

Statement of Support for Landmark Designation: 9401 S. Ewing Ave.
June 2, 2020

Submitted by Eric Rogers

██████████ ██████████ ██████████
Chicago, IL 60649

██████████@gmail.com

I am submitting this as a statement to support the designation of 9401 S. Ewing Ave. as a Chicago Landmark. I am not a professional architect, preservationist or historian, but an interested member of the community. I've been fascinated by this building since the first time I passed it, fourteen years ago. A blog post I wrote in 2017 (<http://chicagopatterns.com/the-bamboo-lounge/>) helped attract significant public attention to the threat the building faced when the Bamboo Lounge, the last business to operate in it, closed.

9401 S. Ewing has improbably survived over a hundred years of radical change – in society, in the economy, in the neighborhood surrounding it. It stands out now as a beacon on a fairly forlorn stretch of road, a place many pass but few have reason to stop. The elegant façade and terra cotta globe tell many stories: about beer, taverns, and a time when businesses invested in architecture and beauty, even for a lowly corner bar and rooming-house. About Chicago's sooty industrial past, its end, and the economic vacuum that has taken its place across so much of the southeast side. About immigrants, their food and music and culture. About ethnic change, neighborhood decline, and police.

This building has a past that is rich and complex. It is so fortunate that it is largely intact. It deserves the protection of Chicago Landmark designation so that it can endure and continue to serve as a lens through which we more clearly see how we arrived at the present moment.

And with protection and support, this building has a bright and meaningful future. If it can be restored to serve drinks and food, it will become a cultural asset and economic engine for the area. It can be more than a stop for people on the road; it has the potential to be a destination. Mike Medina, the building's owner, has the sensitivity and know-how to preserve the physical legacy of the building, and the cultural and historical context to bring its past into meaningful engagement with the present.

With a little luck, in a few years, there will be ice-cold beer, hot food, and live music again at 9401 S. Ewing. It will join Calumet Fisheries and Skyway Dog as a unique draw, offering an authentic and enjoyable experience that can be had nowhere else in Chicago. Then, it will be a living landmark, the best kind.

9401 South Ewing-Letter of Support for Landmarking

Elizabeth Blasius <[REDACTED]>

Tue 6/2/2020 10:07 PM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

Dear Commission on Chicago Landmarks,

While I am writing in support of the preliminary landmark recommendation of the former Schlitz Tied House at 9401 South Ewing Avenue, it is my responsibility as a preservationist and an activist to acknowledge the cultural environment in which I am voicing my support.

Historic preservation is not exempt from its responsibility for dismantling the structural racism that permeates our built environment in Chicago and I implore both landmarks staff and the landmarks commission to view their work through an equity lens—not for optics or allyship—but because it is the right thing to do.

9401 South Ewing Avenue is an excellent surviving example of a neighborhood Tied House with a high level of architectural integrity. As an addition to the other Tied Houses that are locally landmarked, it bears witness to how Chicago's working class lived and socialized. It is my hope that the landmarking of 9401 South Ewing Avenue will encourage other stewards of significant neighborhood buildings to pursue landmark status.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth A. Blasius
Architectural Historian
Blaservations, Inc.

[REDACTED]
Chicago, Illinois 60647

(773) [REDACTED]

blaservations.com
@blaservations

"Focused. I'm a hustler, and my hustle is trying to figure out the best ways to do what I like to do without having to do much else."

-Yasiin Bey (Mos Def)

Comment on 9401 South Ewing Avenue

James A. Pierce <[REDACTED]>

Wed 6/3/2020 4:36 PM

To: ccl <ccl@cityofchicago.org>

IN RE: Preliminary Landmark Recommendation

(FORMER) SCHLITZ BREWERY-TIED HOUSE WARD 10
9401 South Ewing Avenue

Dear Commissioners and Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to share a brief comment on this designation. I suggested it to the commission because of its significance, the quality of its construction, and the rarity of designated landmarks on the Far Southeast Side. And, I would appreciate being included in updates on its progress.

My wife and I own and live in a historic Chicago bungalow nearby in Hegewisch. Our immediate area has no designated landmarks. We have empty lots and closed historic buildings to share on our tours for friends and curious visitors. To say the 10th Ward has been neglected in designation, preservation and retail storefront economic development is an understatement that merits future goals and focus.

This designation and the incentives it will provide is a good first step in helping to energize this important lakefront, steelbelt icon. It will highlight the tremendously important ethnic history of immigration and labor here. It's good of you to recognize these attributes and to ensure it will become a Chicago Landmark.

It's probably no secret that I am one of those students of local history and proponents of historic preservation who thinks he knows most of the important points about our significant neighborhood buildings. I was blown away to learn about the history of this place and its significance to Serbian immigrants and tamburiza music. When you add to that the brewing history, the steel mill history and more, you find that this "small hidden gem" is actually on par with the importance of our landmark Green Mill in Uptown, the unforgivably lost Palm Tavern in Bronzeville and the still not yet protected Berghoff Restaurant downtown. It's an important building that we miraculously have a chance to preserve because a goodhearted Southside resident has chosen to take it on and to not let it fall to ruin or to be sold off for parts.

Thank you for recognizing its importance and working to take the first step toward providing the protection and incentives for it to be restored, reused and showcased. I join you in the desire to see it be a bright light in an area of tremendous potential again soon.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. PIERCE "Andy"

[REDACTED]
Chicago, IL 60633
[REDACTED]

Please forgive any errors. I am working from a mobile device while traveling.

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