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A Conversation about Chicago Landmark Districts

Presented by Ward Miller, Preservation Chicago

Photo credit by Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

WHAT IS A LANDMARK DISTRICT?

A Chicago Landmark District is...

a collection of historic buildings within a designated area that contribute to neighborhood character, through

- History
- Economy
- Architecture
- Art or
- Culture



LANDMARKS IN CHICAGO

Approximately 350 Individual Landmarks including...

- Rookery Building
- Monadnock Building
- Chicago Theater
- Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co.
- Elks National Memorial Headquarters Building

Approximately 60 Landmark Districts including...

- Mid-North District
- Arlington-Deming District
- Armitage-Halsted District
- Astor Street District
- Burling Row Houses
- Old Town Triangle
- Lake View Row Houses



PURPOSE OF A LANDMARK DISTRICT?

Communities choose to create Landmark Districts to...

- Maintain the character and beauty of their neighborhood
- Prevent the demolition of historically significant homes, buildings, and streetscapes
- Protect the neighborhood against tear-downs and over-development.



CHICAGO LANDMARK CRITERIA

Chicago Landmarks and Landmark Districts must meet two of the following criteria:

1. Critical Part of Chicago's Heritage
2. Significant Historical Event
3. Significant Person
4. Important Architecture
5. Important Architect
6. Distinctive Theme as a District
7. Unique Visual Feature

...and must meet the “Integrity” criterion.



HOW DISTRICTS ARE CREATED?

The creation of Chicago Historic Landmark Districts is typically the result of a community's desire for **Recognition, Appreciation, Protection** and a **Voice**.

Support Required:

1. Consent of a Majority of Community Residents
2. Support of Alderman and Chicago City Council
3. Approval of Chicago Commission on Landmarks

Critical Milestones:

- Preliminary Landmark Status
- Final Landmark Designation Report
- City Council Vote and Designation

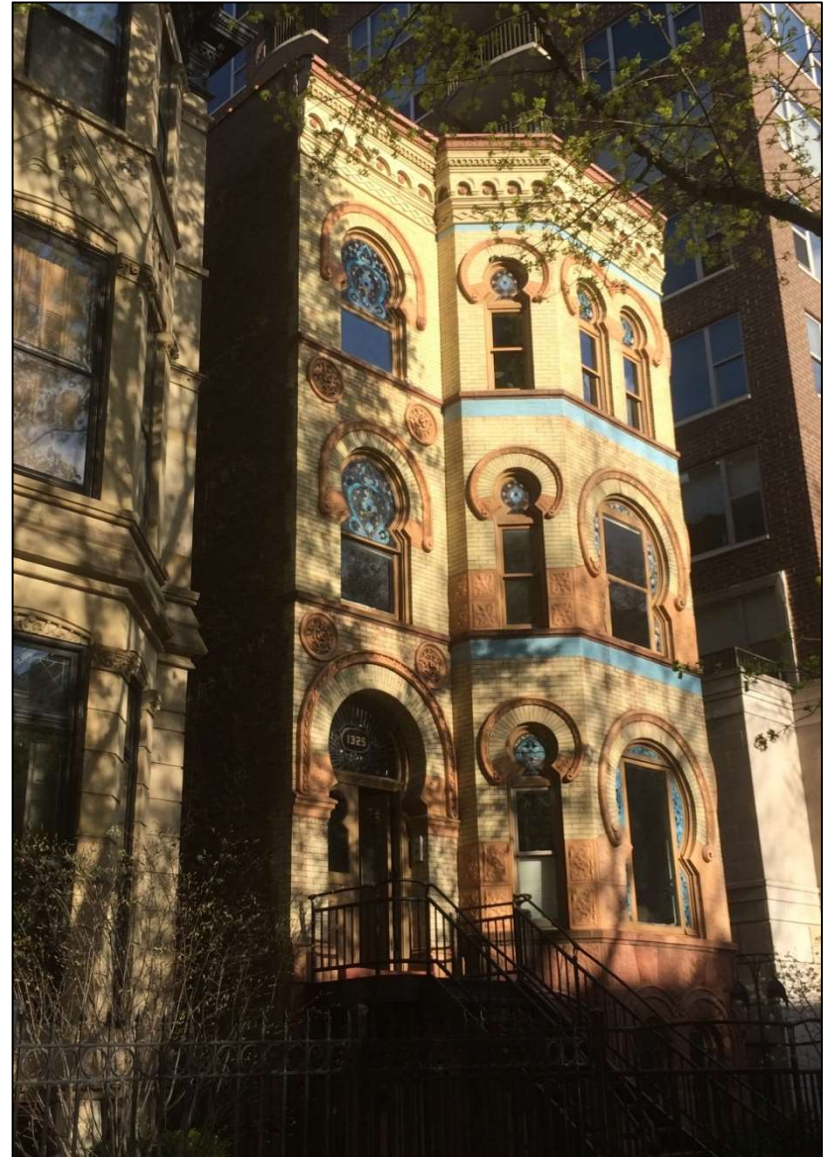




BENEFIT #1: Protect Your Investment

1. Landmark Districts protect investments in historic properties

- Insensitive and poorly planned development often undermine property values.
- In contrast, Landmark Districts encourage people to purchase and rehabilitate properties because they know their investment will be protected over time.





BENEFIT #2: Faster Appreciation



Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers

2. Within Landmark Districts, properties appreciate at greater rates than the overall local market

- Landmark Districts appreciate faster than similar, non-designated neighborhoods. Findings on this point are consistent across the country.
- Additionally, recent analysis shows that historic districts are less vulnerable to market volatility from economic downturns.
- In neighborhoods of impacted by disinvestment or experiencing gentrification, Landmark Districts typically have a stabilizing effect as the value of a property resides in the existing buildings and units, not the land for new construction.



BENEFIT #3: Better Design

3. Landmark Districts encourage better and higher quality design

Better design equals...

- a greater sense of cohesiveness,
- more innovative use of materials
- and greater public appeal.
- all of which are shown to occur more often within designated Landmark Districts than non-designated ones.



Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago



BENEFIT #4: Historic = Green



Photo credit: Cathie Bond / Preservation Chicago

4. Landmark Districts are good for the environment

- The greenest building is the one already built.
- Landmark Districts encourage communities to retain and reuse their existing resources.
- Walkable historic neighborhoods reduces car dependence and congestion.
- Reusing historic buildings reduces landfill waste.



BENEFIT #5: More Energy Efficiency

5. Historic buildings are energy-efficient

- Most historic buildings were designed to maximize natural light and cross-ventilation.
- Additionally, retrofitting renewable-energy technologies are ideal for historic buildings.



Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers



BENEFIT #6: Tangible Link to Our Past



Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago

6. Landmark Districts are a powerful tool for education

- Historic Landmark Districts are a tangible link to the past. They can bring meaning to people's lives and make history "come alive".
- They preserve the original character of buildings and streetscapes, while welcoming growth and innovation within those spaces.



BENEFIT #7: Increased Tourism

7. Historic Landmark Districts positively impact Chicago's economy through tourism

- **Tourism in Chicago (pre-Covid) includes:**
 - **50.2 Million visitors**
 - **Over 160,000 jobs**
 - **\$19 Billion in direct spending**
 - **\$2.5 Billion in tax revenues**
- Tourism is one of Chicago's leading industries and is a critical part of Chicago's economic development strategy.
- Tourism is a major engine for economic growth and job creation; it can drive our city's recovery.
- Tourism creates jobs that CANNOT be outsourced and hires people of all education levels.



Statistics from ChooseChicago.com

Photo credit: Eric Allix Rogers



BENEFIT #8: Support Local Business



Photo credit: Google Maps

8. Protected Historic Landmark Districts support existing Chicago businesses and attract new businesses to relocate to Chicago

- Vibrant commercial corridors and charming neighborhoods with character attract new businesses.
- Companies consistently choose to relocate to communities that offer their workers a higher quality of life...precisely those elements that Landmark Districts promote.



BENEFIT #9: Increased Social Fabric

9. Landmark Districts create cohesive and diverse communities

- People living in historic districts enjoy the comfort of...
- a human-scale environment (a mix of aesthetics and design for people, not cars);
- the opportunity to live and work in attractive surroundings;
- a recognizable and walkable neighborhood;
- and the galvanizing effect of community-based organizing.



Photo credit: Ward Miller / Preservation Chicago



BENEFIT #10: Tool for Planning



Photo credit by Eric Allix Rogers

10. Landmark Districts empower communities to shape their future

- Community organizing is required to create Landmark Districts.
- Once created, Landmark Districts provide a powerful planning tool to ensure that citizens help direct the future of their community.
- They prevent decisions from being made “behind closed doors” and without public input.



OTHER LANDMARK DISTRICT BENEFITS

Additional Landmark and Landmark District Benefits:

- Free building permits in Chicago
- Opportunity for tax credits
- Opportunity for Adopt-a-Landmark & Class 'L' Funding
- Qualification for preservation programs and assistance
- Opportunities for renovation assistance and guidance
- Relaxation of certain zoning requirements (i.e. parking)



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