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## Fwd: Francis W. Parker School Announcement Regarding Belden Buildings

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From: **Sarah Butterfield** <[sbutterfield@fwparker.org](mailto:sbutterfield@fwparker.org)>  
Date: Mon, Aug 24, 2020 at 8:10 AM  
Subject: Francis W. Parker School Announcement Regarding Belden Buildings  
To: Sarah Butterfield <[sbutterfield@fwparker.org](mailto:sbutterfield@fwparker.org)>  
Cc: Ald. Michele Smith

Dear Neighbors,

We hope this letter finds you well and healthy in what are stressful times.

We realize that in many ways, this is a difficult time to think beyond the immediate moment, yet we are writing with an update related to the two buildings about which Parker has communicated with you before: 317-325 W. Belden and 327-335 W. Belden (Belden by the Park).

Two significant developments are the focus of our letter today. Combined, we hope they will be viewed in the spirit of Parker intending to be a good neighbor while also providing the school with the ability to address its future needs.

Earlier this summer, 100% of the owners of 317-325 W. Belden voted to accept Parker's purchase offer for all of the units in the building. The expected closing of this transaction is early this fall. Given the expectation Parker will soon own 317-325 W. Belden, Parker's Board of Trustees has authorized the school to begin the various steps necessary for the intended future school use of this property.

We will begin a process towards converting for school use only the property at 317-325 Belden. This initiative could easily take a decade or more to be implemented. At that point, should Parker own Belden by the Park in its entirety, the school would consider undertaking a renovation of that building for school use. Until then, if any Belden by the Park unit owners wish to sell, Parker will negotiate with them in good faith. Parker will seek to rent the units we now own - and any we acquire in the future - to stable, long term residents.

### Preserving the Facades

We are also announcing that any future renovation of the two buildings will be in the context of preserving the buildings' facades in order to maintain the residential feel of the current streetscape on Belden Avenue.

As you may know, a request has been submitted to the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development that the City create a landmark district that would include these two buildings on the south side of Belden (along with two additional nearby buildings). While the City's planning staff has yet to make a determination on whether to recommend that the City begin the designation process for such a "courtyard building" district, Parker has decided to preserve the facades of both buildings.

We make this commitment irrespective of whether or not the buildings become part of an official landmark district. We also make this commitment in addition to our prior commitments that include limiting the height of any renovation to be essentially consistent with the current buildings in the interest of maintaining the feel of the existing streetscape. This commitment applies to 317-325 Belden and to any future development of Belden by the Park. This way, we believe that Parker can both accommodate the needs of the school while continuing the existing neighborhood aesthetics of Belden Avenue.

### Process

Parker's campus is governed by a Planned Development zoning ordinance that, over the years, has been amended several times by action of the Chicago City Council. In order to redevelop the 317-325 property, a new amendment to the Planned Development will be required, and Parker will start to engage its internal constituencies to develop project plans.

We have just informed Alderman Smith of these decisions. She has asked that we brief you about these developments at a community meeting, led by Alderman Smith. In this initial meeting we will not present final project plans, because they have yet to be developed, but we want to show our concepts around developing the property while preserving the facades. The meeting will be held on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6 p.m. You will receive a separate communication about the meeting and how to participate virtually.

We are looking forward to working with our neighbors.

Sincerely,

Rika Yoshida  
Board Chair

Dan Frank  
Principal

cc: Alderman Michele Smith

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**Parker**