

October 7, 2021

Commission on Chicago Landmarks

c/o Chairman Ernest Wong

City of Chicago

Chicago City Hall

121 N. LaSalle Street

Chicago, Illinois 60603

Re: Preliminary Landmark Recommendation for the Seth Warner House, 631 N. Central Chicago

Dear Chairman Wong and Members of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks,

We at Preservation Chicago, fully support the “Preliminary Landmark Recommendation” and Chicago Landmark Designation of the Seth Warner House, located at 631 N. Central Avenue, Chicago.

For so many reasons, this building is a remarkable structure—almost embodying the early city, with its history relating to Chicago’s West Side and Austin Community, to the involvement of its builder, Seth Warner, in helping to establish the community of Austin and Central Avenue, as a prominent West Side Street. And to Warner’s residency in the City of Chicago, as one of its earliest settlers at the incorporation of our city in 1837. And continuing to Warner’s strong stance on abolition, which was reflected in his many hosted events at Warner’s Hall, constructed by Mr. Warner which once stood near the southeast corner of Randolph and Clark Streets. Programs at Warner Hall included a visit by Frederick Douglass in 1853. This corner of the Daley Center itself should be designated as an important Landmark site.

Clearly, these histories associated with Seth Warner, linked together with an early building—perhaps the oldest building in the Austin Community, dating to 1869, and noted as red-rated in the CHRS-Chicago Historic Resources Survey, should be designated a Chicago Landmark, as most red-rated structures are already Landmarks, noting their significance. We at Preservation Chicago are grateful to both offer and support this Chicago Landmark Designation and honored to have worked with the current long-time owner, Mr. James Bowers for several years towards this day.

We also want to note that on the eve of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chicago Fire, this designation also recognizes and celebrates Chicago’s amazing history, its rebirth, following a terrible-terrible disaster. Yet from that disaster and those ashes came a great amount of energy and commitment, along with new ingenuity and vigor to reconfigure and reinvest in post-fire Chicago. Seth Warner and the Seth Warner

House embodies many of the forward principals of the city and the beginnings of the built environment that we all admire and celebrate today.

I vividly remember the fear of an uncertain future of the Old Chicago Water Tower, which for years had been threatened with demolition for a widening of North Michigan Avenue, before being Landmarked by this Commission, exactly 50 years ago—on October 6, 1971, just two days from the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chicago Fire. There was a great sigh of relief, with that designation, that honored one of Chicago's most treasured buildings, as recognized by the general public—as well as being a first-class building that survived the Great Chicago Fire, almost unscathed.

Realizing that 150 years have brought us many changes and have propelled us into one of the world's great architectural centers, we at Preservation Chicago would like to propose a year of great challenges and a commitment towards preserving the best of Chicago. Working towards that idea and concept, let's consider something very bold and propose 150 Designated Chicago Landmarks.

These proposed Landmarks could extend from the designation of important sites from the Thompson Center and the Century and Consumers Buildings in Downtown Chicago to the Phyllis Wheatley House and Washington Park National Bank in Washington Park and West Woodlawn. And from the Central Park Theatre and Hotel Guyon on the West Side, to our many religious buildings, like St. Adalbert and St. Anthony's Church—in Pilsen and Bridgeport, all threatened with an uncertain future.

Perhaps our Lakefront Parks could also be designated and protected, from South Chicago to Promontory Point in Hyde Park and from Grant Park and extending up to Hollywood Avenue in Lincoln Park. Perhaps these sites may also be considered as a National Park, which would bring millions of additional tourists to Chicago, while also providing much needed funds to repair and maintain our Lakefront Parks, with the National Park Service as our partner.

On the eve of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chicago Fire—and the year ahead, let's plan on bold ideas that capture the spirit and imagination of Chicago, and honor these landmarks and untold stories across Chicago, like no other place in the nation. We're here as your partner at Preservation Chicago and glad to assist towards such a vision.

Sincerely,

*Ward Miller*

Ward Miller, Executive Director

Preservation Chicago

James J. McKay  
Representing Field's Fans Chicago  
3748 N. Plainfield Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60634-1919  
jjmckay@me.com  
(312) 927-4424 (voice & text)

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
c/o Ernest C. Wong, Chair  
City of Chicago  
121 N. LaSalle St.  
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Commission on Chicago Landmarks, Regular Meeting, October 7, 2021  
Agenda Item 4: Class L Property Tax Incentive — Final Certification  
Marshall Field and Company Building, 111 N. State St, Ward 42

I am writing to represent the grassroots citizens group known as Field's Fans Chicago. We support and advocate for the legacy of Marshall Field and Company. Let it be noted that we collectively and wholeheartedly support final certification of the Class L Property Tax Incentive.

For this project, we applaud and express appreciation for the efforts of Macy's and BSREP, along with the contractors, architects, contractors, and all those involved, including the Commission on Chicago Landmarks. The collective preservation and restoration of the building's masonry, windows, flagpoles, State/Randolph Burnham Atrium, and other details is a job well-done which would make Mr. Marshall Field proud. This work will help to ensure that this world-renowned building remains a proud part of Chicago for generations to come.

At the February 2019 CCL meeting it was mentioned that additional masonry work was not able to be included in this project at this time. It is hoped that the success of this project inspires Macy's, BSREP, and all involved to pursue future restoration and preservation of this building.

Again, much thanks and appreciation for the collective efforts on this successful project.

Sincerely,

*James J. McKay*

James J. McKay  
Co-organizer, Field's Fans Chicago

October 6, 2021

Chairman Ernest Wong  
Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
Department of Planning & Development  
121 N. LaSalle Street  
Chicago, IL 60601

RE: Chicago National Register Nominations  
Altgeld Gardens- Phillip Murray Homes Historic District  
The Honorable Elijah Muhammad House  
Ramova Theater

Dear Chairman Wong and Commissioners:

Preservation Chicago enthusiastically supports the three sites being considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. At a time when developers find it too easy to erase and replace Chicago's historic built environment and landscapes, we have an opportunity here to elevate these spaces with a designation that will enable access to redevelopment resources and honor the history that makes Chicago so diverse and dynamic.

Altgeld Gardens-Phillip Murray Homes Historic District. The CHA-funded National Register nomination for Altgeld Gardens-Phillip Murray Homes is a welcome blessing to honor and share the story of this strong development that has endured its share of disinvestment and crime, but also has been home to a large community of extraordinary people. Hazel Johnson fought her entire time at Altgeld for the resources and support the community deserved. She was a trailblazing environmental activist in the 1970s, calling out the city, county, state, and federal policies that allowed big polluters to locate around places like Altgeld Gardens. We look forward to continuing our work with the community to ensure a healthy, sustainable place going forward.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad House. Wendy Muhammad is a great steward of the Elijah Muhammad House, and we applaud her pursuit of a National Register designation to honor and support her ongoing restoration work. This remarkable home has hosted visitors from Muhammad Ali, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and many world leaders and influencers. It is being poised as a house museum to share the story of the Nation of Islam movement, its followers, and its original leader. That history is uniquely Chicago, and it needs to be highlighted.

Ramova Theater. This 1929 Bridgeport theater is being renovated and revived by a community-centric developer. It was originally designed by Mayer O. Nathan. Activating these vacant spaces is vital to the community's economic growth, and investment of resources particularly on South and West Side theaters is encouraging. This space will be able to thrive and grow in the neighborhood, and it is wonderful to be able to recognize that successful collaboration of community and developer with a well-restored historic and genuine space.

Thank you for your commitment to protecting Chicago's history and culture. We look forward to working with the Commission and the City Council going forward to ensure we all have the tools to make our work more productive and effective. Tools that will slow demolition, move the burden of proof onto developers to remove a place, and incentives to encourage reuse instead of development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Lu Seidel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Lu Seidel  
Director of Community Engagement