

DISCOVER JACKSON PARK

THE JEWEL OF CHICAGO'S GREAT PARKS

JACKSON PARK

- Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux
- Site of World's Columbian Exposition in 1893
- Hyde Park, Woodlawn and South Shore



PRESERVATION CHICAGO

THE CHICAGO 7 MOST ENDANGERED • 2018



THE CHICAGO 7

The 2018 Chicago 7 + 1 Most Endangered...



Hotel Guyon



Woodruff Arcade



Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance & South Shore Cultural Center



Thompson Center



Harper High School



Chicago Union Station



Washington Park Substation



Brick Paved Streets and Alleys

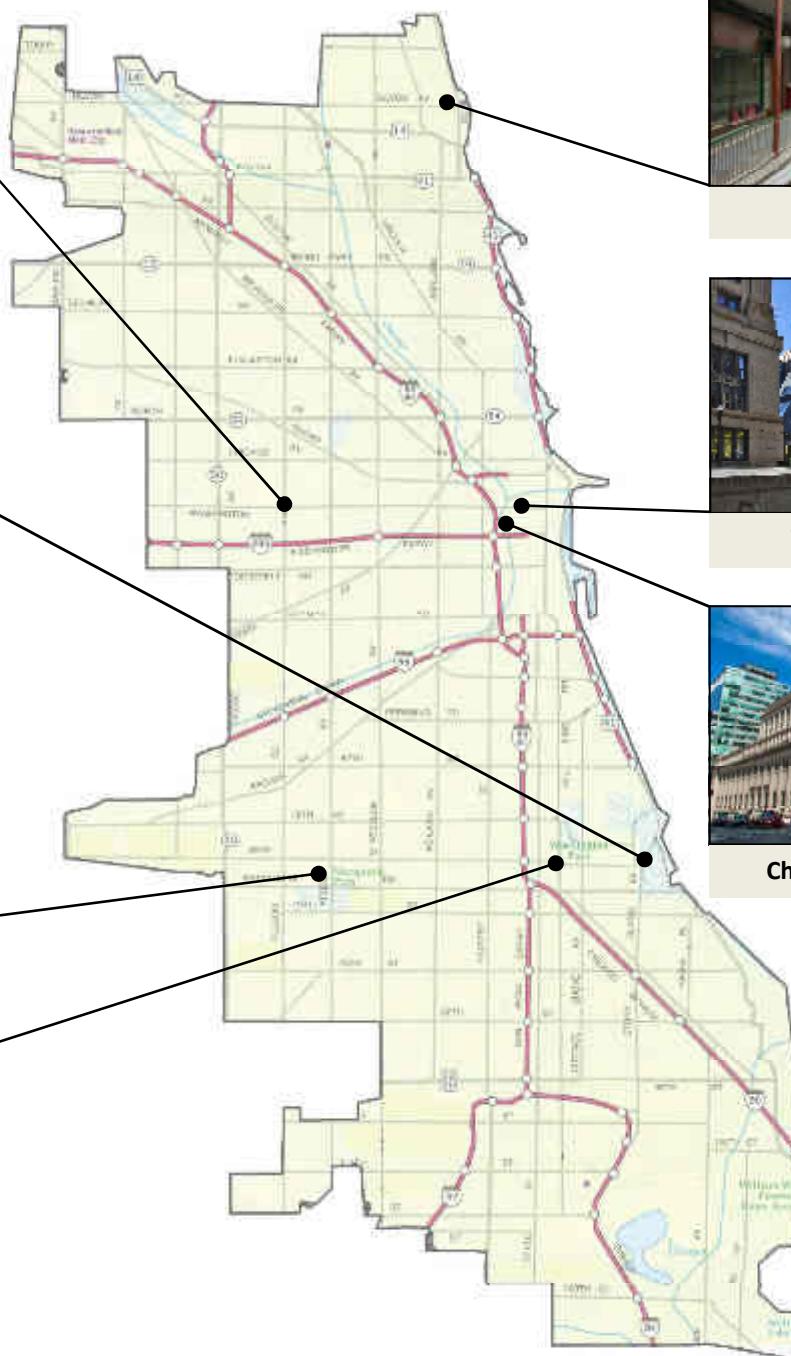


Photo Credits:

All Photos unless noted © Eric Allix Rogers
Guyon Hotel & Thompson © Gabriel X. Michael
Washington Park Substation © Deborah Mercer
Woodruff Arcade © Ward Miller
Brick Streets © Adam Natenshon



PRESERVATION CHICAGO
STRENGTHENING CHICAGO BY PROTECTING HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

Preservation Chicago Unveils the 2018 **Chicago 7** Most Endangered...

Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, & South Shore Cultural Center

Bounded roughly by Lake Michigan, 56th, Stony Island and 71st



Jackson Park , Midway Plaisance, South Shore Cultural Center

Address: Bounded by Lake Michigan, 56th, Stony Island and 71st

Landscape Architects/Architects:

Frederick Law Olmsted & Calvert Vaux

(Jackson Park & Midway Plaisance)

Benjamin Marshall & Charles Fox, Thomas Hawkes

(South Shore Cultural Center)

Date: c.1893 - 1916

Neighborhood: Hyde Park, Woodlawn, South Shore

Photo Credits:

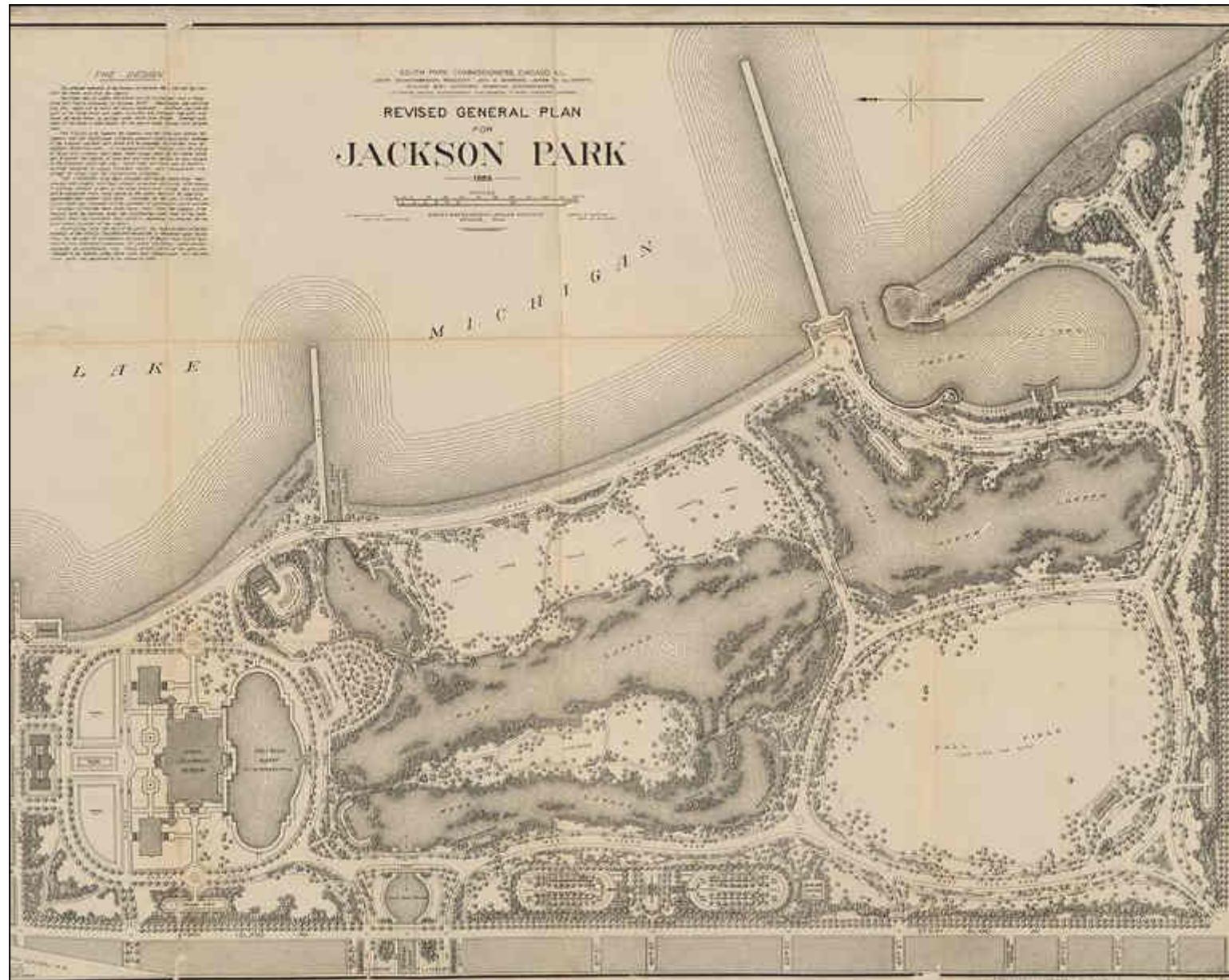
All Photos © Eric Allix Rogers

1895 Revised General Plan for Jackson Park
Map Credit © Digitalcollections.nypl.org

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

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

Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



OVERVIEW:

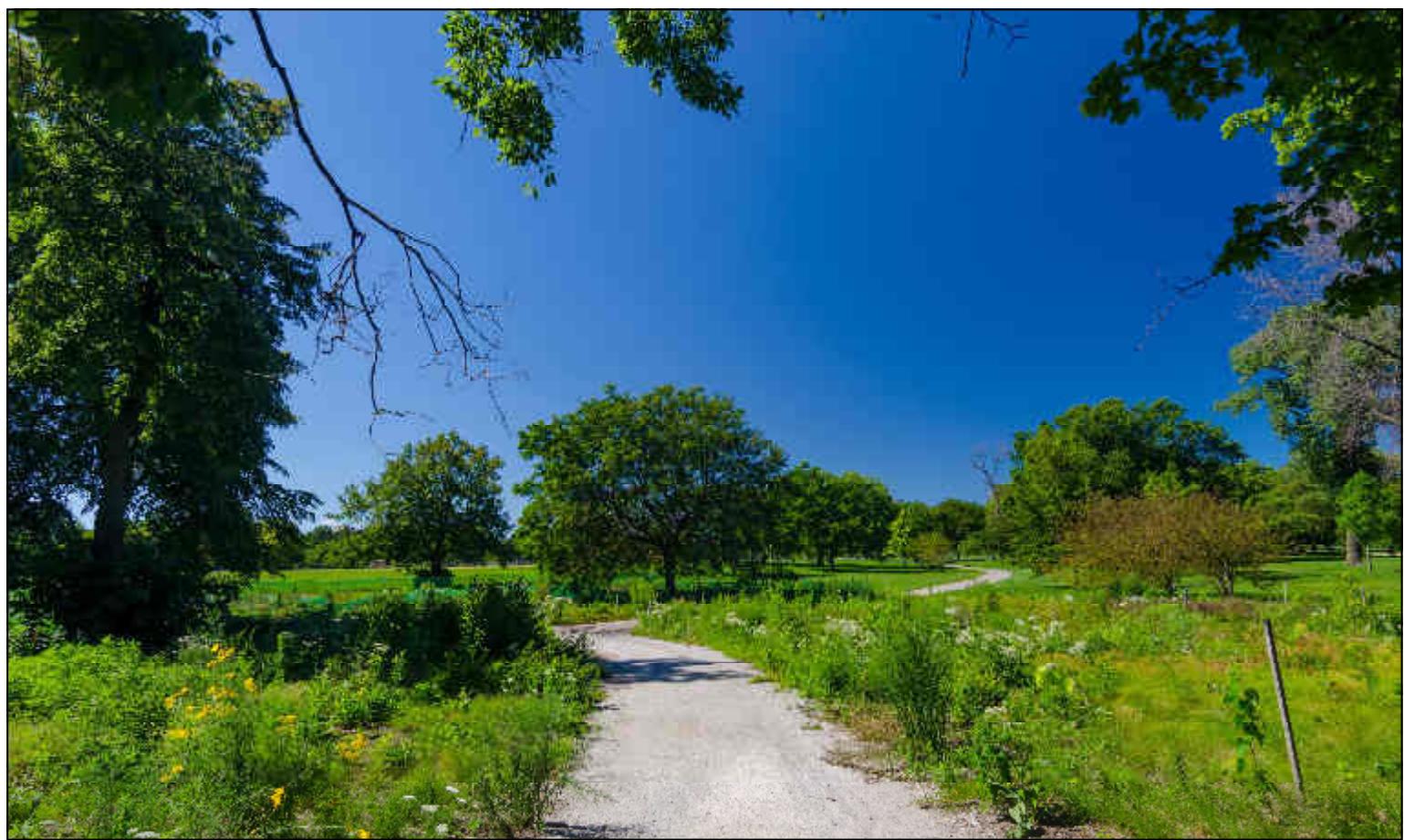
We at Preservation Chicago welcome the Barack Obama Presidential Center to Chicago's South Side. We would strongly support a proposal to construct the Center on private land to avoid impacting the Olmsted-designed Jackson Park.

Jackson Park, with its connecting Midway, and South Shore Cultural Center appeared on Preservation Chicago's 2017 Chicago 7 Most Endangered list. A year later, while a few of the details of the proposals have changed, the overall threat to these important parks remain, so they have been included for a second year.

Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and the South Shore Cultural Center, fronting Lake Michigan, are among the greatest historical and natural assets of Chicago's South Side. Their borders meet at South Shore Drive and 67th Street, and also at Stony Island and the Midway Plaisance. The future of these parks have become more directly intertwined with several interlocking, multi-million dollar, new construction proposals being overseen by the Chicago Park District, city agencies, and an array of non-profit organizations and private contractors.

Jackson Park is the proposed site of the Tod Williams and Billie Tsien-designed Barack Obama Presidential Center (between 60th and 63rd to the north and south, and Cornell Drive and Stony Island Avenue to the east and west) being constructed by the private non-profit Obama Presidential Foundation. One of the most significant recent changes is that the complex will not include the Barack Obama Presidential Library. Instead, the proposed development to be built on public park space will include a private museum, Obama Foundation office suites, event spaces and a variety of community spaces of which only some will be free and open to the public. The planned Obama Presidential Library has been replaced with a local branch of the Chicago Public Library. This change will possibly shift the burden of long-term operating costs of the proposed public library and other related structures from the Federal Government and Obama Foundation to the taxpayers.

Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



Other significant impacts are the closing of Cornell Drive, originally known as West Lagoon Drive and Bridal Path, which is an original Frederick Law Olmsted feature of the park, and which was greatly expanded in 1960, from a modest and beautiful-winding recreational parkway drive and carriageway. This closure if approved for a private entity, would also result in a significant widening of both South Lake Shore Drive, originally called Shore Drive and Harbor Drive in the Olmsted Plans, and South Stony Island Avenue, which will adversely affect the Jackson Park landscape and these other roadways, in addition to being a great cost and burden to the taxpayers with initial costs estimates of \$175 million, according to the City of Chicago.

The Chicago Park District has proposed a \$30 million plan to combine two golf courses, the Jackson Park 18-hole and South Shore Cultural Center 9-hole golf course into one larger 18-hole course, suitable for hosting PGA Championship games. A private non-profit group, the Chicago Parks Golf Alliance has been selected by the Chicago Park District to fundraise and commission the course design, which is being developed away from public view by private contractor Tiger Woods' TGR Design firm. This design may also result in the cutting of approximately 2,000 trees, including many old-growth trees, according to initial estimates from the design team. The golf course should be reconsidered for another site in Chicago, perhaps along the south lakefront, from the Lake Shore Drive Extension to the former U.S. Steel Site, thus providing three golf courses for a city the size of Chicago. Additionally, this would result in a unique and spectacular lakefront golf course for Chicago, and extend the park system southward along the lakefront.

Recently, Jackson Park was also the site of improvements sponsored by another private non-profit organization, Project 120, which included a Yoko Ono sculpture installed outside the historic Osaka Garden. Project 120's website also includes suggested plans for a variety of major changes to the park landscape including a visitor's center, music pavilion, and others. The combined impact of the proposals would result, not in minor modifications to one small section, but in widespread and major changes throughout Olmsted's great masterpiece.

In the past year, some of the proposals originally presented by Project 120 have re-appeared in the Chicago Park District's South Lakefront Framework Plan, the development of which is being conducted largely by private, for-profit design and planning contractors Smith Group JJR.

Because portions of both Jackson Park and the South Shore Cultural Center are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a Federal "Section 106" review process mandated by the National Preservation Act and was triggered in fall 2017. This review process is being managed by the City of Chicago Department of Planning and many of the proposals it is tasked with reviewing have already been publicly endorsed by high-ranking City officials, raising concerns regarding the ability to conduct a rigorous and transparent review process.

Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



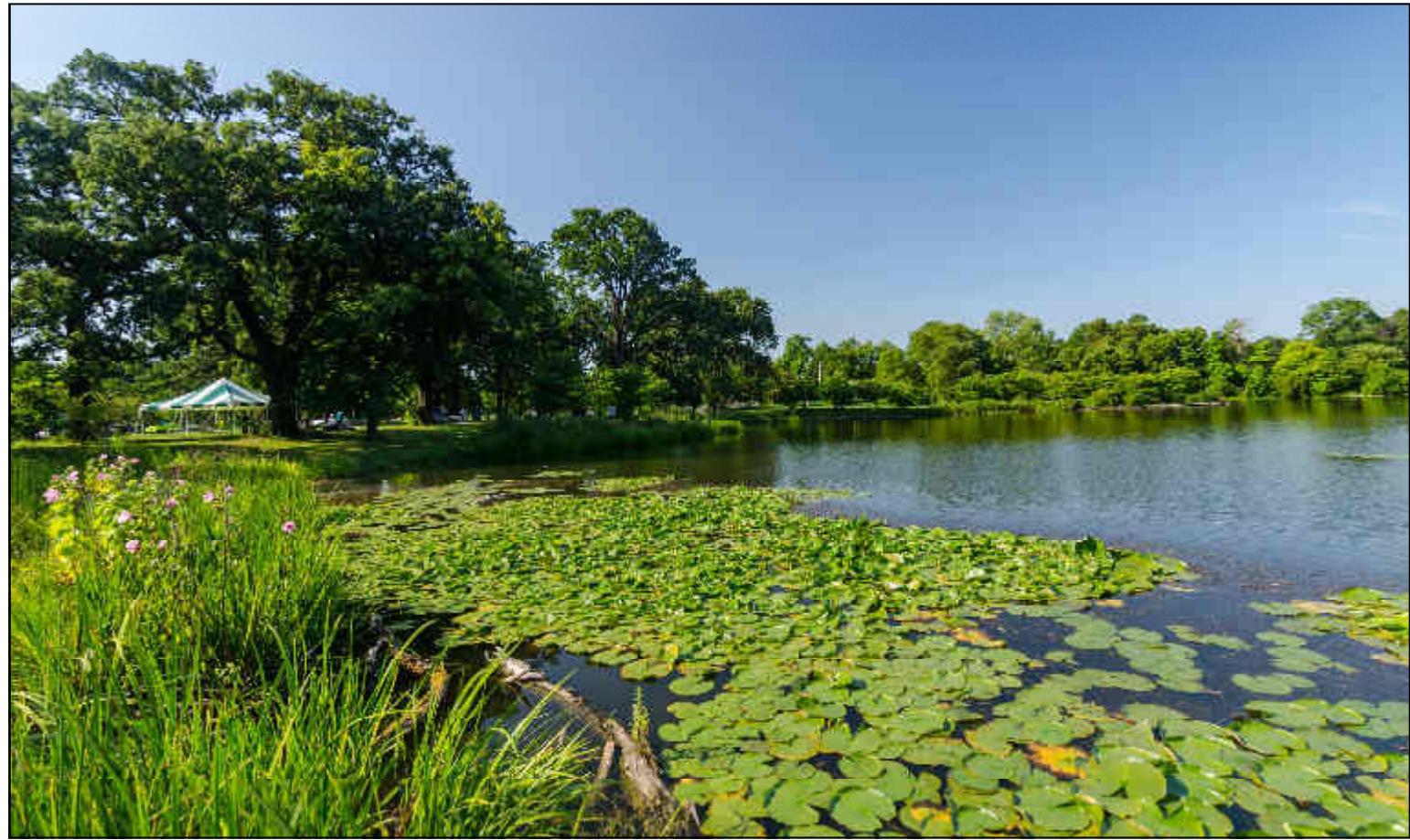
HISTORY:

The historical significance of Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and the South Shore Cultural Center are monumental and well-known to most audiences, including national and international scholars of architectural landscape design, historic landscapes, and cultural heritage. Both sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and certain features, structures and buildings of both sites are Designated Chicago Landmarks. The 500-acre Jackson Park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, perhaps the most famous landscape designer of the 19th century and widely considered to be “the father of American landscape architecture.” Jackson Park was also the site of one of the most important events in Chicago’s history and, arguably one of the most important cultural events of the 19th century, the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. Jackson Park is connected via the Midway to Washington Park and then to Chicago’s Emerald Necklace of great parks and boulevards, forming one of the most magnificent networks of urban parkland in the country.

The Mediterranean-revival South Shore Cultural Center, originally the South Shore Country Club, was designed by the notable Chicago architectural firm of Marshall & Fox and landscape designer Thomas Hawkes, and is one of the most recognizable landmarks on Chicago’s South Side. In its more recent past, it was the site of Barack and Michelle Obama’s wedding reception. Its transformation from a private club to a public park is a major community preservation success story. In 1975, South Shore, Hyde Park and Woodlawn neighborhood activists famously rescued the former private South Shore Country Club from demolition. The Chicago Park District and City of Chicago had the foresight to purchase the grounds from the failing country club, yet plans called for the demolition of the club and supporting buildings. After a lengthy community preservation advocacy effort and under intense community pressure, the Chicago Park District decided not to demolish the historic buildings, and in time renovated and restored the buildings. Ultimately, they supported the Chicago Landmark Designation of most of the former country club structures.

The creation of the South Shore Cultural Center as a public facility open to all visitors represents a victory of diversity and inclusion over the South Shore Country Club’s legacy of exclusion.

Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



THREATS:

The threats to Jackson Park and South Shore Cultural Center are multiple and interrelated. They include the construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park, the expansion and total redesign of the golf course, and various other development proposals which appear in the South Lakefront Framework Plan. Additional threats include the removal of Olmsted-designed Cornell Drive, a widening of South Lake Shore Drive, and a widening of Stony Island Avenue to accommodate a privately-run museum. The proposed widening of South Lake Shore Drive will likely impact both Jackson Park and the Lakefront, and impact access to Lake Michigan, the harbors, 57th Street Beach, and 63rd Street Beach.

Preservation Chicago and other advocacy groups remain concerned about the level of influence by privately-held organizations in the management of public parkland, including the Obama Foundation, the Chicago Parks Golf Alliance, Project 120, and Smith Group JJR. As non-profits and private companies, they serve their respective boards of directors and owners, and are perhaps motivated by a different set of priorities and objectives than those of the public and governmental agencies. These private organizations do not directly serve the public and have no obligation to include the public in the planning process. However, Preservation Chicago acknowledges that the Obama Foundation has hosted a series of public and consulting party/stakeholder meetings that have allowed public comments to be provided to the design team. The central challenge is that the control of public lands have been relinquished to private entities.

Without rigorous oversight, the protection of historic landscapes and structures can be significantly compromised. Last year, Preservation Chicago joined a wide consortium of advocacy groups, neighborhood organizations, and community leaders in calling for a transparent, comprehensive, and thoughtful planning process from the City of Chicago, Chicago Park District, Obama Foundation, Chicago Parks Golf Alliance, and Project 120. The South Lakefront Framework Plan was presented as an effort to create an open and deliberate planning process and a way to ensure that the various infrastructure changes being proposed by multiple private organizations would be coordinated under the publicly-accountable umbrella of the Chicago Park District, and to allow the voices of Chicagoans to be heard and acknowledged in this process. Unfortunately, the South Lakefront Framework Plan has added another layer of meetings, contractors, plans, and organizational timelines and the benefits have been limited.

Community voices at the South Lakefront Framework Plan forums, increased public outreach to community stakeholders from the Obama Foundation, and the tireless advocacy of two local community groups, the Midway Plaisance Advisory Council and Save the Midway, were successful in redirecting the planned multi-story parking garage on the Midway Plaisance to another location.

Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



Furthermore, multiple rounds of community input and design updates have shown key constituent requests largely dismissed to accommodate the programmatic priorities of the Obama Foundation and Chicago Parks Golf Alliance, casting doubt on the good faith and transparency of the public process.

Beyond minor and incremental changes to the plans, specific threats to the historic park landscapes remain. According to the Obama Foundation, approximately 300 trees (many of which are mature old-growth) would be clear-cut, and a major regrading of the site would be undertaken for the construction of the Obama Presidential Center. An additional 2,000 trees would be clear-cut and major regrading undertaken for the new fairways of the expanded golf course. A formal survey of Jackson Park and South Shore Cultural Center trees, detailing type, age, and caliper, should be conducted along with an assessment of which trees will be bulldozed, and the findings released to the public for comment and discussion before any work begins. Also, while an inventory of historic structures in Jackson Park has been approved, there are a number of critical needs for historic buildings that require urgent repair to stabilize and return them to public use.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Preservation Chicago requests that the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District take into account the full range of stakeholders in this process and balance the interests of their constituents with the development of private entities. We request that they prioritize an open and transparent process in determining the future of our public lands and green spaces. Additionally, we request that they protect the historic integrity of these nationally and locally significant landscapes, structures and buildings, so they may remain accessible assets for the people of the South Side and Chicago for generations to come. This would include consideration of narrowing the Olmsted-designed historic parkways, instead of closing them and removing them completely, and retaining South Lake Shore Drive, with its current proportions and winding Lakefront Boulevard characteristics, along with Stony Island Avenue as they currently exist. This would render unnecessary the proposed widening of the other roadways and perhaps save hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars.

In 2017, a handful of local community groups had come forward to advocate for changes to the proposed development plans. The number of organizations has grown exponentially, expanding well beyond the local stakeholders to include advocates from around the city and nation. Community organizations leading the advocacy effort include Jackson Park Watch, Save of the Midway, Midway Plaisance Advisory Council, Coalition to Save Jackson Park, Blacks in Green, The Hyde Park Historical Society, among others, and the city-wide parks advocacy organization, Friends of the Park.

Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



Preservation Chicago reaffirms its commitment to providing a constructive, preservation-oriented voice in this large and complex conversation. As a consulting party in the Federally-mandated Section 106 review process, Preservation Chicago will continue to strongly advocate for the importance of protecting historic features, including the historic Olmsted landscapes. We continue to work to ensure that any construction in the historic parks will be conducted with sensitivity to historic features, historic structures, and historic landscapes.

This includes archeologically important sites such as the foundations of the Women's Building designed by Sophia Hayden, the only female architect who designed a building for the Exposition; the Children's Building; and other important structures and features from the World Columbian Exposition in 1893, likely hidden below the soil line. Also, construction would impact the Woman's Garden, also known as the Perennial Garden in Jackson Park, designed by May McAdams in 1937, a noted female landscape architect.



Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



We remain hopeful that the federal review process mandated by the National Preservation Act will reinforce the importance of protecting the important features of the park and minimizing the adverse effects of new construction. Specifically, we want to insure that the South Shore Cultural Center be included in the Section 106 process already underway, or a new Section 106 process be initiated specifically for the golf course expansion project at both Jackson Park and the South Shore Cultural Center.

Furthermore, Preservation Chicago will continue to push for a written agreement from the Chicago Park District that some percentage of the many millions of dollars to be invested in these potential projects will be earmarked for the badly-needed maintenance and rehabilitation of historic park structures, such as the South Shore Cultural Center main building and stables and in Jackson Park, including but not limited to, the Comfort Station, the Iowa Building, the Columbia/Darrow Bridge, public paths and meadows, and ball fields, many of which are crumbling.



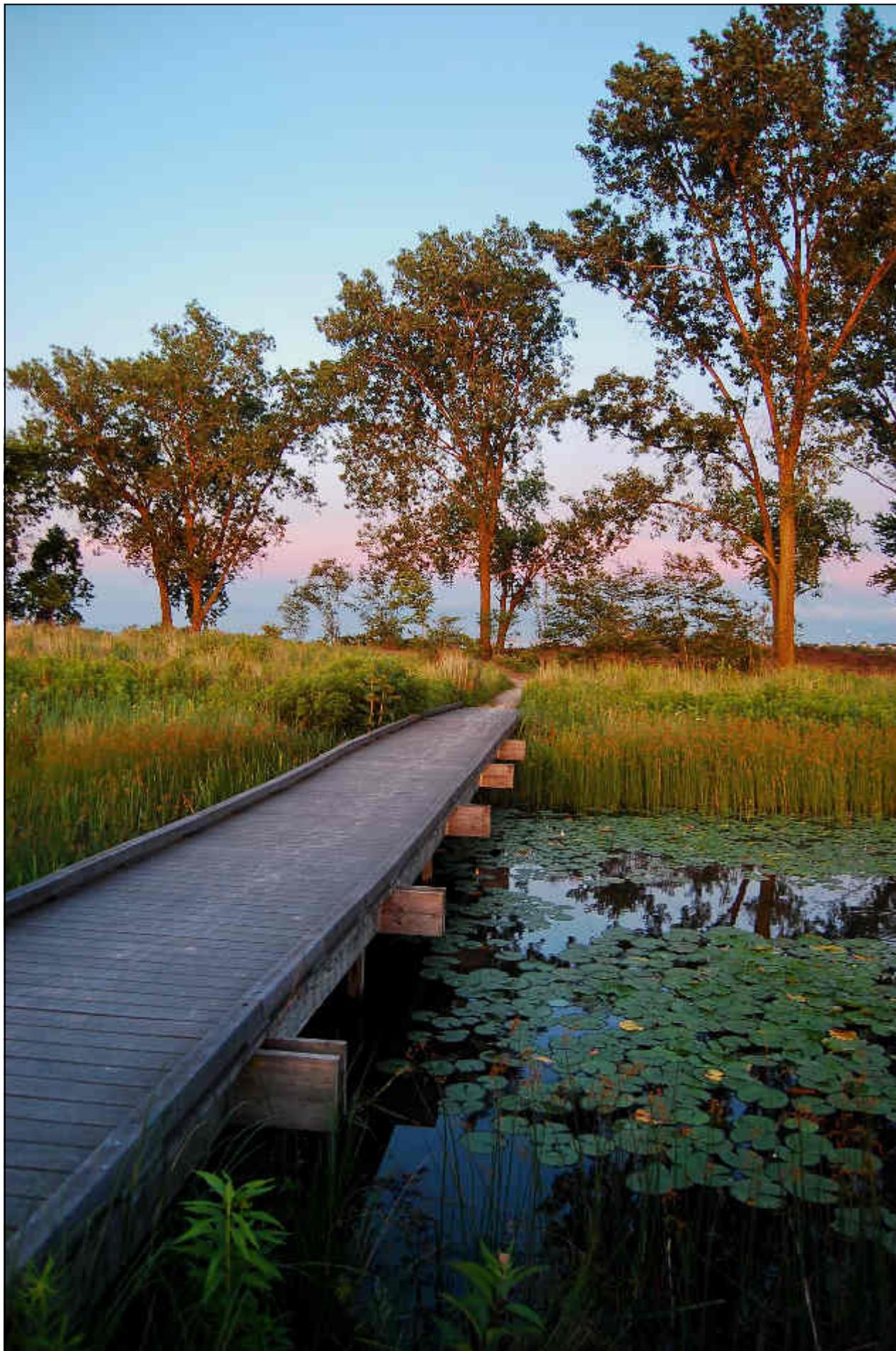
Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consider relocating the Obama Presidential Center to another nearby site, outside of Jackson Park, and another location other than the historic Frederick Law Olmsted-designed parkland and greenspace which belong to the people of Chicago. Perhaps this Presidential Center could be considered for a site nearby on property owned by the University of Chicago, or the approximately nine acres of long-vacant parcels next to the Green Line, adjacent to Washington Park.
2. Consider repairing and restoring the Jackson Park Golf Course, said to be the oldest public golf course west of the Allegheny Mountains. This would be in lieu of a major reworking and combining of two golf courses with 27 holes, into one professional PGA-level golf course of 18 holes and destroying approximately 2,000 trees, some of them old growth trees and even predating the Olmsted-designed park.
3. Consider moving the proposed TGR Golf Course concept for Jackson Park southward, to the new South Lake Shore Drive Extension and extending to the site of the former and now demolished United States Steel factories in the South Chicago neighborhood. This would be a third golf course option for a major city like Chicago, in lieu of just one golf course and an economic boost to the South Chicago and the East Side neighborhoods of Chicago. Perhaps a large 18-hole golf course, suitable for hosting PGA Championship games would "green" this former industrial site as part of on-going efforts to retain publicly accessible parks and green-space along this extraordinary and expansive Chicago Lakefront property. This idea would be an amazing and forward-thinking option along South Lake Shore Drive and Lake Michigan and correct missteps and brown-fields of the past, in allowing this land for private steel manufacturing industrial use, for more than a century.
4. Repairing and landmarking Jackson Park's existing historic buildings, structures, paths, meadow, bridges, including the Columbia/Clarence Darrow Bridge; and the South Shore Cultural Center, which have suffered long-deferred maintenance.
5. Narrowing the Olmsted-designed roadways and parkways to their historic pre-1960s dimensions. Widening was considered a misstep by the general public at that time and were part of numerous protests, resulting in the loss of many trees. A narrowing of Cornell Drive, in lieu of total closure could provide a correction of these missteps and help to again restore a tree-lined boulevard, through the park, which everyone could enjoy, including motor vehicles. Everyone should be able to enjoy Jackson Park, by various modes, walking, jogging, biking and driving through this pastoral setting.
6. Commit to retaining South Lake Shore Drive current proportions and winding Lakefront Boulevard characteristics and commit to retaining the current proportions of Stony Island Avenue.

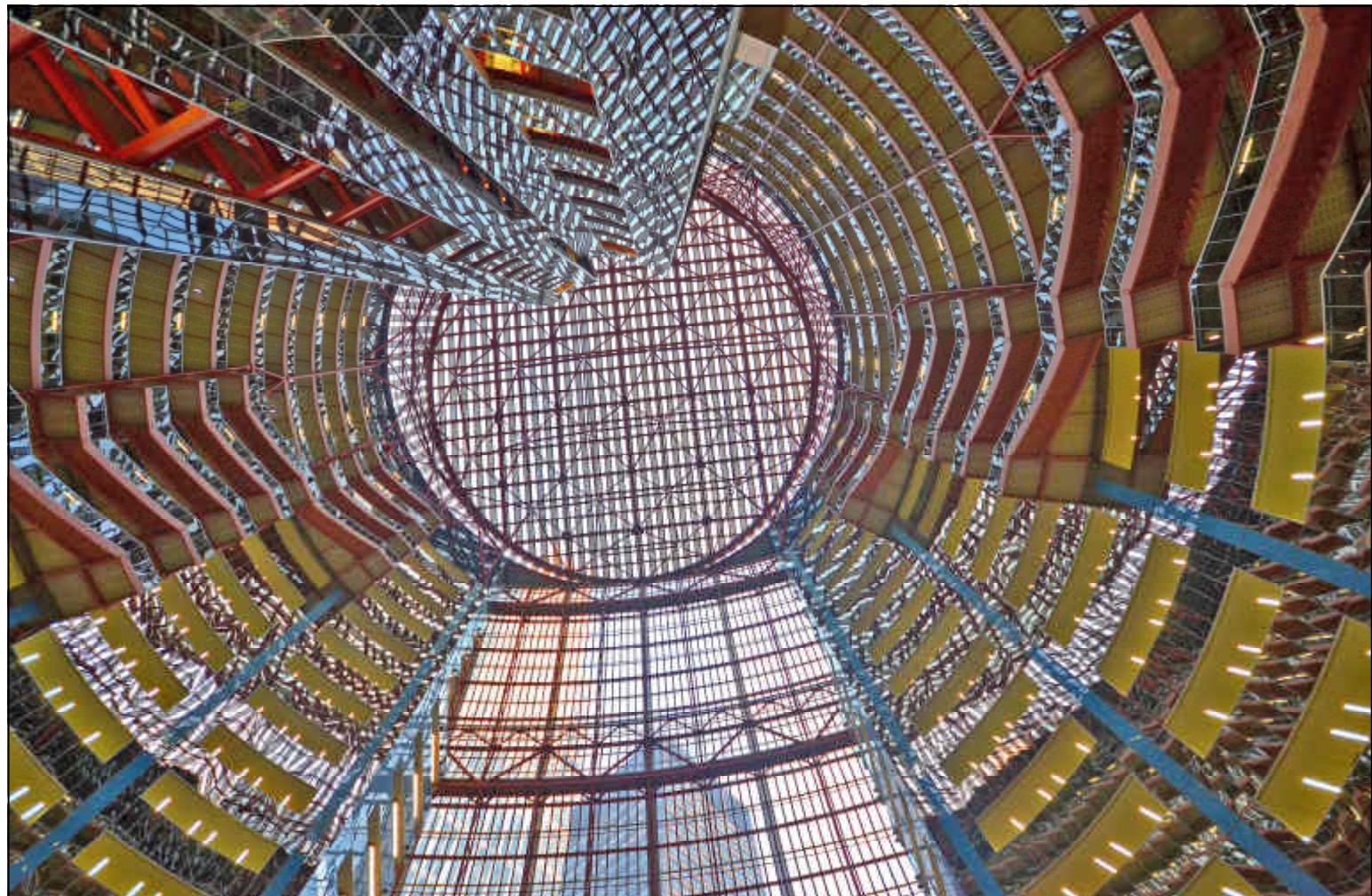
Chicago 7: Jackson Park, Midway Plaisance, and South Shore Cultural Center



Preservation Chicago Unveils the 2018 **Chicago 7** Most Endangered...

James R. Thompson Center / State of Illinois Building

100 W. Randolph Street



OVERVIEW:

Considered one of Chicago's most controversial building projects of its era, the State of Illinois Building now known as the James R. Thompson Center, is one of Chicago's most iconic late 20th century buildings and represented a radical departure from the design of conventional government office buildings of its time. Designed by world-renowned architect Helmut Jahn, the glass and steel building is an important Post-Modern building.

The Thompson Center is currently threatened with sale and demolition by Governor Rauner and his administration. Preservation Chicago encourages that this building be protected and considered for Chicago Landmark Designation.

Photo Credits:

Photos Page 1 & 2 © Gabriel X. Michael

Photos Page 3 - 6 © Eric Allix Rogers

**James R. Thompson Center /
State of Illinois Building**

Address: 100 W. Randolph Street

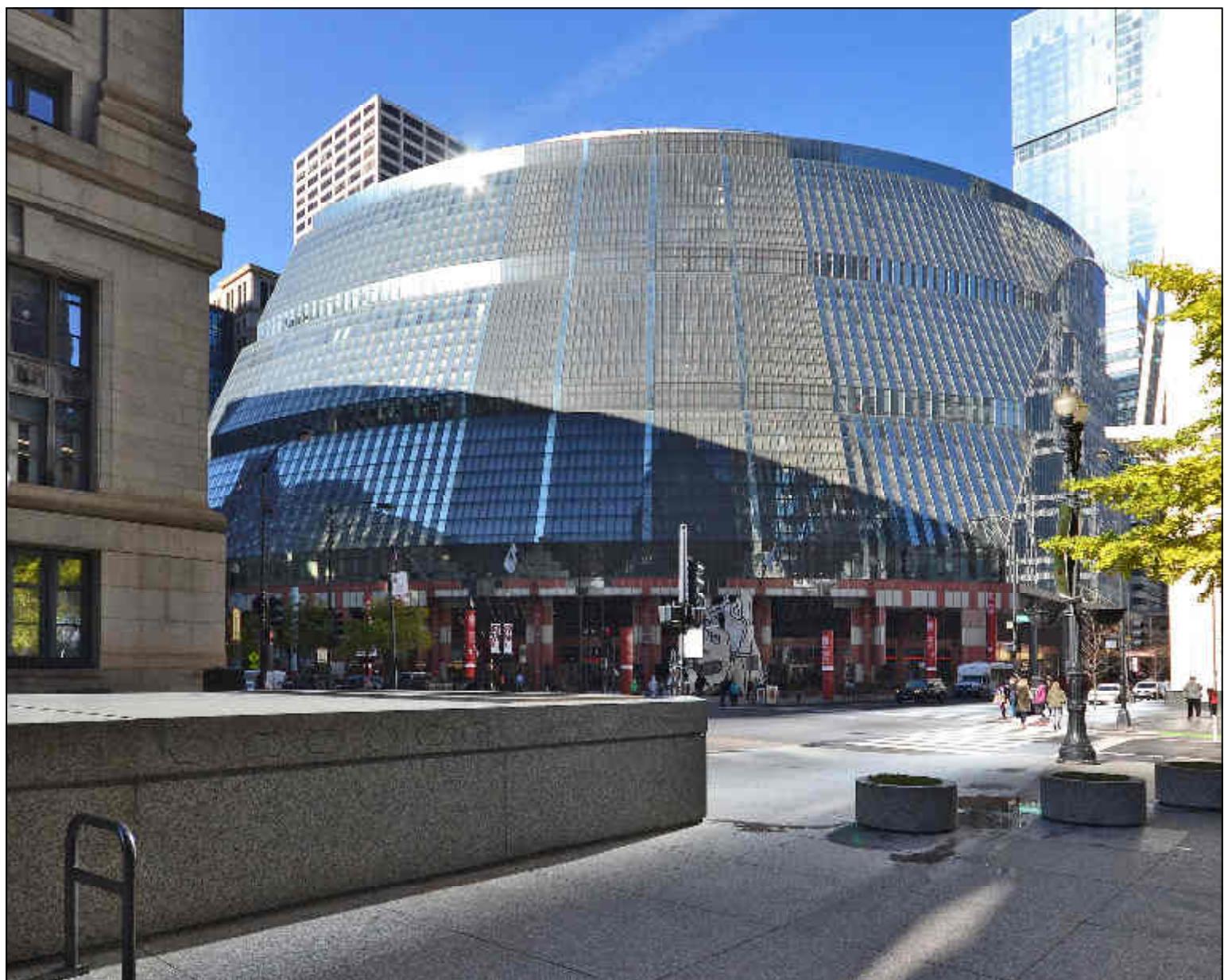
Architect: Helmut Jahn

Date: 1985

Neighborhood: Loop

Style: Post-Modern

Chicago 7: James R. Thompson Center/State of Illinois Building



HISTORY:

The building's design was meant to suggest a more open and transparent government, while referencing the grand public buildings of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Architect Helmut Jahn specifically noted in a public lecture in the 1980s on the building's design, that it recalled the massive dome and vast interior atrium space of the old Chicago Federal Building and Post Office, designed by architect Henry Ives Cobb, completed in 1905 and demolished in 1965.

The unique design of the State of Illinois Building, with its curved walls comprised of irregularly-shaped glass panels presented distinct challenges to the building construction methods of the 1980s. This resulted in construction costs being more expensive than originally projected.

The State of Illinois Building was architect Helmut Jahn's most significant public building at the time, and a bold idea in its design to represent the State's Chicago offices. It served as a "second state capital building" to project its influence in Illinois' largest and most populated city, recognized internationally for its architecture. It was designed to capture the viewer's attention and signal its importance as a seat of government. The building's futuristic styling generated, and continues to generate, both support and criticism.

The structure's grand public 17-story atrium is topped by a vast skylight and stepped glass curtain-wall which spans the entry and extends across most of the building's footprint. This effect essentially creates a large public plaza both inside and outside the building's Clark and Randolph entry. It was conceived to welcome the public into a government building, with accessible public spaces on multiple levels and extensive glass curtain walls to represent an open and transparent government.

Chicago 7: James R. Thompson Center/State of Illinois Building



The State of Illinois Building and its atrium were originally conceived to mix governmental offices with various services and retail, which was intended to reinvigorate the City's business district along Randolph and Clark Streets. At one time, public music concerts were held in its grand atrium space. This area of the Loop had once been the center of its theater and entertainment district informally referred to as Chicago's "Rialto District", which included the Bismarck/Palace Theater, Schiller/Garrick Theater, the Woods, the Apollo/United Artists Theater, and the Oriental Theater. Additional theaters included the Harris and Selwyn/Michael Todd Theaters around the corner on Dearborn, and the Chicago Theater, Roosevelt Theater, Loop Theater, and State-Lake Theater on nearby State Street. The Rialto District was supported by a vibrant collection of famous Chicago restaurants, including Henrici's, Toffenetti's, Old Heidelberg, Holloway House, Mayor's Row, Hoe Sai Gai, Stouffer's, and the Blackhawk, extending eastward to Wabash Avenue.

The site was previously occupied by the legendary 1,700 room, Sherman House Hotel, which stood mothballed from 1973 until its demolition prior to the construction of the Thompson Center. The Sherman was a great landmark and home to many jazz venues, including the College Inn and various hotel restaurants and had been a vibrant part of Chicago since its earliest years. The State of Illinois Building/Thompson Center was intended to channel the energy of The Sherman House and reinvigorate the faded Randolph Street Corridor, one of the oldest sections of the Loop's business and entertainment districts.

The State of Illinois Building never achieved the vibrancy envisioned by Helmut Jahn and Governor Thompson. Its retail tenants have become more mundane over time and deferred maintenance impacted its appearance. The State of Illinois Building inspired Helmut Jahn's much acclaimed landmark and highly vibrant Sony Center in the heart of Berlin, some twenty years later.

Chicago 7: James R. Thompson Center/State of Illinois Building



The State of Illinois Building was renamed the James R. Thompson Center, to honor the longest-serving governor of Illinois from 1977 to 1991. Governor Thompson was a strong proponent in selecting and advocating for Helmut Jahn as the architect for the new State office building and instrumental in selecting the most extravagant and grandiose of Jahn's design options for the building.

THREAT:

Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner has repeatedly requested that state lawmakers pass a bill allowing him to sell the Thompson Center/ State of Illinois Building. He has cited deferred maintenance and operating inefficiencies, and is drawn to the potentially high sale price of the land. To maximize value, Governor Rauner has requested that the City of Chicago relinquish zoning and land use controls to allow the State of Illinois to command the highest possible price for the sale.

Preservation Chicago believes that zoning, planning and land use controls should not be surrendered by the City of Chicago to another governmental body or private developer. New construction and demolition have significant impact on the livability of Chicago now and into the future, so many factors must be considered in the decision making process regarding planning and development.

Preservation Chicago believes that the scale of the Thompson Center, along with its open plaza and public interior atrium space adds quality of life to Chicagoans by allowing light and air into a dense section of the loop. If sold to the highest bidder, these benefits are almost certain to be lost. Additionally, the soaring central interior atrium was built by and for the people of the State of Illinois, and therefore, should remain accessible to the public as a public building.

Furthermore, the Jean Dubuffet sculpture, *Monument with Standing Beast*, by one of the world's most noted Modernist artists in its sweeping public plaza, is a gift to the citizens of Chicago and Illinois and must be protected. We've seen important works of 20th century Chicago public art removed (Henry Bertoia's *Sonambient*), destroyed (top surface mosaic of Marc Chagall's *Four Seasons*), placed in storage (Alexander Calder's *The Universe*), or sold at auction (Henry Moore's *Large Internal-External Upright Form*). 20th century Chicago public art was a 2017 Chicago 7 Most Endangered, so it is imperative that this great Dubuffet sculpture be protected.

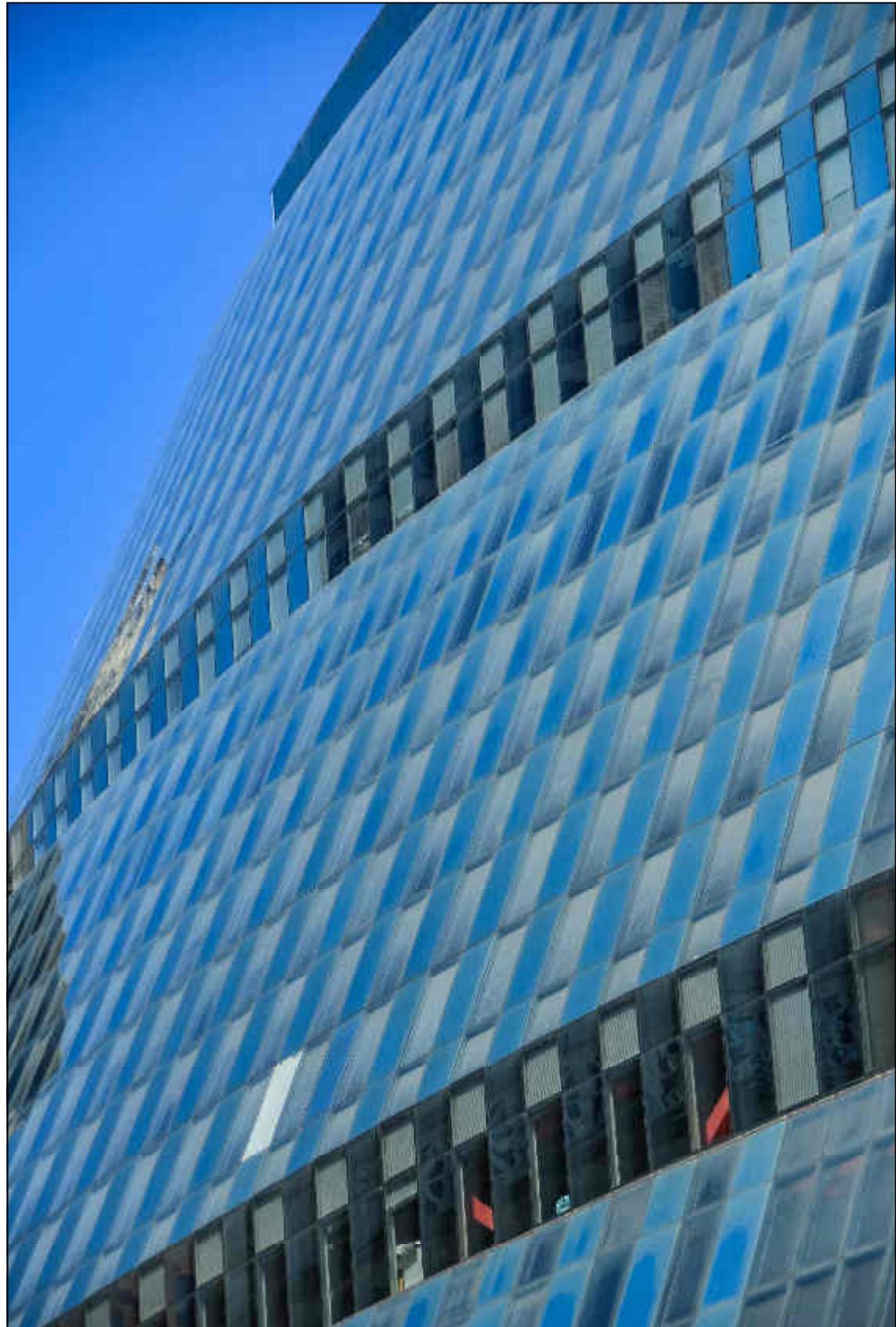
Chicago 7: James R. Thompson Center/State of Illinois Building

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Preservation Chicago suggests that the City of Chicago move quickly to designate the Thompson Center/ State of Illinois Building as a Chicago Landmark.

This would protect this building, plaza, and public sculpture designed by one of the Chicago's most famous contemporary architects, whose career began here and whose work is now celebrated around the world from Chicago to Berlin to Shanghai. This is a building of the people, built as a monument and open to all, with many public spaces that should be forever open to all, and efforts to both protect its architecture and vision and activate the building should be implemented.

We urge the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago to work together to protect this significant building. A comprehensive redevelopment plan could correct the deferred maintenance. A tower-addition study by Helmut Jahn's design firm has suggested that the existing building could accommodate new construction that would add square footage while remaining sensitive to the historic building, atrium, and public space.

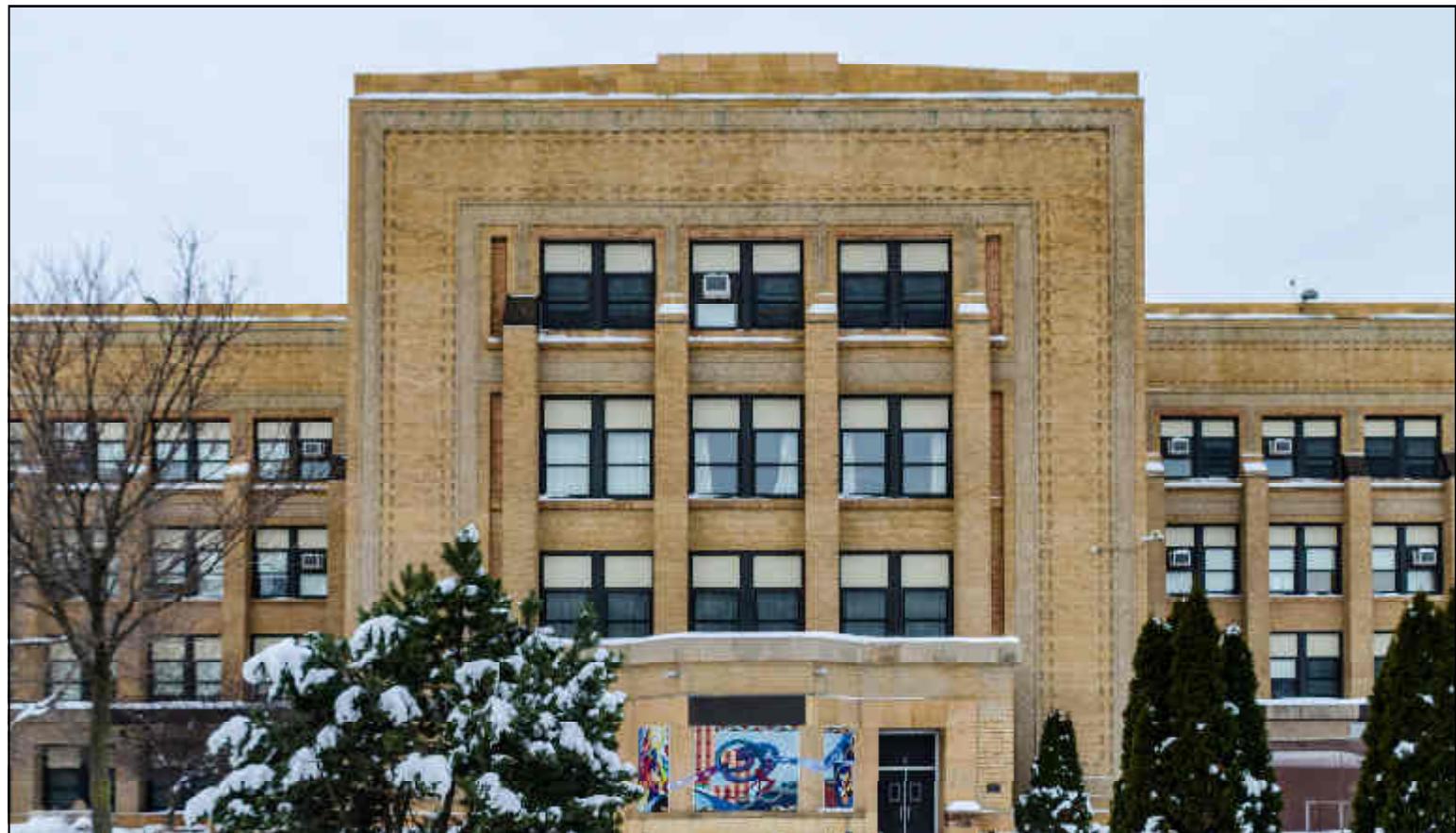


Chicago 7: James R. Thompson Center/State of Illinois Building



William Rainey Harper High School

6520 S. Wood Street



OVERVIEW:

Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Board of Education are moving forward with a plan to close four Englewood community area high schools, including William Rainey Harper High School, and replace them all with one single, \$85 million state-of-the-art campus projected to open in 2019. More recently, Chicago Public Schools announced that the closing of Harper will be delayed until the new school building is completed. However, the future of Harper High School and its building remains uncertain.

HARPER HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY:

Harper High School, located at 6520 S. Wood Street in the Englewood community of Chicago, opened in 1911. The school was named in honor of William Rainey Harper (1856-1906), a legendary educator who served as president of both the University of Chicago and Bradley University, and who was a champion of modernizing the facilities and standardizing the academic curriculum of the Chicago Public Schools.

Designed by celebrated architect, Dwight Perkins, the four-story brick structure is bold in its execution, with its well-organized composition expressing its strong massing and verticality. This effect is further emphasized by wide brick piers and accentuated with large flat masonry surfaces, at both the corners and uppermost portions of the building. Within these flat-plane surfaces are elaborate patterns of intricate brickwork which are integrated with bands of ornament. The interlaced and accentuated fenestration of the facade further emphasizes the verticality of the structure. This is an amazing and very creative use of a two-toned patterned brickwork to create a beautifully ornamented façade with inexpensive materials; thus reducing the amount of expensive materials like limestone or terra cotta required for construction.

William Rainey Harper High School

Address: 6520 S. Wood Street

Neighborhood: Englewood

Architect: Dwight Perkins

Date: 1909-1911

Style: Prairie Style / Chicago School

Photo Credits:

All Photos © Eric Allix Rogers

Chicago 7: William Rainey Harper High School



Portions of the building's base and entries project from the building's surface and create a composition of a defined base, middle and top-section, much like the tall and refined commercial buildings of the period and following the principals and methodology of architect Louis Sullivan and the Chicago School of Architecture. The overall effect of the design creates a very sophisticated and beautiful series of elevations and facades that visually enhance the building and surrounding neighborhood.

Being one of several such designs in this similar genre, William Rainey Harper High School, along with Grover Cleveland Elementary School on the Northwest Side, were among the first to be constructed by the Chicago Board of Education/Chicago Public Schools in this style, employed by architect Dwight Perkins. Others constructed in a similar style followed in the coming years included Noble, Gary, Jefferson, and Corkery which all vary slightly. However, this is one of the finest examples of Perkins's work using this artistic patterned brickwork composition and in this style.

DWIGHT PERKINS HISTORY:

Dwight Perkins left school to work in the Chicago Stock Yards after the untimely death of his father, but soon found employment as an apprentice with an architecture firm. After receiving his degree in architecture from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Perkins returned to Chicago and began working for the architectural firm of Burnham & Root. His talents were soon recognized and he became a highly-valued employee. Perkins was entrusted with running the prestigious and busy office after John Wellborn Root's unexpected death from pneumonia in 1891 and with Daniel Burnham heavily involved in preparations for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

Chicago 7: William Rainey Harper High School



During this period, he supervised the completion of the Root-designed Monadnock Building, Chicago's tallest masonry skyscraper and a Designated Chicago Landmark. In 1894, Perkins left to start his own architectural practice. His first commission was an 11-story office building at 64 E. Van Buren Street with an 850-seat theater for Steinway Piano Company, which later became known as Steinway Music Hall/Ziegfeld Hall, an outstanding building demolished in 1970. Perkins's architectural office was located in Steinway Hall which became a magnet for innovative architects inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement and the writings of Louis Sullivan, such as Robert and Allen Pond, Robert Spencer, Walter Burley Griffin, Perkins's cousin Marion Mahony, and Frank Lloyd Wright, a core group of architects who kept offices in the building and who would later develop the Prairie School style of architecture.

In 1905, with stellar recommendations from Daniel Burnham, Dwight Perkins was appointed as the Chief Architect to the Board of Education. He served in this capacity for five years during a productive time for the construction of public schools. Perkins designed 25 schools throughout the city for the Chicago Board of Education, and made drawings for school building expansions and additions for up to 40 more.

The most recognized of his school buildings is Carl Schurz High School, built in 1910 on Chicago's Northwest Side, and a Designated Chicago Landmark. Another Perkins-designed building, Lyman Trumbull School on Chicago's North Side in the Andersonville community is in the process of being reopened as a private school after being closed for five years, and this extraordinary building is being considered for Chicago Landmark Designation.

Construction of Harper High School in Englewood began in 1909 and the school opened in 1911. Perkins incorporated his sense of humanity and progressive attitude into his school designs and brought about some important changes to school architecture. He wanted the buildings to serve as community centers after regular school hours, so he placed auditoriums on the first floor to make them accessible for community functions.

Chicago 7: William Rainey Harper High School



Perkins widened stairways and hallways to reduce overcrowding. Additionally, he placed bathrooms on every floor and maximized natural light in the classrooms. These were innovative design concepts that have since become standard features of contemporary school design.

Perkins was a strong advocate for children's playgrounds and open space, which were radical ideas in his day. Most schools of that period were built close to the street and often without playgrounds. In his commissions, he provided more generous setbacks, more extensive landscaping, and created more open-space around the school buildings for larger playgrounds.

Perkins's advocacy for open space led to him to be appointed as a member of the Special Parks Commission headed by prominent Chicago architects, and in 1904, he became the first president of the Chicago Regional Planning Commission, which later evolved into the Cook County Forest Preserve. His leadership contributed to the formation of the Cook County Forest Preserves along with his friend and colleague, Jens Jensen, the celebrated landscape architect for Chicago's West Park System. Dwight Perkins continued to serve on the Chicago Park District and Cook County Forest Preserve Boards until his retirement.

Despite his remarkable contributions, Perkins was forced to leave his role of Chief Architect to the Chicago Board of Education for political reasons, presumably his refusal to direct over-priced contracts to politically-connected contractors. Returning to private practice, Perkins remained busy designing settlement houses, park buildings, and private residences. At the Lincoln Park Zoo, he designed the much-beloved Lion House and Cafe Brauer, both Designated Chicago Landmarks, and North Pond Cafe (originally a warming station for North Pond skaters).

Chicago 7: William Rainey Harper High School



Some of his other existing public school buildings are Moos, Hayt, Stewart, Cleveland, Pullman, Jahn, Tilton, Trumbull, Pullman, Bowen, and Schurz High Schools.

HISTORY OF ENGLEWOOD:

The history of Englewood begins in the 1850's at the crossing of two rail lines, near what is now 63rd and Wentworth. The early settlers were primarily German and Irish railroad workers and truck farmers who settled near the railway junction. The Stock Yards opened in June of 1865, a few miles to the north, and many of the people who were employed there found homes in Englewood. In 1889, the City of Chicago annexed Englewood and investment in the community expanded significantly with the construction of brick two flats, apartment buildings, banks, schools, hospitals, churches and other institutions among the existing older wooden cottages. The city's street car system extended into Englewood, and in 1907 Englewood got its own "L" line extension into the community, now known as the CTA's Green Line.

The South Side community of Englewood has seen many changes since it was annexed into the City of Chicago in 1889. What was once a thriving residential and commercial area, centered around 63rd and Halsted Streets, has suffered decades of disinvestment and population loss. The community continues to struggle to overcome a host of challenges and reverse these declines.

THREAT:

In late 2017, Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Board of Education announced they will be moving forward with a project that would close four Englewood schools: Harper High School, Hope College Prep, Paul Robeson High School, and TEAM Englewood. The latest proposal by the Chicago Board of Education is to demolish Robeson High School and use the site to construct a new \$85 million high school campus. The remaining three schools will be closed over the next few years, and their futures remain unknown.

This comes on the heels of the Chicago Board of Education's decision to close 49 public schools in 2013. At that time, Mayor Rahm Emanuel created the "Advisory Committee for School Repurposing" in an effort to create a plan and to implement that plan for repurposing these buildings.

Chicago 7: William Rainey Harper High School



Some of the schools are being used for new schools or administrative offices. Others have been sold to developers for adaptive reuse. However, many of the closed schools remain unused with an uncertain future, such as the Perkins-designed Francis Scott Key School in the Austin Community.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are reports of a possible sale of two of the Englewood schools, but Preservation Chicago worries that if William Rainey Harper High School remains empty, it could fall into disrepair. If Harper High School is not used as a school, Preservation Chicago recommends that the building be adaptively reused for affordable housing, senior housing, and/or veterans housing. Classrooms could easily be converted into housing units. Additionally, Harper High School has a large auditorium, an indoor pool, and a gymnasium which could be utilized as a community fitness center and community gathering space, possibly a Chicago Park District field house.

Recently, there has been positive development in the Englewood shopping district at 63rd and Halsted Streets, including a new Whole Foods and other smaller investments. The repurposing of this significant Dwight Perkins designed school building would be a highly visible investment that could serve community members and catalyze further investment in the Englewood community. Additionally, reuse would protect and celebrate the neighborhood's existing historical and aesthetic resources. We further recommend that Harper High School be considered for a Chicago Landmark Designation to protect it from possible demolition or harm in the future.

Washington Park Substation

6141 S. Prairie Avenue



OVERVIEW:

In the early 20th century, electrical substation buildings were built across Chicago to electrify the city. They were built in various architectural styles, including Prairie School, Art Deco, and Classical Revival, and their unique ornament often celebrated the innovative new technology.

Electrification was extraordinary innovation that allowed a tremendous leap forward in the quality of life for city dwellers. The novelty and excitement around the distribution of electricity has faded and today's electrical infrastructure is largely utilitarian.

Constructed by Samuel Insull's Commonwealth Edison utility conglomerate, many of the early electrical substation buildings were truly architecturally magnificent. They were designed to be assets to their surrounding communities and present Commonwealth Edison in a positive light. Many electrical substation buildings remain in operation in conditions that range from good to poor, while others are vacant and endangered. As the utility grid has been modernized over the years, we hope that these marvelous buildings will be repurposed and preserved.

Washington Park Substation / Gaitan Building

Address: 6141 S. Prairie Ave.

Architect: Hermann von Holst

Date: 1928 and 1939

Neighborhood: Washington Park

Style: Classical Revival

Photo Credits:

All Photos unless noted © Deborah Mercer

Page 3 Arched Windows © Eric Allix Rogers

Chicago 7: Washington Park Substation



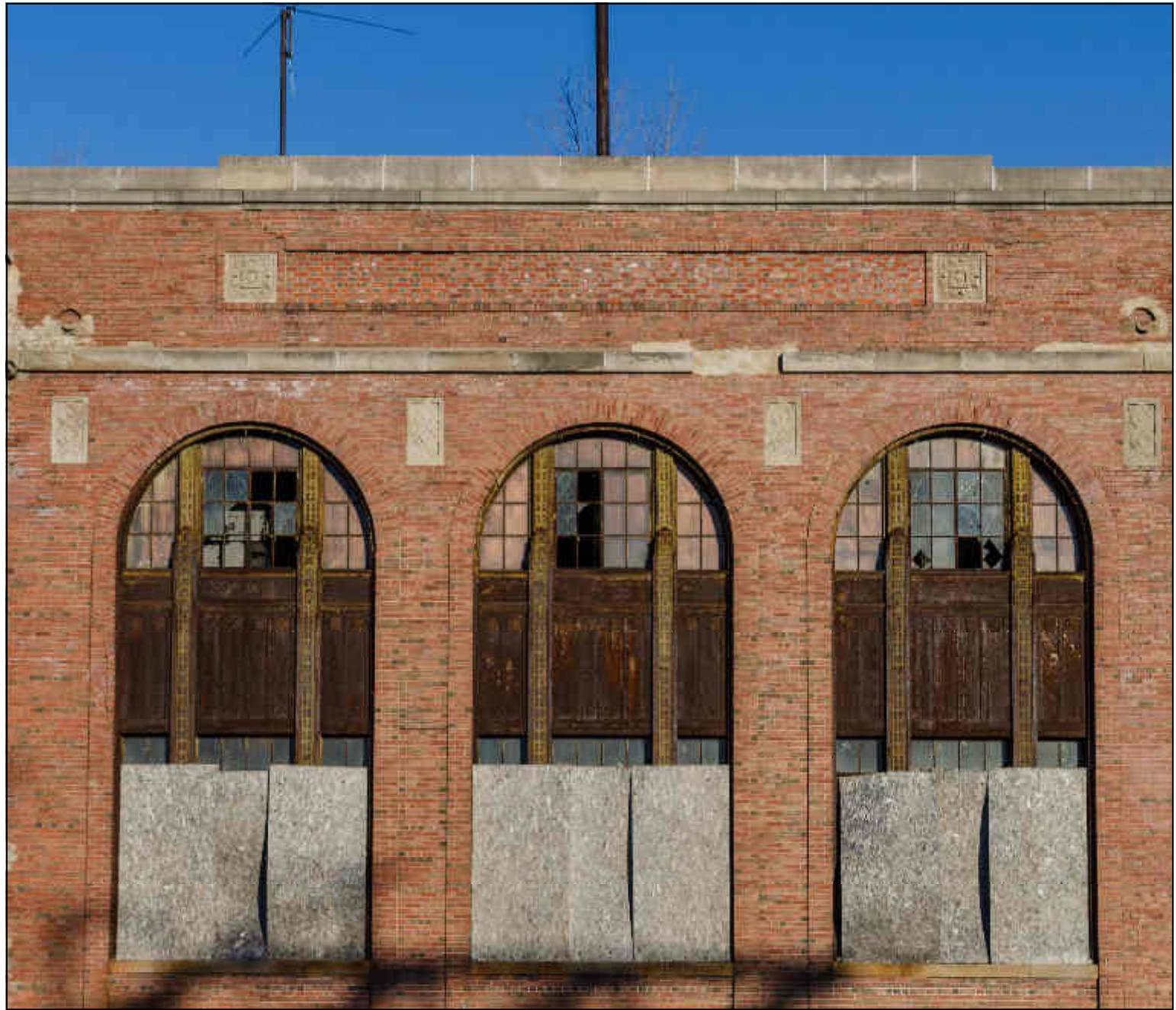
HISTORY:

The history of electric power in Chicago begins with multiple electric generation companies in the 1880s, followed by utility baron Samuel Insull consolidating many of these companies into his Chicago Edison (later Commonwealth Edison) company in the 1890s.

Insull's first substation was opened on the Near North Side in 1899 which transformed power generated from its efficient generating plants to home-use voltage in an area nearest the largest load demand. The substation concept was a huge success, and Insull began constructing substations all over the city, initially in rented property, and then beginning in 1901 in purpose-built structures. This concept created efficiencies in power generation and distribution that resulted in falling electricity rates, more subscribers and massive expansion of the metropolitan region over the next 30 years.

These purpose-built substations, particularly from the 1910s, were mostly built of a high quality by notable architects including Holabird and Roche; Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge; and particularly Hermann von Holst, whose firm Von Holst & Fyfe and his own independent practice designed a majority of the substations built between the 1910s and 1930s, many in a unique Prairie School style. These substations were constructed of durable materials and were designed to house heavy electrical equipment. Other substations were constructed for the streetcar and elevated railroad companies, as well as municipal agencies, and many are of a similar architectural pedigree and quality.

Chicago 7: Washington Park Substation



INDIVIDUAL HISTORY/THREAT:

One substation, in particular, faces a threat of demolition by neglect.

The Washington Park Substation at 6141 S. Prairie Avenue is an excellent example of the many substations built across the Chicago region, and it currently faces a threat of "demolition by neglect". This substation is larger than most as it was built to distribute higher voltages to neighborhood substations.

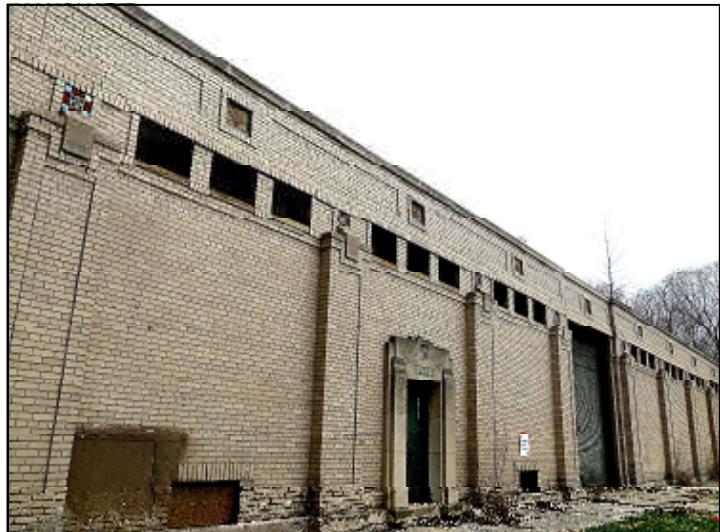
Constructed in stages between 1928 and 1939, it was designed by prolific substation architect Hermann von Holst. It features unique power-related ornament, including carved limestone light bulbs on its façade.

Unfortunately, it currently sits vacant and is currently listed for sale

6141 S. Prairie Avenue is orange-rated in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey.



Chicago 7: Washington Park Substation



RECOMMENDATIONS:

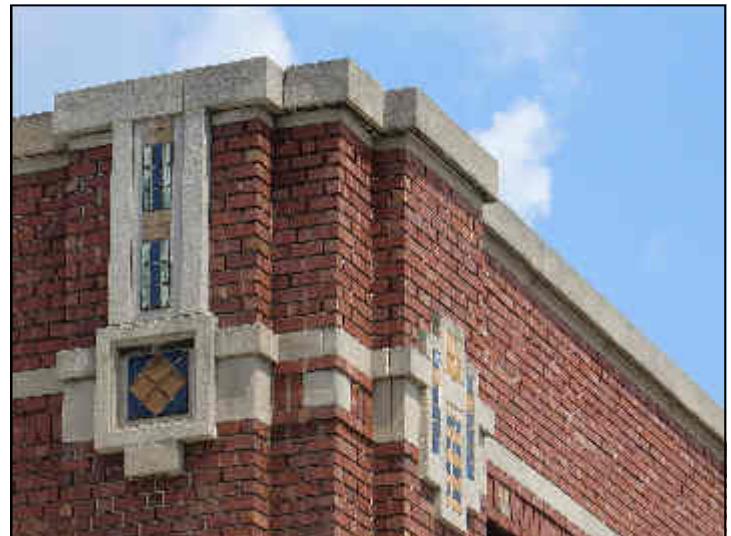
Preservation Chicago recommends that the City of Chicago seek a Landmark Designation for significant substation buildings as part of a larger Thematic Chicago Landmark District. The best examples of different eras and styles of substation construction across the city should be identified and protected.

Also, the city and utility company should be proactive in finding new uses for substation buildings that are obsolete or no longer in use, such as the building identified above on Prairie Avenue in Washington Park. These structures are a unique part of Chicago's built environment and their story and architectural pedigree, as well as their distinctive interior spaces, make them ideal candidates for landmark protection and adaptive reuse.

The von Holst substation located at 924 N. Clark Street in Gold Coast has been beautifully renovated and converted into a single family home and is being marketed for \$10 million.



Chicago 7: Washington Park Substation



LIST OF SUBSTATIONS:

von Holst Substations Requiring Maintenance

- 6141 S. Prairie Avenue
- 6249 S. Prairie Avenue
- 6913 S. Kenwood Avenue
- 6921 S. Kenwood Avenue
- 1708 W. Carroll Street
- 626 E. 40th Street
- 2195 S. East End, Chicago Heights
- 15737 West Avenue, Harvey

Well Maintained von Holst Substations

- 4401 N. Clifton Street - "Suggested for Chicago Landmark Designation" as part of a thematic Power Station/Substation Landmark District by Preservation Chicago in 2017
- 1500 W. 123rd Street
- 1618 S. Prairie Avenue
- Butterfield Road and Eastern Avenue, Bellwood

Well Maintained Substations by Other Architects

- 1042 N. Western Avenue
- 121 N. Dearborn Street
- 924 N. Clark Street (residence)

