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PRESERVATION CHICAGO

STRENGTHENING CHICAGO BY PROTECTING HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

September 2026 Month-in-Review Newsletter



Fall Colors. Photo credit: Chris Cullen

Fall Colors

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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www.ChicagoHistoricPlaques.org

Preservation Chicago and partners launch *Chicago Historic Plaques* program to help homeowners recognize and celebrate the architectural and historical significance of their home.



Sheffield Avenue at Dickens Avenue, in the Sheffield Historic District. **Photo credit: Chris Cullen**

PURPOSE

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 helps homeowners and neighbors better appreciate the history of these properties — and recognize the importance of preserving them. Participating homeowners will receive a short researched summary of their home's history, based on available historical records.

A partnership between Lincoln Park Neighbors and Neighborhood Leaders, Preservation Chicago, and the

Preservation Chicago and partners launch www.ChicagoHistoricPlaques.org program to help homeowners recognize and celebrate the architectural and historical significance of their home. Image credit: Preservation Chicago

Why We Built This
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.

Recognition for the buildings, and for the good stewards who maintain and treasure them.

The Chicago Historic Plaque Program, a pilot in Lincoln Park, offers another way to preserve the neighborhood's history. It gives homeowners a way to learn about and commemorate the history of individual homes.

The Chicago Historic Plaque Program helps homeowners and neighbors better appreciate the history of these properties — and recognize the importance of preserving them. Participating homeowners will receive a short researched summary of their home's history, based on available historical records.

The program brings together Preservation Chicago, University of Chicago historic preservation students and neighborhood residents to research eligible historic buildings and install plaques explaining their architectural and historical significance. The pilot has already begun in selected historic areas of Lincoln Park, including the Sheffield Historic District and nearby historic residential blocks. Our hope is to expand this program to other historic neighborhoods in Chicago.

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.

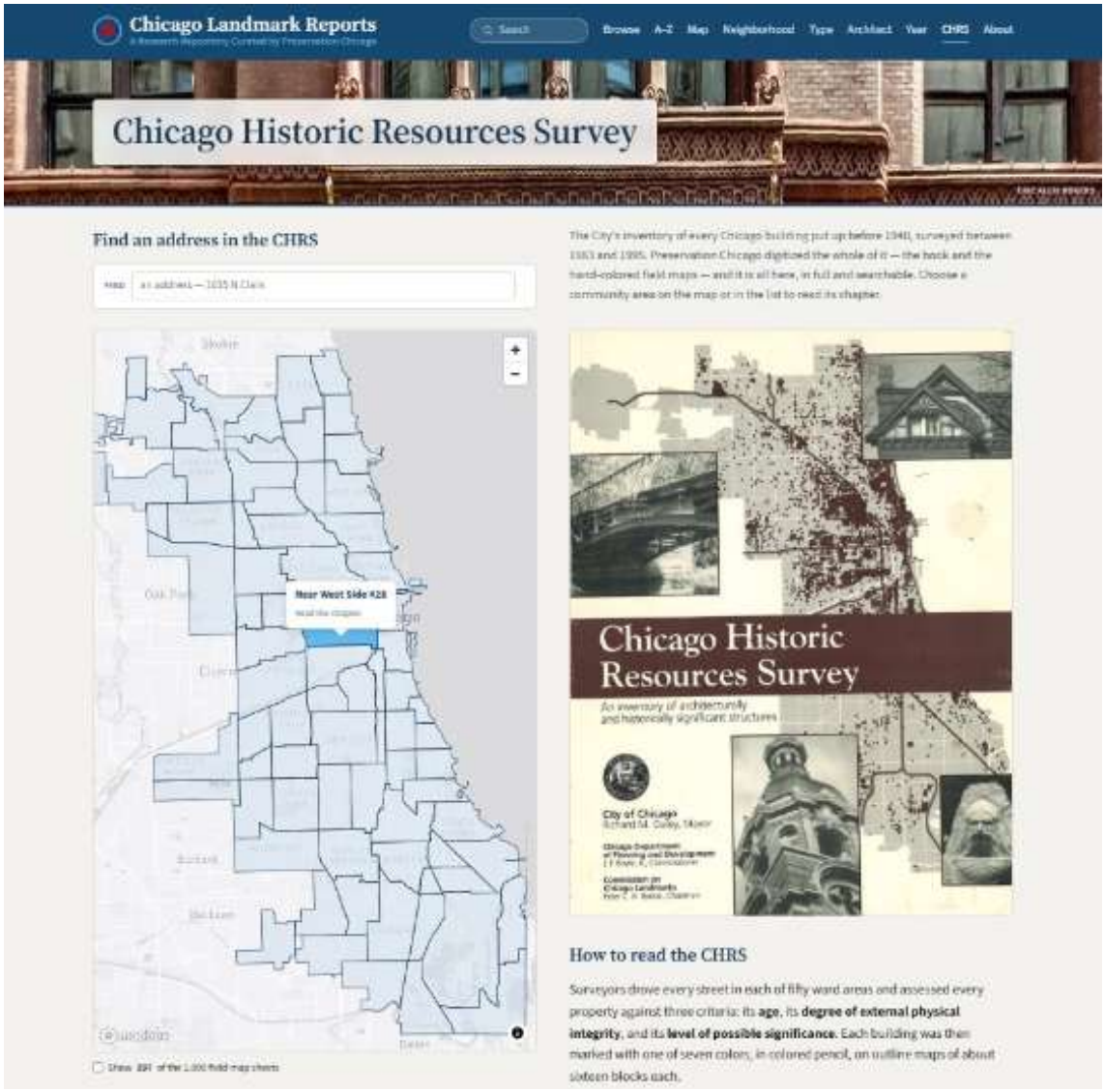
www.ChicagoHistoricPlaques.org

Lincoln Park's Historic Homes Are Disappearing. A New Program Wants To Tell Their Stories; The Chicago Historic Plaque pilot will help document the stories of historic homes and build neighborhood pride as preservation advocates grapple with the loss of old buildings, Patrick Filbin, Block Club Chicago, 9/17/26

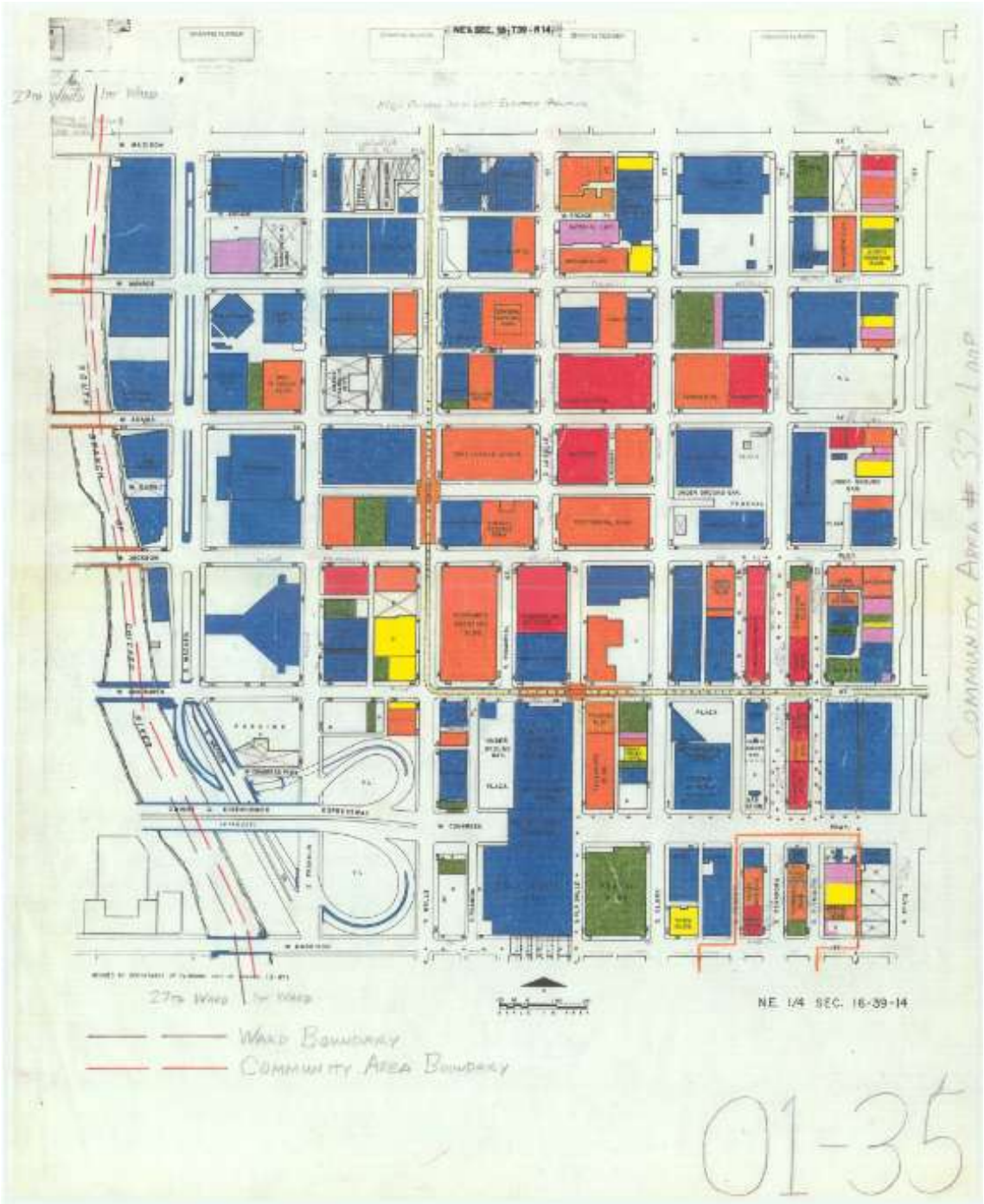
Preservation Chicago Launches *Chicago Landmark Reports*, a Free and Fully Searchable Comprehensive Digital Collection of over 60 Years of Chicago Landmark Designation Reports



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.

16 Reports Are Still Missing
To date we have assembled, digitized and made searchable 482 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.

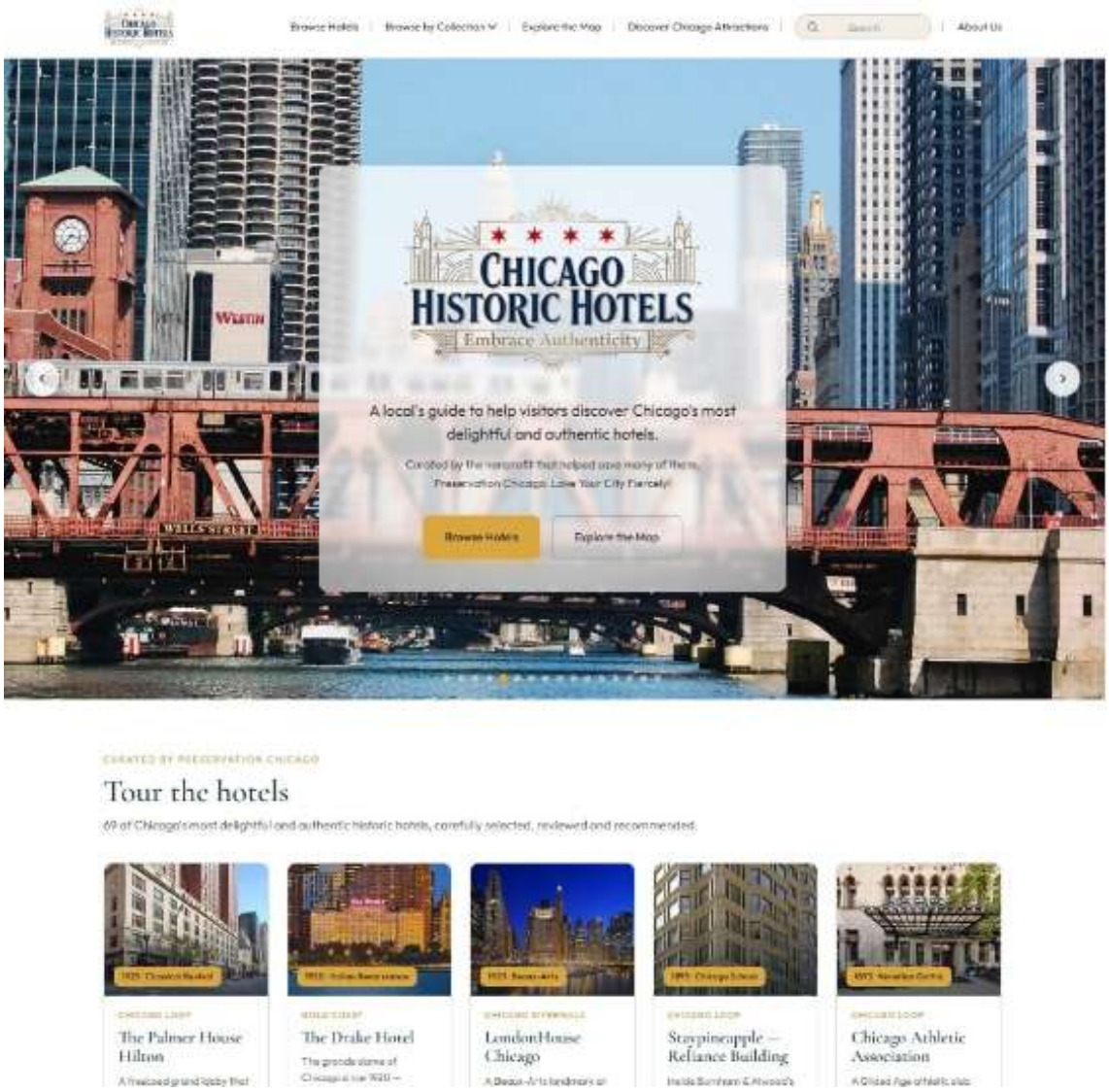
When the survey was published, printing its maps in color was beyond the budget, and the book says so plainly: the colors, it notes, "appear here as black or gray tones." The original hand-colored sheets survive. All 1,090 of them are published here in the colors the surveyors actually used, with 906 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-

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: Morningstar Will Move Its Global Headquarters to the Thompson Center, Joining Google in the Largest Downtown Office Lease of the Year (Chicago 7 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020)



Rendering of Proposed James R. Thompson Center Google Adaptive Reuse in 2024. Built 1985, Helmut Jahn, 100 W. Randolph Street. Rendering credit: Prime/Capri Interests / JAHN Architect



Rendering of Proposed James R. Thompson Center Google Adaptive Reuse in 2024. Built 1985, Helmut Jahn, 100 W. Randolph Street. Rendering credit: Prime/Capri Interests / JAHN Architect



Rendering of Proposed James R. Thompson Center Google Adaptive Reuse in 2024. Built 1985, Helmut Jahn, 100 W. Randolph Street. Rendering credit: Prime/Capri Interests / JAHN Architect



Rendering of Proposed James R. Thompson Center Google Adaptive Reuse in 2024. Built 1985, Helmut Jahn, 100 W. Randolph Street. Rendering credit: Prime/Capri Interests / JAHN Architect



James R. Thompson Center Chicago 7 2020 Most Endangered Poster. Built 1985, Helmut Jahn, 100 W. Randolph Street. Image credit: Preservation Chicago

“Chicago-based investment firm Morningstar announced Wednesday it will move its global headquarters into the James R. Thompson Center, the downtown landmark getting renovated by Google.

“Morningstar’s decision gives another boost to the long-anticipated revival of the former state office building, where Google plans to locate thousands of employees by 2028.

“‘It’s an iconic building and an iconic symbol of Chicago,’ Morningstar CEO Kunal Kapoor said. ‘We are a homegrown company and what better way to announce a decision to keep growing in our city?’

“The firm, which employs more than 1,500 people in the Chicago region, will move in late 2028 from 22 W. Washington St. and occupy 275,000 square feet in the Thompson Center, Kapoor added. Morningstar also plans to donate about $5 million to local nonprofits focused on helping Chicagoland residents enter new careers or improve financial literacy.

“Kapoor said the building’s sleek, high-tech look, its open-office layout and the massive glass walls that flood the interior with sunlight will provide Morningstar workers with a great atmosphere.

“The Helmut Jahn-designed Thompson Center first opened in 1985 as an office building for state employees. Google announced in 2022 that it wanted to take over the property, once threatened with demolition, and transform it into a new regional headquarters.

“Loop property owners, restaurateurs and retailers have said the Thompson Center’s revival could spark additional interest in the Central Loop, bringing back foot traffic, attracting new businesses and helping fill in empty storefronts. Other redevelopment efforts could also get a jolt, including the city’s LaSalle Street Corridor Revitalization, a nearly $1 billion effort to convert obsolete downtown offices into residences and hotels.

“‘Google deserves a lot of the credit for the revival of the West Loop,’ Kapoor said. ‘I think the (new) Thompson Center will also bring back energy to the LaSalle Street corridor.’

“Robert Sevim, president, Chicago Region at Savills, said Morningstar’s decision shows a new ‘urban community’ is being stitched together in the Central Loop, and will eventually draw in more firms. ‘It’s an excellent piece of news and will have meaningful impact,’ he said. ‘The beauty of Google, Morningstar and the Thompson Center is that the ripple effects will be real.’” (Rogal, Chicago Tribune, 9/30/26)

“With architecture firm Jahn/ returning to lead the reimagining of the building, the high-tech renovation will honor the signature design with strategic design improvements that enhance the building as a community destination. New elements include a heightened entry colonnade redesigned to allow a renewed ground floor experience, three levels of covered terraces with more natural light, access to green spaces and biophilic design elements.

“The central opening beneath the 17-story atrium was expanded, constructing a cascading staircase integrated with terraced seating and retail offerings. The atrium and plaza bring a curated mix of quality food, distinctive retail, and space for seasonal events. (Sharp, Urbanize Chicago, 9/23/26)

“Google is wrapping up work on the building’s core and exterior shell and plans to spend 2027 building out office and retail spaces, project executive Joy Park said Wednesday during a rare presentation on the redevelopment.

“‘We brought in our best-in-class thinking around sustainability and design performance to truly rehabilitate the building from the inside out,’ Park said.

“Renovations included replacing every pane of glass on the building’s exterior with a triple-insulated glass system designed to improve energy efficiency. The new glass also allows 100 percent of the sunlight to shine through as opposed to 50 percent previously, Park said.

“The building has also been gutted to make way for new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems as part of a conversion to an all-electric building. Google is also installing systems to collect rainwater from the roof and newly constructed terraces.

“Renovations have included expanding the building’s ground-floor footprint to create more retail and lobby space, enclosing office floors from the public atrium and installing three outdoor terraces.

2. THREATENED: The Griffin Museum of Science and Industry North Entry Pavilion Would Dramatically Alter Appearance of Charles B. Atwood's 1893 Landmark



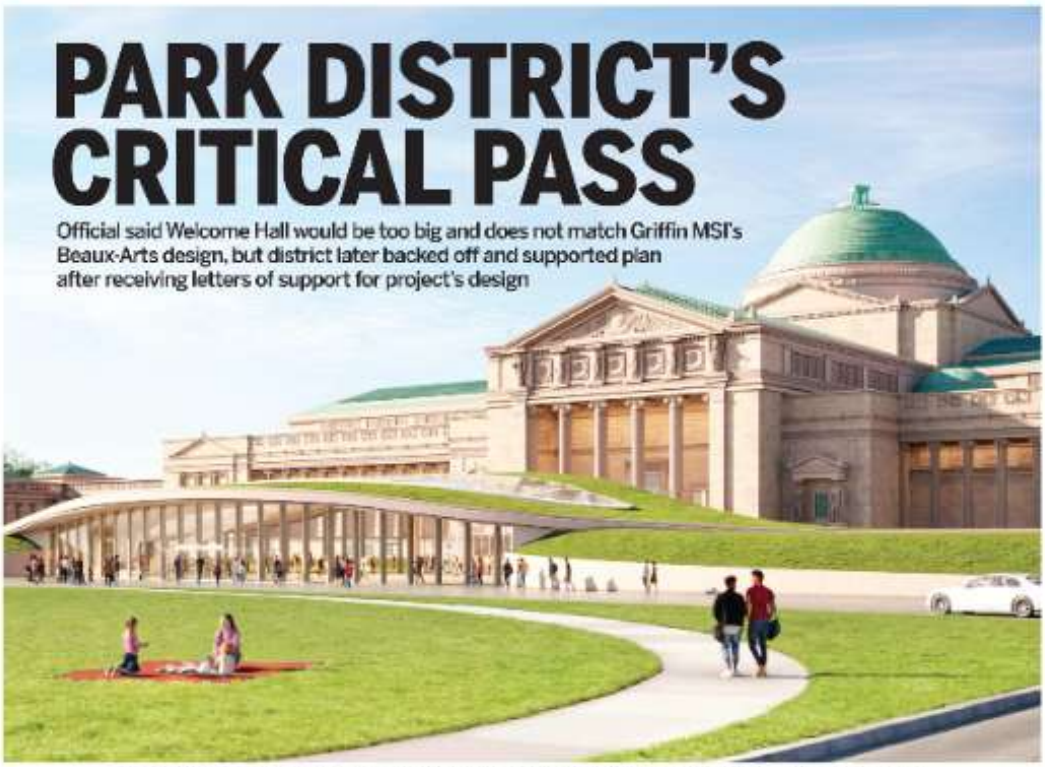
Rendering of the proposed Welcome Hall on the museum's north lawn, 458 feet long and nearly 30 feet tall. Image credit: Alden Studios for RAMSA



Rendering of the proposed Welcome Hall on the museum's north lawn, 458 feet long and nearly 30 feet tall. Image credit: Alden Studios for RAMSA

PARK DISTRICT'S CRITICAL PASS

Official said Welcome Hall would be too big and does not match Griffin MSI's Beaux-Arts design, but district later backed off and supported plan after receiving letters of support for project's design



A rendering of the Welcome Hall, with a glass-topped roof, proposed for the north entrance of the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry.



LEE BEY
ARCHITECTURE CRITIC

The Chicago Park District asked the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry to shrink the size of the 468-foot-long, two-story Welcome Hall it calls planned for the institution's main entry — but later supported the design after consulting with preservationists in the government and local nonprofit fields.

The Welcome Hall, which would be located outside the historic building's North Portico, "greatly rises to a height that visually blocks the lower portions of the historic facades from most vantage points beyond the corners of the original courtyard," Chicago Park District Planning and Research Manager Nelson Chiang wrote in a March 24 letter to Griffin MSI's Vice President of Government Affairs Anne Rainford.

Chiang also said the new structure would be "entirely modern, in stark contrast to the [museum's] strict Beaux Arts design," and asked if there were any earlier schemas for the hall "that continued the classical expression and related directly to the historic building facades."

The points raised in the letter echo much of the public criticism that has been leveled at the museum and its architects, RAMSA, since renderings of the project were released last month.

I've criticized the structure's look, size and lack of architectural

PRELIMINARY STAFF SUMMARY OF INFORMATION



Museum of Science and Industry

57th Street at Lake Shore Drive

SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS
JANUARY 5, 1994

City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Valerie B. Jarrett, Commissioner

Chicago Landmark Designation Report. Museum of Science and Industry, 1891-93, Charles B. Atwood, 57th Street and Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL. Designated a Chicago Landmark: November 1, 1995. Photo credit: Commission on Chicago Landmarks / www.ChicagoLandmarkReports.org

“The museum this month released plans to construct a limestone and glass ‘Welcome Hall’ on the building’s front lawn, right smack in front of that grand entrance. And it’s not a small addition either.

“The new hall would be almost 30-feet tall and a whopping 458-feet — nearly three-quarters of a city block — in length: A big old wide-brimmed hat blocking the screen at the movie theater.

“But in doing so, the museum and its design firm RAMSA are expressing these noble goals with an ungainly and unattractive entry pavilion that visually overpowers the building’s historic north entrance and it’s beautiful, open front lawn.

“The building threatens to foul-up one of the city’s great urban vistas — a remarkable blend of architecture, land, sky and history. One that looks just fine the way it is. The whole thing should be sent back to the drawing board.

“The glass-faced Welcome Hall would link to the museum via a 124-foot glass connection that burrows straight through the center of the building’s exterior stairs. Visitors could still enter the museum through what remains of the stairs, but it’s a little tough to see that historic rise of limestone just being gouged through like that.

“The Permit Review Committee of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks approved the museum’s plan on Sept. 10, agreeing with the assessment by the Department of Planning and Development’s Historic Preservation Division that the Welcome Hall ‘will not have an adverse effect on the significant historical and architectural features of the landmark property.’

“I couldn’t disagree more. The Welcome Hall is too tall and much too wide. It promises to sit there like a carbuncle in the park. And its arched grass roof makes the structure resemble a displaced section of Teletubbyland.

“There’s enough time, talent and cash on the table to develop something far better, given the design power of RAMSA — the late Robert A.M. Stern’s successor firm — and whatever portion is left of hedge fund billionaire Ken Griffin’s $124 million 2019 donation to the museum that’s still burning a hole in its pockets.

“The museum and city landmarks officials must rethink this thing and come up with an approach that properly honors this world-famous building and its important site.” (Bey, Chicago Sun-Times, 9/21/26)

“From the 50-plus years I’ve been involved in historic preservation work in the public and private sectors, I can state without reservation that the proposed work to the museum’s campus is the most seriously damaging I have ever witnessed. The only exception of something worse was when entire historic buildings were approved for demolition.

“With the approved alterations to the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry, the building will essentially remain standing. But the changes will destroy the essence of what makes the building rare and special. It’s all about an elusive quality known as perfection.

“When originally constructed as the Palace of Fine Arts for Chicago’s 1893 World’s Fair, the building was repeatedly singled out for being as near to perfection as could be humanly achievable in its architectural composition and the relationship to its site. Creating quality classical design is one of the most challenging in architecture. It’s all about a perfect relationship of proportions, details and site. All parts must harmoniously relate to the whole.

“At the time of the 1893 World’s Fair, the respected sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens said of the building: ‘I am just bowled over; there is no breath in me. As for that art gallery, it is the greatest thing since Athens.’

“Prior to construction, New York architect Charles F. McKim — a stickler for classical accuracy — looked over designer Charles B. Atwood’s plans for errors. He ultimately exclaimed, ‘Confound him, he is right every time,’ and later praised the building as ‘the greatest thing that has been done in the present century in any country.’

“Even with contemporary needs for better public accessibility and removal of an obtrusive grade-level parking lot, new facilities were creatively placed underground in the 1990s, providing an accessible museum entry from small free-standing pavilions respectfully held away from the main building. The former parking lot on the north side became a grassy park that showcased the building’s ‘perfect’ classical proportions for passing motorists and museum patrons alike.

“The signature classical wide exterior staircases on both sides are to be punctured, creating a gap-toothed large hole at the center that will diminish the power of the remaining original elements. The boldly columned porticos that provide a transitional sense of entry are to be glassed in. No matter how transparent, the original effect is lost.

“And lost forever will be the majestic views of the building melding into the historic landscape of Jackson Park, a landmark itself shaped in design by the great Frederick Law Olmsted. No longer will the front steps of the south side dreamily extend into the adjoining lagoon. And with new construction of entryways and berms on the building’s north side, the majestic classical gift of the building rising from the ground atop a sturdy base will be lost.

3. WIN: City Council Approves Bryn Mawr Historic District Designation



Bryn Mawr Historic District, predominantly Bryn Mawr Avenue between Broadway and Sheridan Road, Edgewater. Designated a Chicago Landmark District: September 23, 2026. Photo credit: Chicago PDP

“The Bryn Mawr Historic District is officially a Chicago landmark.

“City Council approved the landmarking Wednesday, concluding a lengthy series of approvals needed in a process that started in the spring.

“The city’s Commission on Chicago Landmarks found that the historic district met four out of seven criteria needed to be considered for landmark status: It’s a critical part of the city’s heritage, it has important architecture, it has works from important architects and it has a distinctive theme as a district. At a minimum, a potential landmark must meet two criteria.

“According to Preservation Chicago, landmark districts are intended to ‘maintain the character and beauty of their neighborhood; prevent the demolition of historically significant homes, buildings, and streetscapes; and protect the neighborhood against tear-downs and over-development.’

“The new landmark district — which is considered the first business district in the neighborhood — spans Bryn Mawr Avenue from Broadway to Sheridan Road, including notable buildings like the Edgewater Beach Apartments, 5555 N. Sheridan Road, and Belle Shore Apartment Hotel, 5550 N. Kenmore Ave.

“The district has some of the oldest structures in Edgewater, including some dating back to the 1890s, Edgewater Historical Society President John Holden previously told Block Club.

“The Bryn Mawr Historic District is already on the National Register of Historic Places, but becoming a Chicago landmark opens it up to additional financial incentives and opportunities, like the Adopt-A-Landmark program, which makes grants available for restoration projects.

“Ald. Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth (48th), whose ward includes the new landmark district, applauded the landmarking and said it would bring ‘much-needed attention and investment’ to the area.

“‘The Bryn Mawr Historic District is a cultural and architectural treasure, and today we ensured that this important piece of Edgewater and Chicago history will be enjoyed for generations to come,’ Manaa-Hoppenworth said in a Wednesday statement that gave thanks to Landmarks Illinois and the Edgewater Historical Society. ‘Over the last three years we have worked alongside the Edgewater Chamber of Commerce on beautification projects, cultural events, and most importantly filling 15 vacant storefronts along Bryn Mawr, and we’re not done yet.’

“The landmarking process had also seemingly saved one of the district’s historic buildings from being knocked down. While the city was pursuing landmarking the historic district, developer Harlem Irving Companies applied for a demolition permit to knock down a building within the district at 1114 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

“The developer was hoping to demolish it — along with two neighboring buildings at 1106 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. and 5614 N. Winthrop Ave. — in order to build a six-story apartment building with 95 apartments and about 6,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space, the group said previously.

“But the city denied the demolition permit for 1114 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. — while issuing permits for the other two buildings to be demolished — arguing the structure contributes to the historic district because it displays elements of Classical Revival style. Demolishing it would have an ‘adverse affect’ on the historic district, the city said.” (Savedra, Block Club Chicago, 9/23/26)

Preservation Chicago is thrilled with the final designation of the Bryn Mawr Historic District. Preservation Chicago worked for years with the Edgewater Historical Society and the 48th Ward toward this designation, and we testified in support at the Commission on Chicago Landmarks hearings. Special thanks to John Holden, LeRoy Blommaert, Thom Greene, Genell Scheurell and Todd Baisch and Kathy Gemperly of the Edgewater Historical Society, to Landmarks Illinois, the Edgewater Chamber of Commerce, and Ald. Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth.

Preservation Chicago has proposed a set-back compromise for new construction at 1114 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue. This approach would incorporate the 1909 Classical Revival building into the new construction, allowing Harlem Irving Companies to build its 95-unit development while retaining the building’s contribution to the streetscape. We urge Harlem Irving Companies to work with the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, the Department of Planning and Development, Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth, the Edgewater Historical Society and community members toward this solution.

Chicago Landmark designation makes property owners in the district eligible for the Class L property tax incentive, the Adopt-a-Landmark Fund and federal historic tax credits. Preservation Chicago encourages owners along Bryn Mawr Avenue to use them.

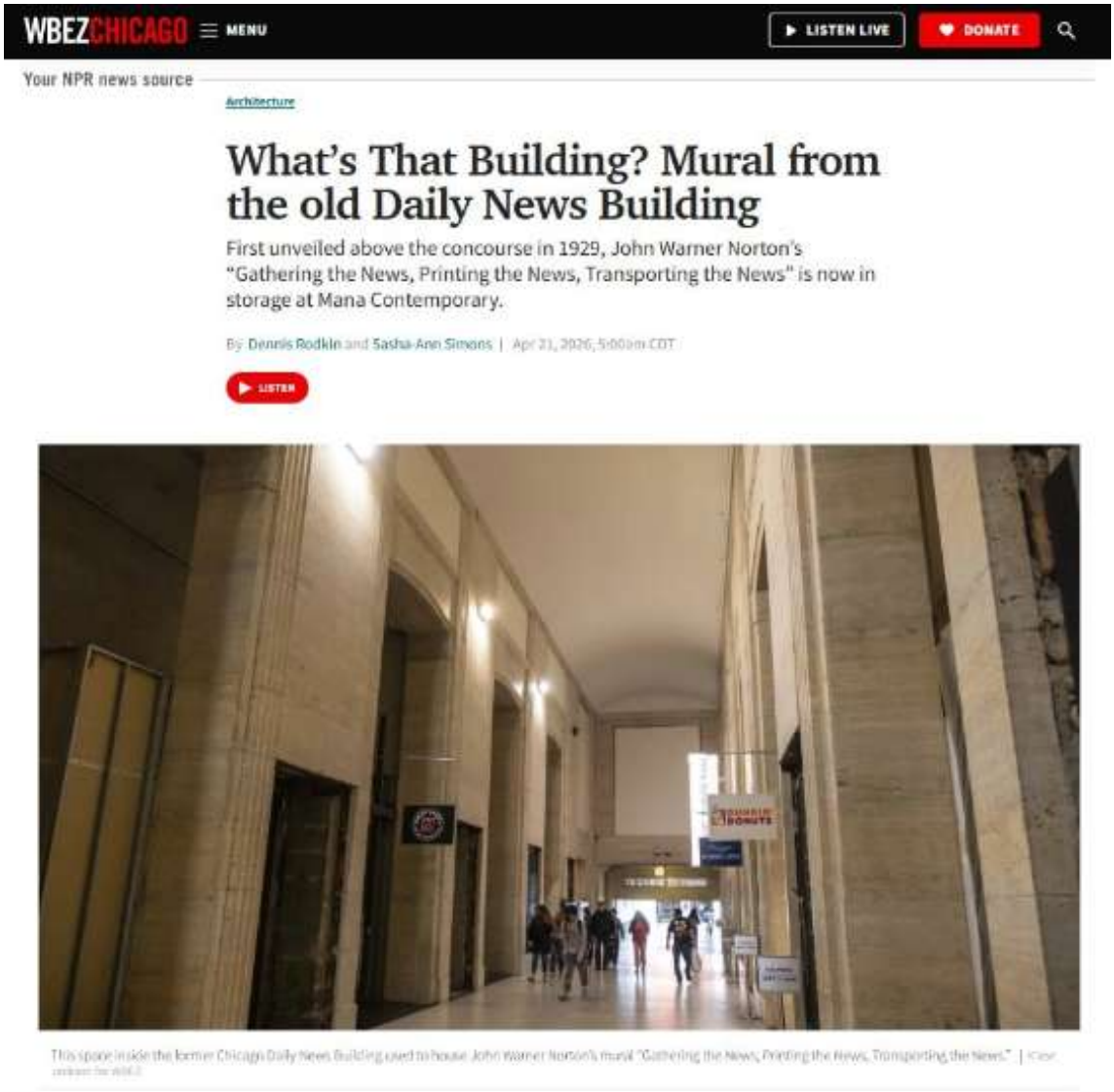
4. WIN: City Council Approved Landmark and Class L for Holabird & Root's 1929 Chicago Daily News Building at 2 N. Riverside Plaza (Chicago 7 2008)



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”, mural 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.

5. WIN: Avalon Regal Theater, Stone Temple Baptist Church and Monumental Baptist Church Recommended for $666,400 in Adopt-a-Landmark Grants (Chicago 7 2012)



The Avalon Regal Theater, 1927, John Eberson, 1645 East 79th Street. A Preservation Chicago 2012 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



The Avalon Regal Theater, 1927, John Eberson, 1645 East 79th Street. A Preservation Chicago 2012 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



The Avalon Regal Theater, 1927, John Eberson, 1645 East 79th Street. A Preservation Chicago 2012 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Stone Temple Baptist Church, 3620-22 W. Douglas Blvd., North Lawndale Photo credit: City of Chicago DPD



Stone Temple Baptist Church Interior, 3620-22 W. Douglas Blvd., North Lawndale Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers



Monumental Baptist Church, 729 E. Oakwood Blvd., Grand Boulevard Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

“The Avalon Regal Theater — the South Side’s Moorish Revival jewel box that fell into decay after closing 16 years ago — is in line to get a $249,500 city grant to help fix up the landmark venue, the Chicago Department of Planning and Development announced Friday.

“The cash from the agency’s Adopt-A-Landmark Fund would help pay for critical masonry repairs and rebuild the exposed brick substructure of a tower on the northwest corner of the 99-year-old theater at 1645 E. 79th St.

“Also covered under the grant would be the selective removal and resetting of displaced masonry, isolated repointing, temporary supplemental stabilization of the building and the isolated repairs on the theater’s front facade, the department said.

“The theater is among three projects recommended for a total of $666,400 in repair funding under the Adopt-A-Landmark program. The others are Stone Temple Baptist Church in North Lawndale and the appropriately named Monumental Baptist Church in Bronzeville.

“The funding would be the theater’s first significant public cash infusion since Community Capital Investment Partners President Jerald Gary bought the building in 2014 from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. for $100,000.

“Built in 1927 as the Avalon Theater, the building was designed by John Eberson, who modeled the work after an intricate metal Persian incense burner he found in a Royal Street antique store in New Orleans’ French Quarter.

“The 2,200-seat Avalon Regal still dazzles, even in its tattered and disused state.

“The ornate street-side ticket booth alone is worth a look, if you’re ever in the neighborhood. The beauty looks as if a genie would pop out if you rubbed the structure the right way.

“And the colorful auditorium is pure escapism. It’s sky blue ceiling and detailed plaster walls with turrets and minarets are designed to make patrons feel they’re watching a movie or a live show in an outdoor courtyard in an exotic land — rather than near the intersection of 79th Street, Stony Island and South Chicago avenues.

“Landmarks Illinois awarded Gary and Community Capital a $2,500 Preservation Heritage Grant in January 2016 for emergency exterior masonry repairs.

“And Preservation Chicago named the theater one of the city’s seven most endangered buildings in 2012.

“Preservation Chicago Executive Director Ward Miller said he hoped the Adopt-a-Landmark Grant ‘coupled with foundation grants will address the many needs to restore this cornerstone of Avalon Park, South Shore and South Chicago.’

“Community Capital must submit updated drawings and project specifications to the city within 2 years to receive the funds.

“Meanwhile, Stone Temple Baptist Church, 3622 W. Douglas Blvd., a Romanesque and Moorish-inspired former synagogue, where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. once spoke, is set to be awarded $167,000 in Adopt-a-Landmark funding.

“The grant would help repair the parapet on the church’s annex building, purchase new exterior doors and cover interior drywall and plaster work.

“And the 123-year-old Romanesque Revival-styled Monumental Baptist Church, at 729 E. Oakwood Blvd., would get $249,900 for a new roof, downspouts and masonry work.
“‘Since 2016, more than $14 million in Adopt-a-Landmark Grant awards have been allocated for 33 historic preservation projects valued at more than $166 million,’ a planning department spokesperson said.” (Bey, WBEZ / Chicago Sun-Times, 10/3/26)

“Three Adopt-A-Landmark grants collectively valued at more than $665,000 will support the stabilization of a former South Chicago movie palace and historic churches in North Lawndale and Grand Boulevard, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) announced today.

“Totaling nearly $843,000 in construction costs, the projects were selected from 16 proposals submitted to DPD’s Historic Preservation Division earlier this year. Applications were evaluated for project readiness, location, impact and building needs, among other criteria, with restorations of

6. THREATENED: Advocacy Effort Gaining Traction to Prevent Emergency Demolition and to Identify Preservation Buyer for 1901 “Big Jim” O’Leary Mansion at 726 W. Garfield Boulevard



Big Jim” O’Leary Mansion, 1901, Zachary Taylor Davis, 726 W. Garfield Boulevard, Englewood. A thirty-three-room Renaissance Revival mansion with a coach house, built for James “Big Jim” O’Leary, son of Catherine O’Leary. O’Leary Mansion, 1901, Zachary Taylor Davis, 726 W. Garfield Boulevard, Englewood. Photo credit: RedFin



Ward Miller Interviewed by Mike Lowe from WGN 9 Chicago at Preservation Chicago's office regarding the O'Leary Mansion, 1901, Zachary Taylor Davis, 726 W. Garfield Boulevard. Building tied to Great Chicago Fire in danger of being demolished. Image credit: WGN Chicago

“An endangered Englewood mansion built by the Victorian era man-about-town and gambler James ‘Big Jim’ O’Leary — his mother and her cow were blamed for starting the Great Chicago Fire — should be granted preliminary landmark status, the city’s two leading preservation groups said Monday.

“Preservation Chicago and Landmarks Illinois told the Commission on Chicago Landmarks’ Program Committee that the designation is needed to protect the vacant 125-year-old O’Leary Mansion, 726 W. Garfield Blvd., from demolition.

“The 33-room house is currently in demolition court under a raft of code violations. Inspectors reported the home’s condition as ‘dangerous.’

“Built in 1901, according to building permits Butterfield unearthed, the three-story mansion was designed by Zachary Taylor Davis, an architect whose works include Wrigley Field and the old — and dearly missed — Comiskey Park.

“The red sandstone-fronted house is a Renaissance Revival riot, with details that include turrets, an ornate circular attic window and two-story bay windows flanking a prominent four-columned front porch. O’Leary’s initials can be found in the facade’s terra cotta detail.

“The home is one of many surviving examples of the high-style homes and apartment buildings that were constructed along Garfield Boulevard from Wells Street to Western Avenue for the well-to-do between the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

“James O’Leary, who was two years old at the time, grew up to become wealthy. He owned a gambling house and saloon at 41st and Halsted streets that — as fate would have it — burned down in the massive Union Stock Yards fire of 1910.

“‘He was a gambling boss in the Union Stock Yards neighborhood and was said to be willing to gamble on anything from sports to elections to even the weather,’ Butterfield said. ‘So he made quite a living for himself, and as such, was able to commission quite a prominent building.’

“The home’s owner was absent from the committee meeting. And who owns the 6,200-square-foot house is murky. It was last listed for sale in 2024 at $450,000.

“‘We hope to have a good steward come forward to adopt the building and restore it and consent to landmark designation,’ Preservation Chicago Executive Director Ward Miller said.

“The Program Committee forwarded the O’Leary mansion and other landmark recommendations from the public to the Department of Planning and Development’s Historic Preservation Division for possible follow-up. The division could take a pass on the recommendation, or after researching the building, the staffers could prepare a report that asks the full landmarks commission to grant the house a preliminary designation.

“The latter is the better move and would protect the historic and architecturally significant building from demolition and wonky, non-historic alterations.

“‘It’s really important that we protect this building,’ Miller said. ‘And we will be not only supporting it before the program committee … but also in court in the coming weeks.’” (Bey, Chicago Sun-Times, 9/21/26)

“Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026 marks the 155th anniversary of the start of the Great Chicago Fire. The disaster claimed thousands of Chicago buildings in 1871, but one building tied to the Chicago Fire legend is in danger of being demolished all these years later.

“On the night of Oct. 8, 1871, on Chicago’s Near West Side, fire consumed Catherine O’Leary’s barn. ‘It’s very unlikely she had anything to do with it. She was in bed with her husband, five children, asleep in her small cottage,’ author and historian Carl Smith said.

“It turned out O’Leary was not at fault, but she was blamed for the disaster that followed, which became known as the Great Chicago Fire. However, for the O’Leary family, the challenges were just beginning.

“‘It also made Catherine and Patrick O’Leary’s children, I think they grew up in a very difficult environment,’ Executive Director of Preservation Chicago Ward Miller said.

“The couple’s son James ‘Big Jim’ O’Leary became the head of a notorious gambling network

7. WIN: Restoration of Landmark Laramie State Bank Building in Austin to Begin This Fall, But Blues Museum Concept Dropped (Chicago 7 2019)



Laramie State Bank Building, 1929, Meyer & Cook, 5200 W. Chicago Avenue in Austin. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 1995. Photo Credit: Debbie Mercer



Laramie State Bank Building, 1929, Meyer & Cook, 5200 W. Chicago Avenue in Austin. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 1995. Photo Credit: Debbie Mercer



Laramie State Bank Building, 1929, Meyer & Cook, 5200 W. Chicago Avenue in Austin. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 1995. Photo Credit: Debbie Mercer



Laramie State Bank Building Lobby After Restoration, 1929, Meyer & Cook, 5200 W. Chicago Avenue in Austin. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 1995. Rendering Credit: Perkins & Will



Laramie State Bank Building Lobby Before Restoration, 1929, Meyer & Cook, 5200 W. Chicago Avenue in Austin. Designated a Chicago Landmark in 1995. Photo Credit: City of Chicago

“An Austin landmark just celebrated the completion of the first phase of its renovation bringing more mixed-income housing to the Soul City Corridor.

“The Laramie State Bank redevelopment project at 5200 W. Chicago Ave. held a ribbon-cutting Thursday on its 78-unit apartment building, the first phase of redevelopment of the landmark bank campus. The nearly $52 million project includes 51 affordable housing units, with residents expected to begin moving in next week, project officials said.

“The second phase of the redevelopment will turn the historic but neglected bank building into a business incubator and cafe. Work on the bank building is expected to begin this fall.

“A courtyard connects the residential and bank buildings and includes a space open to the public and available for events. The residential building’s first floor has a public community room, property management office and mail room. Developers said the community space on the first floor, which includes a kitchenette, is ideal for block club meetings, small events and other gatherings.

“The Laramie State Bank building was built in 1929 and was made a city landmark in 1995. It has been vacant since it was foreclosed on in 2012. The bank’s exterior features an Egyptian-style design with yellow- and cream-colored terra cotta details on the facade. The redevelopment project will restore the building’s art deco flourishes and architecture, city officials previously said.

“Plans for a blues music museum to be housed in the bank are no longer in the works, officials said Thursday.

“The bank redevelopment proposal was selected in 2021 to anchor investment and revitalization efforts in Austin as part of the city’s Invest South/West program under then-Mayor Lori Lightfoot. It is located on Chicago Avenue’s Soul City business corridor and cultural district and near several recent developments in the area. (Liptrot, Block Club Chicago, 9/11/26)

Preservation Chicago advocated for the Laramie State Bank Building for many years, and with greater urgency after it became vacant following the 2012 foreclosure. We attended many building court hearings to support the building and to prevent its emergency demolition. We named it a 2019 Chicago 7 Most Endangered.

We were in regular communication with the owners and with stakeholders tied to the building, including the alderman and the Cook County Land Bank, and we worked to find private developers with an interest in the restoration and reuse of the building. Preservation Chicago suggested that the Laramie State Bank Building would be an ideal candidate for INVEST South/West, and we were thrilled when the City of Chicago stepped forward.

Preservation Chicago applauds former Mayor Lori Lightfoot and former Department of Planning and Development Commissioner Maurice Cox for selecting the Laramie State Bank for the program, and Mayor Brandon Johnson and Department of Planning and Development Commissioner Ciere Boatright for their support for Adopt-a-Landmark funding. We congratulate Athena Williams and the Oak Park Regional Housing Center.

The Laramie State Bank Building was designed by Meyer & Cook with the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company and built between 1927 and 1929. It was designated a Chicago Landmark on June 14, 1995. After so many years of advocacy, Preservation Chicago looks forward to the restoration of the bank building beginning this fall.

Read the full story at Block Club Chicago

Affordable Apartment Building Opens In Austin As Part Of Historic Bank’s Redevelopment; The new Laramie State Bank campus includes a new 78-unit apartment building. Work on the bank building is set to begin this fall, with plans for a business incubator and cafe, Michael Liptrot, Block Club Chicago, 9/11/26

Austin’s Laramie State Bank Renovation Eyes June Opening For New Apartment Building; Michael Liptrot, Block Club Chicago, 3/27/26

A West Side Landmark Will Be Redeveloped Into A Museum, Cafe, Business Incubator, Affordable Housing; Block Club Chicago, 3/8/21

WIN: Beautifully Restored Laramie State Bank Will Include Blues Museum, Cafe and Business Incubator; Preservation Chicago

8. WIN: CDOT Pledges to Complete Cortland Street Bridge Restoration By End of 2028 So Landmark Rescission Deferred For Now (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

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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.

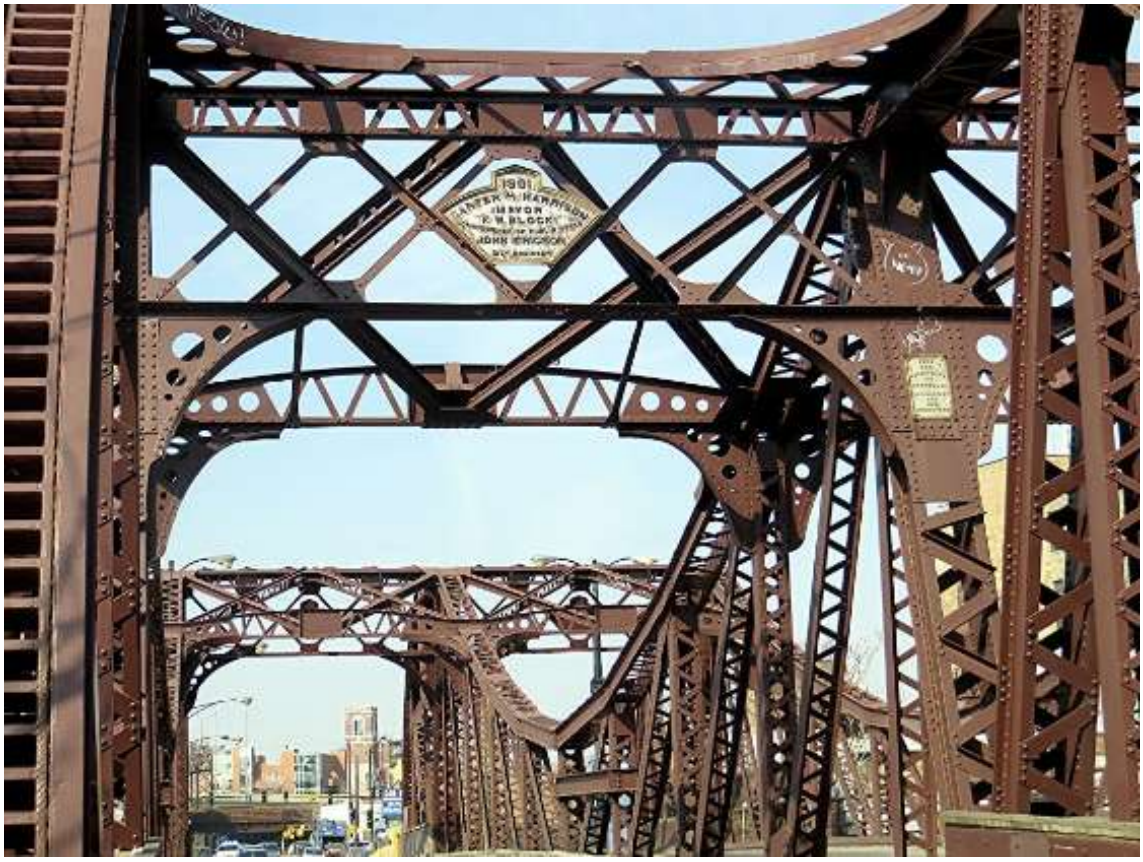
The most recent issue has emerged because Robert Milan, a special prosecutor handling a number of the cases, has informed the court that he would like to withdraw after he was appointed in 2017 to oversee the cases in lieu of the county's top prosecutor.

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."

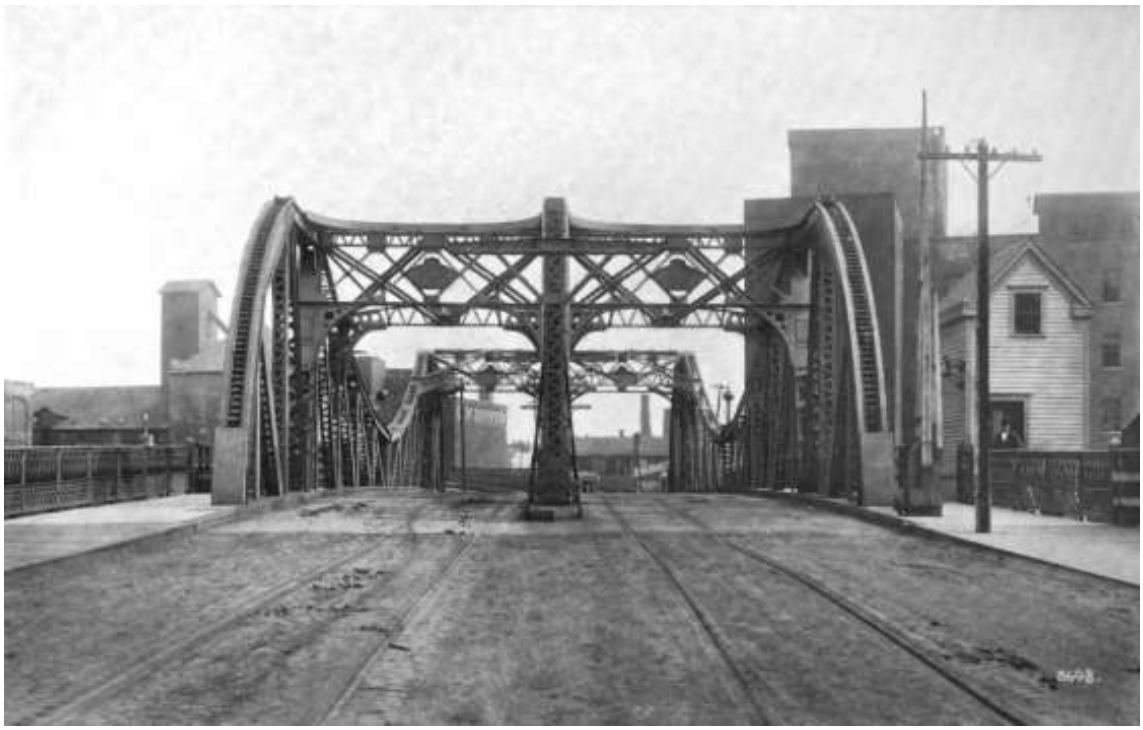
But the court filing set off a flurry of motions and hearings before Judge Erica Reddick, the presiding judge of the court's criminal division, as some attorneys cited concern over how the change would impact ongoing cases and whether or not a conflict still precluded Cook County prosecutors from handling

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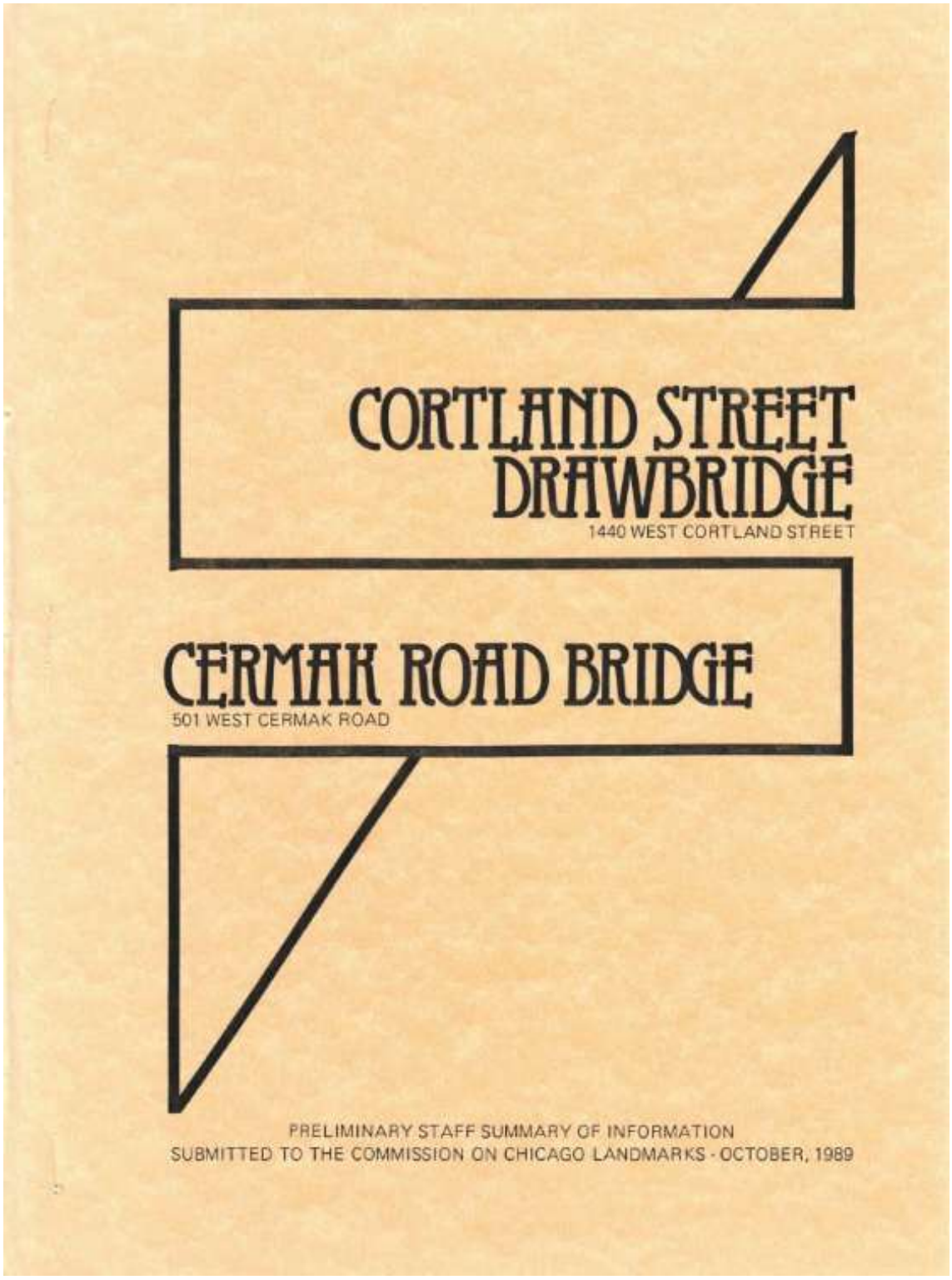
Is the Cortland Street Bridge a precious landmark or a traffic albatross? Aldermen want Cortland bridge's landmark status revoked, an effort spurned by preservation advocates, Talia Soglin, Chicago Tribune, 9/9/26. Image Credit: Chicago Tribune



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

“Alderpeople are backing off a plan — for now — to remove the landmark status of the Cortland Street bridge after the city’s transportation department has pledged to complete ongoing maintenance on the structure by the end of 2028.

“The Cortland Street bridge over the Chicago River has been shut down since last September, when the Chicago Department of Transportation began a long-term rehabilitation project. It was delayed indefinitely this summer because of the discovery of new issues with the 124-year-old bridge.

“That sparked Streeterville and Lincoln Park Ald. Brian Hopkins (2nd) to introduce legislation this summer to remove the bridge’s city landmark status in an attempt to speed up the process to fix the bridge or replace it entirely. Alds. Scott Waguespack (32nd) and Timmy Knudsen (43rd) also co-sponsored the effort.

“But in a surprise move Tuesday at a hearing of the City Council’s Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards, Hopkins deferred a vote on the landmark rescission after he said transportation commissioner William Cheaks assured him construction on the bridge will be completed by the end of 2028.

“The city’s transportation department previously said the removal of city landmark status would not be an immediate fix allowing construction on the bridge to proceed, in part due to ‘state and federal environmental and historic-preservation reviews’ — a process Hopkins referenced on Tuesday.

“‘We’re not giving up the idea that landmark designation could be and should be removed, but we don’t want to interfere with the sensitivity of this moment, where CDOT is completing their scope of work, dealing with federal agencies who may not be in favor of the action that we would take to remove the landmark designation,’ Hopkins said. ‘So we’re going to allow this process to play out.’

“Transportation department spokesperson Erica Schroeder confirmed on Tuesday that construction will recommence on the bridge by the end of the year.

“‘CDOT has developed an alternative rehabilitation approach that can be completed under the existing construction contract while maintaining the bridge’s historic character and addressing structural conditions identified during bridge assessments. We expect construction activity to begin by the end of this year and the work to take about two years,’ Schroeder said.

“Tuesday’s deferral comes as preservationists, cyclists and some neighbors have voiced their opposition to the removal of the bridge’s landmark status. Others have said they are strongly in favor if it means getting the bridge back open to vehicles faster.

“A building’s landmark status in Chicago has not been revoked by the City Council since the 1980s, when the McCarthy Building Downtown was torn down to make way for Block 37. That process sparked lawsuits and was described by Preservation Chicago executive director Ward Miller this summer as a ‘huge embarrassment.’

“‘This too could be a huge embarrassment,’ Miller told Block Club at the time. ‘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.’

“Some neighbors and groups this summer and fall have also pushed for both a new bridge to be built and the existing structure to be moved elsewhere, possibly as part of the planned extension of the 606’s Bloomingdale Trail.” (Myers, Block Club Chicago, 10/13/26)

“The Cortland Street Bridge over the Chicago River has sat closed to car traffic for a year now. Built in 1902, it’s one of the earliest surviving trunnion bascule bridges anywhere, a design Chicago engineers invented. It also carries the city’s landmark status.

“Two aldermen now want that status stripped, hoping to clear the path for a working bridge. Preservation groups are pushing back hard, Ward Miller of Preservation Chicago warning the move could trigger an ‘avalanche’ that undermines the landmarks ordinance.

“There’s a detail that gets glossed over: CDOT admits stripping the landmark status won’t speed anything up, since every bascule bridge already qualifies for federal historic recognition regardless of the city’s designation. The real holdup is a whole layer of review, not a single ordinance. With more than 300 bridges and viaducts to maintain, some overlap is unavoidable, but that doesn’t explain a year with no visible work.

9. THREATENED: City Council Approves Francis W. Parker School's Demolition of the 1909 Belden by the Park Courtyard Building at 327-335 W. Belden Avenue in Lincoln Park



Vintage Courtyard Residential Building at 327-335 W. Belden Avenue. Photo credit: Zillow



Vintage Courtyard Residential Building at 327-335 W. Belden Avenue. Photo credit: Zillow

“The Francis W. Parker School scored a victory in its yearslong battle against some Lincoln Park neighbors over its plan to build a middle school on West Belden Avenue.

“The school, which has been in Lincoln Park for 125 years, received approval Thursday for its expansion from the Chicago Plan Commission. The school also sought approval for new athletic field lights and security cameras.

“It’s proposing tearing down the 15-unit Belden by the Park condos at 335 W. Belden Ave. to build a five-story building, which would include a pedestrian overpass connecting the buildings. Parker, which owns the condo building, pegs construction costs at $39 million.

“But neighbors still showed up in full force Thursday, with more than 40 people signed up to speak about the proposal. Parents of Parker students, alumni and some board members spoke in favor of the proposal, citing the need to better position Parker for the future. But they were outnumbered by opponents of the project, many of whom were against the demolition of the 1909 vintage courtyard building at 335 W. Belden.

“Preservation Chicago urged the commission to reject Parker’s proposal, citing the inclusion of Belden by the Park in the courtyard building landmark district the group has pursued for a number of years.

“Some detractors pointed to the Better Plan, a proposal created by the group East Lincoln Park Neighbors that calls for a five-story building on Parker’s parking lot and a sixth-story aquatic center, to avoid demolishing residential buildings.

“Michelle Hoppe Villegas, board member of the Mid-North Association, said its board opposes the expansion. ‘We ask that you listen to the overwhelming public opposition to amending the current plan development agreement and ask that you reject the private institution … asking to encroach upon our dense and treasured historic neighborhood,’ Hoppe Villegas said. ‘If allowed, Parker will consume and gut this historic community.’” (Miller, Chicago Sun-Times, 9/17/26)

“In order to build its new academic center, which will hold its middle school students and staff, the school will demolish a 117-year-old building it owns at 327-335 W. Belden Ave.

“Since at least 2019, Parker has sought to expand beyond its Webster Avenue campus, initially attempting to buy two neighboring Belden Avenue condo buildings outright before shifting to purchasing individual units.

“The school offered $11.2 million for the 15-unit Belden by the Park building at 327-335 W. Belden Ave. and $9 million for the neighboring 19-unit building at 317-325 W. Belden Ave., the Tribune reported. After those offers failed, Parker bought two condos in Belden by the Park for roughly $1.8 million and secured contracts for additional units.

“The strategy prompted accusations from residents that Parker was attempting a piecemeal takeover of the buildings. A lawsuit filed by residents over the school’s acquisition strategy was later dismissed.

“Melissa Macek, president of the Mid-North Association, said Tuesday during the Zoning Committee hearing that residents remain opposed to expanding onto Belden. ‘We’re not opposed to Parker expanding. We want them to expand on their [existing] footprint,’ Macek said.

“Field lighting and other site improvements are planned for summer 2027, while construction of the new school building is expected to begin no sooner than 2028.” (Filbin, Block Club Chicago, 9/23/26)

“Chicago needs strong schools, hospitals, cultural institutions and nonprofits. While some of those institutions serve the public, others, such as private schools, primarily serve those willing and able to pay for their services. Their tax-free status means they do not contribute to paying for city services. Further, when they purchase private property to expand their campuses, they compensate the owner of the land, but they do not compensate the city for the permanent loss of tax revenue.

“Parker’s proposal has real, human costs that affect not just a block, but the entire city. It would swallow up housing when we are trying to enact policies to grow our housing stock. It would displace families and permanently alter a vibrant residential neighborhood when we are trying to keep eyes and ears on our streets and shoppers in our local stores. Most of all, we lose property that contributes to the local tax base and funds important public services.

10. WIN: The Weather Bell Is Lit Again at the Rector Building, 79 W. Monroe Street



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 1905. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1923, 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 1905. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1923, 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 1905. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1923, 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 1905. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1923, 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 1905. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1923, 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 1905. With matching addition by Holabird & Roche to the south in 1923, Subsequent modifications by others. 79 W. Monroe Street. Image credit: R2 Companies/Ware Malcomb

“Cities are ever-changing organisms, shedding elements of the past while retaining others. Striking the right balance is the challenge, and it’s easy to feel cynical about the moneyed interests driving so many changes that remove, bit by bit, the idiosyncrasies of our surroundings.

“Which is why it’s a pleasant surprise to learn that the office-to-residential conversion underway at the Rector Building in the Loop includes the restoration and repair of the weather bell affixed to its second story at the southeast corner of Clark and Monroe streets.

“Non-functional for at least a decade, if not longer, it once provided a simple forecast. When lit up red, the thermometer was expected to rise. When yellow, temperatures were expected to drop. And when green, conditions remained unchanged. The bell’s color would flash if rain or snow were imminent.

“Now, after a prolonged dormant period, the weather bell is aglow once again.

“‘The bell was in pretty rough shape,’ said Gary Stoltz, the chief design and development officer at the private equity real estate firm R2, which is redeveloping the building. ‘It’s acrylic with stainless steel accents, and then you have the metal panel that kind of clads the armature. All of that was in some form of disrepair.’

“But according to Stoltz, ‘I think it would have cost more to take the bell down and then do repairs to the façade behind it.’ Also, ‘if we wanted to maximize profits, we would not be converting and adapting an office building into residential. It’s not an excellent way for the owners to make money; building new would have been less expensive. But this is absolutely necessary for Chicago’s future. We’ve been working on it for four years and two mayoral administrations; you basically have to convince their teams why this is important.’

“The high-rise was built in 1905 by the restaurateur Charles E. Rector and it is ‘one of the oldest surviving examples of early commercial high rises designed by architect Jarvis Hunt,’ combining ‘classical design features with aspects of 20th century modernism from the Chicago and Prairie Schools,’ according to Preservation Chicago’s website.

“In 1884, Rector opened an oyster house at Clark and Monroe — the future site of a much larger building to come — and it became notable enough that it shows up in Theodore Dreiser’s 1900 novel ‘Sister Carrie,’ when a character dines at Rector’s, a restaurant ‘of some local fame, which occupied a basement at Clark and Monroe Streets.’

“Originally, there was no weather bell. That wouldn’t be added until a half century later in 1951, when the Rector Building became the headquarters for Bell Federal Savings and Loan, a bank founded by the employees of Illinois Bell Telephone. The bank occupied offices in the building until 1997.

“Ornamentally, many financial institutions of the 20th century distinguished themselves with a public clock as part of the building. It seems that decision-makers at Bell Federal decided to take that idea a step further with the installation of the weather bell.

“The bank was an alternative to the more starchy, white-collar financial institutions up and down Monroe and Clark and LaSalle streets, and ‘it must have appeared that perhaps Bell Federal Savings was sending a message,’ said Ward Miller, the executive director of Preservation Chicago. ‘The idea might have been that they were a little more contemporary, hip and fresh versus the solid and traditional banking building across the street with its large analog bronze clocks.’

“Miller is referring to the original First National Bank building at Dearborn and Monroe, a contemporary of the Rector Building designed by Daniel Burnham and torn down in 1970.

“‘We almost forget now that Monroe Street was a big financial powerhouse,’ he said. ‘But there have been so many changes — demolitions but also consolidations of banks — that you don’t get that same feeling that you used to get when you looked down Monroe Street, when there were a whole slew of bank buildings.’

“‘This electronic flashing bell would have really distinguished the location in this darkened canyon of buildings at the time,’ said Miller. ‘And then in the 1960s and 1970s, if you looked down the street, you would have seen the Italian Village neon sign sticking out in the same view as the weather bell. And if you looked further down, there was the Monroe Theatre, with its flashing marquee. And if you looked down Clark to Madison, you would have seen the Clark Theatre with its marquee and flashing lights. So the bell was competing not only with the bronze clock of First National Bank, but it was also competing with these theater marquees and these restaurants. The

11. 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

12. THREATENED: Data Center Conversion of the Chicago Landmark Office Building at 300 W. Adams Street Approved



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

13. WIN: Portage Theater Foundation Partners with the Filament Theatre on Fundraiser Screenings as the $3 Million Restoration Campaign Advances (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

“Two Portage Park theaters are teaming up for screenings of ‘The Nightmare Before Christmas’ starting Thursday to help raise funds for one’s restoration while aiding another reeling from summer flood damage.

“The Portage Theater, which has been closed for eight years but is currently undergoing renovations, and the Filament Theatre, a nonprofit theater that specializes in programs for children and families, are co-hosting screenings of ‘The Nightmare Before Christmas’ Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

“Funds raised from the screenings will go towards support programs at the Filament Theatre, which experienced substantial damage from flooding earlier this year, and will help fund renovations at the Portage Theater.

“Built in 1920, the Portage Theater has sat vacant since 2018. The former cinema was purchased last year by Chris Bauman, the founder of the Avondale Music Hall. Bauman launched a nonprofit foundation to raise money to restore the historical theater in August.

“Bauman said the Portage Theater Foundation will host events throughout the next year to help raise money and drum up interest for the theater.

“His goal is to raise $3 million to get the theater reopened in about a year. After that, he said the foundation will continue to raise money to modernize and renovate the theater in phases.

“Once it reopens, Bauman said he envisions the Portage Theater being used for concerts, film screenings, indoor markets and local theater among other purposes.

“Bauman is also working with filmmaker Michelle Tkachenko Weaver to produce a documentary about the restoration of the theater. A trailer for the documentary will be shown before each of ‘The Nightmare Before Christmas’ screenings.” (DeVore, Block Club Chicago, 10/7/26)“

“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.

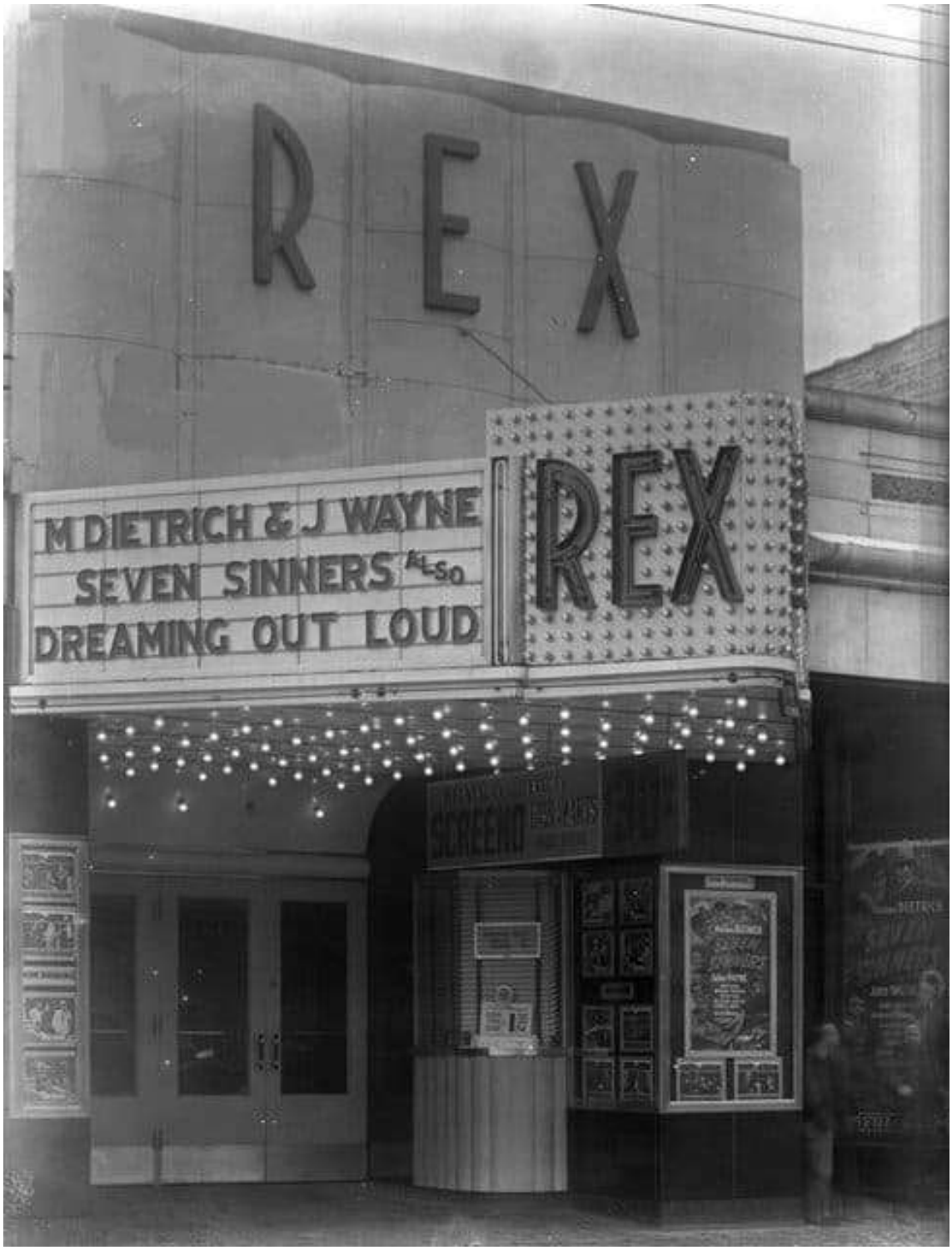
”To achieve this vision, the foundation is actively seeking public support, offering perks like personalized entry tiles, custom marquee messages and collectible certificates for donors, while also welcoming volunteers to assist with fundraising and cleanup.” (Lopez, Time Out Chicago, 8/31/26)

”’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)



14. WIN: Humboldt Park Theater Building at 3679 W. Grand Avenue, Once Slated for Demolition and a Parking Lot, Returns as La Reina Cinema with a $250,000 Neighborhood Opportunity Fund Grant



The former Rex Theatre at 3679 W. Grand Avenue, Humboldt Park. Photo credit: Cinema Treasures



3679 W. Grand Avenue, Humboldt Park. A former vaudeville house and movie theater from the late 1800s, operating as the Grandale, the Lawndale and later the Rex Theatre, then home to the Youth Center Church of God in Christ for more than fifty years. Photo Credit: R8teco / Cinema Treasures

“When Ken Gaebler toured a church for sale in Humboldt Park along Grand Avenue in late fall 2025, he quickly fell in love with its history.

“The one-story building, 3679 W. Grand Ave., with a tan brick and stone facade was home to the Youth Center Church of God in Christ, a historically Black Pentecostal Christian congregation, for more than 50 years. But Gaebler said another aspect made the property stand out.

“The selling broker mentioned to him that before it became a church, the venue operated as a vaudeville theater and a movie house. When Gaebler got home from the tour, he immediately started researching the building’s background and digging into old Chicago fire insurance maps.

“‘It’s kind of a rarity to find a building that had a theater in it before, and I’ve always been a huge cinema [and] movie fan, and so I started to think that it would be interesting to restore the building, but also to restore the theater,’ Gaebler said.

“He officially acquired the building in February and has since started renovations.

“Gaebler named the theater La Reina, Spanish for ‘the queen,’ something he hopes resonates in Humboldt Park, which is home to the oldest Puerto Rican community in Chicago.

“The theater will have 55 to 60 seats, and he plans to show independent movies, art films and projects by local producers, in addition to Spanish-language movies. Gaebler also hopes to run new releases, but said the theater will have both digital film and analog equipment set up to show older movies, too.

“‘It’s going to be a nonprofit, so the hope is that the members of the community will inform the programming,’ Gaebler said.

“‘The success of the theater, to me, is going to be based on whether nearby residents use it, embrace it and help to shape it,’ Gaebler said.

“Gaebler received a $250,000 grant from the Chicago Department of Planning and Development in September to support the restoration. The funding came from the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, which allocates bonus payments from developers seeking additional floor area in Downtown construction projects to support commercial corridor investments on the South, West and Southwest sides.

“Joshua Son, the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund’s projects administrator, said Gaebler’s application was strengthened by letters of support from Humboldt Park neighbors who said they wanted a walkable movie theater that reflected the area’s Latino culture, had engaged with Gaebler about the proposed project and felt that their input had been heard. Son added that Gaebler’s pitch to rehab a historic building in a community that was once a vibrant commercial corridor is ‘exactly what we’re looking to fund’ — and also ‘really cool.’

“Dan Neuman — whose family had owned and operated the Youth Center Church of God in Christ since the 1970s and became fascinated with the building’s history — said one parcel of the property hosted a vaudeville theater since the late 1800s, though he couldn’t pinpoint a specific year of opening. He found stage lights in the building supporting that determination, he said.

“The theater operated under two different names in its earliest days, Neuman said: the Grandale Theatre and the Lawndale Theatre. Both, he believes, showed vaudeville shows and silent movies. City directories for 3679 W. Grand Ave. list the address as ‘Lawndale Theatre’ in 1928, and Cinema Treasures, the online database, states that the Lawndale Theatre opened in 1914.

“Neuman said the theater underwent its largest renovation to date in the late 1930s before reopening as the first movie house with sound in the building. The project added the current auditorium and an Art Deco aesthetic, he said.

“From 1941 to 1951, city directories also list 3679 W. Grand Ave. as the ‘Rex Theatre.’ (Quealy, Block Club Chicago, 9/28/26)

Instead of being demolished for a parking lot, the building is returning to its original use as a theater. Preservation Chicago applauds Ken Gaebler for the research, the vision and the investment.

Additionally, we thank Ald. Gilbert Villegas and the Chicago Department of Planning and Development for the $250,000 Neighborhood Opportunity Fund grant that is making it possible.

15. PARTIAL WIN: Condos Project Behind Second Church of Christ, Scientist Facades Named for Architect Solon S. Beman (Chicago 7 2019)



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]



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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]

“At Pine Grove and Wrightwood avenues in Lincoln Park, the Second Church of Christ, Scientist, built in 1901 and put up for sale as a development opportunity in 2017, now has a six-story building tucked inside and behind three of its original exterior walls. The new construction contains 22 condos, priced from about $1.47 million to a little over $2.67 million, as well as a glass-walled space for the congregation and basement-level parking for both residents and worshippers.

“The name of the condos, Beman Lincoln Park, is a tribute to Solon Beman, who before he designed this and at least a dozen other Christian Science churches around the country was the architect of the company town (and now national park) Pullman, the Blackstone Library in Kenwood and several other important structures.

“Saving portions of a handsome old church while adding new housing units, ‘did something for the church, it did something for the neighborhood and it did something for Beman,’ said Larry Booth, the architect of the combo.

“The new portion both stands apart from and makes use of the church walls. Setting its walls back several feet from the old ones provides a visual distinction that might make passersby think the two are merely neighbors. For four of the units, it also creates unusual terrace spaces between the old walls and the new.

“Like most churches, Second Church of Christ, Scientist does not have landmark status that would prevent demolition, and existing zoning would allow a replacement building as tall as 10 stories. But when the dwindling congregation put it up for sale nine years ago, the listing agent, John Colt Landreth of Plaza Property Advisors, told Crain’s that ‘our marching orders are to find somebody who will reuse the building, not demolish it.’

“In 2020, the congregation struck a deal with Ogden Partners to develop the combo that is under way now, a plan that would keep both the look of the old church and the congregation in place.

“The limestone church with a passage from the biblical Book of Revelations carved over the front door is ‘an important piece of the fabric of this neighborhood,’ Larry Booth said.

“Fenton Booth said the deal included building out a space for the congregation. Set behind the columns of the old main entrance on Wrightwood, the space has a long glass wall that reveals it to the street, ‘showing the life inside,’ Larry Booth said.

“While the original Second Church of Christ, Scientist sanctuary held 750 people, the new one will accommodate 50, a measure of how much church attendance has fallen off.

“Stained glass from the now-removed dome is being fashioned into a sculptural installation for one wall of the new sanctuary, the Booths said, and a few panels were kept in place on walls near the sanctuary. The congregation saved some benches, tables and chairs from the old sanctuary as well.” (Rodkin, Crain’s Chicago Business, 10/6/26)

“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

16. WIN: Chicago Landmark Plaque Unveiled at New Genesis Assembly of God, the Former Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church at 1400 N. Laramie Avenue in Austin



New Genesis Assembly of God Baptist Church / Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1924, Moritz F. Strauch, 1400 N. Laramie Avenue. Photo credit: City of Chicago DPD

“More than a century of history at 1400 N. Laramie Ave. was celebrated on Saturday as members of New Genesis Assembly of God Baptist Church and community leaders gathered to unveil a plaque marking the church as a Chicago Landmark.

“The City Council had officially designated the building, constructed in phases from 1924 to 1949, as a Chicago landmark almost a year ago. The designation protects the building from being altered without formal review.

“During the ceremony, Deacon Don Thompson spoke about the history of 1400 N. Laramie Ave. and what the Chicago Landmark designation means for New Genesis Assembly of God and the Austin community.

“‘For generations, this place has stood for more than just bricks, stones, mortar and stained-glass windows. It has been a beacon of hope and a sanctuary for this community,’ Thompson said.

“The history of 1400 N. Laramie Ave. dates back more than a century to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, a German-American congregation organized in 1870 under Rev. John Bond. The congregation’s 31 founding members separated from their parent church to preserve the religious beliefs and traditions they had practiced in Germany. Trinity eventually moved to the Laramie Avenue site.

“‘It was around 10 years ago when this vision popped into my mind about trying to become a historic landmark. That was when I really started getting serious about it, trying to accumulate what we needed so it could be something we could achieve,’ Norman said.

“Bishop Derrick M. Fitzpatrick, pastor of Stone Temple Missionary Baptist Church in North Lawndale, spoke during the ceremony. He congratulated New Genesis Assembly of God on receiving landmark status, noting that Stone Temple received its own landmark designation in 2016.

“‘A landmark plaque today is not just about the past. It’s not even just about today. But a landmark plaque propels you into what we call God’s future. I can see so much that God has in store for us. I can see that God is going to continue to bless us beyond measure,’ Fitzpatrick said.

“‘A Chicago landmark is not just a compliment, it is a legal protection. This building cannot be altered or torn away without review. Only a few hundred buildings in the City of Chicago have this status,’ Mitts said.

“‘Within these walls have been written countless prayers and shared moments of joy, comfort and enduring fellowship. This landmark designation is a testament to the visionaries who laid the foundation and to the dedicated caregivers who preserve it. By honoring our past today, we ensure that our story, our values and our architectural legacy will be protected for generations to come,’ Thompson said.” (Cervantes, Austin Weekly News, 9/14/26)

“Meeting Criterion 1 for heritage, the church was originally home to the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was established in 1870. The building reflects the city’s social history and specifically, its German American ethnic and immigrant history as well as German American residential migration throughout various Chicago neighborhoods over time.

“Meeting Criterion 4 for exemplary architecture, the building is an excellent example of early 20th century church architecture in an eclectic Neo-Gothic style that was built in multiple phases between 1924 and 1949, as the building’s original congregation encountered delays in the building campaign due to the Great Depression and World II. The building is clad with Lannon Stone on its primary elevations along with various Gothic elements such as lancet windows and multiple crenellated parapets giving it a commanding appearance.

“The building’s unique bell tower, which is four stories in height, includes the church’s bells cast in 1898 and brought from the church’s original location on Ada Street. It is topped by an unusual octagonal lantern framed by stepped gables at each of the tower’s four sides. The overall design detailing and detailed interior oak framing displays the Viennese training of the building’s architect, Moritz Strauch.

“The Commission has recommended that significant features to be protected are all exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 5/16/25)

Preservation Chicago tesdified in support of the Chicago Landmark designation of the New Genesis Assembly of God Baptist Church / Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. We congratulate

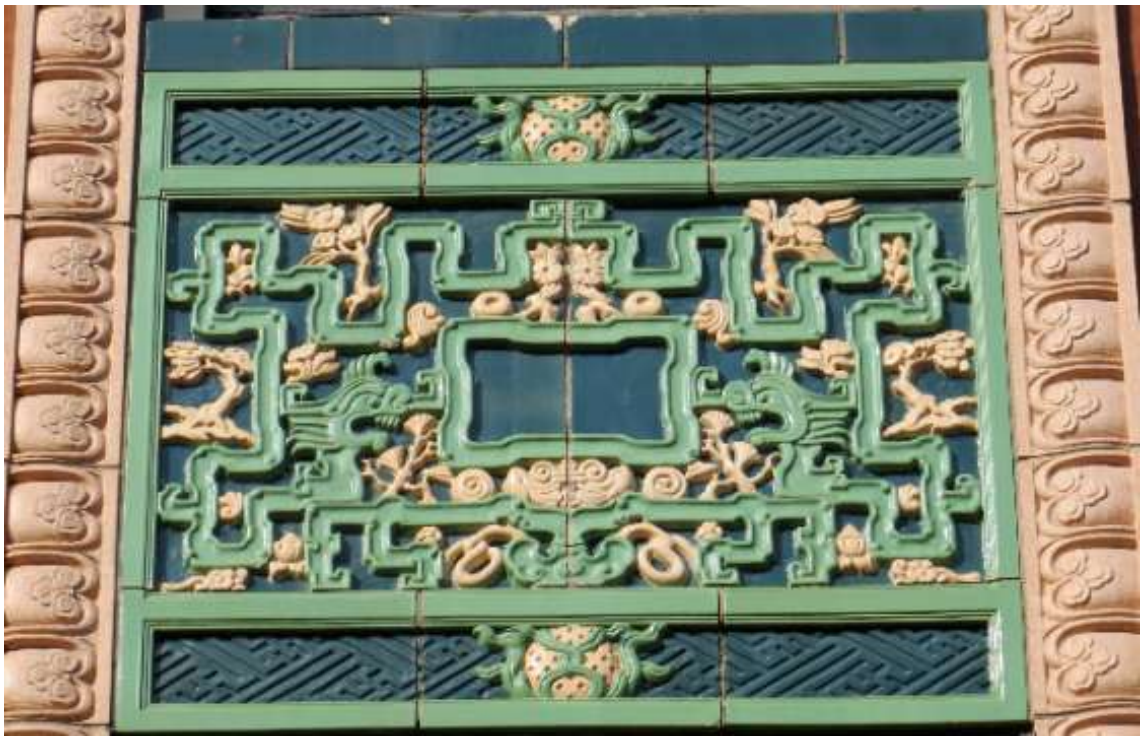
17. WIN: Pui Tak Center / On Leong Merchants Association Building in Chinatown Receives a $750,000 Save America's Treasures Grant, the Only Illinois Project Funded This Year



On Leong Merchants Association Building / Pui Tak Center, 1928, Christian S. Michaelsen and Sigurd A. Rognstad, 2216 S. Wentworth Ave. Photo credit: Preservation Chicago Postcard Library



On Leong Merchants Association Building / Pui Tak Center, 1928, Christian S. Michaelsen and Sigurd A. Rognstad, 2216 S. Wentworth Ave. Photo credit: Debbie Mercer



On Leong Merchants Association Building / Pui Tak Center, 1928, Christian S. Michaelsen and Sigurd A. Rognstad, 2216 S. Wentworth Ave. Photo credit: Debbie Mercer



On Leong Merchants Association Building / Pui Tak Center, 1928, Christian S. Michaelsen and Sigurd A. Rognstad, 2216 S. Wentworth Ave. Photo credit: Debbie Mercer

“The Pui Tak Center — Chinatown’s polychromatic bonanza of Chinese Eclectic architecture — has received a $750,000 grant to help restore the 98-year-old landmark.

“The matching grant was announced Thursday. The center, 2216 S. Wentworth, is among 24 sites awarded grants through the Save America’s Treasures program administered by the National Park Service. It’s the only Illinois project this year to receive funding from the initiative.

“Pui Tak Center Executive Director David Wu said the award, along with the matching funds the group must raise, will be used to cover big-ticket items such as restoring the center’s ornate windows of decorative iron and leaded glass — particularly shop windows on the first floor — and repairing the building’s deteriorating roof.

“Wu said a $200,000 capital grant has been set aside for the building in the state’s 2027 fiscal year budget.

“‘We’re going to try to raise the match from foundations and from individuals,’ he said. ‘So we have some work to do in terms of raising the match.’

“While new money awaits, preservation work on the building has been going on for at least a decade.

“‘We spent around $500,000 on terra cotta work and more recently, in 2022, we restored the front canopy, which is an important feature of the building,’ Wu said. It cost $900,000 to restore the canopy, he said.

“Built in 1928 as the On Leong Merchants Association headquarters and once dubbed Chinatown’s ‘City Hall,’ the building is one of the country’s most exuberant displays of Chinese-inspired architecture.

“The three-story, 36,000-square-foot building has prominent pagoda-shaped towers and patterned brickwork. And a passerby could lose an afternoon gazing at all the colors, figures and glazed terra cotta details on the building’s facade.

“‘For the terra cotta tiles, there are different patterns, like [symbols of] longevity, butterflies, phoenix, lotus, plum blossoms,’ said Anita Luk, former director of the Chinese American Museum of Chicago, who has researched the history and cultural significance of the center’s facade details.

“The building was designed by Christian Michaelsen and Sigurd Rognstad, two Norwegian architects who had never been to China. Their most notable Chicago work includes the golden-domed Garfield Park Field House at 100 N. Central Park Ave.

“‘That period was still under the Chinese Exclusion Act,’ Luk said. ‘That means during that period, there were not a lot of Chinese architects [in the U.S.] — or maybe none. And so when the On Leong association commissioned the architects to build the building, the architects were Norwegian.’

“Wu said the church and the Pui Tak Center are working together to raise rehab and restoration funds. He said the organizations are looking to have much of the work completed by the building’s 100th anniversary in 2028.

“The center has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 2025 and has been Chinatown’s only protected city landmark since 1993.

“The National Park Service said it awarded $24.4 million in the latest round of Save America’s Treasures grants. Founded in 1998, the program is funded by revenue from federal oil and gas leases.” (Bey, Chicago Sun-Times, 10/7/26)

“Built in 1928, the On Leong was one of the first buildings constructed in the then-new Chinatown. The On Leong merchants resettled in the area of 22nd Street and Wentworth Avenue after Chinese businesses were essentially gentrified out of the South Loop starting in the 1920s.

“And the building’s terracotta detailing is, hands down, among the city’s finest — and that’s saying something in Chicago — featuring color, abstract shapes, even green-and-gold dragons.

“‘This is the kind of building that comes to us, and it’s like: “This should have been before us a long time ago,”’ said Amy Hathaway, national register specialist with the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office.

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: Renderings Released for Glass Atrium at Humboldt Park's Historic Stable and Receptory Building



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



Rendering 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 the 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



Aerial view of Humboldt Park Receptory Building and Stable, 1896, Frommann & Jebsen, 3015 W. Division Street including the sculpture garden. Photo credit: ABC Chicago News 7



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

“The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture in Chicago’s Humboldt Park is celebrating a historic achievement.

“The museum recently earned accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums, the highest recognition available to museums in the United States. The designation makes it the only accredited Puerto Rican museum in the continental United States and one of only a handful of accredited museums in Chicago.

“For Billy Ocasio, the museum’s president and CEO, the achievement represents decades of work.

“‘When I reflect and I look at it, 26 years ago, we got started in a trailer in the parking lot while we raised millions of dollars to create this museum,’ Ocasio said. ‘And here we are 26 years later, reaching the highest standard that you could reach as a museum.’

“Accreditation reviewers highlighted the museum’s educational programming, bilingual interpretation and commitment to accessibility. Veronica Ocasio, director of education, exhibitions and programming, said the museum develops bilingual curriculum materials for exhibits and provides them to educators before student visits.

“One of the most ambitious plans is the transformation of the museum’s central courtyard. The museum is preparing to enclose the 6,000-square-foot space in glass, creating a year-round venue for events, programming and community gatherings.

“‘We are more than a museum. We’re also a community hub,’ Billy said.

“The expanded space is expected to accommodate concerts, symposiums, educational programming, school field trips, salsa lessons and other community events. Museum leaders say the glass enclosure will also feature a design inspired by the Puerto Rican flag.

“The museum is also developing a community archiving lab, where families will be able to preserve and share stories of migration from Puerto Rico to Chicago and throughout the diaspora. Those stories will be digitized and made available to future generations.” (Rios, ABC7 Chicago, 9/21/26)

“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 courtyard with the steel and glass structure.

These ideas included the demolition of the partially built cinder-block structure and using the

20. THREATENED: Restoration of the 1880 Burnham & Root Darrow Bridge in Jackson Park Delayed Until 2030 (Chicago 7 2025)



Clarence Darrow Memorial Bridge / Columbia Bridge, a 2025 Chicago 7 Most Endangered. Clarence Darrow Memorial Bridge/Columbia Bridge, 1880, Burnham and Root, in Jackson Park at 1766 Columbia Drive. Photo Credit: Eric Allix Rogers

“Reconstruction of Jackson Park’s long-closed Darrow Bridge may not begin until 2030, transportation officials told residents Monday, the latest setback for a project that has been discussed for more than a decade.

“On Oct. 5, about 40 JPAC members packed the fieldhouse meeting room in anticipation of a long-awaited update on the bridge from CDOT project manager Tanera Adams.

“‘I don’t have an actual date for construction,’ Adams said. ‘I hope by 2030 — But I don’t know. It just depends on the steps.’

“The ‘steps’ include defining the scope of the project, securing funding, conducting soil and geotechnical testing, planning the reconstruction, obtaining permits and, finally, beginning construction.

“In 2017, the Tribune reported that CDOT planned to replace the original structure with an entirely new pedestrian bridge, offering the existing bridge to anyone who could move and preserve it. CDOT later dropped that plan without explanation. Preservation groups subsequently pushed for a preservation-centered approach to the bridge’s reconstruction.

“Adams said Monday that CDOT is now taking a ‘preservation-first’ approach to the project. That approach, as defined by the Secretary of the Interior, means those working on historic properties take steps to ‘sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials.’

“The bridge site is currently being studied, Adams said. Crews are conducting geotechnical testing of the bridge’s soil embankments and limestone abutments. Adams said CDOT aims to finish testing and ‘roll it out to all of our consultants’ by the beginning of 2027.

“The delay in reconstruction provoked frustration and questions from JPAC members, particularly about the possibility of constructing a temporary pedestrian bridge at the site.

“‘It’s not part of the scope of this project,’ Adams replied.” (Monaghan, Hyde Park Herald, 10/9/26)

“Until its closure in late 2013, the bridge served as a principal route for pedestrians and cyclists traveling between the lakefront and the neighboring Hyde Park and Woodlawn communities.

“The Darrow Bridge was built in 1880 and repurposed in 1895 after the World’s Columbian Exposition. The bridge acquired its vernacular name — it is officially called the Columbia Drive Bridge — more than four decades later, after famed lawyer Clarence Darrow, who was known to pace the bridge while practicing his oratory to fish in the lagoon.

“Over the following decades, the bridge fell into disrepair. As early as 1968, community members wrote letters to the Hyde Park Herald urging the city to repair it. In 2014, restoration efforts formalized when JPAC began circulating a petition demanding the city fix the bridge.” (Monaghan, Hyde Park Herald, 4/10/26)

“The June 2, 2025 JPAC meeting, however, marked the first time that restoring the bridge to its 1895 form was proposed by CDOT as the goal for its repair.

“‘This is the most historic structure I have ever worked on,’ Tanera Adams, a CDOT project manager said. ‘We’re (restoring) basically what’s there but making it more safe.’

“News of the bridge’s potential preservation comes just a few months after it landed on Preservation Chicago’s 2025 annual list of the city’s ‘most endangered’ historic sites for the first time.

“‘It’s very encouraging that they are going to shoot for the highest preservation standards,’ said Jack Spicer, a member of JPAC’s Darrow Bridge Committee, after the meeting.

“The plan for historical preservation of the bridge, the email continues, prioritizes repairing and reusing historic materials, such as limestone blocks, railings and uprights to restore it to its 1895 appearance.” (Monaghan, Hyde Park Herald, 6/18/25)

Preservation Chicago has long been concerned about the deteriorating condition of the Clarence Darrow Memorial Bridge / Columbia Bridge and has advocated, along with local preservation partners such as the Clarence Darrow Bridge Coalition and the Hyde Park Historical Society, for a historically sensitive restoration of the bridge for over 20 years. The Darrow Bridge was a Preservation Chicago 2025 Chicago 7 Most Endangered.

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



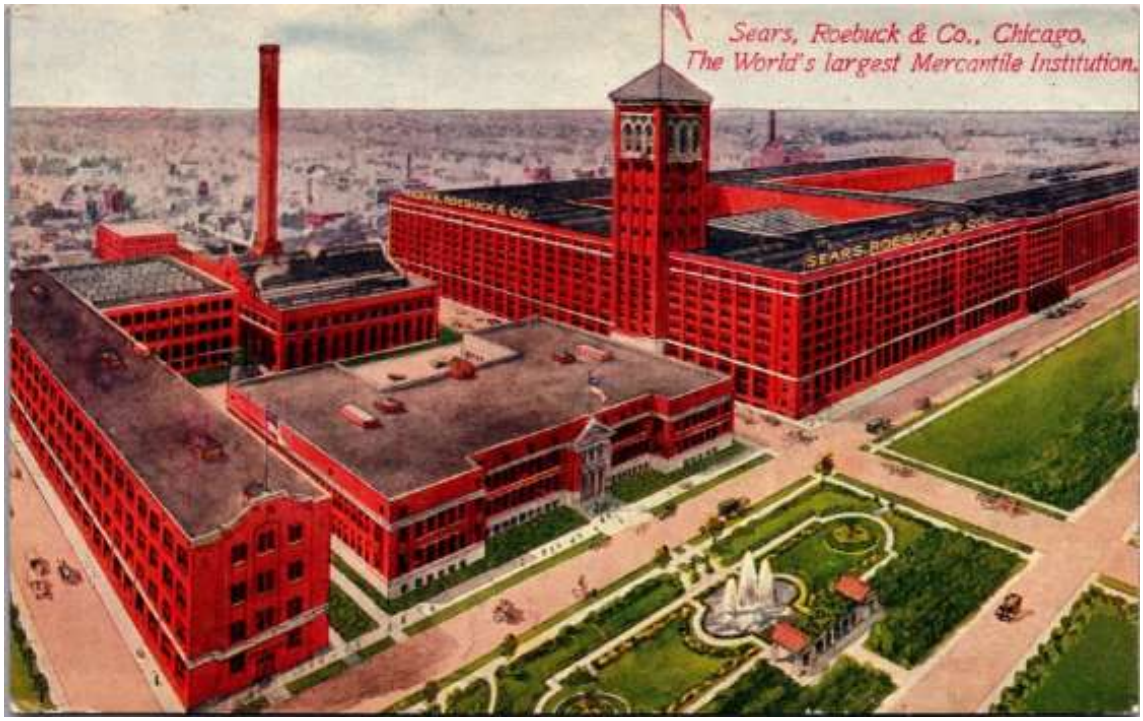
Sears Sunken Garden, 1907, Nimmons & Fellows, 3330 W. Arthington Street, North Lawndale. Image credit: Preservation Chicago Postcard Collection



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: City Council Approves $66.2 Million for Humboldt Village, the Adaptive Reuse of the Closed Von Humboldt School at 2620 W. Hirsch Street (Chicago 7 2014)



Alexander von Humboldt Elementary School, 2622 W. Hirsch Avenue, 1896 Building, W. August Fiedler. Photo Credit: James Iska / ChicagoHistoricSchools.com



Alexander von Humboldt Elementary School, 2622 W. Hirsch Avenue, 1896 Building, W. August Fiedler.
Photo Credit: James Iska / ChicagoHistoricSchools.com



Alexander von Humboldt Elementary School, 2622 W. Hirsch Avenue, 1896 Building, W. August Fiedler.
Historic Photo Credit: Bill Latoza / ChicagoHistoricSchools.com

“After a decade in the making, the Von Humboldt Elementary School redevelopment is a go after developers secured city funding to transform the shuttered school into affordable apartments.

“An agreement to provide more than $66 million in public funds for the project known as Humboldt Village, 2620 W. Hirsch St., was approved last week by City Council.

“The $66.2 million in subsidies, a mix of money from the city’s Housing and Economic Development Bond and low-income tax credits from the city’s Department of Housing, close a yearslong effort to secure public funding for the project’s below-market housing apartments.

“The money comes from a $1.25 billion borrowing pool City Council approved in 2024 to fund a wide-ranging group of projects designed to expand the supply of affordable housing.

“The Humboldt Village project, first introduced to the community in 2016, will have 103 apartments earmarked for people earning 30-80 percent of the area median income, a wider range than most lower-cost housing projects in the area. Rents will range from $945 for a studio for a person making 50 percent of the area income ($42,550) to $2,257 for a three-bedroom apartment, depending on income tier, according to a presentation about the funding project breakdown shared last week.

“The project is estimated to cost $95 million, Department of Housing officials and developers said last week during a City Council finance committee meeting that debated the project cost.

“Each unit is set to cost $922,000 to build — a staggering number that reflects the trend of escalating costs to build affordable housing, especially on the Northwest Side and in converted buildings like schools and churches that need significant rehab.

“The project recently got a new developer, The Community Builders, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit with a series of Chicago housing properties that is in the process of acquiring the Von Humboldt building from New Jersey-based RBH Group, the original developer.

“Joe Lewis, deputy commissioner for the city’s Department of Housing, said the cost is partly driven by the complexities of turning a 130-year-old school into apartments and the carrying costs from the former developer.

“‘It is a sizable amount on a per-unit basis, but the school is a significant facility, comprising the better part of a city block with over 100,000 square feet in total building area,’ Lewis said at last week’s finance committee meeting. ‘It would be a large-scale project, no matter which way you cut it, whether it were affordable housing or market rate, to redevelop this property.’

“With public financing secured, construction is slated to begin early next year and be completed in June 2028, city and development team officials said.

“Ald. Jessie Fuentes (26th), a local organizer when the school was one of 50 CPS schools closed in 2013, has been involved with the project from its inception and has been a fierce supporter.

“The redevelopment of Von Humboldt is a sensitive topic among former students, parents and neighbors, who were devastated when the school was shut down.

“‘We have to break ground as soon as possible so we can restore safety in and around this project,’ Fuentes said. ‘Affordable housing, without a doubt, has been my No. 1 priority … this project allows for people to stay in this community and call it home.’

“With the building languishing for more than a decade and the project previously delayed due to lack of funding, more vandalism and trespassing has occurred at the property this year, neighbors and Fuentes have said. (Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 9/29/26)

Over the past several years, Preservation Chicago has been involved in many hearings and discussions on the transformation of the Von Humboldt School. In addition to retaining the entire building’s exterior envelope, we strongly advocated for retaining certain features of the interiors, including the staircases and the auditorium. We continue to encourage the developer to pursue a Chicago Landmark Designation of the building.

The original Von Humboldt School was designed by John J. Flanders, then the official architect of the Chicago Public Schools, and built in the 1880s. W. August Fiedler designed the second building in 1895, and Arthur Hussander designed the 1921 addition.

23. 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

24. POTENTIAL WIN: Plans Presented to Convert the Milshire Hotel at 2525 N. Milwaukee Avenue into Apartments and Restore the Neon Sign



An adaptive reuse of the old Milshire Hotel at 2525 N. Milwaukee would preserve the iconic sign and building with 30 apartments and two ground-floor retail spaces. Milshire Hotel, 1920s, 2525 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Logan Square. Rendering credit: Kennedy Mann Architecture



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

“After more than 10 years of sitting vacant, the well-known former Milshire Hotel building could be revived under a new development team — with its neon remaining intact.

“New owners of the former hotel at 2525 N. Milwaukee Ave., which has been vacant about 12 years, want to convert it into 30 apartments with two ground-floor retail spots. The proposal, which would need a zoning change, would be an adaptive reuse of a historical building built in the 1920s as a small hotel serving Logan Square’s booming entertainment district, according to Logan Square Preservation.

“The 15-foot-tall neon sign, believed to be about 84 years old, would also be saved and be part of the facade, owners shared at a virtual community meeting about the proposal hosted by the 1st Ward office Monday.

“‘Our intent here is to reuse the existing building and bring it back to life and restore the facade, the commercial storefronts, and obviously the iconic neon sign that hangs from the facade,’ said Kevin Schnell, vice president of acquisitions for Concord Capital, a real estate development company that bought the building last year.

“Schnell said ‘nature has taken over’ the Milshire Hotel, meaning there’s been ample interior damage that would need to be addressed as part of the building rehab. Its terracotta and limestone bases would be unchanged but the building would get new windows.

“Schnell acknowledged the apartments are smaller in size than others in more modern area apartments but said the building’s historical nature and the tight business corridor makes creating larger bedrooms challenging. Historic preservation tax credits from the federal government are also determined by how much of the building can stay the same, the ownership team said.

“‘With these corridor-style buildings, this is how they were really historically laid out in smaller unit sizes that were relatively more affordable, and with the historic corridor, it just made sense to maintain them as relatively small unit sizes,’ he said.

“Because of this, the team plans to rent the units at roughly 80-100 percent of the area median income for tenants, which would be for people who make $68,050-$85,100 for one person and $77,800-$97,200 for a two-person household.

“There are no prospective retail tenants yet, but Schnell said the team floated having another bar, cafe or speakeasy. However, Nick Zettel, zoning advisor and chief of staff for Ald. Daniel La Spata (1st), urged the team to think of other complementary tenants for the ground floor.

“‘We have an entertainment district here, it’s a ton of taverns, and we are actually excited at the ward office to think about complementary uses on that part of Milwaukee,’ Zettel said.

“The ward office first shared plans for the proposal last month and has received about 40 responses in favor of the redevelopment, he said. Neighbors can still submit feedback online while La Spata weighs the zoning decision.

“The proposal would add more density to an already bustling strip and reawaken the building that represents a bygone era for the neighborhood. Mark Fishman, one of Logan Square’s most well-known property investors, bought the building in 2014 after its last 70 single-room occupancy renters were evicted by the former owner.

“Fishman wanted to redevelop it into apartments and tried to sell the iconic sign in 2022, but was unsuccessful. Concord Capital bought the property last year after it was listed for sale. (Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 9/17/26)

Preservation Chicago supports the adaptive reuse of the Milshire Hotel and encourages Ald. Daniel La Spata, the Committee on Zoning and the City Council to approve the rezoning.

Preservation Chicago named Chicago’s historic neon and vintage signs to our 2015 Chicago 7 Most Endangered list. The Milshire’s blade sign was listed for auction in 2022 and withdrawn after a campaign led by Andrew Schneider and Logan Square Preservation. We applaud Concord Capital for the commitment to restore the sign in place, and we encourage the ownership to hold to that commitment as the project advances through approvals.

Preservation Chicago encourages the ownership to pursue the federal historic preservation tax credits and to seek listing on the National Register of Historic Places, which would make the building eligible for them.

25. WIN: Ornate Terra Cotta Facade at 3244 W. Bryn Mawr Retained as Residential New Construction Moves Forward



Proposed New Construction at 3244-3250 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue with historic terra cotta facade incorporated. Photo credit: Hanna Architects



3244-3250 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue Facade. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

“Updated plans have been brought forward for the upcoming redevelopment of the existing buildings at 3244 to 3250 West Bryn Mawr Avenue in North Park. In the works for over six years, our last coverage of the project was in mid-2025 as it received a renovation permit. However, construction never started as the developer pursues higher density.

“Now, the plans call for a five-story structure recessed behind the historic facade. The building’s overall massing was also updated with a medium-tone brick, inset balcony bays, and decorative brick details. It will include around 2,000 square feet of retail across two spaces on the ground floor, joined by the same 27-space parking garage in the rear.

“The floors above will now contain 40 residential units made up of eight one-bedroom and 32 two-bedroom layouts. Of the total, six will be considered affordable. Residents will also have access to a small shared rooftop deck facing south. Local groups have expressed their support for the increase, though no updated timeline has been revealed.” (Achong, Chicago YIMBY, 9/25/26)

“A zoning application has been filed for a revised development scheme at 3244 W. Bryn Mawr. Planned by 3244-50 Bryn Mawr LLC, the project site is a midblock site between N. Jersey Ave and N. Spaulding Ave. The front facade from the existing one-story structure will be retained as part of the development.

“To allow for the project, the developer is seeking to amend the existing site’s Type 1 rezoning from 2024 to allow for the increased scope of the project. Approvals will be needed from the Committee on Zoning and City Council.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 9/30/26)

“The front facade from the existing one-story structure will be retained as part of the development” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 5/13/25)

Preservation Chicago advocated along with neighborhood preservation partners since 2022 to save the ornate terra cotta facade at 3244 W. Bryn Mawr and incorporate it into the new construction. We met recently with the architect and the developer to encourage and support their reuse of the historic facade, and we are pleased to see it included in the project moving forward.

The choice between historic preservation and higher density is a false choice. The new building will contain 40 units and the historic terra cotta facade will be retained and incorporated. Preservation Chicago encourages the Committee on Zoning and City Council to approve the rezoning increase and allow this development to move forward.

Read the full story at Chicago YIMBY and Urbanize Chicago

Density Bumped For Mixed-Use Proposal In North Park, Ian Achong, Chicago YIMBY, 9/25/26
Revised development proposed at 3244 W. Bryn Mawr; The project added another floor and 10 more apartments, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 9/30/26

Renovation permit issued for development at 3244 W. Bryn Mawr; The existing building’s front facade will be retained, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 5/13/25

WIN: After Long Delay, Ornate Terra Cotta Facade at 3244 W. Bryn Mawr Will Be Incorporated Into New Construction; Preservation Chicago

26. WIN: Contributing Three-Story Historic Facade Will Be Incorporated Into New Construction at 169 N. Morgan Street in the Fulton-Randolph Market Landmark District



169 N. Morgan Street, Fulton Market. A contributing three-story industrial vernacular building within the Fulton-Randolph Market District, designated a Chicago Landmark District on May 13, 2015. Photo credit: Google Maps



Rendering of the proposed building at 169 N. Morgan Street, Fulton Market. The three-story historic facade will be rebuilt in salvaged or matching brick, with two floors of new construction set back. Image credit: Hirsch MPG

“The Chicago City Council has approved a mixed-use development at 169 N. Morgan. Planned by Hubbard Street Group, the project site is a midblock property on N. Morgan St between W. Randolph St and W. Lake St. Located within the Fulton-Randolph Market Historic District, the site is currently occupied by a vacant three-story industrial building that will be replaced by the new development.

“Designed by Hirsch MPG, the development will take shape as a five-story mixed-use building reaching approximately 68 feet tall. The new building will feature 3,348 square feet of retail space, 20 residential units, 20 bike parking spaces, but no car parking spaces. To meet ARO requirements, four of the units will be set aside as affordable.

“The building’s design will rebuild the existing structure’s three-story facade with salvaged or matching brick while constructing an entirely new structure behind it. The massing sets back six feet from the front facade above the third floor and switches to a metal panel facade on the fourth and fifth floors. The building design also incorporates an interior light court to provide light and ventilation to units on the interior of the lot line building.

“On the ground floor, the 3,348 square feet of retail space will occupy the majority of the ground floor, with a residential entry corridor next to the retail space and mechanical space and the bike storage room at the back of the ground floor. On the upper floors, each floor will have five units, with a total unit mix of 12 one-beds and 8 two-beds.

“With City Council approval secured, the site will be rezoned from C1-2 to DX-5 to allow for the scope of the project. A timeline for the project has not been announced.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 10/2/26)

169 N. Morgan Street is a contributing building in the Fulton-Randolph Market District. This is a good example of a Chicago Landmark District designation protecting the historic streetwall while allowing for higher density new construction.

Preservation Chicago supports this project. The historic streetwall of the Fulton-Randolph Market District will continue to define the district. The historic significance of the industrial vernacular building at 169 N. Morgan Street is the facade. The historic three-story facade will be reconstructed and the new construction behind it will be set back.

Facade retention is a legitimate and valuable preservation tool, and many excellent historic facades in Chicago that could have been incorporated into new construction were ultimately demolished because of this misguided all-or-nothing approach.

Preservation Chicago encourages developers and the Commission on Chicago Landmarks to incorporate historic facades into new construction in the Fulton-Randolph Market District and across the city.

Read the full story at Urbanize Chicago

City Council approves mixed-use development at 169 N. Morgan; The five-story building will have 20 units and retail, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 10/2/26

Mixed-use development proposed at 169 N. Morgan; The five-story building would have 20 units and retail, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 7/31/26

Fulton-Randolph Market District, A Chicago Landmark District, www.ChicagoLandmarkReports.org

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. LOSS: Terra Cotta Holiday Club Building at 4006 N. Sheridan Road Demolished (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

“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 are being demolished.

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.

Read the full story at Chicago YIMBY and Block Club Chicago

Full Permit Issued For 91 Units At 4006 North Sheridan, But Demolitions Still Pending; The full permit has been issued to replace the Holiday Club and other structures at Irving Park and Sheridan Road, Daniel Schell, Chicago YIMBY, 8/16/26

Caissons Permitted For 91 Units At 4006 North Sheridan Road In Uptown, Daniel Schell, Chicago YIMBY, 4/5/2026

29. WIN: City Council Approves Adaptive Reuse of the Late-1800s Church at 3300 W. Pierce Avenue in Humboldt Park as 20 Apartments, with the Historic Exterior Retained and Restored



Former church, late 1800s, 3300 W. Pierce Avenue at N. Spaulding Avenue, Humboldt Park. Vacant since the congregation sold the property in 2020. Photo credit: Zillow



Former church, late 1800s, 3300 W. Pierce Avenue at N. Spaulding Avenue, Humboldt Park. Vacant since the congregation sold the property in 2020. Photo credit: Zillow

“A deteriorating Humboldt Park church that’s long been the focus of various development proposals got the green light to be converted into apartments.

“City Council approved a proposal to turn the church at 3300 W. Pierce Ave. into 20 apartments Wednesday, a day after the zoning committee approved the project.

“Developer and Humboldt Park resident Nick VanderVoort, principal of development company Vandy Projects, is behind the housing plan, which was presented to the community in February and received mostly positive feedback.

“‘We’re excited to bring new life to the building and get started with permits soon,’ VanderVoort said Wednesday.

“The $5.5 million, privately-funded housing project will have six apartments offered at a below-market rate, VanderVoort previously said.

“The project would preserve the church facade and some stained glass windows but replace exterior windows, repair the foundation at the southwest corner that’s caving in, make roof improvements and improve the sidewalk, the developer told Block Club in February.

“‘I live in Humboldt Park and I’ve always had an interest in redeveloping churches. … I think I’ve finally found a way to make it work, raise the capital and gotten enough buy-in from the local neighbors and the alder to make it happen,’ VanderVoort said at the time.

“The 20-apartment project is the seventh housing proposal for the church, which was once home to Salvation and Deliverance Ministries International. The congregation had called the church home since 1986 and sold the property in 2020, according to property records.

“Ald. Jessie Fuentes (26th) said Tuesday that the project has her support. (Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 9/23/26)

“Designed by OTJ Architects, the project plans to convert the long-vacant church into 20 new residential units. The building will feature six one-beds, seven two-beds, five three-beds, and two four-bed units. To meet affordability requirements, six of the units will be set aside as affordable.

“On the exterior, the project will include roof improvements, foundation repairs, window replacement, sidewalk repair, and a northeast-facing mural with community arts partners.

“With City Council approval secured, the site will be rezoned from RS-3 to B2-5 to allow for the scope of the $5.5 million project. The developer can now move forward with permitting and construction. Construction of the project is expected to take 13 months to complete.” (Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 10/9/26)

This is a good outcome for this building, and Preservation Chicago supports it. Preservation-oriented residential adaptive reuse is a best practice for vacant religious structures. It protects neighborhood character and history while adding new, mid-density residential units to the community.

Preservation Chicago applauds Nick VanderVoort for his vision and moving this development forward. Additionally, we applaud Ald. Jessie Fuentes for her support of this adaptive reuse project.

We encourage the development team to incorporate the original stained glass into the development plan.

Read the full story at Block Club Chicago and Urbanize Chicago

Humboldt Park Church To Become 20 Apartments After City Council Approval; After years of failed proposals for the late 1800s-era church, Vandy Projects was able to get community buy-in for its plans. Parking is also part of the deal, Ariel Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 9/23/26

City Council approves residential conversion at 3300 W. Pierce; The church will be converted into 20 rental units, Lukas Kugler, Urbanize Chicago, 10/9/26

Crumbling Late-1800s Humboldt Park Church Could Be Converted Into 20 Apartments; Ariel Parrella-Aureli, Block Club Chicago, 2/24/26

Plan To Convert Humboldt Park Church Into $200-250K Condos Could Be Doomed After

30. THREATENED: Sacred Heart Mission Church in Morgan Park Remains Closed Five Months After Its Facade Collapsed



Sacred Heart Mission Church, 11652 S. Church St., pictured on May 11, 2026, a day after the front facade partially collapsed. Photo credit: Jim Lynch / Block Club Chicago

“Congregants of Sacred Heart Mission Church in Morgan Park are seeking answers from the Archdiocese of Chicago over when the church may reopen after parts of the building collapsed earlier this year.

“In May, the front facade of Sacred Heart Mission Church, 11652 S. Church St., partially collapsed as a Sunday morning Mass was ending. The collapse surprised the church congregation and sent scores of bricks plummeting to the ground, piling up on the sidewalks and areas in front of the building.

“The church has remained closed since, with congregants saying they have received no updates from the archdiocese over its future. A committee of church members at Sacred Heart Mission sent a letter to fellow members last week saying they are looking for answers from the archdiocese and that they are dedicated to saving the historical church as they did decades ago.

“‘We have exhibited unprecedented restraint, patience, and prayerful watch, waiting for answers,’ the letter read. ‘We want our church back. We have raised money in the past when we reopened the church 44 years ago and can do it again.’

“A similar committee formed at Sacred Heart Church in 1979, shortly after the archdiocese announced the church’s abrupt closure. Then-Cardinal John Cody said the decision was due to a lack of funding to support necessary building repairs and the need for a new pastor after the former retired, according to news reports from the time.

“The church community quickly mounted a fierce campaign to save the building from demolition, even taking their appeal to Pope John Paul II. After years of church members holding weekly prayer services outside every Sunday, the archdiocese, under the leadership of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, announced Sacred Heart Church would reopen in 1982.

“According to a Sun-Times report from November 1982, Bernardin’s decision came with stipulations that Sacred Heart Church would become a mission of nearby Holy Name of Mary Parish and that no archdiocesan monies would be expended now or in the future to maintain the building, among other provisions.

“Since then, Sacred Heart has operated with an all-volunteer advisory board, not requiring any financial support from the archdiocese while contributing required stipends to the Catholic Church. Sacred Heart Mission is now part of the Our Lady of Kibeho Parish, formerly Holy Name of Mary.

“The church building was constructed in 1904. Two decades after the church opened, the parish added a facade using imperfect bricks bought from the nearby Purington Brick Yard, according to the Ridge Historical Society.

“That facade came tumbling down in the spring, with congregants worried the situation could jeopardize its future once again.

“Longtime parishioner Mary Ellen Tatro-Mendoza, who is helping to coordinate the Save Our Shrine Committee’s efforts, said the last few months have been hard on the church community. ‘A lot of anxiety and a lot of prayer. People are worried that history repeats itself and the church closes like it did in 1979,’ Tatro-Mendoza said.

“Tatro-Mendoza said the church community is seeking answers about a plan for the church’s future, especially with winter fast approaching. She said no one from the archdiocese has reached out to the church community with a plan for the future or an update on any building assessments.

“‘There are a lot of people worried that they will just close the church, and they are also anxious because there has been no communication at all with anyone,’ she said.

“No one was hurt when part of the building collapsed in May. In an email to Block Club the day after the collapse, an archdiocese spokesperson said they were assessing the building and would ‘develop plans in the near future.’

“An archdiocese spokesperson told Block Club in an email on Tuesday that the archdiocese is continuing to evaluate the structural issues affecting the church building at Sacred Heart Mission Church. No decisions have been made yet regarding the path forward for the church, the spokesperson said. (Lynch, Block Club Chicago, 9/30/26)

Preservation Chicago encourages the Archdiocese of Chicago to take steps to rapidly stabilize and weatherproof the building before winter, and to work with the Save Our Shrine 2.0 Committee

31. THREATENED: Funds Run Low at Chicago's Oldest House, the 1833 Noble-Seymour-Crippen House in Norwood Park



Noble-Seymour-Crippen House, 1833, 5624 N. Newark Avenue, Norwood Park. Photo credit: Norwood Park Historical Society

“In the late 1980s, the Norwood Park Historical Society saved the oldest house in Chicago from being demolished. Now, nearly 40 years later, the group is trying to save the house yet again.

“Located on a quiet, tree-lined street in Norwood Park at 5624 N. Newark Ave., the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House was built in 1833, when Chicago was still a village. The Norwood Park Historical Society has been maintaining the house for decades, using it as a museum, a place for community meetings and an event space. However, after dipping into funding reserves to pay for a new roof in 2025, the nonprofit desperately needs more donations to keep the house open.

“The historic home was almost lost for good in the 1980s when a next-door neighbor tried to buy the land to create a cul-de-sac with dozens of new homes, recalled Susan Kroll, a member of the Norwood Park Historical Society board. If the sale had gone through, Kroll said the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House would have likely been demolished.

“The historical society held yard sales, neighborhood festivals, sold chocolate Easter bunnies and did ‘basically anything we could to raise money’ and was able to scrape together enough to buy the house in 1987, Kroll said. The house was designated a City of Chicago Historical Landmark a year later and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.

“‘Yes, we saved the house, however, saving it is a constant thing,’ Arthur Krumrey, the acting president of the Norwood Park Historical Society, said as he walked past walls of black-and-white photographs on a Wednesday in August.

“Keeping the house up and running costs about $250 per day, Krumrey said. With a small stream of monthly visitors, the $5 suggested donation doesn’t even begin to cover the house’s costs, he said. Instead, the historical society relies on donations. Krumrey said fundraising fell short last year, but they hope to raise at least $12,000 this year.

“‘I think most people think the history of Chicago is all Downtown and that’s not true,’ Kroll said. ‘There’s history all around us. Here we are, the oldest existing house in the city of Chicago, nowhere near Downtown.’

“Krumrey said the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House is ‘an unnoticed gem in the neighborhood.’ He said the house has been under the radar for years in part because it doesn’t actually own the distinction of being the oldest house built in Chicago, although it is considered the oldest house that exists in Chicago.

“The Clarke-Ford House, which was built in 1836 in the area now known as the South Loop, is designated as the oldest house built in Chicago. When the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House was built, Norwood Park was still ‘nowheresville’ and wouldn’t be annexed into the city for another 56 years, Krumrey said.

“English immigrant Mark Noble Sr. and his wife Margaret came to Chicago in 1831 and rented the former home of Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable, Chicago’s first permanent settler, before claiming 150 acres of prairie in current-day Norwood Park. Using lumber from a sawmill he owned on the Des Plaines River, Mark Noble built what is now the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House along Union Ridge, a high point left behind by a glacial lake.

“In 1868, Thomas Seymour and his wife Louise bought the home and built an Italianate-style addition. Thomas Seymour was a prominent member of Chicago’s Board of Trade and was a member of the Norwood Land and Building Association. The Building Association purchased a group of farms in the area to create a suburban subdivision, which led to the founding of both the Township and the Village of Norwood Park.

“The Crippen family, who lived in the house for two generations and owned it until the historical society bought it, were very civically involved and sponsored community theater productions, founded a local little league program, sponsored a reading program at Taft High School and raised $750,000 for a World War II hospital plane named ‘The Spirit of Norwood Park.’

“‘The families represent the farming era, the village era and the city, neighborhood era which of course we’re still in,’ Kroll said.

“Today the house is filled with artifacts collected from the neighborhood. Kroll said the historical society, which was founded in 1973, initially started collecting historical items in preparation for the centennial celebration of the incorporation of the Village of Norwood Park, which occurred in 1874.

“‘Having the artifacts allows us to tell the stories of the people, the places and the events of the

32. 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

33. WIN: A Downstate Businessman Restores the Forgotten Jewish Section of Oak Woods Cemetery



Robert Libman, former owner of The Libman Company, at his family's grave in the Jewish section of Oak Woods Cemetery, Greater Grand Crossing. Photo credit: Octavio Jones / Block Club Chicago



Neglected Jewish section of Oak Woods Cemetery in 2018. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago



Neglected Jewish section of Oak Woods Cemetery in 2018. Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

“When 83-year-old Robert Libman was a boy, he remembers helping take care of his relatives’ gravesites in a small section of the 184-acre Oak Woods Cemetery in Greater Grand Crossing.

“That section on the south end of the cemetery included graves of Jews from around the Chicago area, including many who lived in Lawndale, which was once known as ‘little Jerusalem.’

“But over the past several decades, a part of that section — which was owned and managed separately from the rest of Oak Woods — endured years of abandonment, neglect and vandalism.

“Many of the nearly 300 plots, including some that date to the 1870s, became overgrown with weeds and forgotten in a jungle of grass several feet high, with tombstones that are cracked or cleaved through, toppled over or weathered so smooth that names and dates are faded from memory.

“The sight was something of ‘an unspoken shame’ for the Chicago Jewish community, according to Mark Mandle, a founding board member of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society who has relatives buried in Oak Woods. The cemetery’s decrepit state was so bad that it made headlines in 2019.

“That’s when Libman — formerly the owner of The Libman Company, a national broom and cleaning materials factory based in Downstate Arcola — stepped in. He began paying landscaping crews to quietly maintain the section and became a frequent visitor, coming up from his home in Champaign. The work has included fixing up some of the 175 or so damaged graves, and he now has plans to add a gate and a Star of David to an archway at the entrance.

“‘It was just a forgotten land,’ said Libman, who was at the cemetery late last month to install a plaque acknowledging the support of his company. ‘How can you possibly forget about all these people who made it possible for all the Jews that followed?’

“Among the ‘forgotten’ people in the cemetery was his grandfather and company founder, William Libman, who immigrated to Chicago from Lithuania in the late 1800s as a child. William would eventually start The Libman Company, which now employs hundreds of people and sells its cleaning products in stores around the country.

“But over the years, many Jews left the area. Jewish historians and news accounts at the time said the Jewish exodus from the South and West sides started happening around the 1900s. The Libman family left in the 1930s for Downstate Illinois, fleeing mobsters who tried to extort the Libman company, Robert Libman said.

“There were other indignities in the larger Jewish section of Oak Woods. In 1947, nearly 200 plots were desecrated in an antisemitic attack, according to news accounts at the time.

“There are now very few modern graves in the section where Libman’s relatives are buried; the most recent appear to be from the 1970s and 80s.

“Mandle said the remaining Jewish sections of Oak Woods are owned by four synagogues in the area, but over the years ‘no money’ was put into parts, including a section owned primarily by Beth Hamedrosh Kesser Maariv in suburban Skokie. Anshe Sholom B’nai Israel in Lakeview also still owns a section, which had been in poor condition for years but its condition was improved after a separate donation from someone with a relative buried there.

“Ben Zion Lazovsky, an associate rabbi for Beth Hamedrosh Kesser Maariv, said his temple received many angry calls about the state of the burial ground over the years. But he maintained that any responsibility for the land was held by a now-dissolved separate cemetery association his synagogue had little control over.

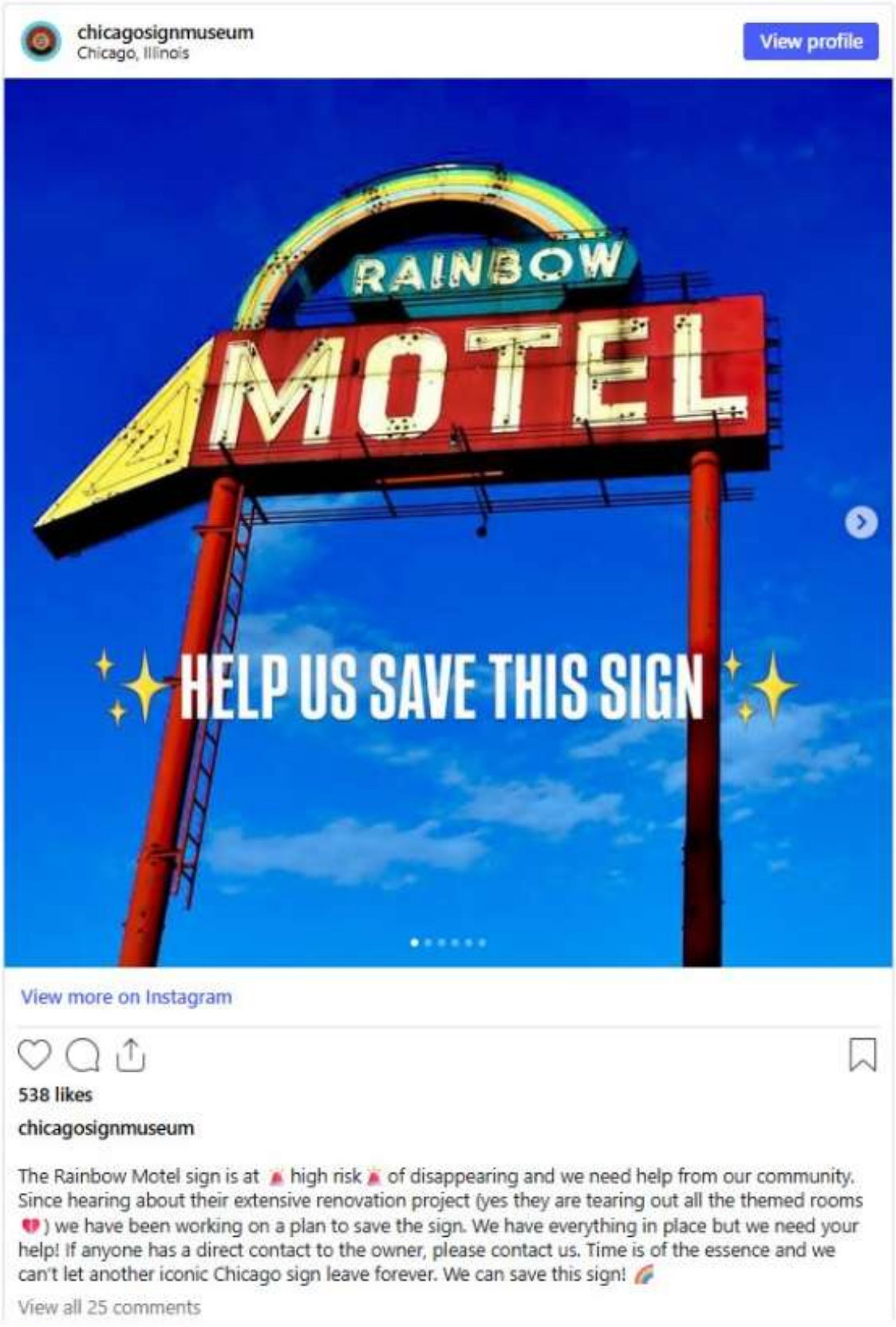
“Marcey Siegel, a former board member and current genealogist with the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois who is working on a history of the Oak Woods graves, commended Robert Libman for stepping in with his own money — and upholding a sacred Jewish principle of caring for the dead. ‘A lot of people do a lot of talking,’ Siegel said, ‘but Robert acted.’

“Lazovsky said that Libman ‘should be blessed.’ ‘It is a great thing … and a tribute to everyone buried there,’ he said.

“Robert Libman refers to what he has done as ‘neatening up the area,’ which can be difficult as crews need to be careful not to disturb any of the sites any further than they already have been. He won’t say how much money he has spent so far, only that it’s ‘significant.’



34. THREATENED: The Fate of the Rainbow Motel's 1954 Neon Sign at 7050 W. Archer Avenue Is Unclear (Chicago 7 2015)



Effort to save the Rainbow Motel neon sign. The Rainbow Motel, 7050 W. Archer Avenue, Garfield Ridge. Opened in 1954 as the Rainbow Pink Palace Motel. The motel is undergoing renovations and the fate of its neon sign is unclear. Image credit: Chicago Sign Museum

eN“The Rainbow Motel’s enormous neon sign still towers over Archer Avenue as workers renovate the property below. While changes to the 72-year-old motel are apparent, the exact fate of the rainbow-shaped neon sign remains unclear.

“Bienert reached out to the Chicago Sign Museum after learning the signs could be changed. The museum is now trying to contact the motel and preserve the signs if they are indeed removed.

“McClellan said the museum believes the large neon sign could come down, but emphasized that it does not know the motel’s plans. The museum wants to intervene if the existing sign is removed and preserve it rather than see it discarded, she said.

“The museum works with a network of sign shops and could help remove and restore the sign. Ideally, the museum would want to see the sign restored and remain in place. But if the motel owner is adamant about replacing it, the sign could go into the museum’s storage with other collected signs.

“Bienert said she also would like to see the motel’s signs preserved. She photographed some of the motel’s themed rooms about eight years ago while working on her book, ‘Hotel Kitsch,’ which explores the history of hotels with elaborate themed rooms.

“‘I would absolutely love to purchase and preserve the signs with the names of the themed rooms and the drawing of the heart bed room on the other side,’ Bienert said. ‘It’s the last of its kind.’

“The Rainbow Motel opened in 1954 as the Rainbow Pink Palace Motel, according to a 2017 WBEZ history of the property. The motel later expanded, including with a two-story wing in the 1970s or early 1980s. At the time of WBEZ’s report, the motel had 11 themed rooms and was working to update them.

“The large neon sign has long been one of the motel’s most recognizable features. The midcentury relic stands about 40 feet tall on two orange-red posts. It reads ‘Rainbow Motel’ with an orange, blue, yellow and green rainbow above.

“McClellan said motel signs have a storied history tied to the rise of highways and were designed to catch the attention of passing drivers. The Rainbow Motel is about a mile east of Interstate 55 and about two miles west of Midway Airport. A historic Chicago-area route along the original Chicago-River-to-Des-Plaines-River portage, Archer Avenue was one of the first designated state highways in Illinois.

“‘Part of that was making really fantastic signs that would make you stop your car and pull in,’ McClellan said. ‘And so this sign is no different. It has a really unique design.’

“‘I just think it’s a beautiful neon sign that deserves to have a life after its use as an actual physical sign on the site,’ she said.

“‘Nooooo the staple of my childhood! Let us know how else we can help,’ one commenter wrote on the Chicago Sign Museum’s Instagram post seeking more information about the sign’s fate.

“‘Our whole mission is to preserve Chicago’s vintage neon signs because we’re rapidly losing them and there are no protections for them,’ she said.

“Chicago’s vintage sign code provides some protection for existing signs, but it does not give them the same historic protections that landmarked buildings can receive, McClellan said.

“A 2023 city ordinance strengthened protections for designated vintage signs, allowing new building owners to keep them up even if their permits had expired. But preservationists have said there is little financial incentive for owners to maintain the signs as public art, particularly when longtime businesses close or change ownership.

“‘I think this will probably be a persistent problem moving forward, like, maybe [businesses are] bought by new companies, saying this place isn’t up to standard and we need to remodel it,’ McClellan said. ‘So, I think it’s just indicative of a broader issue for preserving these signs.’” (Heather, Block Club Chicago, 9/14/26)

Preservation Chicago named Chicago’s historic neon and vintage signs to our 2015 Chicago 7 Most Endangered list, and we supported the 2023 City Council ordinance protecting historic signs. Some progress has been made, but much more proactive efforts are needed to save what’s left of Chicago’s neon signs. Since 2015 when Neon Signs were a Chicago 7 Most Endangered,

35. WIN: CTA Recreates the 1958 Congress Line Neon-Style Marquee at the Racine Blue Line Station's Loomis Street Entrance



The CTA's Racine stop in 1958 including neon sign. Photo credit: CTA

“The Racine Blue Line station’s Loomis Street entrance is glowing over the Eisenhower Expressway again, thanks to a new neon-style sign inspired by the station’s original mid-century modern aesthetic.

“After about a year of construction to modernize accessibility at the Near West Side stop’s auxiliary entrance, the Loomis access looks more retro than ever. The Racine station’s new marquee recreates the signage of the original Blue Line Forest Park Branch, then called the ‘Congress Line,’ which first moved Chicagoans in 1958. It uses LED tubing designed to look like neon to display messages like ‘4 Minutes To Loop’ and ‘Use Rapid Transit’ outside the entrance.

“‘This is the first time we’ve replicated a backlit, more elaborate sign like this,’ Chicago Transit Authority General Manager Graham Garfield said. ‘It gives the station a unique look and feel that people will recognize and take ownership of — “I use the 1950s station.”’

“In bringing the historic station to modern day, the CTA worked with the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office to assess any adverse effects to the landmark structure, in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The state agency asked that the CTA reserve the Loomis Street entrance as an example of the ‘L’ system’s 1950s architectural and transit design, Garfield said.

“‘We’re proud of the whole Racine project,’ Garfield said. ‘We’re proud to continue making our system accessible and bring it up to modern, state-of-the-art standards while, in this case, we could add a little historic flourish to it. You kind of get the best of both worlds.’

“Garfield, who’s worked at the CTA for 26 years and also operates as its in-house historian, said the same ‘unfortunately’ happened with the original 1950s neon marquees at Blue Line stations. The CTA removed each of the signs by the 1980s as they began to fall into disrepair.

“But he said the CTA was committed to making the new sign at Loomis Street a near-exact replica of its original, with small allowances for modern technology and maintenance needs.

“The CTA worked with architectural and infrastructure design firm HNTB and provided the company’s engineers and architects with the construction plans for the station’s initial build in the 1950s. The CTA added to HNTB’s designs by finding matching colors and materials, and Garfield said he used extensive photo references to copy the playful, hand-painted-looking font.

“‘We wanted to give it the utmost attention to do it just right and to do it justice,’ Garfield said.

“The reopened station entrance features other nods to the 1958 station’s look. The authority recreated CTA-logo door handles at the entrance and restored the station house’s glass and aluminum front, which was typical of those built for the 1958 Congress Line. Garfield said the CTA maintained the entrance’s original brick exterior.

“The entryway also includes interpretive panels explaining the history of the Congress Line, the station’s design and the particular features the CTA preserved or recreated.

“It was also the golden age of American roadside architecture. Along highways such as Route 66, businesses competed for motorists’ attention with bold colors, distinctive shapes and glowing neon signs.

“The Congress Line used similar tactics. Its bright red signs and neon lettering gave the stations a distinctive presence along the expressway and made their entrances easier to identify from a distance.” (Quealy, Block Club Chicago, 10/5/26)

Preservation Chicago congratulates the Chicago Transit Authority, General Manager and CTA historian Graham Garfield, and HNTB on the restoration of the Loomis Street entrance. Working from the station’s original 1950s construction plans, matching the colors and materials, and copying the hand-painted lettering from photographs is the right way to do this work, and the result shows it.

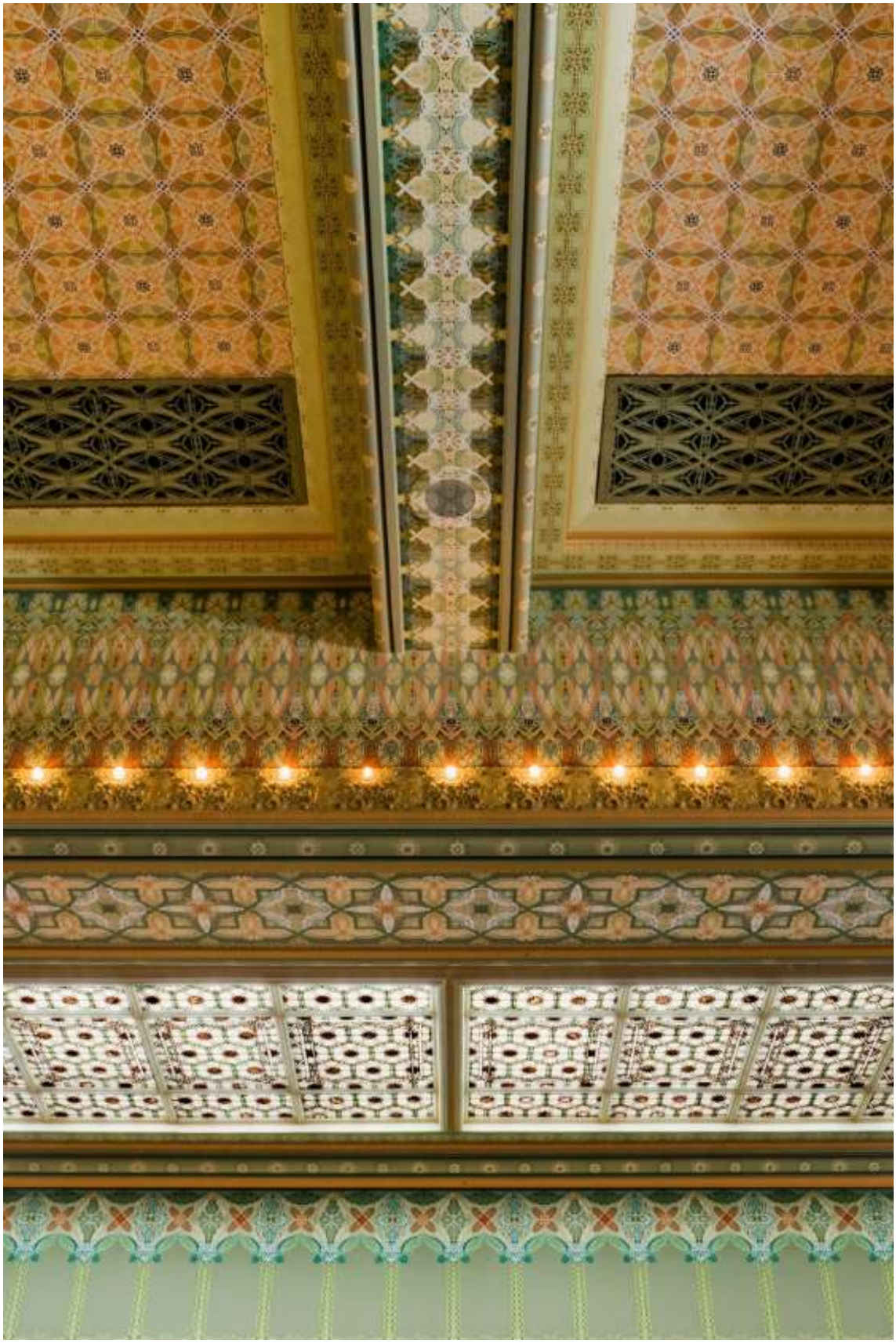
Credit is also due to the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office, whose Section 106 review asked the CTA to retain the Loomis Street entrance as an example of the “L” system’s 1950s architectural and transit design. When SHPO’s review makes a project better, that deserves recognition.

Preservation Chicago named the city’s historic neon and vintage signs to our 2015 Chicago 7 Most Endangered list, calling attention to the rapid loss of hand-crafted signage from commercial corridors across the city, and we supported the 2023 City Council ordinance protecting historic

36. IN MEMORIAM: Robert A. “Bob” Furhoff, Architectural Conservator and Paint Analyst, 1939–2026



Robert A. “Bob” Furhoff, 1939–2026. Photo credit: Furhoff Family



Bob Furhoff's brilliant paint analysis work was essential for the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room restoration and reconstruction. Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room, 1893, Adler & Sullivan, reconstructed 1977 at the Art Institute of Chicago. Photo credit: Bill Zbaren

Robert A. “Bob” Furhoff, who spent five decades recovering the original colors and finishes of Chicago’s most important interiors, died Saturday, September 12, 2026, at Montgomery Place in Hyde Park. He was 87.

“Bob was born February 18, 1939, in Flint, Michigan and was raised in Holly, Michigan. He was the son of August and Ruth (Gobat) Furhoff. Following high school, Bob attended Kendall School of Design in Grand Rapids and developed an interest in the historical aspects of design. After graduation, he entered the U.S. Army and spent 2-1/2 years in Germany, where he had the opportunity to meet his grandparents and other relatives. He also visited Italy, France, and Spain during that period. After concluding military service, he moved to Chicago to work with several architectural firms, designing and developing furniture and equipment systems for commercial interiors.

“In 1974, he started Restoration of Interiors, which specialized in conducting site investigations and paint analysis to research and document historic buildings. Significant Chicago-area projects included the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room, the Auditorium Theatre, St. James Episcopal Church, Glessner House, Clarke-Ford House, the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, and the Woodstock Opera House, to name but a few. He went on to work at more than a dozen Wright sites across the country and was also engaged for projects with the National Park Service, the Henry Ford Museum, and the Jeffris Family Foundation in Wisconsin.

“Bob served on the national board of The Victorian Society in America from 1995 to 2006, and was a member of the House & Collections Committee at Glessner House for more than 25 years. In 2014, he received the Architectural Conservation Award from the Society of Architectural Historians. Many of his project files and research materials were donated to the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries at the Art Institute of Chicago.” (Legacy.com, 10/2026)

Paint analysis is the least visible work in preservation and among the most consequential. A restored interior is only as truthful as the evidence behind its colors, and that evidence survives in fragments — a few microns of pigment under a dozen later coats, read from a cross-section under magnification. Bob Furhoff did that reading for the Auditorium Theatre, for Glessner House, for the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, and for the Chicago Stock Exchange Trading Room, where Adler and Sullivan’s stenciled decoration was recovered and reconstructed after the building itself had been demolished. Anyone who has stood in those rooms has seen his work without necessarily appreciating it. He was masterful and his work felt seamless and disappeared into the building.

His donation of five decades of project files and research materials to the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries will serve as a permanent archive of his extraordinary career. Preservation Chicago extends its condolences to his family and colleagues. He was a good friend and we will miss him.

Donations may be made to the House & Collections Fund at Glessner House.

Robert A. Furhoff Obituary; Legacy.com, 10/2026

Obituary: Robert A. “Bob” Furhoff (1939–2026); Society of Architectural Historians, 10/6/26

House & Collections Fund; Glessner House

37. BUYER WANTED: 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

“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

38. BUYER WANTED: Goodman Mansion, also known as the Court of the Golden Hands and Astor Court by Howard Van Doren Shaw at 1355 N. Astor



Goodman Mansion, also known as the Court of the Golden Hands and Astor Court, 1914, Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1355 N. Astor Street, Gold Coast. Built for lumber baron William Goodman and his wife Erna. 1355 N. Astor Street is a contributing building to the Astor Street Landmark District. Photo credit: @properties Christie's International Real Estate



Goodman Mansion, also known as the Court of the Golden Hands and Astor Court, 1914, Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1355 N. Astor Street, Gold Coast. Built for lumber baron William Goodman and his wife Erna. 1355 N. Astor Street is a contributing building to the Astor Street Landmark District. Photo credit: @properties Christie's International Real Estate



Goodman Mansion, also known as the Court of the Golden Hands and Astor Court, 1914, Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1355 N. Astor Street, Gold Coast. Built for lumber baron William Goodman and his wife Erna. 1355 N. Astor Street is a contributing building to the Astor Street Landmark District. Photo credit: @properties Christie's International Real Estate



Goodman Mansion, also known as the Court of the Golden Hands and Astor Court, 1914, Howard Van Doren Shaw, 1355 N. Astor Street, Gold Coast. Built for lumber baron William Goodman and his wife Erna. 1355 N. Astor Street is a contributing building to the Astor Street Landmark District. Photo credit: @properties Christie's International Real Estate

“After sitting unsold for almost two years at $21 million, a lavishly detailed Astor Street mansion is being offered in a new configuration: one gigantic chunk sold separate from five smaller ones.

“Originally the home of a lumber baron whose son became the namesake of the Goodman Theatre, the Georgian Revival mansion went up for sale in October 2024 at $21 million, the asking price for the entire 25,000 square feet. The price remained steady until at least April, according to real estate listing sites.

“Today one big piece of the mansion, 14,000 square feet, hit the market at $12.5 million. It’s listed with a different agent than the previous whole-property offer.

“‘The seller is going to turn the property into six condominiums,’ listing agent Emily Sachs Wong of the @properties Christie’s International Real Estate told Crain’s in a text message. The $12.5 million asking price is for the main house and an attached coach house.

“‘There are still five other units that may become available once that is sold,’ Sachs Wong wrote. She said prices have not been set for the other units.

“Sachs Wong said the seller has started the legal process of dividing the property into separate parcels but will still sell the property whole if a buyer surfaces for that.

“Other historical Gold Coast megamansions have been carved into pieces in the past. Among them are the George Isham mansion on North State Parkway, later known as the Playboy mansion, and the Patterson-McCormick mansion on Astor Street. A two-bedroom condo in the latter sold Sept. 1 for $2.5 million.

“The former Goodman family mansion has at different times been called the Court of the Golden Hands and Astor Court. Behind its stately facade are palatial rooms replete with painted ceiling beams, elaborate wall moldings, substantial fireplaces and plaster ceiling ornament. Several rooms look out onto the courtyard, where a one fountain flows to another via a long, linear rill.

“‘It’s a wonder,’ owner Paul Episcope, a retired attorney, told Crain’s in 2024, ‘like the manor houses you see in Europe.’

“Built in 1914, the princely mansion was the design of Howard Van Doren Shaw, an eminent architect of city and country mansions in the early 20th century. He designed it for lumber baron William Goodman and his wife, Erna.

“Four years later, their son died at the mansion, according to an archived Chicago Tribune article. The parents donated $250,000 in Kenneth’s name to establish a theatre in his name at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1925, a gift that in today’s dollars would be almost $4.9 million.

“By the time Episcope bought the mansion in the 1980s, the scope of the restoration it needed ‘should have frightened me,’ he told Crain’s in 2024, ‘but it didn’t.’

“The property ‘was a wreck’ at the time, Episcope said. ‘Bad shape isn’t the word for it.’ In his restoration, he kept all the main rooms’ layouts and trim but added color and additional materials to make them ‘more theatrical.’

“In the main living spaces and bedroom suites, Episcope said, no walls were moved or layouts changed, to retain the impressive stature from the original design. The kitchen and some baths are in redesigned spaces, he said.” (Rodkin, Crain’s Chicago Business, 9/2/26)

1355 N. Astor Street is a contributing building to the Astor Street Landmark District. Howard Van Doren Shaw was among the most accomplished architects working in Chicago in the early twentieth century, and this is a mature work: a Georgian Revival and neo-classical house built around a private courtyard with formal gardens and fountains, on an eighty-foot lot of nearly one-third of an acre, which on Astor Street is extraordinary. The estate holds 45 rooms, 16 bedrooms, 17 baths and 18 fireplaces.

Read the full story at Crain’s Chicago Business

Opulent Gold Coast mansion now offered in a smaller size — and at $8.5 million less; After sitting unsold for almost two years at $21 million, a lavishly detailed Astor Street mansion is being offered in a new configuration: one gigantic chunk sold separate from five smaller ones, Dennis Rodkin, Crain’s Chicago Business, 9/2/26

39. CHICAGO LEGACY BUSINESS: Goose Island Shrimp House Celebrated For Its 53 Years on Division Street



Goose Island Shrimp House, 1011 W. Division St., Chicago. A Chicago Legacy Business since 1973. Photo credit: Google Maps

“Over the past three decades, the West Side native has risen the ranks from night shift worker to manager to owner of Goose Island Shrimp House, the no-frills, counter-service-only spot that’s offered a simple menu of fried shrimp, frog legs and other seafood since 1973.

“Eichelberger has served thousands of Chicagoans over the years, including many families who grew up nearby in Cabrini Green and still return to the shrimp house at 1011 W. Division St., even if they now live miles away.

“Then there’s the longtime staff members, some of whom — like Eichelberger’s brother and general manager, Bernard — have also worked at the restaurant about as long as he has.

“‘We’re not just a little restaurant. We’re part of a big community. We’re a family. We’re the Goose Island family, you know,’ Eichelberger, 53, said. ‘There’s something more to this than just working at a restaurant.’

“The restaurant next week will be given the annual Small Business of the Year Award from North Branch Works, an economic development organization that represents businesses in the area.

“Eichelberger told Shaw he was interested and went to work for the restaurant’s original owner Ed Polizzi, who launched the shrimp house in 1973.

“‘We were all nationalities at work here. He was Italian, but he loved each and every one of us,’ said Eichelberger, who took over the restaurant more than a decade ago. ‘My brother would get a job, my best friend’s brother would get a job. … It was all family, always family-oriented. He wanted to have that family-type legacy for this place.’

“That bond extended to the shrimp shack’s customers over the years, many of whom lived just east in the Cabrini Green housing projects.

“Eichelberger said the restaurant’s ties to Cabrini remain a major part of its legacy. Neighbors who had to move after most of the housing project was demolished in the 2000s still make it a point to return to the neighborhood to pick up their favorite order from Goose Island.

“‘I’ve seen grandparents, kids, grandkids, great grandkids — they all come back, even though they’re gone. They come back, and we remember each other. It’s like a celebration. When they come in, we know them, they know us,’ he said. ‘It’s a part of their history as well as a part of Chicago’s.’

“Something unique about Goose Island Shrimp House is that its menu never changes.

“‘If you want a burger, you gotta go to Burger King or McDonald’s. You want chicken, you gotta go to Popeyes,’ he said. ‘People always ask, “Why don’t you sell chicken?” Because we’re a shrimp house. We specialize in shrimp, so this is what we have.’

“While many of Goose Island’s customers are neighbors or people who work nearby, the restaurant has also attracted its fair share of celebrity visitors over the years, many of whom can be seen in photos behind the counter. That includes Steve Harvey, Shaquille O’Neal, Jack Black and the actress LisaRaye. Scottie Pippen also used to come in when he was playing with the Bulls, Bernard Eichelberger said.

“Then there’s the Thanksgiving meal giveaway, which last year fed 100 families. Eichelberger said he wants to double that number this year, hopefully with the help of local companies and corporations.

“‘I may not be here in 50 years,’ he said, but ‘I want to do more, and if I do more for the community, then there has to be a Goose Island in 50 years.’” (Myers, Block Club Chicago, 10/1/26)

“Chicago Legacy Businesses are unique, authentic, precious assets. They are also endangered.

“Pressure from rising rents and competition from national chains has forced many Chicago Legacy Businesses to close. Chicago Legacy Businesses have supported Chicago for decades. They have anchored neighborhoods, provided jobs, and delighted generations of Chicagoans and tourists. Chicago Legacy Businesses are a reflection of Chicago which is culturally rich and racially diverse. Their authenticity and uniqueness contribute to the quality of life for Chicagoans.

“Chicago Legacy Businesses are typically multi-generational, family-owned, locally-operated, customer-facing businesses in operation for over 35 years. Business owners often live in their

40. CHICAGO LEGACY BUSINESS: Papa Chris' Place Celebrates 40 Years on Touhy Avenue in Edgebrook-Wildwood



Papa Chris' Place, 6235 W. Touhy Avenue, Edgebrook-Wildwood. A Chicago Legacy Business since 1986. Photo credit: Google Maps

“Papa Chris’ Place, a local Edgebrook-Wildwood eatery at 6235 W. Touhy Ave., has been a neighborhood staple since the day it opened in 1986.

“‘The line was out the door (on the first day),’ said Nick Sideris, who operates the fast-food restaurant along with his sister Pam Cosmos. Papa Chris’ Place celebrated its 40th anniversary on Aug. 29, 2026.

“Sideris said that he was running the family’s suburban hot dog stand, which was sold a couple years later, and had to rush over to the new establishment to help with the crowd.
“Sideris said that the family has been blessed with loyal customers for 40 years and a supportive neighborhood.

“‘We’ve had kids (who were customers) grow up and bring their kids here,’ Sideris said. ‘We’ve had bridal parties (come here) to take their picture.’ One of those brides showed up during the restaurant’s 40th anniversary celebration.

“Sideris said that in the mid-1980s his father Chris — also known as ‘Papa Chris’ — was driving by the Touhy site and asked his son if he would be interested in joining him in opening a restaurant there and he said ‘yes.’

“What’s Sideris’ favorite? He said it’s all good but it’s a near-guarantee — ‘98 percent’ — that the ribs will bring new customers back for more ribs.” (Nadig, Nadig Newspapers, 9/2026)

“Chicago Legacy Businesses are unique, authentic, precious assets. They are also endangered.

“Pressure from rising rents and competition from national chains has forced many Chicago Legacy Businesses to close. Chicago Legacy Businesses have supported Chicago for decades. They have anchored neighborhoods, provided jobs, and delighted generations of Chicagoans and tourists. Chicago Legacy Businesses are a reflection of Chicago which is culturally rich and racially diverse. Their authenticity and uniqueness contribute to the quality of life for Chicagoans.

“Chicago Legacy Businesses are typically multi-generational, family-owned, locally-operated, customer-facing businesses in operation for over 35 years. Business owners often live in their community and employ people from their community.

“Too often, the first media attention happens following the announcement that they are closing. The more publicity and attention they are given, the more likely new Chicagoans and tourists are to patronize these businesses.” (Preservation Chicago, The Case to Support Chicago Legacy Businesses)

Preservation Chicago congratulates Nick Sideris, Pam Cosmos and the Sideris family on forty years. We encourage Chicagoans to support Chicago Legacy Businesses and we continue to urge the City of Chicago to establish a formal Chicago Legacy Business program to create policy that would help Chicago Legacy Businesses remain vibrant for the next generation.

Read the full story at Nadig Newspapers

Papa Chris’ Place celebrates 40 years in Edgebrook area, Brian Nadig, Nadig Newspapers, 9/2026

The Case to Support Chicago Legacy Businesses; Preservation Chicago

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.,Bettinghofer & Hermann, 1891, Lincoln Park. Photo credit: Redfin

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**

Preservation Chicago is advocating for the protection of this building with community members and key decision makers. 1939 N. Larrabee Street was built in 1891 and is rated orange in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. Preservation Chicago historic research identified the architect as Bettinghofer & Hermann, the firm that designed the Martin Schnitzius Cottage at 1925 N. Fremont Street, a Chicago Landmark completed in 1891, the Aldine Building at 909 W. Armitage Avenue, now the Old Town School of Folk Music, and workers cottages throughout Chicago's German immigrant communities.



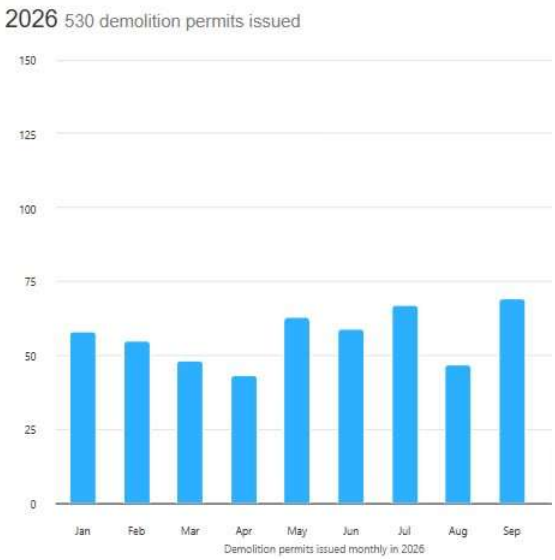
2965 N. Lincoln Ave., Lake View. Photo credit: Google Maps

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 September 2026

- Holiday Club, 4000–4006 N. Sheridan Road and 1002–1016 W. Irving Park Road, Uptown
- 1026 W. Jackson Boulevard, West Loop
- 2501 N. Clark Street, Lincoln Park
- St. Paul's Evangelical Church, 1527 W. Edgewater Avenue, Edgewater
- 1324 W. Wrightwood Avenue, Lincoln Park
- 1822 N. Wolcott Avenue, Bucktown
- 1248 S. Harding Avenue, North Lawndale
- 8007 S. Maryland Avenue, Chatham
- 6939 S. Jeffery Boulevard, South Shore
- 6143 S. Racine Avenue, Englewood
- 3832 N. Lakewood Avenue, Lake View
- 2142 N. Leavitt Street, Bucktown
- 2318 W. Addison Street, North Center
- 2117 W. Melrose Street, North Center
  917 W. Fletcher Street, Lake View
- 2026 W. Leland Avenue, Lincoln Square
- 2622 N. Ashland Avenue, Lincoln Park
- 6818 W. Hobart Avenue, Norwood Park

“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 69 demolitions during September 2026 at Chicago Cityscape’s Demolitions Tracker

Chicago Cityscape



Holiday Club Building, 4000–4006 N. Sheridan Road, Uptown. Residential portion 1905, David Robertson; retail portion 1925, Adolph Woerner. A three-story red brick block above an ornate white terra cotta storefront base. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



1026 W. Jackson Boulevard, c.1935, West Loop. An Art Deco industrial building of buff brick with steel ribbon windows and a stepped limestone entry pavilion with fluted pilasters and glass block. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



2501 N. Clark Street, c.1940, Lincoln Park. A single-story Moderne commercial building clad in smooth limestone ashlar, its rounded corner wrapping the intersection. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



St. Paul's Evangelical Church, 1527 W. Edgewater Avenue, 1895, Edgewater. A wood frame church with a steep gable roof and a square corner tower carrying a tall octagonal spire. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



1324 W. Wrightwood Avenue, c.1890, Lincoln Park. A two-story frame corner storefront with clapboard siding, a steep front gable and a canted shopfront at the sidewalk. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



1822 N. Wolcott Avenue, c.1890, Bucktown. An Italianate brick two-flat with a bracketed metal cornice, stone lintels and a hipped entry hood on turned columns, demolished with its rear coach house. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Realtor.com



1248 S. Harding Avenue, c.1910, North Lawndale. A two-story brick flat with a crenellated parapet, limestone banding and sill courses, and a carved stone entry surround beside a projecting window bay. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



8007 S. Maryland Avenue, c.1915, Chatham. A two-story red brick flat with a corbelled stepped parapet, limestone sills and a recessed entry, boarded and overgrown with ivy. Emergency demolition, September 2026. City-owned. Photo credit: Google Maps



6939 S. Jeffery Boulevard, c.1915, South Shore. A two-story brick flat with a bowed parapet, a recessed second-floor balcony under a tiled pent roof and an angled bay. Emergency demolition, September 2026. City-owned. Photo credit: Google Maps



6143 S. Racine Avenue, c.1905, Englewood. A two-story greystone with a full-height angled bay, a dentilled cornice and a wood entry porch, its windows boarded. Emergency demolition, September 2026. City-owned. Photo credit: Google Maps



3832 N. Lakewood Avenue, c.1900, Lake View. A greystone two-flat with a rusticated limestone front, a full-height bay and a columned entry porch over a raised stoop. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Realtor.com



2142 N. Leavitt Street, c.1900, Bucktown. A two-story brick building with a shaped parapet gable, stone diamond accents and a glazed shopfront at street level. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



2318 W. Addison Street, c.1920, North Center. A two-story brick residence with a projecting angled bay, limestone sills and a small hipped hood over the entry. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



2117 W. Melrose Street, c.1895, North Center. A three-story front-gabled flat building with a two-story angled bay and a columned entry porch reached by an open wood stair. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



917 W. Fletcher Street, c.1890, Lake View. A frame house with a gabled dormer, a two-story angled bay and double doors beneath a bracketed entry hood. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



2026 W. Leland Avenue, c.1895, Lincoln Square. A Queen Anne frame house with shingled front gables, decorative bargeboards and a full-width porch on rusticated stone piers. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



2622 N. Ashland Avenue, c.1890, Lincoln Park. A small clapboard frame church with pointed-arch windows, a gabled entry porch and a corner tower with a shingled spire. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps



6818 W. Hobart Avenue, c.1925, Norwood Park. A frame house with a steeply pitched gable roof, a gabled front dormer and a full-width porch set behind a deep lawn. Demolished September 2026. Photo credit: Google Maps

Preservation in the News

WGN Radio Booth 46: Episode 28 – Chicago Architecture Talk with Ward Miller and Warren Strovel By Steve Dale at Petterino's Restaurant



Warren Strovel, Steve Dale, and Ward Miller in Petterino's. "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: LaSalle Street Could Shine as Chicago's Next Nighttime Attraction



Proposed lighting for 135 S. LaSalle Street. Image credit: Prime Group

“A city must be beautiful during the day, but also at night. And at night, as the streets darken, the architecture of a city must be the element that shines the most to confirm its beauty, vibrancy, and ambiance.

“Chicago is widely regarded as America’s greatest architectural city and one of the world’s most important centers of architecture. We have buildings that have changed the course of architecture, streets lined with masterpieces, and a skyline that is recognized around the globe.

“The owners and stewards of some of the best historic landmarks in our city have done a great job keeping the enduring beauty of their buildings illuminated during the evening hours. Done properly, exterior lighting reveals the architecture, emphasizes its character, and gives the building an entirely different presence after sunset.

“Notable examples include The Tribune Tower, The Wrigley Building, The London House, and The Board of Trade. Over 35 years ago, I made sure my [77 West] Wacker, a modern classical tower designed by the world-class Spanish architect Ricardo Bofill, would stand out on the riverfront skyline both day and night.

“To that end, Ricardo and I hired the premier lighting consultant in the world, Pierre Arnaud from Paris. Pierre Arnaud had an unprecedented list of successful engagements, having designed the lighting for the Eiffel Tower, the Great Pyramids of Egypt, the Parthenon in Athens, the archaeological ruins of Persepolis, the temple of Karnak in Egypt, and the famous Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.

“We will soon launch an exciting lighting design for one of the finest landmarks in the city, the Jewelers Building at 35 East Wacker. Designed by Joachim Giæver and Frederick P. Dinkelberg and completed in 1927, the Jewelers Building was, at the time, the tallest building in the world outside New York City.

“Today, our focus is now on the LaSalle Street Historic District, which has become essentially the best ‘architectural museum’ in the United States. Many of the landmarks in the district already have exterior lighting programs to various degrees. We suggest, however, for our fellow property owners to bring out the night time beauty of their buildings to the fullest extent. To that end, we commissioned a lighting study to show what LaSalle Street can become at night.

“Done right, a fully illuminated LaSalle Street Historic District would become one of the city’s biggest nighttime walking attractions, on par with what the riverwalk has become in the last decade. Architectural tour companies will readily add evening tours to their calendars.

“Now the most important and beloved historic building on LaSalle Street needs the attention of our government: The City/County Building located at 121 North LaSalle.

“Designed by Holabird & Roche and completed in 1911, this monumental civic building features enormous Corinthian columns and classical detailing intended to express the dignity and permanence of government.

“Personally, I believe The City/County Building is the best example of Classical Revival architecture in our city. Today the LaSalle Street façade is beautifully lit at night, a beacon on the street. But the other three sides of the building are dark.

“I hope the city and county will finish the lighting program on all four sides of this landmark so the building can be a beacon of light, inspiration, and good government on all four sides. Imagine nighttime events in Daley Plaza, including the Christkindl Market, and having the illuminated facade on Clark Street radiate a beautiful glow over the plaza.

“It’s time to light it up.” (Reschke, Crain’s Chicago Business, 9/17/26)

Preservation Chicago supports this vision for the LaSalle Street Historic District and encourages the City and Cook County to complete the lighting program on all four elevations of the City-County Building.

Read the full story at Crain’s Chicago Business

Michael Reschke: LaSalle Street could shine as Chicago’s next nighttime attraction, Michael Reschke, Crain’s Chicago Business, 9/17/26

Block Club Chicago: Lincoln Park's Historic Homes Are Disappearing. A New Program Wants To Tell Their Stories



Chicago Historic Plaque Program. Sheffield Avenue at Dickens Avenue, in the Sheffield Historic District. Photo credit: Chris Cullen. Photo credit: Chris Cullen

“Late last year, while walking around his neighborhood, Peter Millen spotted a troubling yet familiar sign: plans to demolish a 19th-century home at 2018 N. Seminary Ave.

“The one-and-a-half story worker’s cottage, built in 1889 after the Great Chicago Fire, had a distinct green shingle roof, arched windows and brick facade. In its place, the property’s owners planned to build a single-family mansion that was recently listed for $7.2 million.

“Millen has lived in Lincoln Park for 20 years and has built a reputation online for documenting the overwhelming loss to historic buildings in the neighborhood. He had seen the process before, but the demolition plans helped inspire a new effort to recognize and document the homes that remain.

“In 1976, roughly 1,000 pre-1900 buildings in the neighborhood were included in the Sheffield Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places, a rare designation for such a dense residential area.

“Yet the designation has not stopped the neighborhood’s historic building stock from being demolished or significantly altered. In 2019, Landmarks Illinois counted 350 properties lost or substantially changed in the Sheffield Historic District since the 1990s — about a third of the district’s buildings.

“For longtime residents and preservation advocates, the losses have become familiar: historic homes are demolished to make way for larger single-family houses, side yards and gardens, or multiple units are replaced with expensive new construction.

“The Chicago Historic Plaque Program, launched as a pilot in Lincoln Park, is intended to offer another way to preserve the neighborhood’s history. The program, which has already received requests from over 50 curious homeowners in the first week, isn’t designed to prevent demolition or grant landmark protections, but it gives homeowners a way to learn about and commemorate the history of individual homes.

“‘The hope is that it creates a little bit of pride of place,’ Millen said. ‘Maybe it makes people a little more preservation-minded when they own these properties.’

“Adam Natenshon, director of operations for Preservation Chicago, said the organization will serve as the program’s back-end facilitator, helping residents move through the process and ensuring the plaques are historically accurate. The group is working with University of Chicago students, faculty and neighborhood residents to identify eligible properties and research their histories.

“‘It’s a community-oriented, crowdfunded sort of big neighborhood hug, Natenshon said. “The hope is that eventually, that neighborhood recognition would bubble up to decision-makers who might say, “These 50 buildings are beloved neighborhood buildings. They may not have formal protections, but they’re a beloved neighborhood asset.”’

“Residents can submit a property for consideration through Preservation Chicago with the building’s address and any history the homeowner or applicant already knows about the property. Researchers will then work to dig up details about the building, including when it was constructed, who lived there, how it was used and what architectural features make it significant.

“Recognizing historic buildings does not have to mean opposing all new development. Preservation and density can coexist through strategies such as adaptive reuse, facade preservation and rebuilding behind historic structures, Natenshon said. ‘The idea that you have to choose between preservation and density is a false choice,’ Natenshon said. ‘You can have both.’

“Emily Talen, a professor in the University of Chicago’s Division of the Social Sciences whose research focuses on urbanism and the relationship between the built environment and social equity, is helping connect the program to the university. Her students will assist researchers at Preservation Chicago to learn more about individual properties by examining historic records, deeds, occupants, building materials and the surrounding block to develop a fuller account of each home.

“‘I’ve been doing this for a long time, too, mostly experiencing total outrage walking around Lincoln Park at the destruction of historic properties for side yards and McMansions,’ Talen said.

“‘There’s a movement in historic preservation to go beyond a simple plaque and really tell the story of a building,’ she said. ‘That’s important so that it isn’t just window dressing or an elitist look at an attractive property. It should talk about the meaning and context of buildings.’

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

South Side Weekly: Greater Tabernacle Cathedral in Roseland Named Best Beacon of Community Strength



Greater Tabernacle Cathedral (former Holy Rosary Catholic Church), 1890, Solon S. Beman, 11300 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Roseland. Designated a Chicago Landmark: July 19, 2023. Photo credit: Cristen Brown



Greater Tabernacle Cathedral (former Holy Rosary Catholic Church), 1890, Solon S. Beman, 11300 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Roseland. Designated a Chicago Landmark: July 19, 2023. Photo credit: Cristen Brown

“For nearly 140 years, a church has dominated the corner of 113th and King Drive. The origins of that red brick masterpiece, now known as the Greater Tabernacle Cathedral, lie in the days when Pullman and Roseland were both young. Roseland is the older neighborhood, founded on what was originally Potawatomi land, and where Dutch farmers and abolitionists settled as early as the 1840s. The model town George Pullman founded to house his factory workers would come in the 1880s, carved out of Roseland’s southeastern flank.

“Pullman’s curious blend of paternalistic capitalism extended into even the religious lives of his employees. In 1882, Pullman’s gorgeous Greenstone Church was completed, designed — like the rest of the neighborhood — by architect Solon Beman, and clad in serpentine limestone quarried at great expense in Pennsylvania.

“No one could pay such an exorbitant price, and the church sat empty for years while religious groups met elsewhere, including the fledgling Catholic parish of Holy Rosary. After outgrowing several spaces, the parish, led by Father John Waldron, decided to build a permanent home. The southwest corner of 113th and South Park (now King Drive) looked perfect, but was owned by George Pullman. Surprisingly, Pullman entered into a verbal agreement for the land after first extracting a promise that the new church be designed by architect Solon Beman and built of red brick to match Pullman.

“Construction was underway when Pullman reneged on the deal and work halted. Waldron was incendiary in the pulpit, and was quoted in the Chicago Daily News torching the industrialist as a ‘capitalistic czar; a man who ruled, crushed and oppressed by the force of money.’ Work restarted, but not before more scandalous ink was spilled in the papers and Waldron resigned, perhaps not voluntarily. Still, by 1890 construction was finally complete.

“Holy Rosary was spectacular. A Romanesque Revival beauty sitting on a heavy base of rough-hewn limestone, the upper reaches of the massive structure clad in red face brick, just as Pullman demanded. Boasting an enormous bell tower with a cross-topped spire, its soaring majesty was further emphasized by the flatness of Palmer Park directly across the street. Presiding over a neighborhood of smaller buildings, it is deliberately imposing. The architecture itself meant to invoke a feeling of a vast and immutable power.

“In reaction to the Great Migration, neighborhoods across Chicago began to implement racially restrictive covenants barring Black people from living within their boundaries and confining them to the ‘Black Belt.’ According to the Encyclopedia of Chicago, Roseland, a ‘community that was once a stop on the Underground Railroad, added whiteness to its list of advantages.’ Directly across the street from Holy Rosary, a racially restrictive covenant was signed by 24 neighbors in 1929, intending to keep Black folks out until at least 1950, according to the Chicago Covenants Project.

“In 1948, however, covenants were ruled unenforceable by the Supreme Court, and Black people around Chicago began to push against the boundaries that had held them in place for decades, eventually moving to neighborhoods as far south as Roseland. These new families were rarely embraced. Though Holy Rosary was itself integrated, many of its white congregants began to leave the community in droves. Racial demographics inverted, and the Archdiocese reports that by the mid-1960s the parish’s school was almost entirely Black.

“Holy Rosary, however, stayed, absorbing demographic shifts and adapting to the evolving needs of the community despite its shrinking congregation. In the 1980s, they offered office space in their underutilized rectory to the fledgling Developing Communities Project (DCP), a faith-based nonprofit working to bring change to South Side neighborhoods through grassroots organizing. Working from this office for several years before enrolling in Harvard Law School, the DCP’s first Executive Director, Barack Obama, refers to these years spent at Holy Rosary as ‘the best education’ he ever had.

“After a remarkable 126 years of serving Roseland, Holy Rosary closed its doors in 2008, when its congregation became too small to justify keeping the enormous campus open. The church complex was leased to New Day Ministries International for several years, and then sold to Greater Tabernacle Cathedral, a Pentecostal congregation with a long history of community support stretching back to its founding in the 1950s.

“Greater Tabernacle lovingly stewards the building today, celebrating its long hist
ory of service to Roseland, and extending it. During their tenure in the building, they worked to have the church added to the National Register of Historic Places and saw it become a Chicago Landmark, honoring the fact that, as they say on their website, ‘for generations, this sacred space has stood as a beacon of faith, worship, and community strength on the South Side of Chicago.’

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.

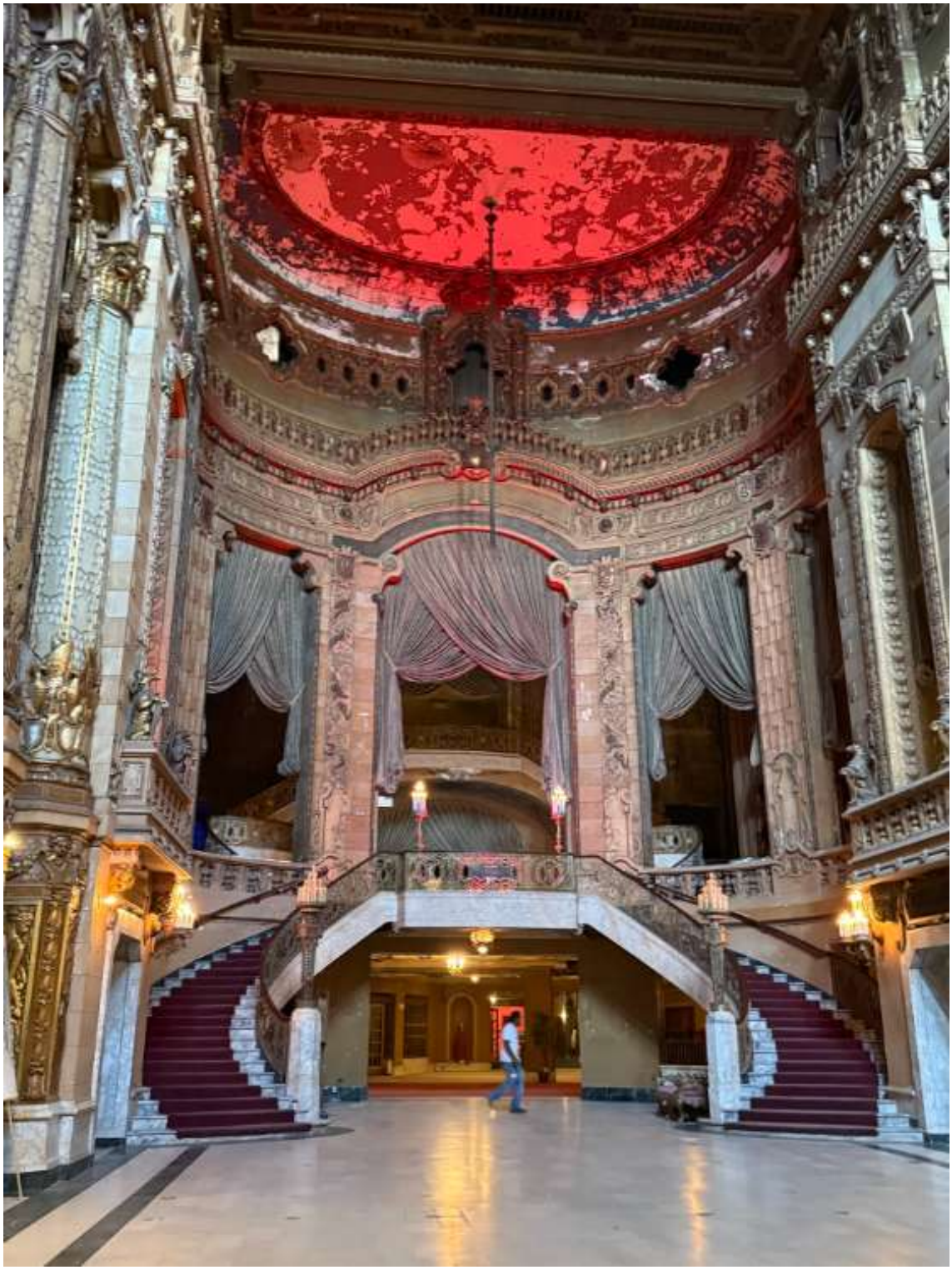
Vacant lots present a significant challenge to neighborhoods working to recover from decades of disinvestment. Preservation Chicago encourages a heightened focus to prevent the creation of new vacant lots.

Preservation Events & Happenings

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 architecture. 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



Uptown Theatre, 1924, Rapp & Rapp, 4816 North Broadway. A Designated Chicago Landmark since 1991.
Photo Credit: Ward Miller

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, Eunice Alpasan, WTTW News, 9/9/26

Here’s What To See In Lincoln Park And Lakeview During Open House Chicago 2026, Open House Chicago offers visitors a closer look at some of the area’s most distinctive and unusual spaces, like Lake View Presbyterian Church, the Zen Buddhist Temple and the Wild Mile, Patrick Filbin, Block Club Chicago, 10/12/26

Theatre Added to Open House Chicago, Catch a Rare Glimpse Inside Gilded Jewel, Patty Wetli, WTTW Chicago, 10/1/26

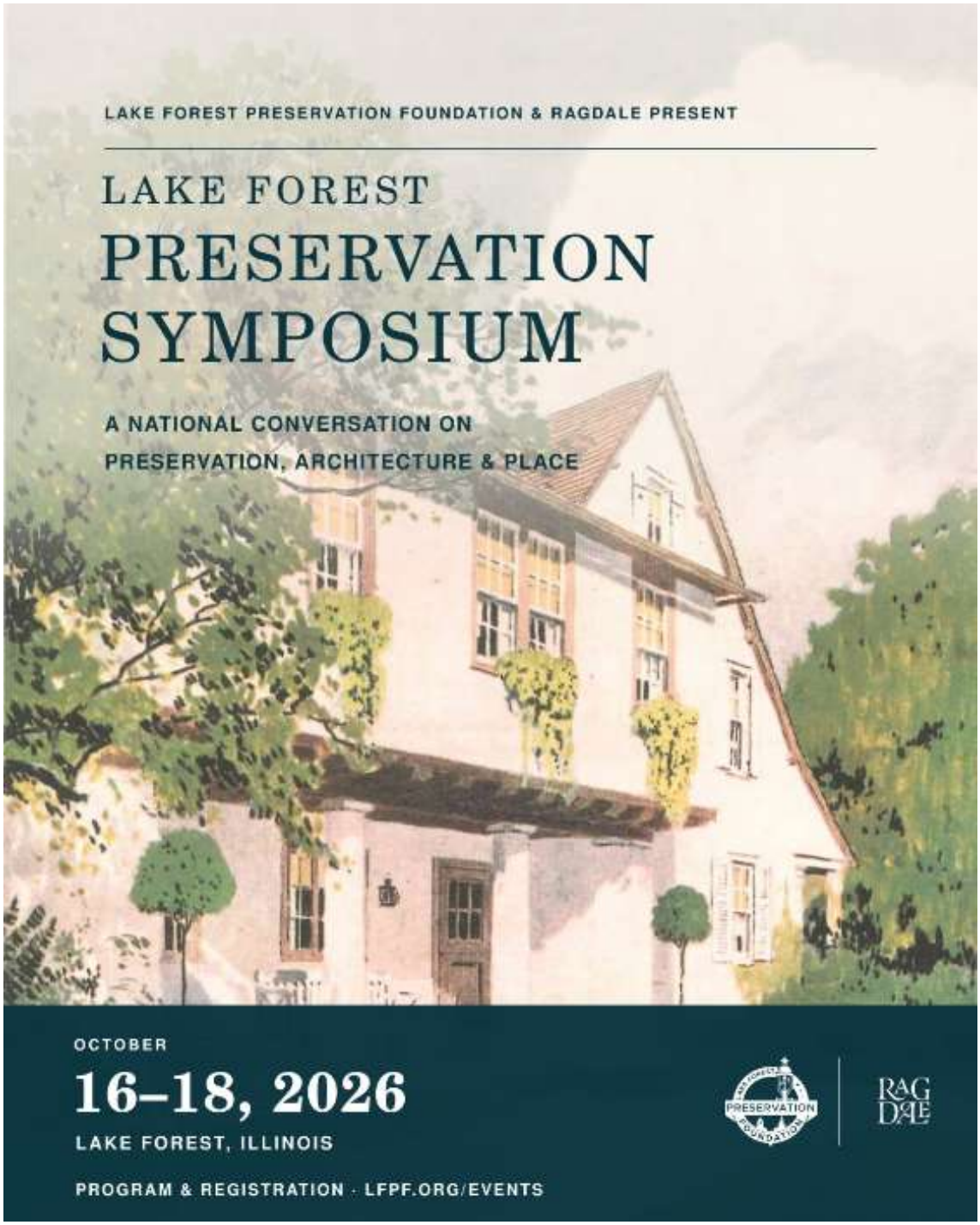
You Can Tour The Uptown Theatre As Part Of Open House Chicago This Year, Other new sites announced Thursday in advance of the Oct. 17-18 event include the Monadnock Building and the new Chicago Architecture Center hub at the Marquette Building, Gwen Ihnat and Leigh Giangreco, Block Club Chicago, 10/2/26

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

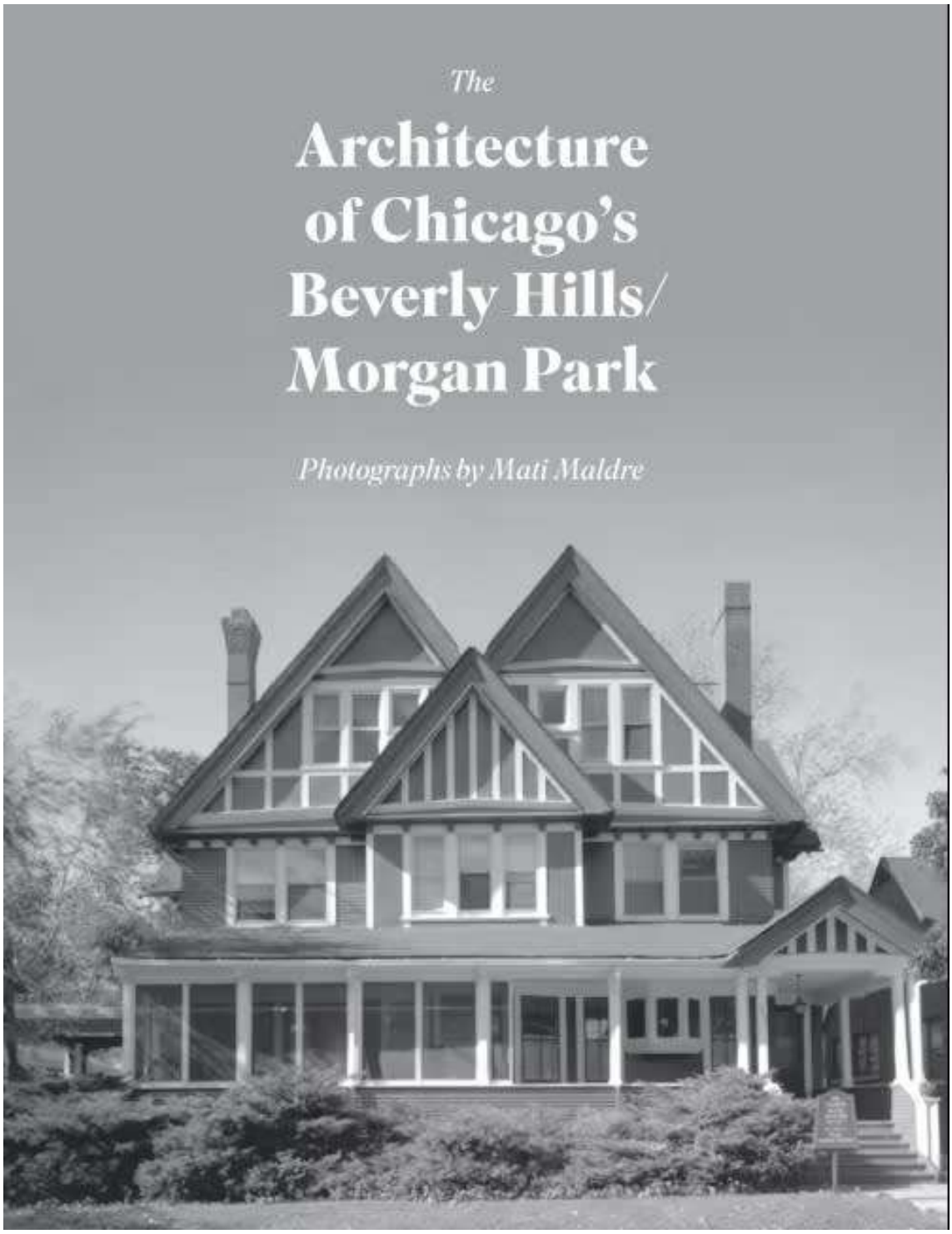
LF Preservation Symposium — Main Symposium Day Tickets, Saturday, October 17; Eventbrite

Lake Forest Preservation Symposium Runs October 16-18, 2026 at Ragdale Estate; Traditional Building, 6/12/26

Ragdale

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)

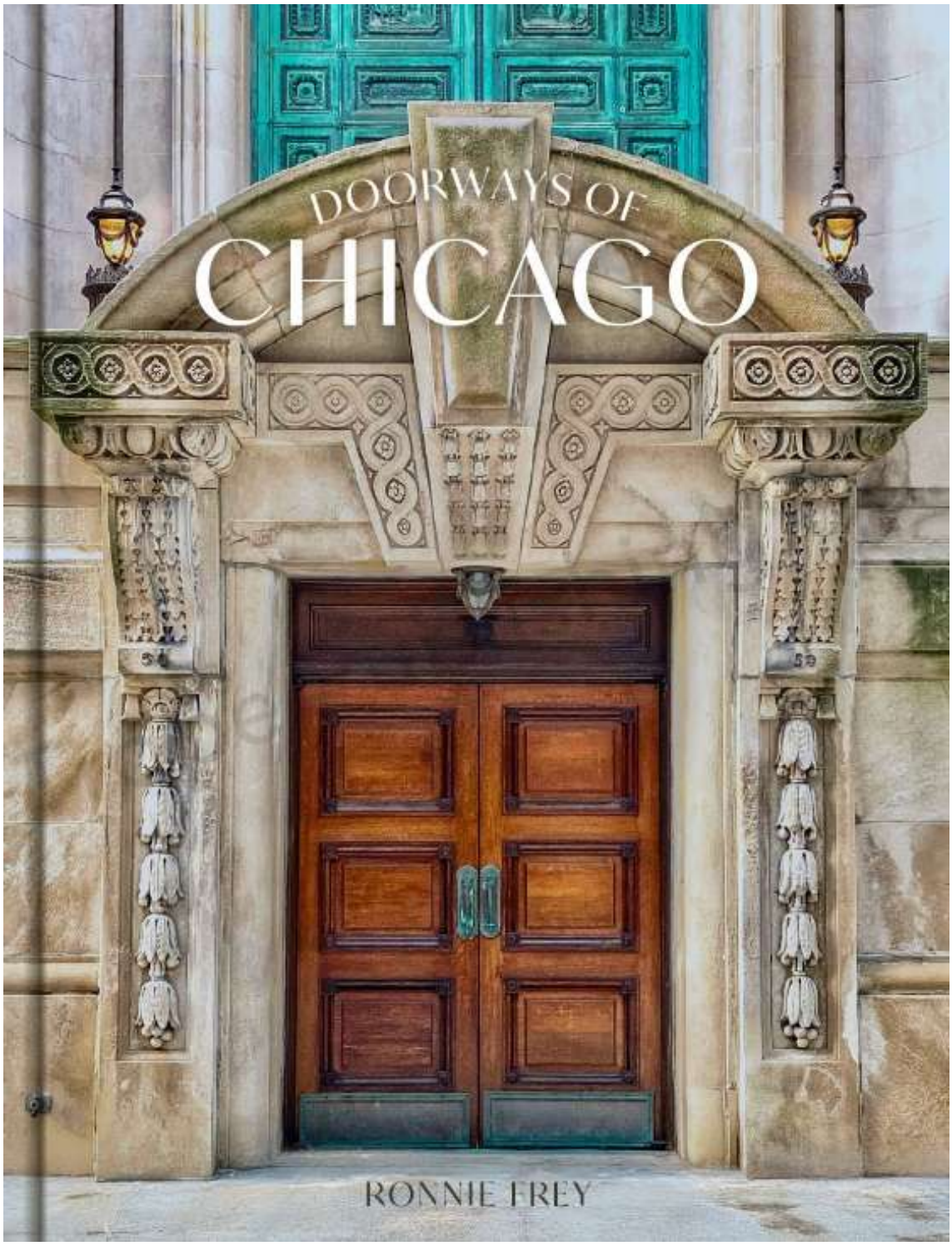
“I have a tremendous collection of pictures of the architecture in the community, and it just seemed to make sense to do a book — to share this visual information with everyone, to let people know about what a great community Beverly Hills and Morgan Park is,” Maldre said.

“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

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

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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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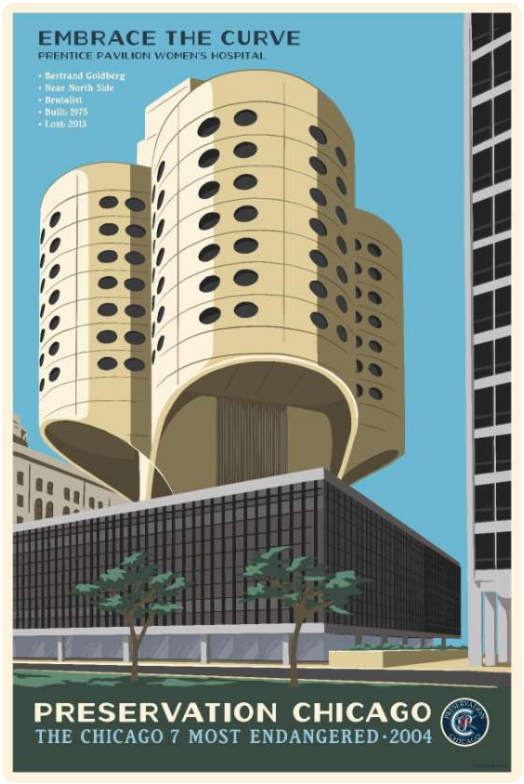
Since 2003, the "Chicago 7 Most Endangered" has sounded the alarm on imminently threatened historic buildings and public assets in Chicago to mobilize the stakeholder support necessary to save them from demolition. Image credit: Preservation Chicago
Purchase Chicago 7 posters at Preservation Chicago's Etsy webstore


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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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Posters, mugs and notecards are available at Preservation Chicago's webstore.



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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

- **Be Generous!** Donate to Preservation Chicago to support our tireless advocacy!
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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.