

## Pui Tak Center

2216 S. Wentworth Ave., Armour Square  
Adopt-a-Landmark Grant

The On Leong Merchants Association building, designed by architects Michaelson and Rognstad and constructed in 1926, is often described as the “City Hall” of Chinatown. Built as an independent mutual aid center for newly arriving immigrants, it is considered the oldest and most prominent physical symbol of Chicago’s Chinese heritage. At a time when area buildings reflected more familiar designs, the Chinese Revival-style structure’s colorful terra cotta elements and pagoda-inspired roof towers were a novelty.

Today home to the Pui Tak Center, the building serves thousands of people annually through educational and community service programming. In Cantonese, Pui Tak means to build character or cultivate virtue. The building was designated a Chicago landmark in 1993.

In 2019, architecture and engineering firm Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates completed a building assessment that produced two primary exterior improvements. First, multiple terra cotta units were either replaced, reset, patched or repaired on three facades. Second, the building’s cast iron canopy over the Wentworth entrance was completely restored and rebuilt.

The City provided \$250,000 in Adopt-a-Landmark funds for the \$950,000 project, which also included a State of Illinois grant. The general contractor was Bulley & Andrews Masonry Restoration, LLC.





# St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral

835 N. Oakley Blvd., West Town  
Adopt-A-Landmark

St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, designed by Worthmann and Steinbach and opened in 1915, is a blend of Romanesque, Byzantine, and vernacular Ukrainian styles of religious architecture. The cathedral follows traditional basilica proportions, with a central nave, side aisles and a semi-circular apse. The building's high-quality materials and craftsmanship is reflected in ornamental brick, stone, copper, mosaic and stained glass. It's most prominent features are multiple rooftop onion domes that serve as visual landmarks within the Ukrainian Village neighborhood. The cathedral is a contributing building within the Ukrainian Village District's Second Extension, which was designated a Chicago landmark in 2007.

In 2023, the congregation worked with JLK Architects to restore the 18-foot diameter rose window on the building's south elevation — a project that carefully removed 1,500 individual stained-glass sections for cleaning, repairing and reattachment within a newly fabricated steel frame. Other work included new copper cladding, protective laminated glass, masonry repairs and minor interior plaster work.

The City provided a \$250,000 Adopt-A-Landmark for the church's \$6 million capital improvement project, which included additional maintenance work beyond the window restoration.

The general contractor was Berglund Construction.







# Gunnison Lofts

1215 W. Gunnison St., Uptown

Adopt-A-Landmark



The development of Uptown Square during the first two decades of the 20th century transformed the intersection of Lawrence and Broadway from a rural crossroads to one of the region's most vibrant entertainment, business and shopping districts. Rivalled only by the downtown theater district, Uptown Square's retail and entertainment center was referred to as the Loop's "Little Brother." The 1215 W. Gunnison Building was constructed in approximately 1926 as a warehouse for the Spiegel Furniture Co., which was founded in Chicago in 1865 and became a trusted name for mail-order furniture and clothing. Today filled with 33 condominium units and ground-floor commercial uses, the former warehouse is a contributing building within the Uptown Square District, which was designated a Chicago landmark in 2016.

In 2019, following the significant failure of some exterior terra cotta units, the building's condominium association worked with Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates and restoration architects at Klein & Hoffman to rebuild the parapet walls on the east and north facades and remove, store and reinstall salvaged and newly fabricated terra cotta units. Boston Valley Terra Cotta created more than 550 new terra cotta pieces using molds of approximately 175 historic pieces from the building. Additional work included removal and replacement of the roof membrane and wood decking on the north elevation balconies.

The City provided a \$250,000 Adopt-A-Landmark grant for the \$1.8 million project.

The general contractor was Bral Construction of Hoffman Estates.





## 2037 W. Haddon Ave.

### West Town

This 1899 worker's cottage in the center of the Ukrainian Village District was significantly altered prior to its 2021 acquisition by its current owners. The street-facing elevation's ornate brickwork was covered with an applied Permastone facade, and original wood windows and decorative trim were replaced with plain vinyl windows.

While planning the building's restoration, owners Katherine Mackenzie and Murah Ahmed determined the property was one of a series of identical cottages characteristic of the neighborhood and built by notable developer William D. Kerfoot. Removal of the 1960s Permastone facade revealed brick detailing and other decorative features commonly seen on Kerfoot cottages. Unfortunately, the process also revealed severe damage to the underlying masonry.

The owners replaced the entirety of the historic brick with new masonry matching the historic design as closely as possible and worked with project architects to reproduce or reveal original ornamental detailing, including original trimwork underneath metal window edges, as well as new, clad-wood windows and surrounds.

Additional work included installation of an historically appropriate wood porch and a new chimney.







# Eljah Muhammad House

4847 S. Woodlawn Ave., Kenwood

This 1902 property in the Kenwood Landmark District was once home to the Georgia-born religious minister Elijah Muhammad, best known as the leader of the Nation of Islam in the United States between 1930 and 1975. Under his leadership, the Nation of Islam's financial enterprises focused on economic improvements for the African American community, especially in Chicago.

In 2019, Wendy Muhammad purchased the home with the intent to restore and reuse it as a cultural center for the neighborhood. She appreciated the building's important legacy as host to many historic African American figures including Thurgood Marshall, Adam Clayton Powell, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, Stokely Carmichael, Ralph Abernathy, Sam Cooke and others.

Extensive masonry repairs were conducted on the brick facades, including the replacement of non-historic mortar and damaged bricks to match original designs. The roof, which had been replaced with non-historic asphalt shingles, was restored to its historic appearance using composite slate tiles, new copper gutters and downspouts. The interior was painstakingly restored to its 1950s and 1960s appearance, with 120-year-old antique mantels and mirrors repurposed and natural wood elements restored.

Additional work included access improvements, new wood windows, infrastructure modernization and restoration of elements of the historic carriage house.







# CircEsteem

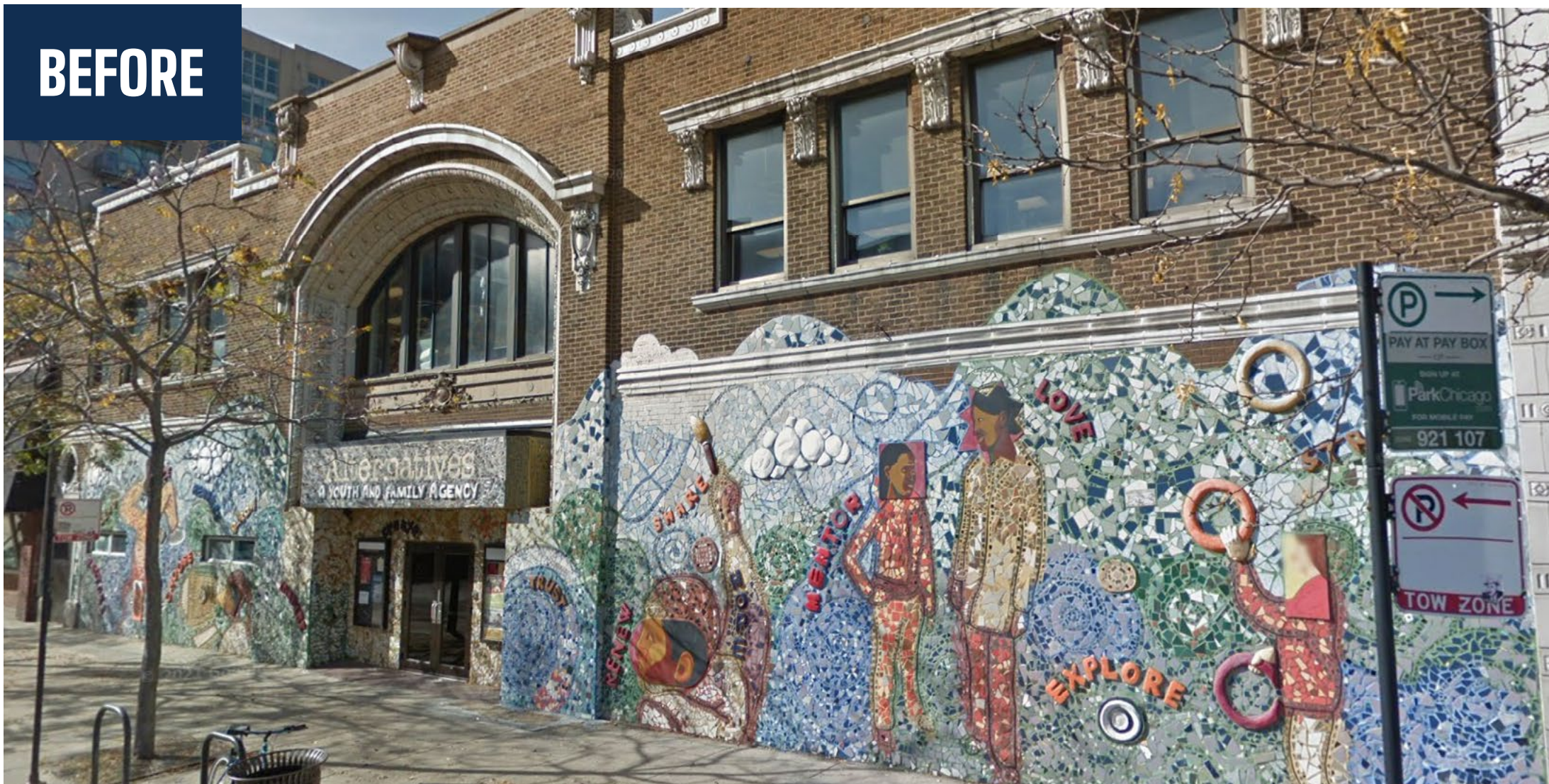
4730 N. Sheridan Road, Uptown

This two-story performing arts center opened in 1915 as the 1,000-seat Lakeside Theater, Uptown's first movie house. After the theater closed in 1966, the building served as a dance center for Columbia College before becoming home to the nonprofit CircEsteem, which purchased the building for its youth circus arts programming needs.

In restoring the building's storefront facade, CircEsteem replaced a mosaic mural installed in 2006 with clear window glazing to enable passersby to directly observe the organization's reactivation of the space. Sections of the mural were offered to the community and unclaimed pieces were salvaged and reinstalled within the facility.

The new storefront closely matches the proportions and rhythm of the original facade. Masonry repairs replicate compromised terra cotta units with matching glass fiber-reinforced concrete. A new marquee was installed as a nod to the building's movie house roots and to promote the organization, bringing a welcome sense of vitality to the block.

The \$6.25 million project included a \$3.7 million Community Development Grant from the City of Chicago.







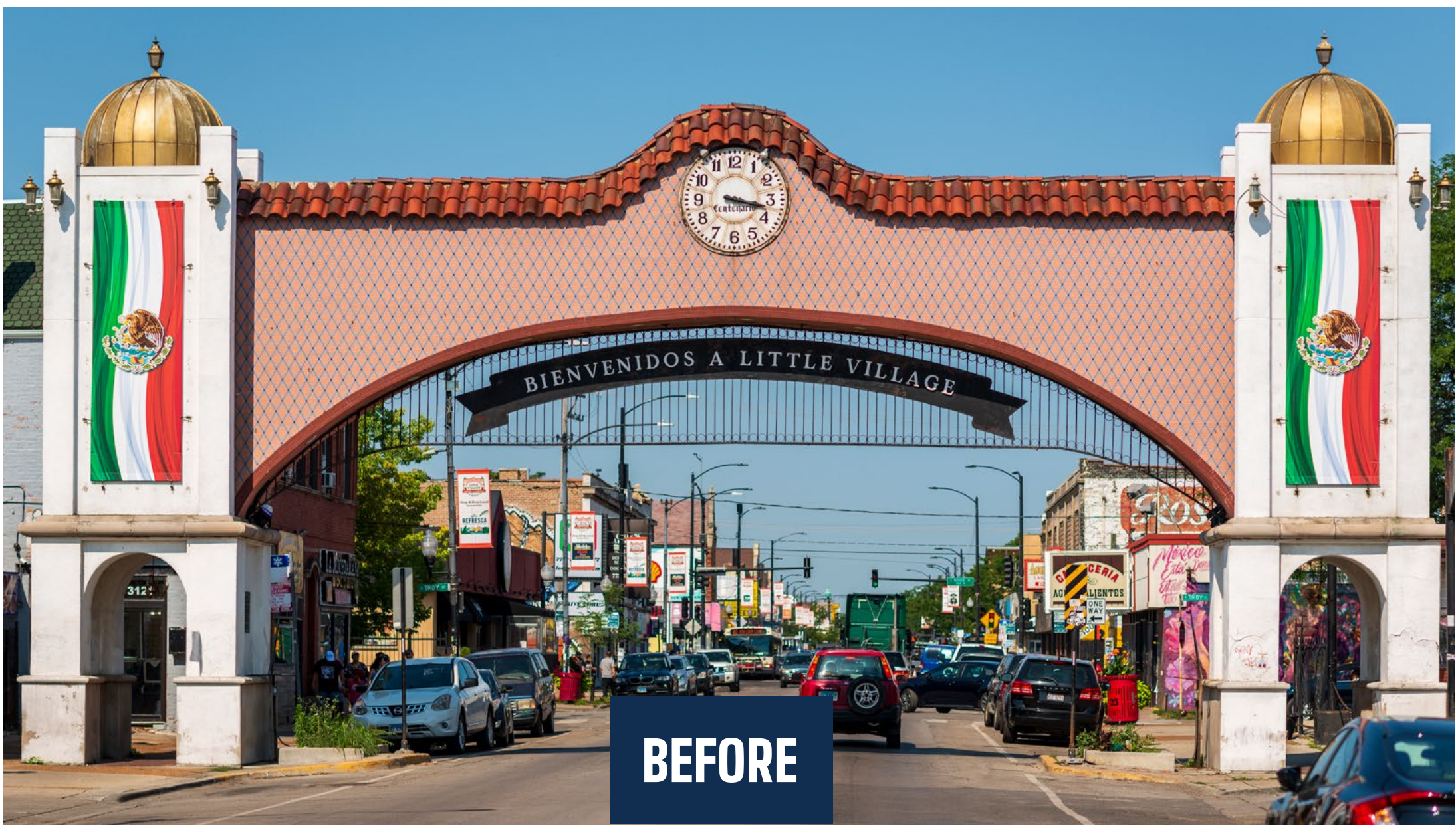
# Little Village Arch

## 3100 W. 26th St., South Lawndale

The stucco and clay tile arch over the 26th Street commercial corridor is a distinct visual landmark and a beloved part of the Little Village neighborhood. Designed as a gateway that celebrates the area's Mexican American heritage, the arch was completed in 1990 according to an Adrian Lozano design. Its signature clock was donated to the community by Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari in 1991 and it was designated as a Chicago landmark in 2022.

A comprehensive Chicago Department of Transportation restoration project subsequently commenced to address a variety of deterioration and maintenance issues. The project team replaced stone panels at the base of the arch, repaired back-up masonry, and applied a new stucco finish to most exterior surfaces. The ceramic clay tile around the crown of the arch was cleaned and spot-replaced, and the metalwork on the "Bienvenidos a Little Village" sign was replaced with a custom-made grill that allows for greater clearance heights below the archway.

Lighting fixtures were replaced, and the clock was repaired through a collaboration with its Mexican manufacturer and reinstalled.







# Fine Arts Building

## 410 S. Michigan Ave., Loop

Originally constructed in 1885 as a Studebaker showroom and warehouse, the Fine Arts Building was adapted in 1897 to serve as office and studio space for artists, musicians and cultural organizations. By 1913, the storefront was modified with new transom windows and freestanding, polished granite columns were integrated into the facade. The changes remained in place until the current owner, Berger Realty, recently restored the original 1897 design while meeting contemporary code and accessibility requirements.

The project included the reproduction of decorative mullions that mimic twisted rope, installation of recessed, accessible doorways at the south and north entrances, and the replacement of structurally vulnerable windows with two panes of glass that appear to have a seamless finish due to butt-glazed joints.

The facade restoration is part of a larger revitalization project that includes the Studebaker Theater's Andrew Rebori-designed interior.







# 6901 Oglesby Cooperative Apartment Building

6901 S. Oglesby Ave., South Shore

Completed in 1929 along the south Lakefront, this 11-story residential building capitalized on increased height allowances approved in the Chicago Zoning Ordinance of 1923. The English Gothic Revival-style building was an early Chicago example of cooperative land ownership. By the 1970s, as the South Shore neighborhood underwent a significant demographic shift, the building became home to some of the city's leading African American residents, including Vernon Jarrett, Charles Coles and Robert and Shirley Tucker. The property was designated a Chicago landmark in 2008.

In 2020, following the building's conversion to condominiums, its 40 unit owners engaged Architectural Consulting Group to perform a critical assessment of the building exterior. The process identified several concerns, including a parapet that needed to be rebuilt and masonry that required repairs. Both improvements were completed in 2024.

The City provided a \$249,999 Adopt-A-Landmark grant for the project, which represents a small portion of the unit owners' capital investment in the structure.







## 2139 N. Cleveland Ave. Lincoln Park

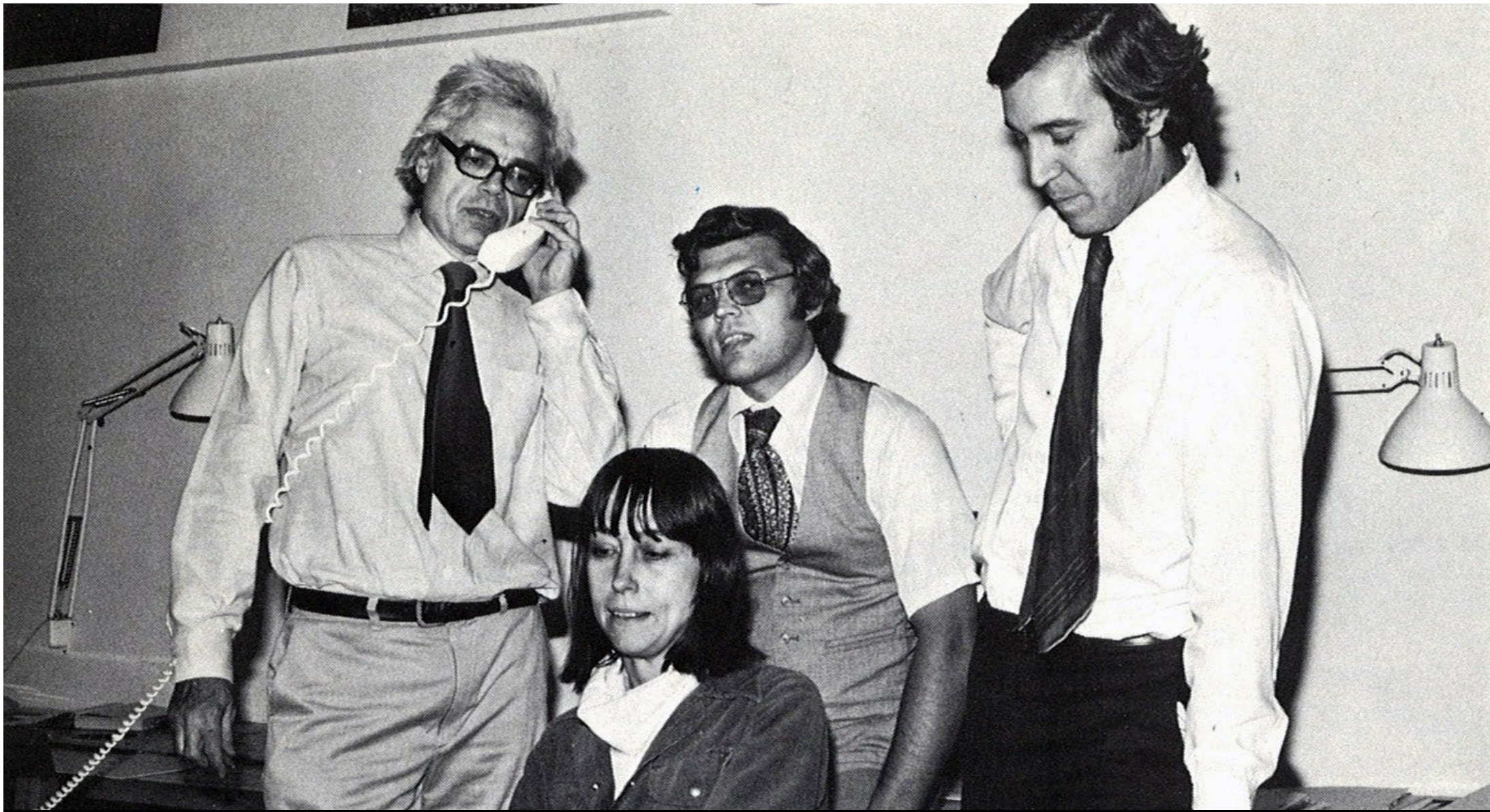
This 1880s rowhouse in the Mid North Landmark District exhibits many details typical of its time, including an asymmetric facade that has a rounded window bay on the right and a flat plane on the left. The windows are increasingly ornate from the basement up to the third floor, as reflected in the carved upper lintels and curved top sashes. Its large roofline cornice with repeating vertical brackets is a signature element of Italianate architecture.

Following a series of exterior alterations, remodeling efforts and environmental wear, the building's recent restoration repaired its finely carved Joliet limestone where possible. Highly damaged Indiana limestone was removed and replaced in-kind, including hand-carved detailing to match the preserved pieces. The original second-floor raised entrance doors were repaired and refinished, while the ground floor doors were replaced in a much simpler design befitting an historic service entrance. Other work included cornice repairs, installation of new wood windows and removal of third-floor plywood to restore underlying historic details.

The owners also expanded the living space with a rear addition, and a coach house was fully renovated using an historically appropriate design and materials.







In 1977 Ben Weese left HWA to establish Weese Seegers Hickey Weese. Left to right: Ben Weese, Cynthia Weese, Thomas Hickey and A. William Seegers. Source: "From the Boards of Weese Seegers Hickey Weese." Inland Architect, December 1977.



## Benjamin H. Weese, FAIA (1929–2024)

### John Baird Award for Stewardship in Historic Preservation

Evanston-born Ben Weese was a significant Chicago architect whose designs focused on social responsibility and the human experience of architecture. Throughout his career, Weese was a pillar of the historic preservation movement in Chicago. From 1998 to 2011, Ben served on the Commission on Chicago Landmarks.

Ben received his Masters in Architecture from Harvard in 1957 after serving as a conscientious objector due to his religious beliefs during the Korean War. He returned to Chicago to work at Harry Weese and Associates (HWA), his brother's fast-growing architectural firm. At the same time, he joined Leon Despres, John Vinci, Will Hasbrouck, and Richard Nickel to form the Chicago Heritage Committee to try to stop the loss of significant late nineteenth-century architecture such as Adler and Sullivan's Garrick Theater.

Ben became a persuasive spokesman for historic preservation as he raised funds to prevent demolition of H.H. Richardson's Glessner House and establish the Chicago Architectural Foundation to educate the public on design and architecture, a nonprofit now known as the Chicago Architectural Center. In 1968, after Chicago established a commission with the authority to recommend and oversee protections for historic architecture, Ben Weese was asked to be part of the advisory committee tasked with creating an inventory of properties worthy of designation.

Ben became a partner at HWA in 1967. There he developed a niche focusing on institutional clients, primarily small, private colleges in the Midwest, and smaller-scale housing. In 1974, Ben was named a Fellow by the American Institute of Architecture. Just two years later, he became part of the "Chicago Seven" architects who rejected the rigid modernism of Mies van der Rohe and looked to architectural history for inspiration as they explored the incorporation of ornament and symbolism into work which took its immediate context into account.

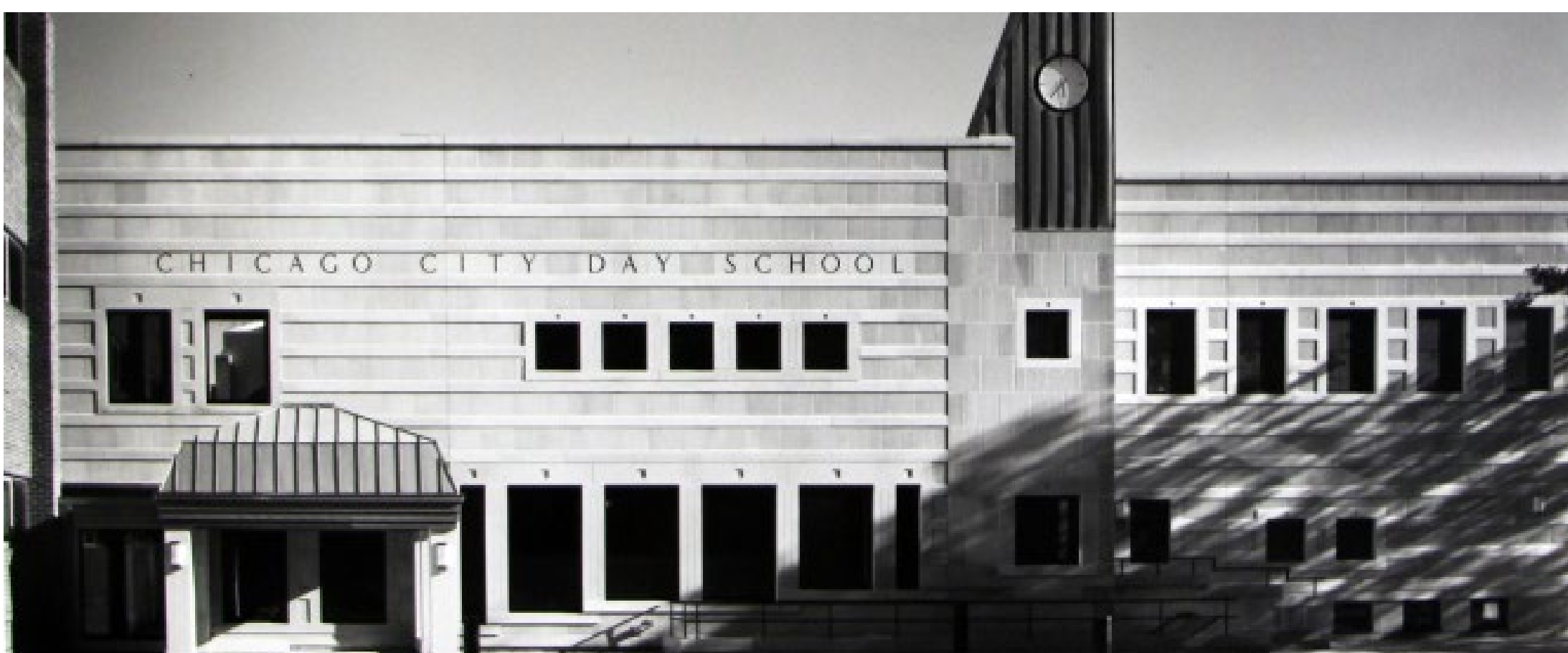
In 1977, Ben left his brother's firm to set up practice with his wife Cynthia and a series of partners, a firm now known as Weese Langley Weese. This smaller firm would become known for educational and non-profit projects which exhibited a sensitivity to vernacular and historic design. In 2011, Ben was recognized by AIA Chicago with a Lifetime Achievement Award.



Ben Weese designed the Eugenie Lane Apartments in 1962 to fit within the context of the Old Town Neighborhood by using traditional materials and by maintaining a tree-top height. The building was designated as a Chicago Landmark in 2023.



Weese designed these townhouses in Hyde Park in 1971. The two- and three-story townhouses are clad in warm red brick for economy. In lieu of ornament, each townhome is defined with an entrance stoop and a 45-degree angled window bay window that is clearly inspired by Barry Byrne's Kenna Apartments of 1916.



A substantial addition to the Chicago City Day School designed by Ben Weese in 1990 with standing-seam sheet metal features. Source: Ben Weese Papers, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, the Art Institute of Chicago.