



## LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

People Saving Places

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30 N. Michigan Ave.  
Suite 2020  
Chicago, IL 60602

[www.Landmarks.org](http://www.Landmarks.org)

December 1, 2020

(SENT VIA EMAIL)

Chairman Rafael Leon  
Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
Attention: Kandelyn Hahn

*RE: Proposed Landmark Designation for the Miracle House*

Dear Chairman Leon and Members of the Commission,

Landmarks Illinois is in full support of the proposed Chicago Landmark designation of the Miracle House, located at 2001 N. Nordica in the Galewood neighborhood, and hope the Commission will support its preliminary designation.

In 2018, Landmarks Illinois was contacted by Dan Lempa, a student in the graduate program in historic preservation at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). He was working with the owner of the Miracle House who was interested in understanding his options for protecting the home, designed by the noted midcentury Chicago architecture firm Belli & Belli. Dan had gotten to know the owner after selecting the home as his subject for his SAIC class on the preparation of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. Dan is not your typical historic preservation student. He is a grandfather, his family ran a demolition company and he grew up in a neighborhood filled with post-war bungalows. However, Dan grew up on the same block as the Miracle House, visited there as a child, and has had a passion for the house all his life. After meeting the home's equally passionate 21-year owner Dr. David Scheiner, it was clear this team was determined to find protection for the Miracle House, equal in importance for its modern architectural design and its historic tie to the community and the parish campus it helped to build. In a 2017 Austin Weekly interview, Dr. Scheiner stated, "I've never been in a house where every single time I walk in I'm excited." After exploring the options, we all agreed Chicago Landmark designation was most appropriate.

It has been a joy working with this impassioned team, visiting the house several times, including a holiday dinner party in 2018 where I was able to hear stories from Jim Belli about the legacy of his father's and uncle's firm. Belli & Belli designed some of the Chicagoland area's most beautiful midcentury-era hospitals, churches and schools, many for the Chicago Archdiocese, which had embraced the Modern aesthetic in the 1950s and in Belli & Belli, had found one of its favorite architecture firms. The forgotten records and oral histories Dan and Dr. Scheiner unearthed tell a wonderful story about the design and construction of this modern home. Still standing proud in its neighborhood as the odd man out, it has stood the test of time in both its design and its appreciation within the community as the Miracle House that helped build a new St. William parish campus, also designed by Belli & Belli.

The Chicago Landmark designation of the Miracle House will provide two firsts – the first and long overdue landmark designation of a Belli & Belli designed building in Chicago and the first landmark designation in the Galewood neighborhood. Many thanks to Dan Lempa and Dr. Scheiner for pursuing this designation, which will now ensure that the Miracle House's status as a neighborhood icon is truly protected. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa DiChiera  
Director of Advocacy

## Support for Landmark Designation of Miracle House

tom drebenstedt <chilstedt@sbcglobal.net>

Wed 12/2/2020 2:50 PM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Good morning,

I fully support the Preliminary Landmark Designation for the Miracle House on Nordica Avenue in Ward 29, item number 2 on the Commission's December agenda.

It is an important example of post war optimism by a Chicago architect, one of his few residences.

I am a twenty year Galewood resident, well versed in architectural history, and a friend of the owner, so I've experienced this extraordinary example of modernism close up.

Thanks for your consideration,

Tom Drebenstedt

Chair, Galewood Economic Development Committee  
35 year Docent, Chicago Architecture Foundation  
Treasurer, Rutherford Sayre Park Advisory Council

## Landmark Designation of the Edo Belli "Miracle House" in Galewood neighborhood

JENNIFER MARLING <jmarling7@comcast.net>

Tue 12/1/2020 5:11 PM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Dear Chairman Leon-

I have been a proud resident of the Galewood neighborhood of Chicago for more than 20 years. I love my storied area that helps critically ill children at Shriner's Hospital and fills the air with tasty smells from the Mars factory right across the tracks. I also love that the development can trace its origins to the farmland owned by the Gale family and continues to be the home to many Chicago first responders. When I moved in to my house in 2000 I loved walking the grid of streets admiring the orderly brick bungalows and Georgian-style homes - not uniform by any stretch of the imagination - with each home striving to be a little unique. While I appreciate the tidy blocks, I was delighted when I came upon the "Miracle House" only a stone's throw away from my address. I remember the first time I saw it- like it was yesterday. The structure looked like a sturdy yet delicate grasshopper that had just touched down and was resting before its next giant leap. The amazing arrangement of glass and metal had such movement. I walked around to the side view and found more fascinating features. Such creativity! I was almost tempted to knock on the front door. As a long-time fan of architecture and one-time docent for the Chicago Architecture Foundation (Now CAC), I had to know the story behind how this magnificent mid-century modern structure landed in my neighborhood. When I did a just little research I was blown away and frankly surprised that more of my friends and neighbors did not know the story of the visionary and risk-taking Edo Belli and his incredibly generous gift to St. William parish. Even more I loved reading about the current resident, Dr. Scheiner and his unstoppable passion for the house. I love how it has remained a steadfast marker on my walks and is remarkable in every season. I am amazed how it continues to be touched by both fame and focus as the neighborhood continues to thrive around it.

I am a very active member of Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple in Oak Park (another visionary risk-taking architect), so I understand the power and responsibility that comes with a landmark designation. I would love to get more involved in supporting and educating my community about the significance of the design and history of this house. Just like the many Wright and E.E. Roberts structures in Oak Park and River Forest that contribute to the character of the area, Edo Belli's gift to Galewood deserves a proper recognition and endorsement. I enthusiastically support the house receiving a landmark designation as a significant structure- both to the history of the Galewood neighborhood and the history of Chicago.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warmest Regards,  
Jennifer Marling

Jennifer Marling  
1905 North New England  
Chicago, IL 60707  
jmarling7@comcast.net  
mobile: 312.543.6109

"An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest." --Benjamin Franklin

## The Miracle House, 2001 North Nordica, Chicago - Preliminary Landmark Designation - Letter of Support

Rachel Leibowitz <leibowitz@esf.edu>

Tue 12/1/2020 6:00 PM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Dear Mayor Lightfoot, Chairman Leon, and Alderman Taliaferro:

I am sending this email to provide a letter of support for the preliminary landmark designation of The Miracle House, designed by the Chicago architect Edo Belli, of the firm of Belli and Belli, and constructed at 2001 North Nordica Avenue, within Ward 29 of the City of Chicago.

As the former deputy state historic preservation officer for the State of Illinois (2013-2018), I am personally familiar with the building, having last visited it at the invitation of the owner during July and August 2019.

The building has a very high level of integrity and is in excellent condition, effectively communicating its significance as a highly unusual work of architecture—both within its local, neighborhood context and within the portfolio of works by Edo Belli of Belli and Belli. This important firm focused primarily on the design of ecclesiastical architecture, which is, in part, how it came to design The Miracle House; these architects also created designs for hospitals and medical facilities, but very few residential buildings—making The Miracle House especially rare. There is no more unique example of the tenets and principles of midcentury modernist residential architecture within this ward than this building at 2001 North Nordica Avenue.

The social history of the building, too, is fascinating and unique in the history of the City of Chicago. Not only is it associated with the growth of the Catholic diocese in Chicago and St. William Parish, specifically, but the building also drew the attention of other cultural luminaries, including Hugh Hefner—who posed with his family in front of the house, seated in a convertible automobile—and the Hollywood actress Kim Novak, who came home to St. William Parish in order to draw the winning raffle ticket that gave away this house.

The owner has lovingly cared for and stewarded this house for decades. Designating The Miracle House as a local landmark is the most important step that can be taken for the continued preservation of this historic building, and the owner should be commended for his care in pursuing this historic designation. Kudos to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks for its consideration of this preliminary landmark designation for The Miracle House by Edo Belli.

With many thanks for your consideration, and all best regards,

**Rachel Leibowitz**, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Co-Director, Center for Cultural Landscape Preservation

**SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry**

Department of Landscape Architecture

1 Forestry Drive

Syracuse, New York 13210

[leibowitz@esf.edu]leibowitz@esf.edu

[www.esf.edu/la](http://www.esf.edu/la)

[www.esf.edu/cc/p](http://www.esf.edu/cc/p)

[www.esf.edu/faculty/leibowitz](http://www.esf.edu/faculty/leibowitz)

## Illinois Historic Group Directory

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**From:** Illinois Historic Group Directory <ihgdir@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 10:25 PM  
**To:** 'Ward02@cityofchicago.org'; 'yourvoice@ward43.org'  
**Cc:** 'wmiller@preservationchicago.org'; Joanne Yasus; 'Lisa DiChiera'; 'Kaitlyn McAvoy'  
**Subject:** COMMENTS ON THE HALSTED AND WILLOW GROUP LANDMARK RECOMMENDATION

I would like to take this chance in advance of the December 3 Commission on Chicago Landmarks (CCL) monthly meeting and recommend your support for approval of the Halsted-Willow Group Landmark Designation recommendation when the question comes before City Council. My remarks to you will also be furnished to them as part of their regular public input process.

Staff at both Landmarks Illinois and Preservation Chicago have invested their time and effort in researching these historic properties, and I will defer to their knowledge about all the specifics as to the reasons these buildings are historic. CCL staff have themselves researched and agreed with the preliminary findings that the buildings are historic. What I am witnessing however, is the continued potential for these properties to be subject to redevelopment potential that may well not be historically sensitive. This would be a tragic and terrible loss for the City and historic preservation if any such proposed redevelopment occurred, as was being openly discussed/considered in 2014. It is only largely due to a technicality that these buildings are not included in the Sheffield National Register Historic District, but they are historic nonetheless. I urge your complete support to protect these structures as the landmark recommendation process begins and advances with the existing city process.

My remarks to you today come in my role as Illinois Directory administrator for historic groups. Depending on if the Landmark Recommendation is ultimately accepted by the CCL, you could well receive additional public input from me later as Northern Illinois Historic League president with full organizational approval for you to recommend future City Landmark protection for the Halsted and Willow Group City Landmark initiative.

Bill Kenney  
Northern Illinois Historic League President  
Illinois Historic Group Directory Administrator





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Richard A. Miller

30 N. Michigan Ave.  
Suite 2020  
Chicago, IL 60602  
[www.Landmarks.org](http://www.Landmarks.org)

November 30, 2020

(SENT VIA EMAIL)

Chairman Rafael Leon  
Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
Attention: Kandalyn Hahn

*RE: Proposed Landmark Designation for the Halsted and Willow Group*

Dear Chairman Leon and Members of the Commission,

Landmarks Illinois is in full support of the proposed Chicago Landmark designation of the Halsted and Willow Group.

In 2013, Landmarks Illinois was first alerted to a development proposal that would have demolished 1800 N. Halsted at the northwest corner of Halsted and Willow. At that point, LI embarked on a collaborative, multi-year advocacy effort with Lincoln Central Association and Ranch Triangle, with the support of Alderwoman Michele Smith, to protect what the local community organizations recognized as a largely intact, late-nineteenth century group of commercial buildings that serve as a visual gateway to the Sheffield neighborhood. As was indicative of the Sheffield neighborhood and many parts of Lincoln Park, large-scale development pressure would continue to threaten this visually cohesive commercial intersection of buildings if not protected. We placed the grouping of buildings on our *Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois* list in 2014.

In 2015, we brought in students from Loyola University's public history program to draft a National Register district nomination and began working with Alderwoman Smith, the local groups and DPD staff planner Matt Crawford on the local landmark process. LI provided grant funds to Lincoln Central in 2018 to match funds from Lincoln Central, Ranch Triangle and the alderwoman's office to hire architectural historian Terry Tatum to research and write a designation report, which finally brings us to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks for consideration. We greatly thank the community groups and Alderwoman Smith for their hard work and perseverance to see this important group of buildings protected and Alderman Hopkins and Historic Preservation Division staff for their support. We hope the Commission will also support the proposed designation.

While 1800 N. Halsted is the best known of the grouping from two long-time businesses located there, the Black Duck restaurant from 2000-2014 and from 1914-1949 Schulien's Tavern (a gathering place for noted Chicagoans and magicians), all of the buildings in the proposed designation have exceptional architectural integrity and craftsmanship that could not be replicated today. We commend Laramar, who later took ownership of 1800 and 1732 N. Halsted, Dan Allen – former owner of Black Duck and now the Willow Room who took special care in renovating his restaurant space – and all the building owners for preserving the integrity of these irreplaceable buildings.

Sincerely,

Lisa DiChiera  
Director of Advocacy

cc: Ald. Michele Smith, 43<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Ald. Brian Hopkins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward  
Kelly Dotson, Lincoln Central Association  
Chuck Griffin, Ranch Triangle Association





55 East Monroe Street  
37th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60603

312 346 7500 main  
312 580 2201 fax  
thompsoncoburn.com

**Bernard I. Citron**  
312 580 2209 direct  
bcitron@thompsoncoburn.com

November 30, 2020

**VIA ELECTRONIC AND  
U.S. FIRST CLASS MAIL**

Maurice Cox  
Commissioner  
Department of Planning and Development  
121 N. LaSalle St.  
10th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Attention: Dijana Cuvalo  
First Deputy Commissioner

Re: Proposed Landmark District  
Halsted-Willow Group  
1727 N. Halsted

Dear Commissioner Cox:

I have been retained by GRL Properties, LLC (the "Owner") of the building at 1727 N. Halsted (the "Property") in regard to the proposed creation of a landmark district that will include the building noted herein. We have read the draft report and discussed the proposal with various members of your staff. Unfortunately, the Owner of the Property is objecting to the inclusion of their building within the proposed Halsted-Willow Historic District.

Some time ago their building underwent a significant renovation during which time many aspects of the exterior of the building were changed. As noted in the draft report, the first floor elevation was significantly revised. The Owner is very concerned that when it will come time to do additional renovation or even replacement, if the District is created, the Owner will have to expend significant funds to restore the first floor elevation to its original configuration. While we do not discount the importance of historical preservation, the additional costs associated with restoration to the building's original condition will add no additional value to the building and will possibly cause issues with the existing tenant or a potential new tenant.

The south elevation, while a secondary elevation, will still be subject to the need for approval by the Department of Planning and Development and the Historic Preservation Commission. The fact that any changes or additions will require specific approval by the Commission only adds a level of complexity to the process that otherwise (if not designation is approved) will not be required.

Finally, we do not understand how four buildings comprise a District. The buildings on the west side of Halsted Street are already protected by virtue of their inclusion within the Planned

November 30, 2020

Page 2

Development; while demolition would otherwise be possible, construction of any new building would require support by the other owners within that Planned Development and approval by the Department of Planning.

In summary, the Owner of the 1727 N. Halsted building is opposed to the inclusion of their building within the Halsted- Willow proposed historical district. We are prepared to present their concerns at the Commission hearing on the preliminary designation.

Very truly yours,

Thompson Coburn LLP

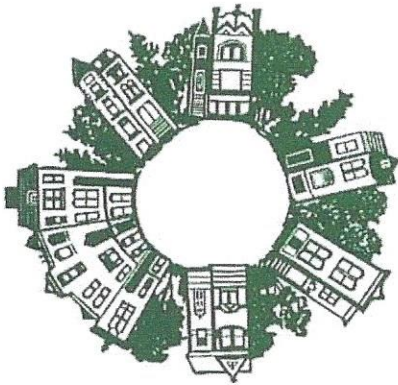


By

Bernard I. Citron  
Partner

BIC/mse

cc: Linda Lang  
Mathew Crawford  
Daniel Klaiber  
Alderman Brian Hopkins



# Sheffield Neighborhood Association

est. 1959

November 30, 2020

Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
121 North La Salle Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Proposed Landmark Designation of the Halsted-Willow Group  
1727-1733 North Halsted, 1730-1732 North Halsted, 800-812 West Willow and 745-813  
West Willow, 1800 North Halsted

Dear Commissioners:

I am Vice-President and Planning Chairman of the Sheffield Neighborhood Association (SNA). On behalf of the SNA I wish to express our great support for the proposed Preliminary Designation of the Halsted-Willow Group as a Chicago Landmark District. Although these buildings are not located within the boundaries of the Sheffield Neighborhood Association which extend from Fullerton on the north to Armitage on the south and from Halsted Street on the east to the Chicago River on the west, they are located only two blocks from southern boundary. The SNA includes four Chicago Landmark Districts, the McCormick Rowhouse District, the Bissell Street District, the Fremont Rowhouse District and most notably here the Armitage-Halsted Landmark District, the first landmark district consisting entirely of commercial buildings. It is also located within the Sheffield National Historic District.

The buildings of the proposed Halsted-Willow district are of similar age and style as are those of the contributing structures in the Armitage-Halsted District. They reflect the same history and architectural character of this area. As described in the Preliminary Summary of Information submitted to the Commission, they emblematic of the development of Chicago neighborhoods in the 1880's and of the strong German influence in that development. The buildings maintain a considerable amount of their original character and integrity as a group. In addition, the building at 1800 North Halsted is of particular historic interest as the location of John Schulien & Sons saloon which was noted for magic acts by Matt Schulien. In Chicago Magic: A History of Stagecraft & Spectacle (The History Press, 2013) author David Witter describes the period of 1890-1930 as America's Golden Age of Magic and states "Schulien's

*Garden District of Chicago*

2233 North Kenmore Avenue • Chicago, Illinois 60614

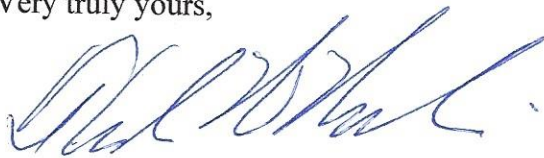
[www.sheffieldneighborhood.org](http://www.sheffieldneighborhood.org)

restaurant on the North Side became an epicenter for magicians and magic fans." Chapter 8 of the book is devoted to Schulein's and describes it as "America's Greatest Magic Restaurant."

The proposed Halsted-Willow district amply qualifies for landmark district under the criteria set forth in the Chicago Municipal Code and will be a great addition to the list of Chicago Landmark Districts and the recognition of the Lincoln Park neighborhood as an area replete with buildings of historic and architectural significance.

We urge the Commission to approve the proposed preliminary designation of the Halsted-Willow District as a Chicago Landmark District.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Theodore W. Wrobleski', with a stylized, cursive script.

Theodore W. Wrobleski  
Sheffield Neighborhood Association

cc: Alderman Michele Smith  
Alderman Brian Hopkins  
Lincoln Central Association  
Ranch Triangle Association

November 29, 2020

Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
121 N. LaSalle Street, Room 1101  
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Halsted-Willow District  
City of Chicago Landmark Designation

To the Commission on Chicago Landmarks:

As a long time Lincoln Park resident I am writing to support the designation of the Halsted-Willow District as a City of Chicago landmark. Recent years have seen significant changes to Halsted Street, the major commercial artery of the western edge of the Lincoln Park neighborhood. Designating the Halsted-Willow District a historic one will allow the neighborhood to maintain the sense and character of Lincoln Park as developed in the late 19th century.

I appreciate your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Alan Cravitz  
2234 N. Burling Street  
Chicago, IL 60614

**Halsted Willow Landmark Commission Testimony**  
**By Allan Mellis**  
**December 3, 2020**

COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS Regular Meeting – Thursday, December 3, 2020 Virtual Meeting  
3. Preliminary Landmark Designation HALSTED-WILLOW GROUP WARDS 2 & 43 1730-1732 North Halsted Street (evens), 1727-1733 North Halsted Street (odds), 800-812 West Willow Street, and 745-813 West Willow Street (odds)

I am Allan Mellis a Lincoln Park community leader for over 45 years and a landmark preservation advocate.

**I am in full support of the proposed Preliminary Landmark Designation of the Halsted-Willow Group.**

Not only have these buildings withstood the test of time; they have withstood Lincoln Park Urban renewal, and a threatened demolition in 2013.

The preliminary Summary of Information submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in 2019 stated:

*“The buildings that comprise the Halsted-Willow District exemplify these historic patterns of neighborhood development. They are located at the intersection of a major arterial street (Halsted) with a smaller-scale street (Willow) that provided vehicular and pedestrian penetration into the residential neighborhoods east and west of Halsted.”*

In 2014 Landmark Illinois listed these buildings on their most endangered list. The following observations were included in that listing:

*“The intersection of Halsted and Willow Streets is home to four Victorian-era buildings on three of the corners, serving as a gateway to the Sheffield neighborhood. These distinctive corner buildings were built during the same period as the architecture seen in the adjacent Sheffield National Register Historic District.”*

*“Remarkably, historic and visually cohesive area has changed little since the first decade of the 20th century, with buildings at the Halsted and Willow Gateway dating back to at least 1889. Of particular note is 1800 N. Halsted, known as the “Black Duck,” which housed Schulien’s Tavern from 1914 until 1949. The tavern, owned and operated by amateur magician and gag artist Matt Schulien, was a gathering place for noted Chicagoans and many magicians, including Harry Blackstone. The Chicago style of magic, which soon spread throughout the world, was born in this building.”*

In closing, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks staff should be commended for recommending the preliminary landmark designation of the beautiful, historic buildings that make up the Halsted – Willow District. This gateway will help remind future generations about the architectural history of our community.



## December 3rd 12:45 p.m. Landmark Commission Meeting

Gabe Fajuri <gabe@potterauctions.com>

Tue 12/1/2020 3:24 PM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

To Whom it May Concern,

I'd like to voice my support for a landmark status, and make Public comment on 1800 N. Halsted - Halsted Willow Group.

The rich history of Chicago's unique style of entertainment and tavern life collided at this north side establishment for decades, creating an unintentional milieu that has yet to be duplicated (though many have tried). Schulien's became an institution - nationally - known for its hospitality, but also for its owner and the atmosphere he created as a close-up magician. Matt Schulien, perhaps unwittingly, created a style of theatrical magic in a completely improbable setting - his family's restaurant - and in the process redefined what it meant to be a magician.

Schulien was, by some estimates, the *very first* close-up magician - a man who performed miracles at your table, under your nose. It was his style of magic, so popular today, that has spawned an entire performance genre.

The legacy created by Schulien and his family has lived on in more ways than one. In point of fact, a lovely book was written about Schulien and his work at 1800 N. Halsted in the late 1960s, and the book itself remains influential in the world of magic.

It seems only fitting that the birthplace of a "Chicago-style" of close-up magic be designated a landmark, as the influence of Schulien remains a strong, vital, living presence in the world of magic even today - as it no doubt will for generations to come.

Best Regards,

Gabe Fajuri

--

Gabe Fajuri  
Potter & Potter Auctions, Inc.

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**Featuring Owen Magic Supreme**  
**December 12, 2020**

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## Commission on Chicago Landmarks - Halsted Willow District

rag <raginsu@gmail.com>

Tue 11/24/2020 6:24 PM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

Cc: Anne Moore <am@annemoore.net>; graz.21stcentury@rcn.com <graz.21stcentury@rcn.com>

[Warning: External email]

12/03/20 Public Meeting – Neighbor Comments

Dear Members,

A resident here on Cleveland near Wisconsin ... raised our family here in same house ... now grandkids play in the same Bauler Pk a few houses down from us, and, a volunteer on our Lincoln Central community development and zoning committee, I voice my support for the Halsted Willow District.

Is it an exemplary corner here in Old Town? Is it an expression of our historic community? I guess it depends on who's looking. If it's us time tested residents, sure we are want to care for what makes us so proud and fortunate to live here. It also seems likely that many of the 200,000 or so annual Steppenwolf theatergoers (in normal times), and many others visiting the neighborhood, from near and far would take in the sense of warmth and charm that these particular buildings bring to the overall experience of just being there.

I trust you will take these thoughts into account in your deliberations. Serious stuff, such impactful decisions with such long term consequences, seemingly made more challenging not knowing what would take their place without the protections you could assist in providing.

Respectfully,

Richard A. Ginsburg  
1836 N. Cleveland  
Chicago, IL 60614

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

**December 3rd 12:45 p.m. Landmark Commission Meeting**

Sean Masterson <sean@mastersonmagic.com>

Mon 11/30/2020 7:20 PM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Public comment on: 1800 N. Halsted - Halsted Willow Group.

I urge the commission to strongly consider approving landmark status to the buildings in question at Halsted and Willow. This group includes 1800 N. Halsted once home to Schuliens a major historic landmark in the history of magic.

The legendary story of Matt Schulien and his magical beginnings at 1800 N. Halsted is known to magicians all over the world. As a professional magician, I'm constantly asked about Schulien's restaurant by Chicagoans who remember their visits to 1800 N. Halsted & 2100 W. Irving Park Rd.

The magic I perform is directly inspired by Matt Schulien and one night at the restaurant his son taught me some inner secrets of card magic.

Chicago style magic is Schuliens. The tricks, the style of presentation has been adopted all over the world without ever losing its link back to Matt Schulien.

Sincerely,

Sean Masterson

773.769.1904

1727-29 N Halsted, 1733 N Halsted, 1730-32 N Halsted, 807 W Willow, 1800 N Halsted

kathleen moore <kcmoore100@hotmail.com>

Sun 11/29/2020 12:08 AM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kathy (and Tom) Moore

residential units from the 1970's. How I wish I could once again see those tumbling-down worker cottages that gave the street unity, community, a sense of the grand ethnic history of our great city. We all thought "urban renewal" was a great idea back in the 70's. Now, thank the heavens, we as a city have a more humble appreciation of our amazing history.

The visionary developers of the late 70's who strove to preserve these few buildings at the intersection of Willow and Dayton, (along with the neighborhood visionaries in my Mid-North neighborhood who got Landmark approval for our whole neighborhood) have given us a great gift. As a 73-year-old, I most fervently hope that that gift will be passed down to my grandchildren, who still study the unique history of Chicago in 3rd grade.

Those buildings are a gift to us and to succeeding generations. The older I get, the more appreciation I have for those who have fought for the restoration and preservation of the Halsted-Willow District. The buildings are priceless treasures, both historically and architecturally.

I trust that the Chicago Commission on Landmarks shares this vision, because, in the end, that is why the Commission exists.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kathy (and Tom) Moore



December 1, 2020

Mr. Rafael Leon, Chair  
Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
Attn: Kandalyn Hahn

(SENT VIA EMAIL)

Re: Proposed Landmark Designation for the Halsted and Willow Group: 1730-1732 N. Halsted (evens); 1727-1733 N. Halsted St (odds); 800-812 W. Willow; 745-813 W. Willow (odds).

Dear Chairman Leon,

I support without qualification the designation of the Halsted and Willow Group as Chicago Landmarks. These are important structures of a very high architectural quality with significant histories situated in a part of Lincoln Park that is fast disappearing. The intersection of North Halsted and West Willow is a gateway to Lincoln Park, both to its commercial district along Halsted and the residential neighborhoods to the east and west along Willow. This gateway must be preserved.

I have lived in the neighborhood for thirty-five years and I have seen the benefits of landmarking firsthand, for both individual buildings and neighborhood districts. With landmark action and the consequent reuse of buildings that it encourages, a solid base is formed for people wanting to live here, entertain here and shop here. Without landmarking in an area of high-pressure development, its character is erased, its history forgotten and vapid buildings erected where once something meaningful stood. It is death by a thousand cuts to the neighborhood. Buildings like this grouping are the anchor points to maintain the look, history and economy so vital to a community.

I urge the Commission to designate the Halsted and Willow group as a Chicago Landmark.

Sincerely,

VINCI | HAMP ARCHITECTS, INC.

A blue ink signature of Philip Hamp, written in a cursive style, is placed over the printed name and title.

Philip Hamp, FAIA, LEED BD+C, NCARB  
President



November 30, 2020

To: The Commission on Chicago Landmarks

**Re: The Halsted Willow Gateway Application at the 12/3/20 Meeting**

I am writing as President of Lincoln Central Association, one of six Lincoln Park neighborhood groups, to advocate for the Halsted Willow Gateway landmark status.

First, a cornerstone of Lincoln Central's founding and ongoing contribution to the community is the preservation of our individual landmark buildings as well as historic districts, particularly the uniquely valuable 19th century buildings in Lincoln Park. The preservation efforts for the buildings in the Halsted Willow Gateway are important to this effort. The application well documents how the Gateway meets landmark considerations such as exemplary architecture and preservation of the city's heritage. Today, I write to share the impact on our community. These buildings are beloved by our residents and visitors for the character they contribute, the history they preserve and the experience they afford today.

The impact of our historic buildings is at its best when there is a critical mass of buildings with distinct visual unity due to the consistent size and scale. This is the case with the Halsted Willow Gateway, and the distinction is further enhanced because of its placement at an intersection. This creates a unique perspective with wide views of the collective buildings. In this context, landmarking goes beyond preserving the history of yesterday, and creates a unique city experience for today.

In the case of the Halsted Willow Gateway, the buildings are loved for their beauty and exquisite architectural detail. But they are also valued for the history they hold, particularly regarding Schulien & Sons Saloon (now The Willow Room) and its place as the origins of close-up magic. Because of this building, history is now woven into the story of our neighborhood to the extent that we have a tradition of including close-up magic in all Lincoln Central events. The most common question as neighbors gather is "where is the magician?" – all born out of the Halsted Willow Gateway.

We ask that you approve the application for landmark status to protect these neighborhood treasures.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kelly Dotson  
President  
Lincoln Central Association

Chicago Commission of Landmarks  
December 3, 2020 meeting  
Regarding the status of 1800 North Halsted

My name is David Parr, an author and professional magician with five decades of experience. I'm writing to you regarding the status of the building at 1800 North Halsted, former location of Schulien's saloon and restaurant. I hope you'll consider the following perspective:

The art of magic has been a part of Chicago from the very beginning. We're told that the first public performance by a professional entertainer in the city was, in fact, a magic show. As the city grew, magic grew with it. Theaters such as the Erlanger, the State-Lake, and the Studebaker were regular stops for the touring illusion shows of Blackstone, Thurston, Dante, and Nicola. Blackstone was a local boy, by the way, and for a time he was the most famous magician in the world. (Among magicians, it's still hotly debated whether he took his stage name from the south-Loop hotel or the brand of cigars, because nerds need something to argue about.) Nightclubs and showrooms — the Empire Room at the Palmer House, for example, and the Boulevard Room at the Hilton — featured solo acts such as Cardini, Russell Swann, and Channing Pollock.

Chicago was home to more magic emporiums and magic manufacturers than any other city on the planet. There was a magic shop on the mezzanine level of the Palmer House hotel, and there was a magic counter in Marshall Field's department



*Schulien's, circa 1946*



store. A building on north Clark Street, one of the lucky structures to survive the Chicago Fire, housed four magic shops at once.

Amid all the hubbub and hocus-pocus, a new style of magic was being pioneered in a local saloon called Schulien's, at 1800 North Halsted (see photo 1). From 1914 to 1949, this was Matt Schulien's home base, known far and wide as a place of wonders. Matt was a mountain of a man with a boisterous sense of humor and an outsized personality to match (see photo 2), but he didn't perform big, elaborate illusions with boxes and assistants. Matt's specialty was what we now know as "close-up magic," miracles performed with everyday objects: cards, coins, pocket knives, napkins, matchbooks, silverware.



*Matt, in a characteristically jovial mood*

The difference between Matt's style and that of other magicians was that there was no dividing line between artist and audience. The performance was not a spectator sport but a shared experience. At Schulien's, magic could happen anywhere — on the bar top, at the tables, and even in your own hands — at any moment, and everyone was part of the show. A crowd would form, with Matt at the center of it, and folks leaned in because they knew something amazing was about to happen. One of Matt's signature mysteries went like this:

A deck of cards was offered to a guest, who selected and signed a card across its face. The card was returned to the deck, and the cards were shuffled. A thumbtack, looking Lilliputian in Matt's enormous hands, was poised on the edge of the deck. Suddenly, Matt turned and hurled the deck at a nearby wall. Playing cards flew everywhere (see photo 3). After they fluttered to the floor, it was seen that one card was now inexplicably thumbtacked to the wall, face outward: the selected card with the guest's name written across the face. This moment of realization was followed by an explosion of laughter and applause.



*A favorite miracle, in progress*

Magicians called this freewheeling, fun, anything-can-happen type of performance the “Chicago style” of magic, and it spread throughout the world. But 1800 Halsted was more than the birthplace of modern close-up magic. It was a social center, a place where blue-collar workers rubbed elbows with local politicians, visiting dignitaries, and magic fans from around the world. Everyone knew Matt. Everyone loved Matt. At Schulien’s, a firefighter just off a long shift might be seated next to the elegantly gowned star of a hit musical. And with Matt as their host, everyone was having a fantastic time.



Blackstone wrote: “Never shall I forget the many happy hours spent in Matt’s place at Halsted...” Over the years, the landscape and the people have changed, but the Chicago magic tradition continues. I’m part of it. And anyone who is a fan of magic is part of it too. For all of us, 1800 Halsted is an important landmark, a place where history is a palpable presence. To stand in that building is to be connected with a line of magicians and an art form that goes back centuries. That deserves to be preserved and protected so Chicago residents and visitors and generations after us can discover it, learn about it, and enjoy it.

David Parr

November 30, 2020

[davidparr.com](http://davidparr.com)

December 3, 2020

Commission on Chicago Landmarks

City of Chicago

Chicago City Hall

121 N. LaSalle Street

Chicago, Illinois 60603

Re: The proposed Preliminary Willow-Halsted Landmark District, Chicago

Dear Mr. Chairman and Member of the Commission,

We at Preservation Chicago, fully support the Chicago Landmark Designation of the Willow-Halsted District of four buildings, located at 1727-1729, 1733, 1730-1732 and 1800 N. Halsted Street, Chicago.

These four structures tell a visual story and history of the development of buildings along the Halsted Street commercial corridor in the Lincoln Park Community. It's also a history relating to the German-American community on Chicago's North Side, and gives some insight into Lincoln Park's history during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Each of the four structures is a finely crafted building, from the Frank Niesen Building, housing "Vinci restaurant" at 1730-1732 N. Halsted, constructed in 1889, to the twin buildings—Zuber Building and Gespitz's Drug Store Building/1727-1729 N. Halsted Building, both circa 1880. Also, Hammerstrom's Hall/Schulien's Building, built as a combination storefront, apartment and social hall, and dating to 1883. These buildings situated at the corner of Willow and Halsted Streets are remarkable in character, define a gateway to the commercial district that lays beyond and the Armitage-Halsted District, also Landmarked to the north.

Urban Renewal efforts of the 1960s and 1970s, left much of the commercial streets to the south of this site—near the Yondorf Hall Building/Sam's Liquors (now a Designated Chicago Landmark) Building, vacant of structures—with huge empty parcels. And it's difficult to believe that not too long ago, this immediate area near North Avenue and Clybourn Avenue was sort of "a tenderloin district," which had suffered from disinvestment and heavy-handed land clearance policies, demolishing vast swaths of historic buildings.

These four buildings also represent a new vision to the greater Lincoln Park Community, where commercial buildings and the community experienced/underwent a renaissance. When this was occurring, it was one of the few bright sparks at the time—encouraging a reuse of historic commercial

buildings, versus demolition. While that may have been underway in the Old town Triangle District, it was a fairly new idea for commercial structures in this vicinity at the time.

It is also said that John Baird, of the Baird & Warner family and real estate firm, also a long serving member of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, personally saw something special in these defining masonry corner anchor buildings. Noting that interest, these structures were integrated into a larger plan, which included new construction as well. However, John Baird's reuse ideas were visionary for the time and contributed greatly to the reestablishment of the immediate commercial area as a destination for restaurants, theaters—both the Steppenwolf and Royal George Theatres, as well as a place for the community and neighbors to gather.

On a personal note, my very own paternal great-grandparents and grandmother lived and grew-up in this area, owned a business at 907 W. Armitage in what is now the Armitage-Halsted Landmark District. They worshiped nearby at St. Michael's Church in Old Town, while my own children, now adults, once attended the nearby Newberry Math & Science Academy/elementary school, a short block to the east of this intersection. So, on so many various levels I've personally observed this community over the decades, watched it change ethnically over time from German-American to Latinx, and then transform to a very diverse community of great investment and change.

These four structures are fine quality buildings and will be a fine addition to our Chicago neighborhood Landmarks across Chicago and we are proud to have worked with community members, and our preservation partners, including Landmarks Illinois for more than five years towards this goal and outcome.

Special thanks are in order to Deidre Graziano, Diane Levin, Diane Gonzalez, Allan Mellis, nearby community organizations, Alderwoman Michelle Smith, 43<sup>rd</sup> Ward, Alderman Brian Hopkins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, along with their Staff, and R. Terry Tatum, who worked with so many community members over time and prepared this Preliminary Landmarks Report.

We at Preservation Chicago fully support the designation of these buildings, located at the corner of Willow and Halsted Streets, as a Designated Chicago Landmark District.

Sincerely,

*Ward Miller*

Ward Miller, Executive Director

Preservation Chicago

cc: [CCL@CityofChicago.org](mailto:CCL@CityofChicago.org), Dijana Cuvalo, DPD, Historic Preservation Division; Alderman Michelle Smith, Alderman of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Ward; Alderman Brian Hopkins, Alderman of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward; Deirdre Graziano, Lincoln Central Association; Diane Levin, Ranch Triangle Association, Diane Gonzalez, Old Town Historical District Committee; Lisa DiChiera, Landmarks Illinois; Bonnie McDonald, Landmarks Illinois; Ted Wroblewski, Sheffield Neighbors; Allan Mellis, Lincoln Park Community Leader, Joana Zaidan, 43<sup>rd</sup> Ward, John Geahan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, Kandelyn Hahn, DPD, Historic Preservation Division.

25 November 2020

Mr. Rafael M. Leon, Chair  
Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
Cook County Building  
121 N LaSalle St #1101  
Chicago, IL 60602  
[ccl@cityofchicago.org](mailto:ccl@cityofchicago.org)

Re: Support for the Designation of the Halsted-Willow District, 1727-1729 North Halsted, 1733 North Halsted, 1730-1732 North Halsted / 807 West Willow, and 1800 North Halsted, Chicago, IL, as a Chicago Landmark District

Dear Mr. Leon:

As an Architect, Lincoln Park community member, and member of the Coalition for Affordability in Lincoln Park I strongly support the proposed listing of the Halsted-Willow District located at the intersection of Halsted and Willow in Chicago, as a Chicago Landmark District.

The Lincoln Park community is a mostly small scale area of mixed use and residential buildings primarily built up in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It certainly has had its own history of change and redevelopment but recently that change has resulted the removal of many of the beautiful and iconic buildings in the neighborhood. Halsted Street, between North Avenue and Armitage Avenue has been a vital and beautiful street now with fewer and fewer historic buildings that tell us the story of the various ethnic histories and personal commitment of the many people who have lived in the area.

Urban change and waves of development and redevelopment on Halsted Street has left us with fewer and fewer buildings, and particularly intersections or groupings of buildings that are original and intact. The Halsted Willow District is one such area. The four buildings noted in this request make up small but important grouping that must be preserved. Just a few years ago there was a proposal to demolish the building at 1800 North Halsted in order to replace it with a larger and certainly less significant building. As an architect I certainly do believe in progress and modernism, but I also believe in character and history. The straightforward design, brick and stone work, sheet metal detailing and classic storefronts are wonderful and should be kept for everyone to see and experience, not just the current Lincoln Parkers.

I and my many neighbors and colleagues encourage you and your commission to list the Halsted-Willow District as a Chicago Landmark. It is important that we recognize the physical histories of the many named and unnamed members of Lincoln Park and other similar working class communities.

Sincerely;



Peter Landon FAIA  
President Landon Bone Baker Architects

Date: November 24, 2020

To: Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
121 N. LaSalle, Suite 1101  
Chicago, IL 60602

From: Craig Saenger  
506 West Armitage, Unit 4  
Chicago, IL 60614

Re: Halsted-Willow District  
1727-1729 N Halsted, 1733 N. Halsted, 1730-1732 N Halsted / 807 W. Willow and 1800 N. Halsted

I am writing to express my support for the creation of the Halsted-Willow Landmark District for the four buildings located at the intersection of Halsted and Willow. My family and I have been residents of this neighborhood for the past 16 years and I am a licensed architect. These mixed use buildings located at this intersection help to create a sense of place specific to this location within the neighborhood. My family regularly walks this way down Willow Street past this intersection in order to access the area east near Sheffield and Clybourn. Willow is one of the few streets that continues east along this stretch of Halsted. These buildings are good examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century historical buildings that are found throughout the neighborhood. The presence of these historical buildings at this intersection create a gateway into the residential neighborhoods east and west of Halsted.

Sincerely,

Craig Saenger