

CHICAGO LANDMARKS



2019 PRESERVATION EXCELLENCE AWARDS

3647 South State Street Black Metropolis-Bronzeville District Rehabilitation

Recipient: City of Chicago Department of Fleet & Facility Management

This Art Deco/Moderne architectural style building was designed by Z. Erol Smith and constructed between 1929 and 1931. The building initially served as the headquarters for the Chicago Bee Newspaper, founded by the noted African-American entrepreneur Anthony Overton. The upper floors were originally configured for apartments and offices including those of the Douglass National Bank and the Overton Hygienic Company, a nationally known cosmetics firm during the 1930's. After the newspaper and Overton Hygienic ceased their operations (in the 1940's and 1980's respectively), the building was adapted for reuse as a branch of the Chicago Public Library in the mid-1990s. The facade had deteriorated over the decades, and the City of Chicago Department of Fleet and Facility Management performed extensive exterior restorations to the building. The existing non-historic storefronts were replaced with a new, historically appropriate system in a dark finish. The highly decorative terra cotta had cracked and spalled over time and the damaged pieces were repaired with the patching colors matching exactly. The wood windows were retained and restored in place. The Chicago Bee Branch Library is located in the Black Metropolis-Bronzeville District, designated a Chicago Landmark on September 9, 1998.



before



historic



after



after



DPD
CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT