The VR film is not only a work of architectural history — it is a tool for the future, one that can help donors, planners, and community members visualize the extraordinary possibility of adaptive reuse.

We congratulate John Vinci on the completion of this remarkable project. Bravo!

Bridgehouse Museum presents “Unlocking Potential: Leveraging The Power of Preservation to Reactivate Chicago’s Bridgehouses as Community Cultural Spaces” Thursday, July 23, 2026



Bridgehouse Museum presents “Unlocking Potential: Leveraging The Power of Preservation to Reactivate Chicago’s Bridgehouses as Community Cultural Spaces” Photo credit: Debbie Dodge / Preservation Chicago



Bridgehouse Museum presents “Unlocking Potential: Leveraging The Power of Preservation to Reactivate Chicago’s Bridgehouses as Community Cultural Spaces” Photo credit: Debbie Dodge / Preservation Chicago



Bridgehouse Museum presents “Unlocking Potential: Leveraging The Power of Preservation to Reactivate Chicago’s Bridgehouses as Community Cultural Spaces” Photo credit: Debbie Dodge / Preservation Chicago



Bridgehouse Museum presents "Unlocking Potential: Leveraging The Power of Preservation to Reactivate Chicago's Bridgehouses as Community Cultural Spaces" Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

Bridgehouse Museum presents
“Unlocking Potential: Leveraging The Power of Preservation to Reactivate Chicago’s Bridgehouses as Community Cultural Spaces”
Thursday, July 23, 2026
5:15 PM - 6 PM

“Chicago’s historic bridges and their tender houses are among the city’s most recognizable civic landmarks, standing as enduring symbols of engineering innovation and the river that shaped Chicago’s growth. Yet many of our bridgehouses remain vacant and underutilized, disconnected from the communities that surround them.

Join Preservation Chicago Executive Director Ward Miller and Tender House Project founder Mejay Gula for a conversation about preserving and reimagining these remarkable bridge operator buildings for future generations. It’s hosted by the McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum, a prime example of how these buildings can be repurposed for the public good.

Ward will discuss the inclusion of Chicago’s bridges and bridge tender houses on Preservation Chicago’s 2026 Chicago 7 Most Endangered list. Their architectural significance, current challenges, and the urgent need to protect these unique structures call for immediate attention.

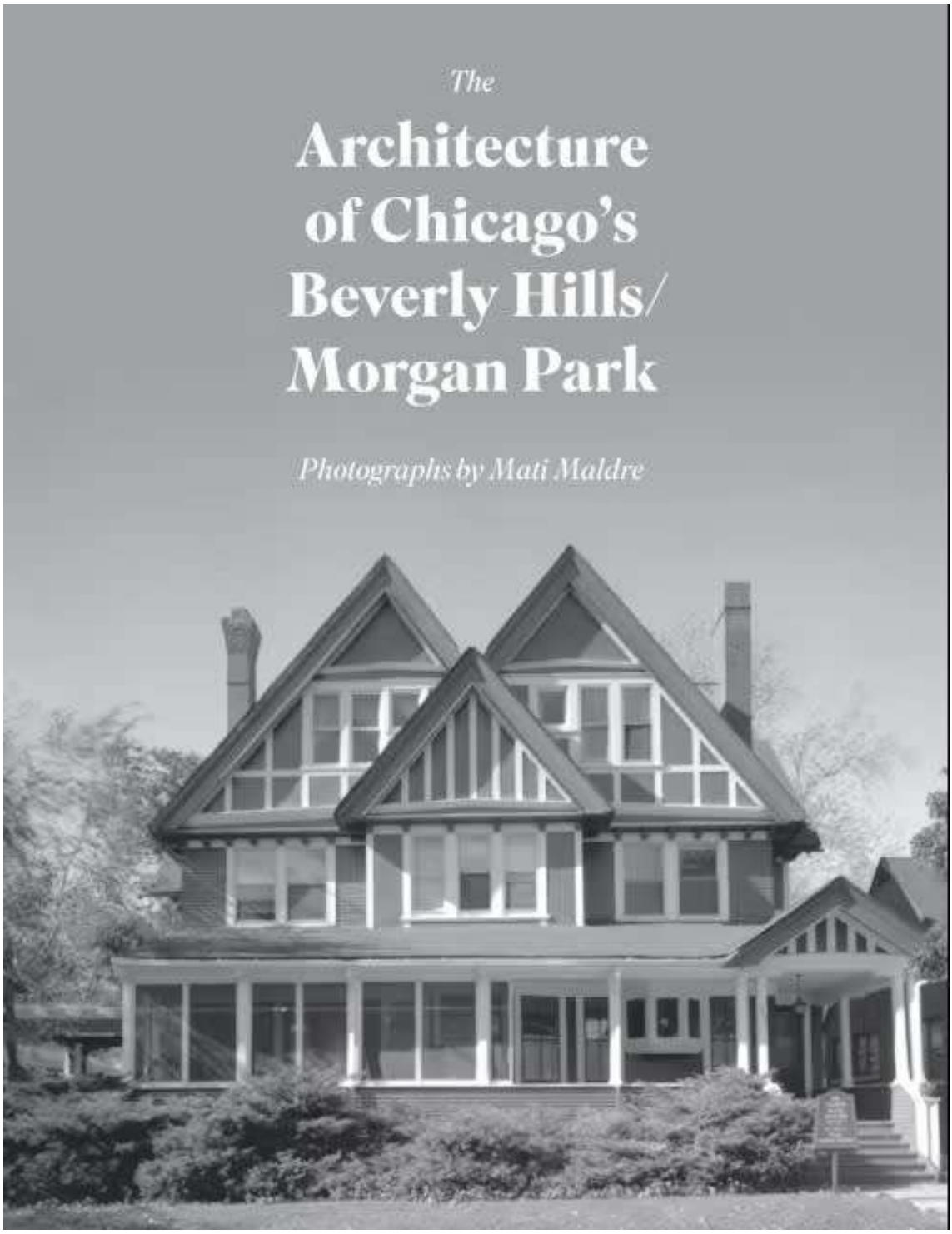
Building on that foundation, Mejay will share a vision for how preservation can become a catalyst for community connection. Through the Tender House Project, a nonprofit initiative dedicated to preserving and reactivating historic bridgehouses, she will explore how these vacant civic assets can be transformed into neighborhood-centered cultural spaces that expand public access to the Chicago River.

As Chicago continues to invest in its riverfront, this conversation about preservation through stewardship is more timely than ever. It demonstrates how adaptive reuse can protect historic landmarks like the bridges and bridgehouses by transforming them into vibrant community assets that connect neighborhoods, celebrate culture, and ensure the river belongs to everyone..” (Bridgehouse Museum)

Bridgehouse Museum Website

Books & Films

The Architecture of Chicago's Beverly Hills / Morgan Park
By Mati Maldre



The Architecture of Chicago's Beverly Hills/Morgan Park, By Mati Maldre Image credit: Arcadia Publishing

“The Architecture of Chicago’s Beverly Hills/Morgan Park is the first complete large-format visual record published of these Southwest Side twin communities in Chicago. The historic and significant architecture and distinctive landscape of these neighborhoods is gorgeously captured by Mati Maldre in hundreds of photographic plates, maps, and illustrations, supplemented by essays by Timothy Barton, Harold Wolff, Robert Wagner, and Paul Sprague.

"Many of Chicago’s most important designers are represented in this community, including Frank Lloyd Wright, George Washington Maher, Daniel H. Burnham, Robert E. Seyfarth, Dwight H. Perkins, Robert S. Smith, and Walter Burley Griffin. This community also called on noteworthy local architects, including Harry Hale Waterman, Rudolph P. Boehm, and John Todd Hetherington and his son Murray. The book also documents nationally and locally designated historic districts such as the Ridge Historic District, Longwood Drive, the Walter Burley Griffin Place District, and the Beverly/Morgan Park Railroad Station District, as well as individual designated historic houses.” (Arcadia Publishing)

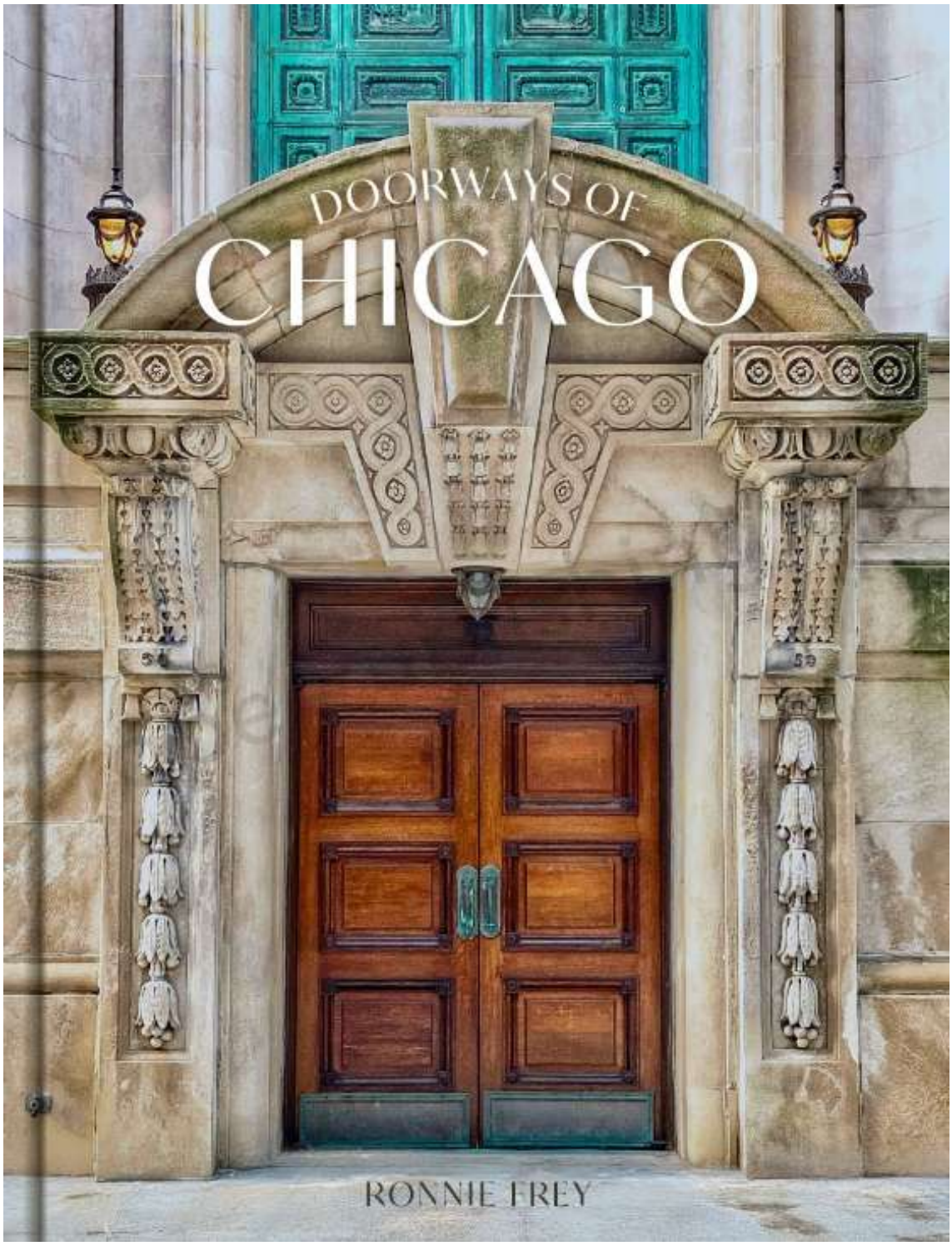
“I have a tremendous collection of pictures of the architecture in the community, and it just seemed to make sense to do a book — to share this visual information with everyone, to let people know about what a great community Beverly Hills and Morgan Park is,” Maldre said.

“Maldre’s work is on display at the Ridge Historical Society, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., as the society celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Ridge Historic District. The district, described as an outdoor museum of architecture, runs from 87th to 115th streets in Beverly and Morgan Park.” (Lynch, Block Club Chicago, 7/31/26)

The Architecture of Chicago’s Beverly Hills/Morgan Park, by Mati Maldre, Arcadia Publishing, 368 pages

Historic Beverly And Morgan Park Architecture Captured In Neighbor’s New Book, Photographer Mati Maldre has spent decades capturing the architecture and landscapes that make Beverly and Morgan Park unique. He’ll be at a book launch and signing event Saturday at Bookie’s, Jim Lynch, Block Club Chicago, 7/31/26

Doorways of Chicago
by Ronnie Frey



Doorways of Chicago, Ronnie Frey. Image credit: Trope Publishing Co.

“Doorways of Chicago offers a new and colorful photographic tour of one of the world’s most exciting cities.

“With more than 100 photographs of Chicago’s most iconic and unique doorways from Ronnie Frey, creator of the popular Instagram account of the same name, Doorways of Chicago presents an entirely new way to explore the city. With a keen eye for detail and a deep love for Chicago’s layered architectural history, Ronnie sees the city differently, and his photos highlight more than just doors and buildings—he captures atmosphere, memory, and soul. His photographs feature doorways, cornices, arches, and façades—details many overlook.

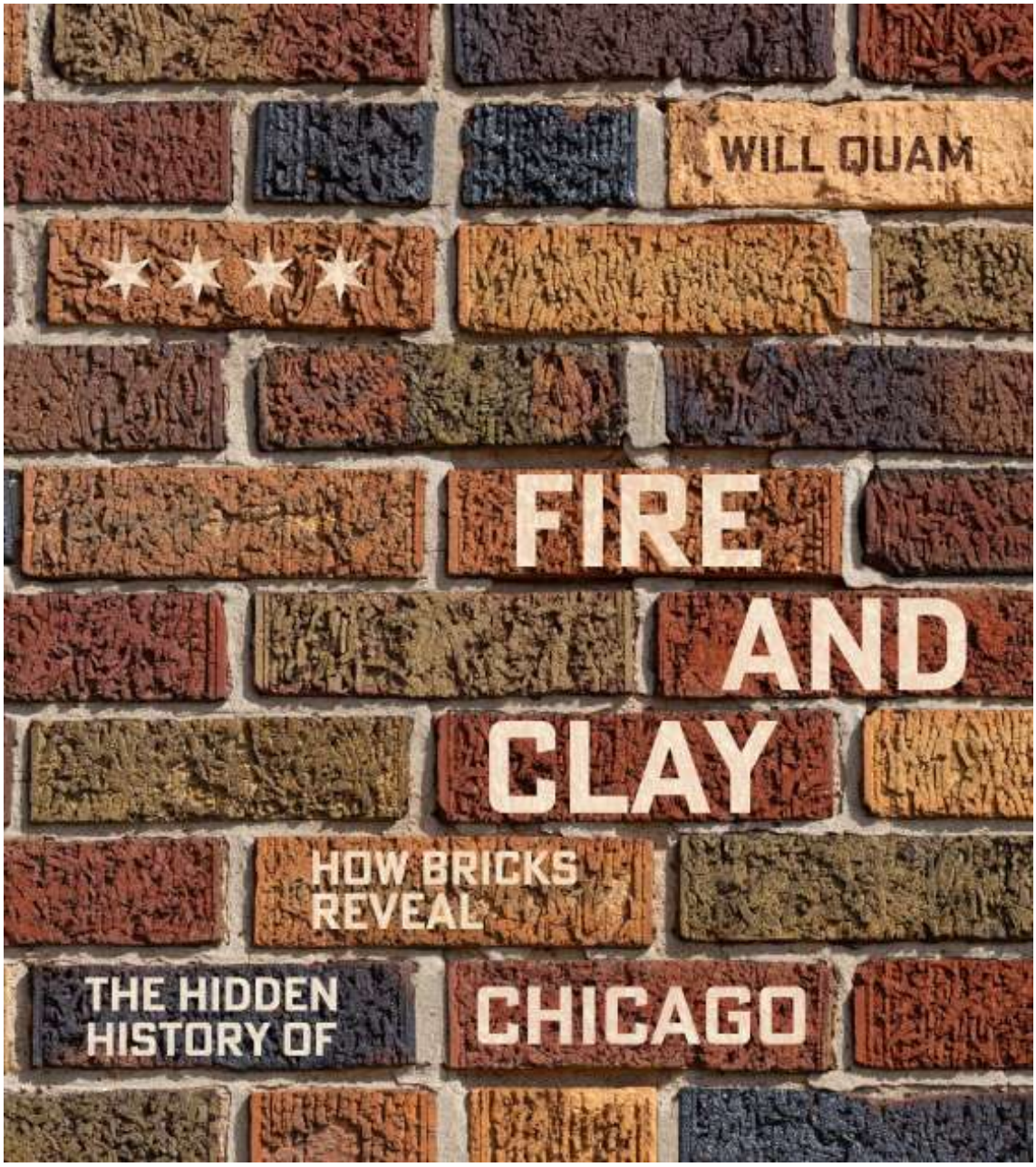
“Including images from more than 40 distinct neighborhoods—such as Bronzeville, Uptown, Lincoln Park, and the Gold Coast—Doorways of Chicago also highlights stories about ten of the city’s most iconic doorways. Together, these elements offer a unique perspective that inspires readers to notice the beauty waiting around every corner, in every doorway.”

Doorways of Chicago, by Ronnie Frey, Trope Publishing Co, 160 pages

This Photographer Has Captured 144 Stunning Chicago Doorways—And Published Them All in a Book, Tour guide and photographer Ronnie Frey is the creative force behind the Instagram feed Doorways of Chicago, and his delightful new book is a must-read, Amy Bizzarri, Midwest Living, 3/9/26

Doorways of Chicago, Ronnie Frey’s streetfront photography spotlights beauty hidden in plain sight, Mike Thomas, Chicago Magazine, 6/1/26

Fire and Clay: How Bricks Reveal the Hidden History of Chicago
by Will Quam



Fire and Clay; How Bricks Reveal the Hidden History of Chicago, Will Quam. Image credit: University of Chicago Press

“A remarkable exploration of Chicago’s architectural history through the humble brick.

“By the late 1920s, at its peak of brick making and consumption, Chicago was making over a billion bricks a year for its buildings and importing almost another billion nicer face bricks for their front facades. Throughout Chicago’s history, brick dramatically transformed from a simple fireproof building material into an integral piece of architectural design. And no one knows the hidden details and stories of this fascinating history like Chicago’s foremost brick aficionado, Will Quam.

“In Fire and Clay, Quam takes us on journeys to experience the beauty and mystery of Chicago’s buildings. He also explores how developers, architects, and masons followed changing fashions as they designed and built the city, creating connections across disparate neighborhoods. The red bricks that make up Lincoln Park mansions, for example, are the same as those found on Pullman row homes and Pilsen workers’ cottages, just as Rogers Park’s colorful bricks can also be found far across the city in South Shore. Known for his popular walking tours, Quam has built his life around the appreciation, study, and evangelizing of this most humble building block’s many wonders. Here, he pours all his knowledge into the first book of its kind, beautifully illustrated with more than one hundred of his own full-color photographs.

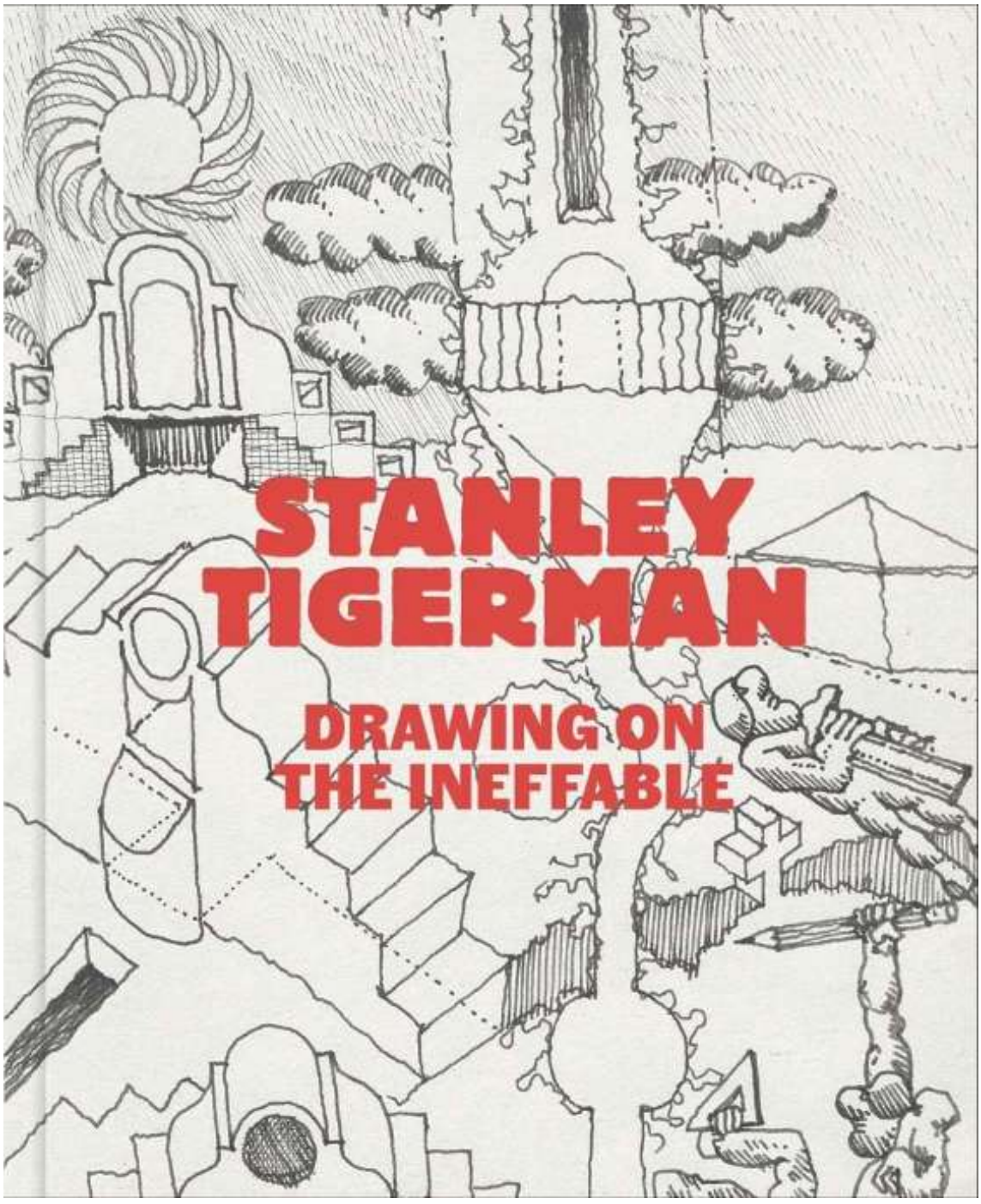
“More than just an investigation into brick, Fire and Clay gives readers a fresh lens through which to explore the city anew and find clear connections across its different neighborhoods. By the end of this lively tour through Chicago’s history, readers will never look at a brick building the same way again.” (University of Chicago Press)

Fire and Clay: How Bricks Reveal the Hidden History of Chicago, Will Quam, University of Chicago Press, 320 pages

Chicago is a city made of its own brick: A new book says that was a stroke of luck, Nina Metz, Chicago Tribune, 5/6/26

A History of Chicago Architecture with the Humble Brick as Guide, Daniel Hautzinger, WTTW Chicago, 5/4/26

Stanley Tigerman: Drawing on the Ineffable
Edited by George Papamattheakis



The Uptown: Chicago's Endangered Movie Palace, by Robert Loerzel and James A. Pierce. Image credit: CityFiles Press

“At his passing in 2019, Stanley Tigerman had been one of the city’s most influential architects for almost 60 years. The Chicago native worked for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and George Fred Keck during the 1950s before nabbing two architecture degrees in as many years from Yale’s School of Architecture and then putting out his own shingle in 1962.

“A new book recently published by his alma mater, ‘Stanley Tigerman: Drawing on the Ineffable,’presents drawings from every phase of his career chosen from among more than 2,000 items donated by the architect to Yale.

“For those of us who knew Stanley — and he seemed to know everybody — he could be an exasperating force of nature. But three things were never in doubt: his devotion to Chicago, his dedication to architecture and his sense of humor that extended to all things architectural and otherwise. The book captures this sensibility well.

“In the years following Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s death in 1969, large offices like Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and Perkins & Will dominated the Chicago architectural scene. But Tigerman led a small office revolution during this period, spawning a group of young practitioners including Larry Booth, Jim Nagle, Tom Beeby and Stuart Cohen who transformed architectural culture and practice in the city.

“The Anti-Cruelty Society (1982) at LaSalle and Grand was designed to encourage pet adoption by placing as many animals as possible in wide windows surrounding the domestically scaled front entrance. The now-shuttered Hard Rock Café (1985) at Clark and Ontario demonstrates Tigerman’s contrarian streak by wrapping a rock ‘n’ roll-themed burger joint in a classical French orangery. The Lake Street Self Park (1986) at 60 E. Lake St. renders a midblock parking garage as a memorably oversized car grill. Possibly his most substantially constructed building is the Commonwealth Edison Substation (1989) at Dearborn and Ontario, another classically inspired structure that sits next to the earlier Hard Rock Café. His last years of practice were devoted to two major projects that revolved around Tigerman’s long-standing social concerns: the sturdy and utilitarian Pacific Garden Mission (2007) on Canal and 14th and the iconographically freighted Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center (2009) in Skokie

“But Tigerman’s built legacy is in peril. Despite his fame and enduring influence, none of his buildings enjoy landmark protection. The Power House in Zion has already been demolished. The Library for the Blind and the Anti-Cruelty Society have been substantially altered. The Hard Rock Café is vacant. And Archeworks, the custom-built home for the socially conscious design school he founded with Eva Maddox, is up for sale.

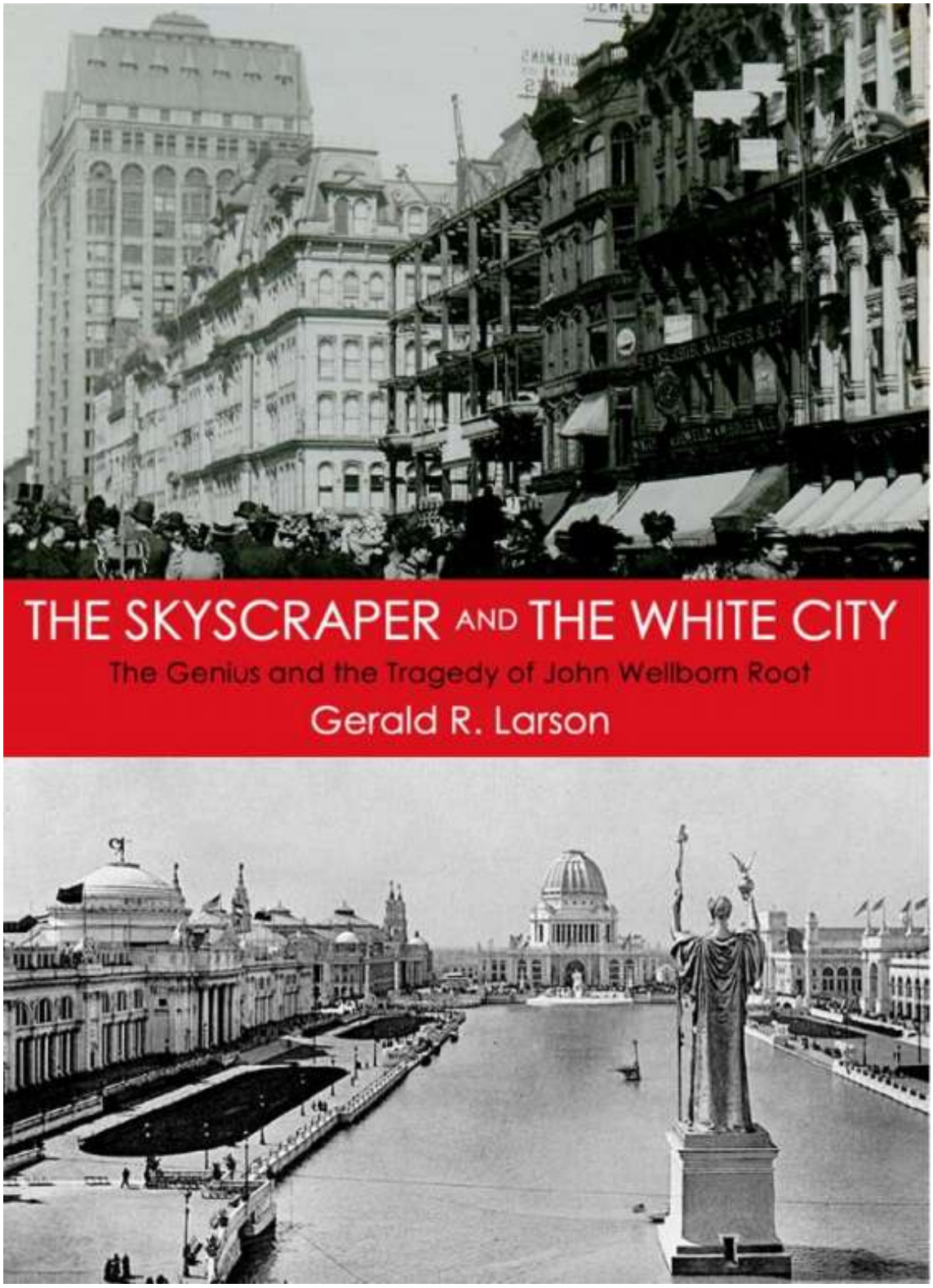
“There is a need to save and preserve as many of these structures as possible. Chicago architecture has always had just a few leading lights at any given time. In the last years of the 19th century and early years of the 20th, it was Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and Daniel Burnham. Mies van der Rohe arrived in the years before World War II and was widely influential through his distinctive glass and steel buildings and through his role as the director of the architecture school at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Harry Weese and Bertrand Goldberg provided formal direction after Mies van der Rohe. But for the latter decades of the 20th century and the first two of the 21st, the city’s most influential architect was Tigerman.” (Keegan, Chicago Tribune, 3/15/26)

Read the full story at Chicago Tribune

Edward Keegan: Stanley Tigerman’s last book preserves traces of the architect, but his legacy is in peril, Edward Keegan, Chicago Tribune, 3/15/26

Stanley Tigerman: Drawing on the Ineffable, Edited by George Papamattheakis, Yale University Press, 256 Pages

The Skyscraper and The White City: The Genius and the Tragedy of John Wellborn Root
by Gerald R. Larson



The Skyscraper and The White City: The Genius and the Tragedy of John Wellborn Root by Gerald R. Larson. Image credit: The Skyscraper and The White City

“John Wellborn Root’s the leading designer and theoretician among Chicago’s architects during the 1880s. He designed more skyscrapers than all those designed by the city’s other architects combined.

“Together with Daniel Burnham, the pair formed a perfect architectural entity: Burnham’s ambition and managerial expertise complemented Root’s design imagination, artistic abilities, and theoretical clarity. The pair also led the campaign of the Western Architectural Association to reform the AIA, that culminated in the consolidation of the two bodies in 1889. This experience had prepared them for the challenge of coordinating the design of the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition.

“Root’s design centered around a Court of Honor, that framed the view of entering fairgoers out to the maritime liveliness in Lake Michigan, similar to how the Piazzetta San Marco does in Venice. He was also exploring how to use colored electric lights to exploit the translucency of the material planned for the buildings’ construction (staff: plaster reinforced with hemp). Unfortunately, these ideas died with his premature death due to pneumonia on January 12, 1891.”

The Skyscraper and The White City: The Genius and the Tragedy of John Wellborn Root by Gerald R. Larson

The 2026 Chicago 7 Videos

WATCH: The Preservation Chicago 2026 “Chicago 7 Most Endangered” Video (Length 6:06)



WATCH: The Preservation Chicago 2026 “Chicago 7 Most Endangered” Video (Length 6:06) Image credit: Preservation Chicago

WATCH: The Preservation Chicago 2026 “Chicago 7 Most Endangered” Social Media Video (Length 1:33)



WATCH: The Preservation Chicago 2026 “Chicago 7 Most Endangered” Social Media Video (Length 1:33)
Image credit: Preservation Chicago

WATCH: The Preservation Chicago 2026 “Chicago 7 Most Endangered” Full Live Presentation (61 minutes)



WATCH: The Preservation Chicago 2026 Chicago 7 Most Endangered FULL Presentation (61:44). Presented live to a hybrid audience, both live in-person at the Chicago Architecture Center simultaneously to virtual audience of approximately 650 people on March 4, 2026. Image credit: Preservation Chicago

WATCH: 20 Years of the Chicago 7: Incredible Wins, Tragic Losses, and Those Still Endangered (Length 5:45)



20 Years of the Chicago 7: Incredible Wins, Tragic Losses, and Those Still Endangered. (Length 5:45)
Image credit: Preservation Chicago

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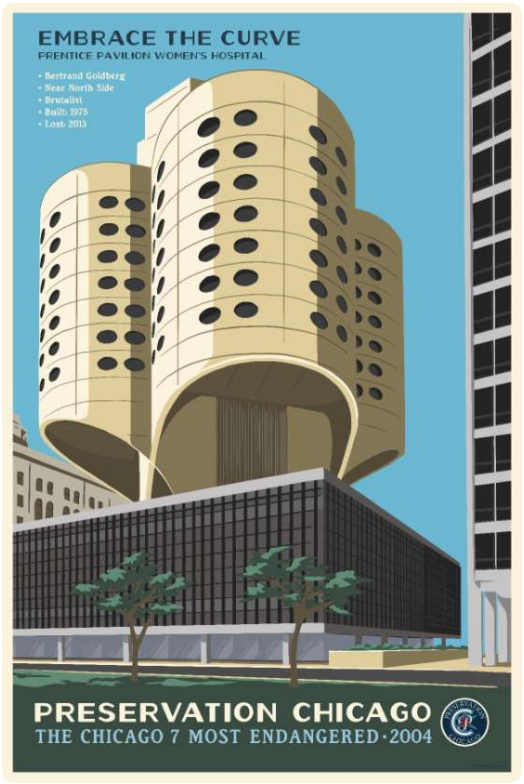
Since 2003, the "Chicago 7 Most Endangered" has sounded the alarm on imminently threatened historic buildings and public assets in Chicago to mobilize the stakeholder support necessary to save them from demolition. Image credit: Preservation Chicago
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The Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room

The Spark That Reignited the Preservation Movement, The Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room Poster, a Preservation Chicago 2026 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Image credit: Preservation Chicago

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The Century and Consumers Buildings. The Century Building, 1915, Holabird & Roche, 202 S. State Street. The Consumers Building, 1913, Jenney, Mundie & Jensen, 220 S. State Street. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

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Preservation Chicago leverages the power of Chicago's historic built environment to create, nurture and enhance healthy, vibrant, diverse and sustainable communities.

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.
Thank you from your friends at Preservation Chicago for your support of the mission of Preservation Chicago and our tireless advocacy.

Your financial support allows Preservation Chicago to advocate every day to protect historic buildings throughout Chicago. For a small nonprofit, every dollar counts. Preservation Chicago is a 501(c)(3) non-profit so your donation is tax-deductible as permitted by law.

Donating is fast, easy and directly helps the efforts to protect Chicago's historic legacy.

For larger donations, please contact Ward Miller regarding the Preservation Circle details and a schedule of events at wmiller@preservationchicago.org or 312-443-1000.