

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



Sheridan Road Mansions

Joseph Downey House and Coach House, 6205 N. Sheridan Rd.

Samuel H. Gunder House and Coach House, 6219 N. Sheridan Rd.

Adolf Schmidt House, 6331-33 N. Sheridan Rd.

Albert G. Wheeler House, 970 W. Sheridan Rd.

Final Landmark Recommendation adopted by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, April 4, 2013



CITY OF CHICAGO
Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

Department of Housing and Economic Development
Andrew J. Mooney, Commissioner

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within a designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

SHERIDAN ROAD MANSIONS

JOSEPH DOWNEY HOUSE & COACH HOUSE
(NOW BERGER PARK SOUTH MANSION)
6205 N. SHERIDAN RD.
BUILT: 1906
ARCHITECT: WILLIAM CARBYS ZIMMERMAN

SAMUEL H. GUNDER HOUSE & COACH HOUSE
(NOW BERGER PARK NORTH MANSION)
6219 N. SHERIDAN RD.
BUILT: 1909-10
ARCHITECT: MYRON H. CHURCH

ALBERT G. WHEELER HOUSE
(NOW PIPER HALL,
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO)
970 W. SHERIDAN RD.
BUILT: 1909
ARCHITECT: WILLIAM CARBYS ZIMMERMAN

ADOLF SCHMIDT HOUSE
(NOW BURROWES HALL,
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO)
6331-33 N. SHERIDAN RD.
BUILT: 1916-17
ARCHITECT: GEORGE W. MAHER

The four mansions that comprise the Sheridan Road Mansions exemplify the significant early residential history and development of North Sheridan Road in the Edgewater community area as a lakefront street of high-quality mansions built in the early years of the twentieth century. Chicagoans have long relished living next to Lake Michigan for its views, cooling summer breezes and recreational opportunities, and Sheridan Road embodied this residential ideal. Developed as part of the Edgewater real-estate subdivisions platted by developer John Lewis Cochran in the 1880 and 1890s, North Sheridan Road provided well-to-do Chicagoans with a suburban-style streetscape of expansive houses with lake views. Most of these houses and the low-scale residential streetscape they formed—reminiscent of North Shore suburbs such as Evanston, Wilmette, Winnetka and others—were demolished after World War II as Sheridan Road was largely transformed into a street of high-rise apartment buildings. The houses that comprise the Sheridan Road Mansions today are among the best-remaining of these "first-generation" houses that drew Chicagoans of wealth to the far North Side lakefront. As such, these buildings form a visually-distinctive low-scale counterpoint to the predominant high-rise character of present-day North Sheridan Road and offer a "snapshot" of life a century ago.

These four buildings, built between 1906 and 1917, are fine examples of significant architectural styles of the period, including the Prairie, American Four Square, and Classical Revival. Two of the houses—the Downey and Gunder Houses—also retain their historic, matching coach houses.

Two of the houses—the Downey and Wheeler houses—were designed by Chicago architect William Carby Zimmerman, significant to both the city and the State of Illinois as both the West Parks Commission architect and as the architect for the State of Illinois in the early years of the twentieth century. A third house—the Schmidt House—was designed by George W. Maher, a significant progressive architect working in the Prairie School movement of the early twentieth century. Maher is widely admired today for his individualistic combination of historic building forms with non-historic ornamentation.

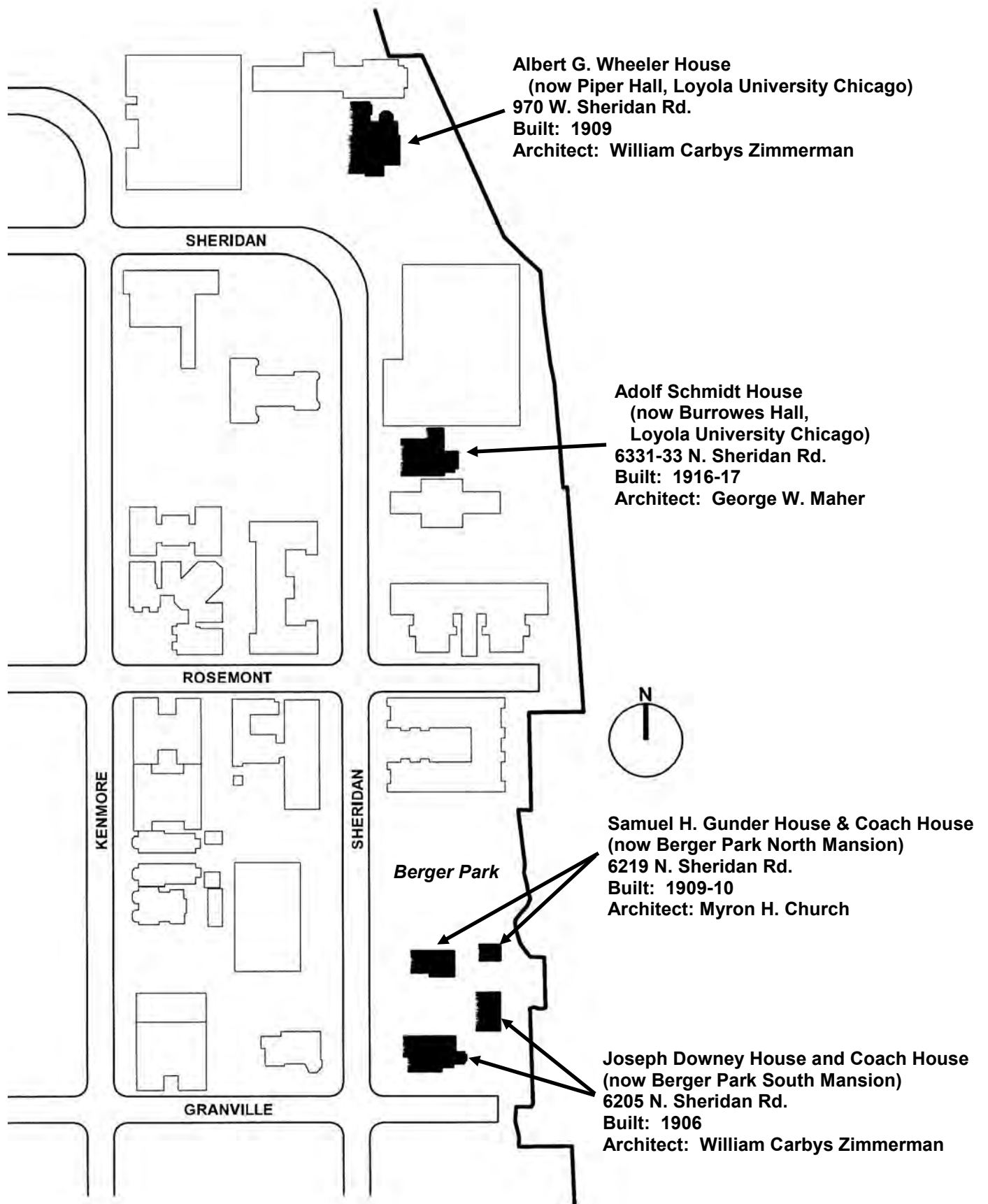
EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH SHERIDAN ROAD IN THE EDGE-WATER NEIGHBORHOOD

North Sheridan Road was conceived in the late nineteenth century as an extension of Lake Shore Drive north along the Lake Michigan shoreline through newly annexed Chicago neighborhoods and developing North Shore suburbs. This new road was named "Sheridan Road" in an effort to get the federal government interested in funding it as a military road connecting Chicago to the newly-opened Fort Sheridan, just south of the Lake County community of Lake Forest. Initial hopes that the road would hug the lake shore, creating a continuous lakefront promenade, proved naive, as lakefront property owners often resisted losing their private lakefront access. So the road as built was a somewhat meandering road that occasionally ran quite a distance inland. Only at a few places did it actually hug the lakefront; one of those was in the Chicago neighborhood of Edgewater.

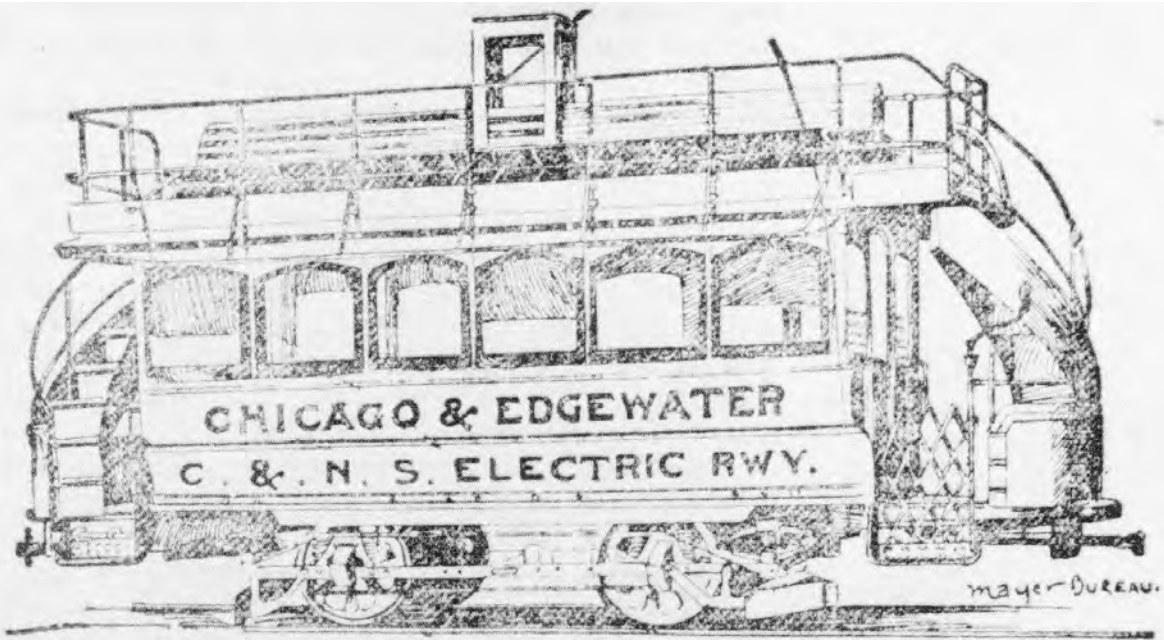
Edgewater began in 1886 as a then-suburban real-estate development created by John Lewis Cochran (1857-1923). Subdivided in stages, Edgewater was conceived by Cochran as a fashionable railroad suburb, reachable from Chicago by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, which ran at grade just east of Broadway (known as Evanston Avenue at the time), along what is now the right-of-way for the Chicago Transit Authority's Red Line. Cochran's first Edgewater subdivision in 1886 was located south of Bryn Mawr Ave., extending from the west side of Sheridan Road west to Broadway and south to Foster. A later subdivision in 1888 extended Edgewater up the lakefront to today's Devon Ave., including lakefront property north of Bryn Mawr, while a subsequent subdivision extended the settlement west of Broadway to today's Lakewood-Balmoral neighborhood (now a National Register of Historic Places historic district). In 1889 Edgewater became a Chicago neighborhood as part of the larger annexation of Lake View Township.

Despite becoming part of the sprawling city early on, Cochran's subdivisions were intended to be suburban in character, with large single-family houses set on large lawns and with wide setbacks. Cochran differed from many Chicago developers in the quality of infrastructure provided to new home owners as they moved into houses in his developments, including sidewalks, sewers and streetlights. The developer wanted Edgewater to rival North Shore suburbs. Nowhere was this more apparent than along North Sheridan Road. Cochran saw the road as an asset to his subdivisions and did not fight its extension through his land as many other north lakefront property owners did. Instead, when Cochran opened North Sheridan Road through Edgewater in 1894, Sheridan Road ran along the lakefront, and Cochran sold lots along the street with fine lakefront views and, for those lots on the east side of Sheridan Road, direct private access to the lake. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* noted in its February 25, 1894, edition:

In the spring Mr. Cochran will open up the Lake Shore strip of Edgewater, continuing Sheridan road through the village. The boulevard will be improved in a first-class manner. It will be eighty feet wide, this being divided into roadway forty feet wide, stone sidewalk seventeen feet wide and



The Sheridan Road Mansions consist of four “first-generation” mansions (two with matching coach houses) that remain on Sheridan Road north of Granville Ave.



EDGEWATER ELECTRIC CAR LINE

Will Be in Operation by June 1st, 1893.

EDGEWATER Homes } \$5,100
 Modern, Artistic, }
 With All Conveniences. } \$12,000

FOR SALE *On Terms That Will Suit You . . .*

1,000 MEN will be put to work at once on construction of New Electric Railway.
 FIFTY CAR LOADS of material on the ground.

QUICK TRANSPORTATION.

FIFTEEN NEW HOUSES, **EDGEWATER** — *A Strictly*
 NO TWO ALIKE—SEE THEM, *Residence Suburb.*

Take C., M. & St. Paul Railroad to Edgewater. Agent there or salesman at city office will take you to see property free of expense. For terms, etc., apply to

J. L. COCHRAN, 722 Chicago Opera-House.

SUBURBAN REAL ESTATE.

North Sheridan Road between Foster on the south and Devon Ave. on the north was subdivided in the late 19th century as part of real-estate developer John Lewis Cochran's first two Edgewater subdivisions.

**Edward S. Shepherd House,
6341 N. Sheridan Rd.**



By the early 1920s, North Sheridan Road in Edgewater was lined with large mansions in a variety of styles, including Classical Revival, Tudor Revival, Prairie, and American Four Square. Pictured here are three examples (all demolished) published in 1910 in *The Book of the North Shore*, a picture book of houses in Chicago's Edgewater and Rogers Park neighborhoods and lake-front suburbs such as Evanston.

**William H. Fahrney House,
6171 N. Sheridan Rd.**



**Dr. C.N. Johnson House,
6118 N. Sheridan Rd.**

a parkway ten feet wide between the sidewalk and the curb. At a distance of thirty-three feet apart large trees will be planted.

Over the next thirty years, especially in the first two decades of the twentieth century, up to World War I, one mansion after another was built on expansive Sheridan Road lots. The seven-block stretch of the street north of Bryn Mawr Ave to Devon Ave., subdivided as part of Cochran's Second Subdivision of Edgewater in 1888 and often called "North Edgewater" in its early years and "North Edgewater Beach" in more recent times, was especially desirable for its lake views and suburban character. The four houses that comprise the Sheridan Road Mansions were built between 1906 and 1917, during this period of peak development.

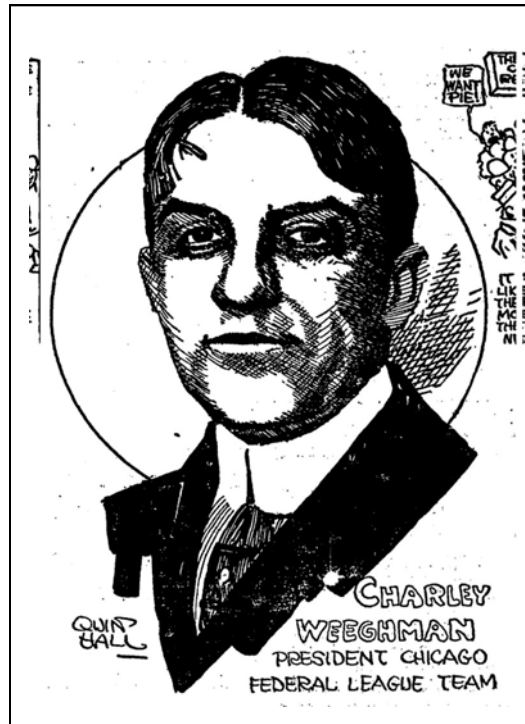
Cochran had hired high-quality architects to build his speculative housing in Edgewater, including J. L. Silsbee, George Maher, and others, and the wealthy businessmen and politicians buying Sheridan Road lots and building houses also often used well-known architects, including Maher, William Carbys Zimmerman, John Ahlschlager, and Arthur Heun. The result is that, by the 1920s, North Sheridan Road in Edgewater was a visually-distinctive street of single-family houses. Large mansions, many set within expansive landscaped grounds, lined both sides of the street. Those on the east side also opened directly onto private Lake Michigan beaches. By the 1930s, the street was lined with large trees and lighted by Prairie-style streetlights that were based on those historically found in Lincoln Park. North Sheridan Road was featured in *The Book of the North Shore*, published in 1910, which featured photographs of lakefront houses in Edgewater, Rogers Park and North Shore suburbs.

Early North Sheridan Road home owners

As North Sheridan Road in Edgewater developed in the 1890s and early 1900s, its houses were built and owned by successful, wealthy, often self-made businessmen, manufacturers, politicians and medical professionals. As a newly-developed upper-income street, Sheridan Road with its lakefront houses was attractive to families without social pedigrees but with substantial bank accounts.

Two Sheridan Road home owners were early owners of the Chicago Cubs baseball team. Charles Webb Murphy (6157 N. Sheridan Rd.) was a former sports writer who owned the Cubs from 1906 to 1914, a period during which the team won two World Series. Restaurant owner Charles Henry ("Lucky Charlie") Weeghman (5627 N. Sheridan Rd.) later owned the Cubs from 1916 to 1920 and was the ball club owner who built Wrigley (then known as Weeghman) Field. (A later owner of the Weeghman House was John R. Collins, the founder and president of the Southern Coal Co.)

Oscar Meyer, who built a prominent meat company from its origins in a Near North Side butcher's shop, lived at 5727 N. Sheridan Rd. until his death in 1955 at the age of 95. Other company owners and executives living on the street included P.A. Starck, the founder of the P.A. Starck Piano Co., whose 21-room, 8-bath limestone mansion at Sheridan Rd. and Glenlake Ave. was considered a North Side showplace. After Starck's death, his house became the home of Elmer Rich, president of the Simoniz Company. William H. Fahrney, the owner of a patent medicine company, the owner of 6171 N. Sheridan Rd., was an avid boatsman with a seventy-foot motor boat that he moored at a pier on his property. Axel A. Strom, whose residence was at 6039 N. Sheridan Rd., had come to Chicago from Sweden as a boy and risen to become president of the U.S. Ball Bearing Co., vice-president of the Pettibone-Mulliken Co., and a director of two Chicago-area banks. Edward S. Shepherd, president of Crerar, Adams & Co., a railway supplies firm, lived at 6341 N. Sheridan Rd.



The builders and early owners of North Sheridan Road mansions were typically businessmen, owners of manufacturing companies, and prominent politicians. A sampling includes (clockwise from top left): Oscar Meyer, founder of the meat-packing company; Charles "Lucky Charlie" Weeghman, who built Weeghman Field (now Wrigley Field) while owning the Chicago Cubs baseball team; Chicago alderman and lawyer Charles Werno; Cook County Board President Peter Reinberg; businessman Edward S. Shepherd, president of the Crerar, Adams & Co. railway supplies concern; and Axel Strom, president of the U.S. Ball Bearing Co.



In its heyday as a street of high-quality single-family houses, North Sheridan Road was lined with trees and decorative light poles similar to those used historically in Lincoln Park. Photographs on this page were taken in 1936 by the Illinois Department of Transportation to document traffic on the street.

Edwin M. Colvin, an executive with the William F. Hall Printing Co., lived at 5940 N. Sheridan Rd. for many years in a George W. Maher-designed house. A handsome example of Maher's personal version of the Prairie style, the Colvin House was designated as a Chicago Landmark in 1994.

A number of politicians made their homes on North Sheridan Road. Former alderman John Powers, a long-time power in the Democratic Party, lived at 6038 N. Sheridan Rd. in retirement. (He had bought his house from Board of Trade member Sidney S. Date.) Peter Reinberg, the president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners at the time of his death in 1921, had lived at 5643 N. Sheridan Rd. since 1914. Harry R. Gibbons (5400 N. Sheridan Rd.) was Cook County Treasurer at the time of his death in 1921. Other politicians who lived on the street included former alderman Nathan T. Brenner (5839 N. Sheridan Rd.), who was also president of the American Insulated Wire and Cable Co.; and former alderman Charles Werno (5910 N. Sheridan Rd.), a lawyer who served on the City Council from 1899 to 1907.

Other prominent home owners on North Sheridan Rd. included Walter Beverly Pearson (6222 N. Sheridan Rd.), who was the president of the Standard Screw Co.; Willard W. Jaques (5754 N. Sheridan Rd.), president of a baking powder manufacturing company; Moses Van Gelder (5747 N. Sheridan Rd.), president of the Empire Mattress Co.; Waldemar Giertsen (6317 N. Sheridan Rd.), owner and president of the Chicago Machinery Exchange; Harry H. Bishop (6151 N. Sheridan Rd.), president of the Bishop Lumber Co.; Dr. Charles Nelson Johnson (6118 N. Sheridan Rd.), a noteworthy Chicago dentist who served as the president of the American Dental Association and as editor of the association's Journal; and Dr. John S. Appleman (5906 N. Sheridan Rd.), a physician associated with Northwestern University.

CONSTRUCTION, DESCRIPTION AND ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF THE SHERIDAN ROAD MANSIONS

The four Sheridan Road Mansions are located along North Sheridan Road in northern Edgewater between West Granville Avenue (6200 North) on the south and the curve where Sheridan Road turns west towards North Devon Avenue at 6400 North. Individually, these are handsome single-family houses built in the decade preceding World War I. Taken together, these houses are among the best-surviving houses remaining from the low-rise streetscape that was North Sheridan Road in the first decades of the twentieth century, and these houses exemplify this important aspect of Edgewater's early real-estate development.

All of the houses share certain physical characteristics. They are all built of masonry, with the Wheeler House built of stone and the others of brick with stone trim. All are two-and-a-half stories in height and are relatively cubic in shape. They derive their visual distinction from the use of handsome brick and stone and through applied ornament concentrated around entrances and windows and along rooflines. Their visually-restrained appearance, in contrast to the more elaborate and eclectic houses of the Victorian era, reflects the taste of early twentieth-century Chicagoans.

The Downey House and Coach House, 6205 N. Sheridan Rd.

In 1906, Chicago building contractor Joseph Downey commissioned a new house from architect William Carbys Zimmerman. A building permit was issued for the house on April 25 of that year. The contractor was listed as M.F. Powers, and the projected cost of the building was \$20,000.



The Downey House and Coach House at 6205 N. Sheridan Rd. was built in 1906 for building contractor Joseph Downey (bottom left), whose company built, among other buildings, the Illinois Central Railroad Station. The house was designed in 1906 by William Carbys Zimmerman in the American Four Square architectural style, which emphasized cubic form, hip roofs, overhanging eaves and relatively restrained ornament.



Top: The rear of the Downey House. Bottom: The north elevation of the house. The house is built of tan Roman brick with gray limestone trim.



Top: The front entrance of the Downey House has a stone frame finely carved with foliate ornament..
Bottom right: The stylized capitals of the house's porch pillars has Classical moldings and ornament.
Bottom left: Dormers rise above the wide overhanging building eaves (ornamented with coffering) and have similarly wide eaves as well as low-relief Classical-style rosettes.



The Downey House coach house is built of matching tan Roman brick and has similar wide eaves as the house.

The Downey House (now the Berger Park South Mansion) is a generously-proportioned American Four-Square dwelling, two-and-a half stories in height and built of tan Roman brick. (Roman brick, so called due to its original use for ancient Roman buildings, is longer and narrower than other commonly-used bricks.) Located on the northeast corner of Granville Ave. and Sheridan Rd. and relatively square in its overall footprint, the house has relatively few projections other than a half-width porch on its front (west) elevation and projecting one-story bays on its south side (facing the portion of Granville dead-ending against the Lake Michigan shoreline) and on its east elevation facing the lake itself. A low hip roof with dormers and broadly-projecting eaves (showing the influence of the Prairie style) sits atop the cubic volume of the building. The underside of these eaves has shallow coffering

The building's front facade is balanced without being symmetrical. A front door is set off-center to the north side of the front facade, sheltered within the front porch, balanced to the south by a horizontal band of three windows. Second-floor windows are single double-hung windows set within narrow limestone surrounds. The house's side and rear elevations are similar in material and detailing with the aforementioned tan Roman brick and round bays, plus large windows and dormers.

The building has restrained Classical-style ornament on its porch piers and as part of the front entrance, windows and dormers. Porch piers have floral and egg-and-dart moldings, as does a small square second-floor window set squarely in the front elevation. The wide front entrance, with its sidelights, has a stone surround with foliate ornament. The porch floor is laid with "pebbled" terrazzo and decorated with a large Classical-style tile medallion in front of the front door. Dormers are ornamented with acanthus leaves and rosettes.

The house retains its historic coach house, built of similar tan Roman brick and with broad overhanging eaves with coffering. Relatively simple in overall appearance, the coach house's most-distinctive detail is a round-arched wall dormer rising above the building's roofline on its west (street) elevation.

The American Four Square architectural style developed during the 1890s and early 1900s as a modern, up-to-date house style. In its visual simplicity, the style reflected a turning-away from the visual elaborateness of Victorian-era styles such as the Italianate, Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque. American Four-Square houses combine a rectangular footprint and overall cubic form with (typically) a wide front porch and hip roof, often with dormers. Ornamentation was typically kept simple with decoration adorning porches, front doors, and dormers. Some examples of the American Four-Square style show the influence of the Prairie style with an emphasis on horizontal proportions and grouped bands of windows.

Joseph Downey was born on a farm outside Dublin, Ireland, and came to Chicago at the age of 12. Starting out as a bricklayer, he soon became partners with established builder James McGraw. By his death Downey was a well-regarded building contractor, responsible for building such major structures as Chicago's Illinois Central Railroad Station. He was the first president of the city's Builders Club. He served in several public-service roles, including public-works commissioner, building commissioner and public school trustee. He was staying at his winter home in Sarasota, Florida, where his obituary noted that he owned much real estate, at the time of his death in 1925.

The Gunder House and Coach House, 6219 N. Sheridan Rd.

The same year as the construction of the Wheeler House, businessman Samuel H. Gunder commissioned his new house from architect Myron H. Church. The building permit for the house was issued on December 28, 1909. Olson & Brockhausert was listed as the contractor, and the projected cost of the building was \$20,000.



Top: The Gunder House and Coach House at 6219 N. Sheridan Rd. was constructed in 1909-10 for businessman Samuel H. Gunder. Myron H. Church was the architect. Bottom: The house is built of tan brick with gray limestone trim and designed in the Classical Revival architectural style.



Views of the Gunder House from the southwest (top) and south (bottom).



Views of the Gunder House from the north (top) and east (bottom).



The Gunder House is detailed with Classical-style ornament influenced by Italian Renaissance precedents. Clockwise from top left: A medallion atop the building's front parapet; low-relief foliate-ornamented panels on the front façade; the round-arched front door, flanked by light fixtures; and the first-floor rounded bay.



The Gunder House coach house is built of matching tan brick and has similar Classical-style ornament.

Built of tan brick, the Gunder House (now the Berger Park North Mansion) is two-and-a-half stories in height and is roughly rectangular in footprint. A very shallow hip roof is set behind a high parapet projecting upwards on the front and side elevations.

The building's front facade, facing west, is relatively narrow in comparison to its depth. The building does not have a front porch. Instead, a shallow terrace paved with tan tile extends across the front of the house. The front entrance is on the south side of the front elevation, visually balanced by a shallow-projecting curved bay behind the terrace. The entrance is set within a round-arched opening with a round-arched "lunette" transom over the front door. Decorative iron grillwork ornaments both the door's large window and the above transom. A pair of torcheres (i.e. free-standing lamps) with white glass globes set atop tall iron bases flank this entrance. The side and rear elevations of the house have similar tan face brick. A side entrance on the north facade has decorative grillwork similar to that found in the front entrance.

The Gunder House is designed in a visually-spare variation of the Classical Revival architectural style. Ornament is found around the round-arched front entrance and low-relief stone panels with Classical-style ornament between second-floor windows and on roof parapets.

Similar to the neighboring Downey House, the Gunder House has a surviving historic coach house. Built of similar tan brick, this coach house has a high hip roof with similar wall dormers ornamented with Classical-style reliefs. One surviving free-standing light fixture, similar to those flanking the house's front entrance, is located on the north side of the coach house.

The Gunder House is designed in a sparsely-detailed variation on the Classical Revival architectural style with ornament based on Italian Renaissance precedents. Classicism is one of the world's oldest architectural styles with its origins in ancient Greece and Rome and with a series of revivals, beginning in 15th-century Italy. By the early twentieth century, the Classical Revival was used by Americans for buildings in a wide variety of sub-styles, including buildings based on colonial and early American precedents, as well as historic Italian, French and Spanish buildings. With its general overall design and low-relief stone ornament and decorative metal grillwork, the Gunder House is part of a larger trend towards imaginative historic-revival houses based loosely on the Italian Renaissance.

Samuel H. Gunder was born in 1859 in Anderson, Indiana, and became president of the Pozzinni Pharmaceutical Company. In 1919 he and his wife Nettie sold their house at 6219 N. Sheridan Rd. and moved to Los Angeles, California, where he died in 1925.

The Wheeler House, 970 W. Sheridan Rd.

In 1909, Chicago business magnate Albert G. Wheeler built what was considered one of the grandest Chicago houses of its time. The building permit for the building, designed by William Carby Zimmerman, was issued on March 27 of that year. The permit listed the contractor as A. Lund and the projected cost of the house as \$30,000.

The Wheeler House (now owned by Loyola University Chicago and known as Piper Hall) is a large-scale American Four-Square dwelling. It is two-and-a-half stories in height and built of white marble quarried in Vermont. The building's front (south) facade, facing the curve in Sheridan Road, is balanced. It is dominated by a half-width front porch within which is a centrally-placed front door. Horizontal bands of windows light first-floor rooms. A low hip roof of green tile sits atop the building. Small dormers light the building's attic story. Side elevations, facing east to-



The Wheeler House (now Piper Hall, Loyola University Chicago) was built in 1909 for businessman Albert G. Wheeler, the head of the Illinois Tunnel Company, which built freight tunnels under Chicago's Loop. The house is constructed of white Vermont marble and trimmed with copper. It was considered one of Chicago's finest houses at the time of its construction. Top: The house's front (south) façade, with its wide porch and balustrade-edged terrace. Bottom: A view of the house's west façade.



Top: The Wheeler House's east façade, facing Lake Michigan. Bottom: The house's rear façade, more simply clad with tan brick.



Top: The Wheeler House's front entrance, with its carved marble surround detailed with a Classical-style foliate garland. Bottom left: The front porch has both massive rusticated-marble piers and more delicate, smoothly-finished Classical-style columns. Bottom right: A copper bay on the house's east façade.

wards Lake Michigan and west towards the former Mundelein Skyscraper building (now owned by Loyola and an individually-designated Chicago Landmark), have similar windows. The west (side) elevation of the building has a more visually-modest porch and a non-historic ramp added for accessibility. The rear elevation, although retaining a historic glass-and-copper conservatory, is more utilitarian with tan brick walls and an exterior non-historic metal staircase accessing the second floor. A modern glass and limestone enclosed “umbilical” provides a connector to neighboring Coffey Hall.

The Wheeler House's front porch extends to the east with an open terrace with a Classical-style balustrade. This terrace wraps around the side (east) elevation towards a projecting round-arched bay and large staircase leading down to what was originally the property's lawn extending to Lake Michigan. Two small copper bays project onto the porch on the east elevation. The front porch's thick stone piers are paired with more delicate Classical-style columns.

The Wheeler House derives much of its visual appeal from the heavy rustication of its marble walls and porch piers and the stark white of its Vermont marble walls contrasting with green copper gutters, bays and other trim. Applied foliate ornament can be found around the front entrance and first-floor windows, as well as around a second-floor window above the front entrance. The west (side) entrance has similar ornament.

Albert Gallatin Wheeler, the original owner of the Wheeler House, was born in New York City in 1854. Although he was involved in a number of business enterprises, including railroads and telephone and telegraph service, Wheeler is best known in Chicago as the head of the Illinois Tunnel Company, which built and maintained freight tunnels to provide underground access to Loop buildings. Wheeler owned the house until 1916, when he sold it to Albert M. Johnson, the president of the National Life Insurance Company. Wheeler died in 1917. The house was later acquired by Mundelein College; it now is owned by Loyola University.

The Schmidt House, 6331-33 N. Sheridan Rd.

Architect George W. Maher designed this house for printing executive Adolf Schmidt. A building permit was issued for the building on August 9, 1916, and the house was completed in 1917. H. D. Morelans was listed as the contractor on the building permit, and the cost of the house was estimated as \$35,000. The Schmidt House is designed in the Prairie architectural style as imaginatively conceived by Maher. It is two-and-a-half stories in height and built of an orange-tinted yellow brick. It was owned for many years by Mundelein College; it now is owned by Loyola University and known as Burrowes Hall.

The Schmidt House (now owned by Loyola University Chicago and known as Burrowes Hall) is roughly rectangular in its overall form, with a long side facing the street. Its overall design has a visually-dominant center section set beneath an overhanging hip roof, and a recessed round-arched side entrance to the south and a recessed wing (originally sheltering a porte-cochere) to the north. The main street elevation of the building is divided in two, with one half defined by a vertically-oriented set of first- and second-floor windows set within a limestone “frame,” set slightly forward of the other half, which has horizontal bands of windows. Side elevations are designed with similar brick and stone but are relatively difficult to see due to the physical closeness of an apartment building to the south and a Loyola classroom building to the north. The house's rear elevation faces Lake Michigan and has similar use of materials.

The Schmidt House's ornament combines both foliate and geometric ornament in a manner typical of the “motif-rhythm” theory favored by the building's architect, George W. Maher. Most visually



Top: The Schmidt House (now Burrowes Hall, Loyola University Chicago) was designed in 1916 by renowned Prairie architect George W. Maher for printing executive Adolf Schmidt. Bottom left: A detail of the house's front façade. Bottom right: The building's front entrance is deeply set back within an arcade of stone pairs of columns ornamented by examples of Maher's non-historic ornament.



The Schmidt House is detailed with finely-crafted stone ornament based on lotus flowers, vines and circles, a combination of organic and geometric ornament that served as the basis for Maher's innovative "motif-rhythm" theory of ornamentation. In designing a building, Maher would decide on a combination of organic and geometric motives, then he would use these details as visually-unifying elements throughout it.

prominent is a projecting limestone balconette at the base of the front facade's vertical windows, which is ornamented with lotus flowers, vines and circles in a non-historic manner. There is similar ornament atop thin colonettes dividing second-floor windows, squared "capitals" atop building piers, and detailing around the building's entrances, including paired columns that ornament an arcade for the highly recessed front entrance.

The Schmidt House exemplifies the Prairie architectural style as developed by architect George Maher, one of Chicago's best-known early modern architects. The Prairie style is most associated with the innovative buildings of Chicago architect Frank Lloyd Wright with their horizontal proportions and lack of historic applied ornament. As used by Maher, the Prairie style incorporated foliate and geometric ornament, combined to form non-historic ornament used for both exterior and interior building ornament, that was used for both exterior and interior detailing that was meant to visually unify the entire building design.

The building's original owner, Adolf Schmidt, was a founding partner in the Columbian Colortype Company, a Chicago printing company that was a pioneer in color process printing. The house was later acquired by Mundelein College, a Roman Catholic women's college, and used as the President's House. Mundelein became an affiliated college with Loyola in 1991 and the house now houses Loyola's Academic Affairs office.

ARCHITECTS WILLIAM CARBYS ZIMMERMAN, GEORGE W. MAHER & MYRON CHURCH

The four Sheridan Road Mansions were designed by three Chicago architects. George W. Maher, the architect of the Schmidt House, is one of Chicago's best-known Prairie architects. William Carbys Zimmerman, the architect of the Wheeler and Downey Houses, is important as a residential architect and for his positions as West Park Commission Architect and State of Illinois Architect. Lesser known is Myron Church, the architect of the Gunder House. His best-known surviving work includes a group of Flemish Revival-style row houses in the Giles-Calumet Chicago Landmark District on Chicago's South Side.

George W. Maher

George Washington Maher (1864-1926), the architect of the Schmidt House, was one of Chicago's most significant architects of innovative houses in the early twentieth century. Born in West Virginia, Maher apprenticed as a draftsman in the Chicago architectural office of Augustus Bauer and Henry Hill. Later, he worked for noteworthy architect Joseph Lyman Silsbee, where he became associated with such co-workers as George Grant Elmslie and Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1893, Maher opened his own practice. A longtime resident of the North Shore suburb of Kenilworth, Maher maintained a broad list of social contacts and club memberships, which resulted in numerous residential commissions from important figures in Chicago, the suburb of Oak Park, and on the North Shore.

Maher is considered one of Chicago's most important Prairie-style architects. Less radical than Frank Lloyd Wright, Maher blended traditional American house styles with more progressive European Arts & Crafts-style designs. Many of his residences reflect a broad horizontal character, with overhanging roof eaves, a strong rectilinear massing, and symmetrically placed windows cen-



Top left: George W. Maher, the architect of the Schmidt House. Maher is considered one of the most original of Chicago's Prairie architects, a group of progressive architects practicing in the early 20th century. Top right: Pleasant Home, located in Oak Park and one of Maher's earliest houses, is noteworthy for its exceptional horizontal proportions and non-historic ornament. Several of Maher's other houses are Chicago Landmarks, including (middle left) the Pate-Comiskey House at 5131 S. Michigan Ave.; (middle right) the Rath House at 2703 W. Logan Blvd.; and (bottom) the Colvin House at 5940 N. Sheridan Rd.



tered on a prominent central entry. Concentrations of Maher's work in the Chicago area are in the North Shore suburb of Kenilworth and the Hutchinson Street Chicago Landmark District on Chicago's North Side lakefront.

Maher is known for his "motif-rhythm" theory of design, which used the form of a specific plant, often one indigenous to the Midwest, as the unifying motif for an individual project. "The leading flower of a neighborhood is nature's symbol of the spirit breathed there," Maher wrote in his essay, "Art Democracy," published in the March 1910 *Western Architect*. The Patten House in Evanston (1902; demolished), the King-Nash House in Chicago's East Garfield Park neighborhood, and the Pate-Comiskey House on Chicago's South Side, for example, all used thistles as the basis for ornamentation; the Rubens House in Glencoe adopted a hollyhock; and the Magerstadt House in Chicago's South-Side Kenwood Chicago Landmark District used a poppy.

Maher wanted to create houses that reflected modern American modes of living while retaining visual references to past architectural forms and ornament. In his article, "Originality in American Architecture," published in the October 1887 *Inland Architect and News Record*, Maher noted that American architects enjoyed a fortuitous circumstance in their freedom from the traditional "rules" and historic styles that governed their European counterparts. American architects, he argued, had an opportunity to create an American style.

In his support and use of historic design features, Maher was among a small number of architectural innovators of his day. While Frank Lloyd Wright and others developed non-historic designs that focused on abstract geometry, Maher incorporated historic references into his compositions in a more literal manner than his contemporaries. In his search for an indigenous "American style," Maher was seemingly attempting to create a new form of architecture relevant to American life, but in a form that simultaneously recalled traditional domestic forms.

The Schmidt House reflects Maher's interests in combining both traditional and progressive design ideas. The house was designed in 1916, towards the end of Maher's most progressive period of design, and it reflects Maher's efforts to incorporate both traditional and innovative design elements. Its visual formality gives the house a sense of visual repose and order. Yet the house's clean-lined, hard-edged rectilinear design is modern in feeling, reflecting a turning-away from the more intensely decorative styles popular during the second half of the 19th century, including Italianate and Queen Anne. The emphasis on contrasting brick and stone with relatively limited elaborate embellishment reflects Arts-and-Crafts thinking, which sought the "honest" use of materials and emphasized the inherent decorative possibilities of plain building materials.

The Schmidt House also incorporates Maher's "motif-rhythm" theory. Through this theory Maher attempted to unify a given house design by combining a stylized floral form and a geometric shape to create a dominant visual theme to be used throughout the design. According to Maher, writing in "Art Democracy," the principle "completely harmonizes all portions of the work until in the end it becomes a unit of composition. . . since each detail is designed to harmonize with the guiding motif which in turn was inspired by the necessity of the situation and local color and conditions." The motifs were used to create decorative schemes that were used for both exterior and interior building decoration and room furnishings. The Schmidt House's main decorative motifs are the lotus (representing nature) and the circle (representing geometry), used on the building's exterior in a balconette in front of first-floor windows, the paired columns in the front entrance arcade, for window colonnettes, and for rectangular "capitals" under broadly-overhanging eaves.

William Carbys Zimmerman

William Carbys Zimmerman (1859-1932), the architect of the Wheeler and Downey houses, was born in Thiensville, Wisconsin. He attended school in Milwaukee and studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before coming to Chicago around 1880. He became the junior partner to Chicago architect John J. Flanders in 1886, and the pair developed a reputation for houses designed in a variety of historic architectural styles, including the Gustavus Swift House at 4848 S. Ellis Ave. (built 1898) in the Kenwood Chicago Landmark District.

Zimmerman opened his own practice in 1898, taking offices in Steinway Hall at 64 E. Van Buren St., a piano showroom-office building famous among architectural historians as housing such progressive architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Dwight Perkins, Pond and Pond, and Robert Spencer. Zimmerman continued to specialize in residential architecture, designing houses in the North Kenwood District such as the C.A. Goodyear House at 4340 S. Greenwood Ave. (built 1902). During this period of his practice, Zimmerman designed a number of houses in Chicago's Edgewater and Rogers Park neighborhoods, including the Wheeler and Downey houses.

In 1905 Zimmerman's career took a different path when he was appointed Illinois State Architect. During his eight-year tenure, he designed a number of prominent state-owned buildings for universities, hospitals and other institutions, including the Physics Building and additions to the Natural History Building on the University of Illinois campus in Urbana, Pemberton Hall at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, the state Supreme Court Building in Springfield, and buildings for state hospitals in Kankakee and Peoria.

Thanks to connections made through his state position, Zimmerman became architect to Chicago's West Park Commission in 1907. Between 1907 and 1914, he designed eight fieldhouses and other buildings for the rapidly expanding West Side park system, including the Pulaski Park Fieldhouse (an individually designated Chicago Landmark), a picturesque building with high-pitched roofs and half-timbering. Other park buildings designed by Zimmerman include fieldhouses for Dvorak, Eckhardt, and Holstein parks and natatoriums for Humboldt and Harrison parks.

Zimmerman later in life joined with his son Ralph Waldo Zimmerman and son-in-law Albert M. Saxe in the architectural firm of Zimmerman, Saxe and Zimmerman. He died at his winter home in La Jolla, California, in 1932.

Myron Church

Myron Henry Church (1852-?), the architect of the Gunder House, was born in Detroit, Michigan. Early on, he worked in the shipyards of the Wyandotte Iron and Ship Building Works, before getting experience in Detroit architectural offices. He moved to Chicago in 1876 and continued to work for several architects before starting his own practice in 1889 as a partner to C. Frank Jobson. The resulting firm of Church and Jobson began their practice focusing on residential designs, including a set of Flemish Revival-style row houses in the 3800-block of S. Giles Ave. in the Giles-Calumet Chicago Landmark District. In 1901, Church parted ways with Jobson, and for the next decade, he continued to focus on small-scale commissions, including houses such as the Gunder House.



Top left: William Carby's Zimmerman, the architect of the Downey and Wheeler houses. Zimmerman, either with early partner John J. Flanders or working alone, designed a number of finely-crafted houses, including (top right) the Gustavus Swift House at 4848 S. Ellis Ave. in the Kenwood District.



In 1905, Zimmerman became Illinois State Architect. Among the buildings that he designed during his tenure are (middle left) Pemberton Hall at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston; and (middle right) the Illinois Supreme Court Building in Springfield.



Zimmerman also served as architect to Chicago's West Park Commission from 1907 to 1914, designing a number of fieldhouses and other park facilities, including (bottom) the Pulaski Park Fieldhouse at 1419 W. Blackhawk St. (a designated Chicago Landmark).

POST-WORLD WAR II DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH SHERIDAN ROAD

The decline of North Sheridan Road as a prestigious area of single-family houses began as early as the 1920s as apartment buildings began to be built on the street despite Cochran's earlier prohibitions against such multi-residential buildings. (The Edgewater Beach Hotel at 5349 N. Sheridan Rd. had been built earlier, in 1916, and its prestige as a popular resort hotel had burnished Edgewater's reputation and encouraged its status as a fashionable Chicago neighborhood.) First, the low-rise courtyard apartment building at 6249-59 N. Sheridan Rd., located just north of Berger Park, was built in 1919. A decade later, in 1929, a high-rise apartment building was built at 6101-09 N. Sheridan Rd. Farther south, the Edgewater Beach Apartments at 5555 N. Sheridan Rd. and the Renaissance Apartments at 5510 N. Sheridan Rd. clustered near the Edgewater Beach Hotel and were built in 1928 and 1927, respectively.

Then, during the Great Depression years of the 1930s, families were increasingly unable to maintain large houses due to the cost of staffing or the large property taxes levied on what was increasingly seen as under-developed lakefront property. Houses began to be sold to institutions, converted into apartment buildings or rooming houses, or were torn down. The extension of Lincoln Park and North Lake Shore Drive north of Foster to Hollywood Ave., completed in 1957, made North Sheridan Road houses less attractive due to increased traffic and (for those south of Hollywood) loss of lake views.

After World War II, through the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, most remaining houses on North Sheridan Road in Edgewater were torn down for high-rise apartment buildings. A *Chicago Tribune* article from 1965 noted this rapid change to the street:

The pace is hectic in Chicago's most active area for apartment construction—Sheridan road between Devon and Hollywood avenues. Within the six block area work is now in progress on three 30-story buildings, an 18-story structure, and two-four story apartment houses. Excavation work is scheduled to begin soon on a twin to the 18-story building.

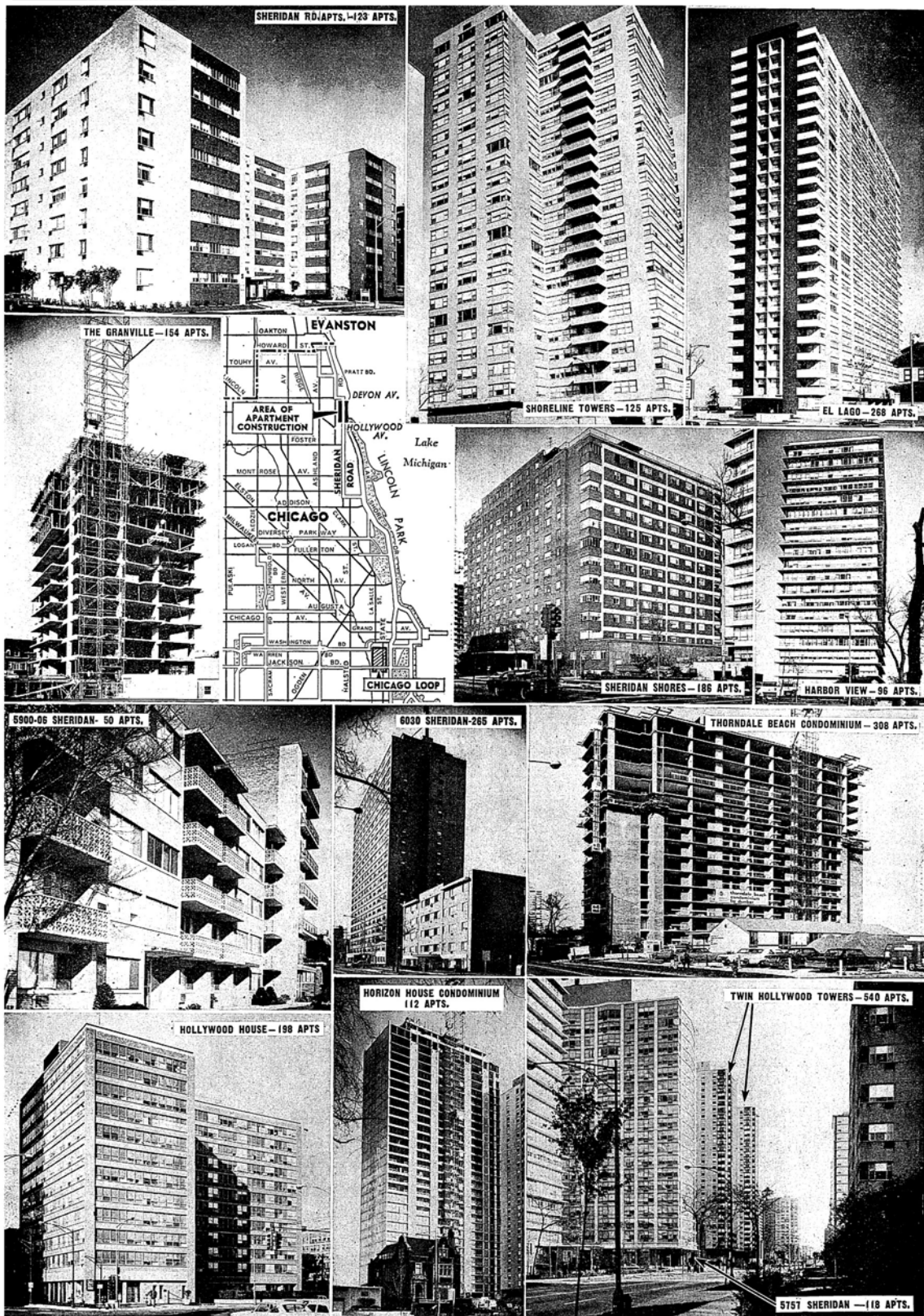
The article goes on to state:

Once two-story mansions lined both sides of the street. Today their number is dwindling. Their architectural style is ornate, but they are of an era when a building was put together to look as if it would last forever. Most have passed from the original family ownership. The list of diverse owners now includes the Hardy Preparatory school for Boys, Lakeside Nursing Homes, and northern states headquarters of the missions of the Mormon church.

A *Chicago Tribune* article from 1969 profiled the mansion at 6039 N. Sheridan Rd., originally built for industrialist Axel Strom, but at the time of the article awaiting demolition for construction of a new 45-story apartment building. The article comments on the early history of North Sheridan Road: "It was a time when Sheridan road was a fashionable place to live; when the section between Hollywood and Devon avenues was not a branch of Lake Shore drive and you could hear the restless water of the lake rather than the roar of the traffic."

Among the mansions that remained by the 1980s were the four Sheridan Road Mansions. They survived because of their particular institutional ownership histories. The Wheeler and Schmidt houses were first acquired by Mundelein College, then Loyola University upon the merger of the two Catholic institutions. The Downey and Gunder houses were acquired by the Clerics of St. Via-

Sheridan Road's New Look—Old Mansions Fade Away—Tall Towers Mushroom



A stretch of Sheridan road almost a mile long, between Hollywood and Devon avenues, provides a good cross section of what is happening in housing construction close to Chicago's lake front. Pictured are examples of the apartment buildings which are replacing the solid old brick and stone mansions, built to "last forever."

along the street which once was a country road and later a long residential street thru the north side. Additional high-rise structures are in the planning stage, while sites for still others are being offered for sale. Condominium housing, with tenants owning their apartments, is increasing also in the area. (Story on page 2)

Starting in the 1950s, and continuing through the 1960s and 1970s, most North Sheridan Road houses were demolished and replaced with apartment high-rises. This photo page from the November 4, 1965, *Chicago Tribune* illustrated an article on the redevelopment of the street.

Changing Times, Bulldozers Destroy Once Fashionable Mansions

Each year the mansions that once covered fashionable neighborhoods in Chicago become fewer in number.

Their sturdy walls are pulverized in a few days and the sites usually are covered by a high rise.

Most were not the homes of prominent persons; most lack the architectural importance to cause a stir when the wreckers move in.

Interesting But Expensible

Some with red brick turrets and fleur de lis designs frozen in concrete are grotesque; others are curious and pleasing; all are considered expensible in the plans of the developers.

An example is the three-story building at 6039 Sheridan rd., which will be demolished this month to make way for a 45-story condominium building planned by Dunbar Builders.

The yellow brick building and coach house were built in 1910.

Newspaper clippings show that in the days before World War I it was the home of Axel A. Strom, vice president of two manufacturing firms and director of several banks.

It was a time when Sheridan road was a fashionable place to live; when

the section between Hollywood and Deven avenues was not a branch of Lake Shore drive and you could hear the restless water of the lake rather than the roar of the traffic.

But in 1919, two years after Strom had died, his son Walter died of influenza. A few days later, the younger Strom's wife and 19-month-old son also were victims of the epidemic which swept the country.

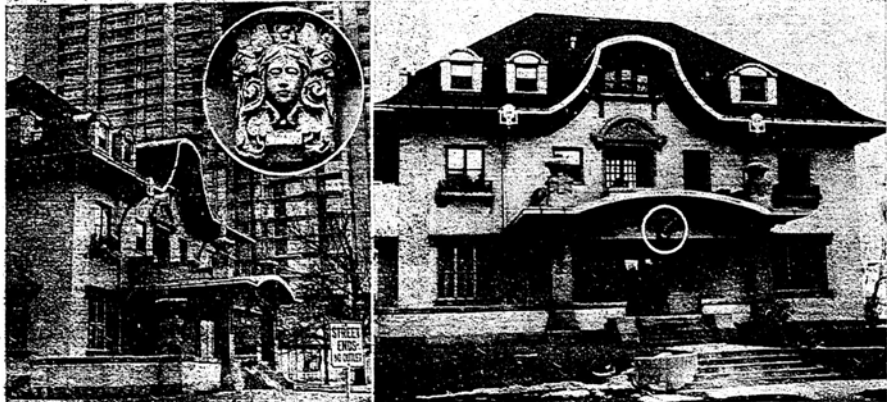
Then in 1927 the elder Strom's wife died while in Miami.

Lost Social Prominence

After World War II, Sheridan road lost its former social prominence. Buildings were sold and converted for use as nursing homes, fraternity houses, preparatory schools, and residences for religious orders.

In 1948, the Franciscan Fathers purchased the building at 6039 Sheridan rd. and converted it for use by students attending Loyola university. They will open a new residence at Kenmore and Glenlake avenues in September.

Last year, Dunbar purchased the Sheridan road building and an adjoining mansion, which already has been wrecked.



Mansion at 6039 Sheridan rd. will be demolished this month to make room for a 45-story building. Inset shows an example of the ornate design found over the entrance and along the roof line.

(TRIBUNE STAFF Photos by James O'Leary)



Top: The imminent demolition of the Axel Strom house at 6039 N. Sheridan Rd., and the larger issue of the ongoing demolition of mansions on the street, was the subject of an article in the March 2, 1969, *Chicago Tribune*. Bottom: A view of North Sheridan Rd. looking south from roughly 6240 North. Berger Park, with its surviving mansions and coach houses, is in the foreground, while apartment towers can be seen in the blocks to the south.

N. Side battle

Lakefront property rescued for park

By Mitchell Locin

NORTH SIDE community groups apparently have won their battle to prevent the last sizable piece of undeveloped lakefront property in Chicago from being turned into another apartment complex.

The Chicago Park District has reached agreement with the owner of the land, at 6205-49 N. Sheridan Rd., to purchase the 3.3-acre site for a park.

"We're delighted," said Kathy Osterman, vice president and recreation chairman of the Edgewater Community Council, a citizens group. "It's a big victory for the neighborhood and the whole City of Chicago."

THE PROPERTY, which includes 450 feet of beach frontage and two old mansions, is owned by the Clerics of St. Viator, a Catholic religious order.

The land had a price tag of \$3 million, which apartment developers were ready to pay. But, the deal with the park district calls for a purchase price of \$2.3 million in federal community development funds.

Park board President Raymond Simon was ready to call for a vote on the contract at the board's Feb. 10 meeting but agreed to delay the vote until Monday's meeting to allow some of the com-



Tribune photo by Walter Kahl

Two mansions now occupy land at 6205-49 N. Sheridan Rd. set aside for a 3.3-acre park. North Side community groups rallied to persuade the Chicago Park District to negotiate a deal for the valuable lakefront property.

Edgewater wouldn't let old mansions die

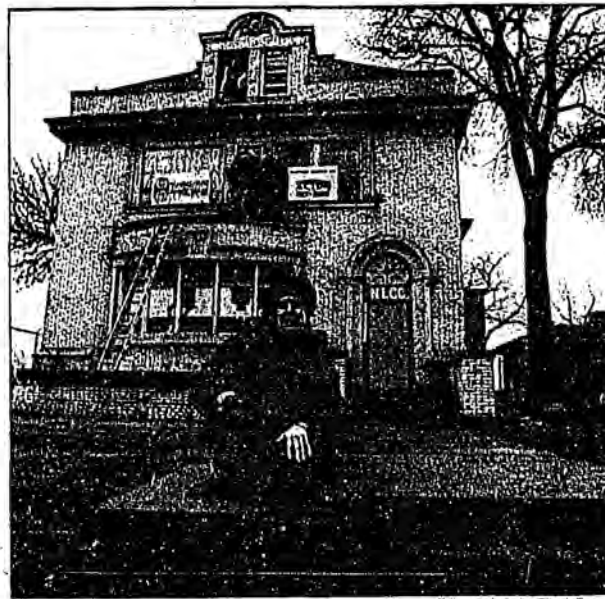
By Stevenson Swanson

Time is almost never on the side of a community organization when it opposes government or a developer. Interest among volunteers is too hard to sustain over the long haul. Initial outrage cools to numbed acceptance.

But the people of Edgewater have stayed angry for eight years over the threat that two turn-of-the-century mansions at 6219 and 6205 N. Sheridan Rd.—practically the last of their kind along the lakefront—might be torn down. A dedication ceremony on Saturday finally began the next-to-last chapter in the story of the successful fight.

The ceremony, with congratulatory speeches by local and state politicians, formally marked the beginning of work to restore the northernmost mansion. When work is finished in the spring, the last chapter of the tale will be the opening of the building as the North Lakeside Cultural Center.

"I really hope that it becomes a home for culture and the arts, for people to come together and share experiences and get to know other people," said Ellen Mazer, the center's executive director. "We hope to make the center a part of



Tribune photo by Chuck Berman

The mansion at 6219 N. Sheridan Rd. will become the North Lakeside Cultural Center, with Ellen Mazer as executive director.

the Clerics of St. Viator, an order of Catholic priests that had used the two mansions as dormitories, decided to move. The disappearance of yet another chunk of private lakefront open space seemed only a matter of time as developers began to inquire about buying the houses, tearing them down and constructing high-rise apartment buildings.

But Edgewater was the home of feisty community groups and activists. The Edgewater Community Council and Ald. David Orr (49th), whose ward includes the Viatorian mansions, worked for preservation of the property. In 1981, the Chicago Park District offered to buy the 3.5-acre site for \$2.3 million. The Viatorians could have gotten more from a private developer, but as a nonprofit group with a social conscience, the order was satisfied with the sale.

The next threat to the property came from its new owner. The park district had plans and funds for the south mansion, which was built in 1906, but it said the north mansion, constructed in 1910, was too badly deteriorated to save, given the district's budget.

Community leaders rallied their troops again, and the park district

Community support and pressure in the 1980s brought about the Chicago Park District's purchase of the Downey and Gunder houses, for many years owned by the Clerics of St. Viator, for Berger Park.

tor religious order in the 1940s; the houses provided housing for the order until they were acquired by the Chicago Park District in 1980.

The transition of the Downey and Gunder houses from private institutional ownership to public park properties exemplify an important theme in Edgewater community history in the late twentieth century as the increasingly densely-populated neighborhood sought more public lakefront park properties. Lincoln Park, after its last expansion north to Hollywood Avenue in 1957, had not been extended further. The construction of many apartment high-rises in the neighborhood had increased population without a similar increase in park land.

When the Viatorians made it known that they intended to sell the Downey and Gunder houses and their associated land, neighborhood residents and organizations worked to get the Chicago Park District to buy the property for expansion of the small Berger Park and Beach that already existed at the foot of Granville Ave. At first, the CPD was reluctant to commit to the rehabilitation of the houses themselves, but community pressure, combined with fund-raising, convinced the CPD to keep both houses and their respective coach houses as park facilities, and they were renovated in 1988. The Downey House, at the corner of Sheridan and Granville, became the Berger Park South Mansion and was rehabilitated to serve as a recreational facility for the park. The Gunder House to the north became the North Lakefront Cultural Center and housed classes and other activities. The Gunder House coach house housed a cafe. Land north of the Gunder House, originally the location of a mansion at 6237 N. Sheridan Rd., contains a playground installed after the acquisition of the land by the Chicago Park District.

This acquisition of the two Berger Park mansions came as Edgewater residents increasingly wanted to preserve the best-surviving buildings from its early history. Arguably the most architecturally significant house to survive on North Sheridan Road, the Colvin House at 5940 N. Sheridan Rd. and a quintessential Prairie-style house by George W. Maher from 1909, was designated a Chicago Landmark in 1994. Other already-designated Chicago Landmarks in Edgewater include the Bryn Mawr and Belle Shore Apartment Hotel Buildings on the 1000-block of W. Bryn Mawr Ave. and the Gauler Double Houses at 5917 and 5921 N. Magnolia Ave. Historic districts for the commercial streetscape along Bryn Mawr Ave. and the Lakewood-Balmoral residential subdivision to the southwest have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as a number of individual properties, including the Edgewater Beach Apartments, the Epworth United Methodist Church at 5253 N. Kenmore Ave., and the Church of the Atonement at 5749 N. Kenmore Ave.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sections 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a final recommendation of landmark designation for an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art or other object within the City of Chicago if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Sheridan Road Mansions be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Value as an Example of City, State or National Heritage

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The Sheridan Road Mansions exemplify the significant early residential history and development of North Sheridan Road in the Edgewater community area as a corridor of high-quality lakefront mansions built in the early years of the twentieth century.
- The four mansions that comprise the Sheridan Road Mansions remain among the best-surviving of these "first-generation" mansions that drew Chicagoans of wealth to the far North Side lakefront in the early twentieth century.

Criterion 4: Exemplary Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship.

- The Sheridan Road Mansions, built between 1906 and 1917, are excellent examples of significant architectural styles of the early twentieth century, including Prairie, American Four Square, and Classical Revival.
- Two of the houses—the Downey and Gunder Houses—retain their historic matching coach houses.
- The buildings are finely crafted in terms of brick, stone, decorative metal and tile, and they possess beautifully-detailed ornament in the Prairie and Classical styles.

Criterion 5: Work of Significant Architect or Designer

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- Two of the Sheridan Road Mansions—the Downey and Wheeler houses—were designed by Chicago architect William Carbys Zimmerman, significant to both the city and the State of Illinois as both the West Parks Commission architect and as the architect for the State of Illinois in the early years of the twentieth century.
- A third house—the Schmidt House—was designed by George W. Maher, a significant progressive architect working in the Prairie School movement of the early twentieth century. Maher is widely admired for his individualistic combination of historic building forms with non-historic ornamentation.

Criterion 7: Unique or Distinctive Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or City of Chicago.

- The Sheridan Road Mansions are visually-distinctive and unusual within the context of present-day North Sheridan Road, which is dominated by tall, large-scale apartment buildings mainly built after World War II.



Downey House details, including (clockwise from top right): a second-story window centered in the front façade; a decorative tile medallion set in the front porch floor; and the carved-stone front-entrance surround.



Gunder House details, including (clockwise from top left): a carved stone low-relief panel ornamenting the front façade; the staircase windows and dormer on the north side of the house; decorative grillwork in the front entrance lunette; and one of the front-entrance light fixtures.

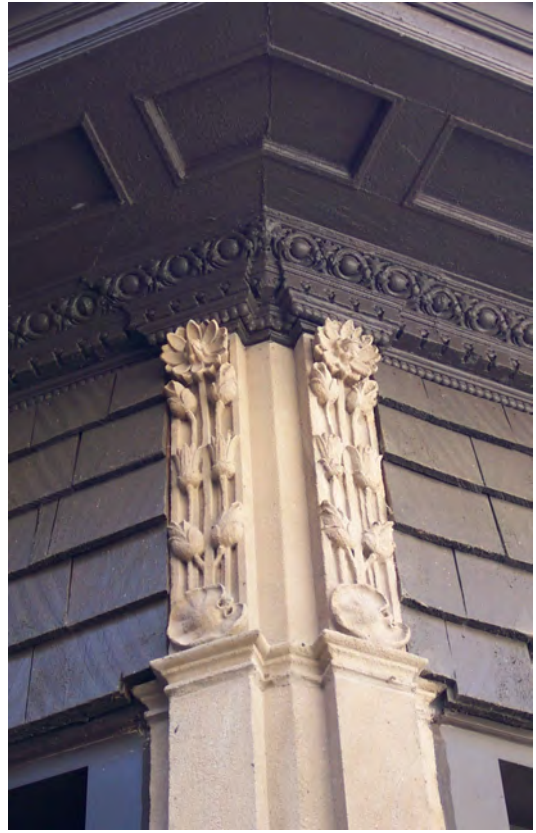


Coach house details, including (top) the Downey coach house; and (bottom) the Gunder coach house.





Wheeler House details, including (clockwise from top): a detail of the carved stone front door surround; the view from the front porch across terrace to Lake Michigan; and one of the light fixtures flanking the front entrance.



Schmidt House details, including (clockwise from top left): Classical-style moldings and paneled eave; carved stone flower ornament on north bay; pairs of carved-stone columns ornamenting entrance arcade; and stone planter above front entrance.

Integrity Criteria

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architecture or aesthetic value.

The Sheridan Road Mansions include four mansions and two associated coach houses. Each of these buildings retains its historic siting, overall building forms, and the vast majority of their historic exterior building details. In addition, the Downey and Gunder Houses, along with their coach houses, remain within a visually-open landscaped setting that exemplifies in overall visual effect, although not in detail, the sense of visual spaciousness and visual connection between Sheridan Road houses and Lake Michigan that historically was found along the street.

Changes that have occurred to the buildings exterior are varied, depending upon the buildings, and typically are window replacements within original openings, modifications of entrances for ADA accessibility standards, new porch paving and stair railings, and other changes required for changes of use from private residential to private institutional and public park uses. Specific changes include the loss of a decorative stone balustrade for the Gunder House's front terrace, along with the loss of a decorative canopy sheltering the building's front entrance; the loss of the Wheeler House's original coach house and the addition of a ADA-accessible ramp on the building's west elevation, along with the recreation of the building's original side porch; and the insertion of offices in the porte-cochere and an ADA-accessible ramp in the driveway of the Schmidt House. In general, the Sheridan Road Mansions retain excellent historic integrity and exemplify the historic contexts within which they are significant.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark. The Commission has identified the significant features for the Sheridan Road Mansions, and these are defined in the Commission's "Recommendation to the City Council of Chicago that Chicago Landmark Designation be adopted for the Sheridan Road Mansions," dated April 4, 2013.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A.G. Wheeler, Builder, Dead," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 25, 1917, p. 13.

"Building on the North Side," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1894, p. 30.

City of Chicago, Chicago Historic Resources Survey.

"Changing times, bulldozers destroy once fashionable mansions," *Chicago Tribune*, May 2, 1969, p. E1.

Chicago Blue Book of Selected Names of Chicago and Suburban Towns. Chicago: Chicago Directory Co., 1917.

- Chicago History Museum. *Index to the American Contractor's Chicago Building Permit Column, 1898-1912*.
- Chicago Tribune*, various articles.
- "Community Area 77: Edgewater," in Chicago Fact Book Consortium, ed. *Local Community Fact Book, Chicago Metropolitan Area*. Chicago: The Chicago Fact Book Consortium, 1984.
- "Edgewater," in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*.
- Geo. W. Maher Quarterly*, October-December 1999, pp. 8-10.
- "Joseph Downey, Prominent Here for 50 Yrs., Dies," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 13, 1925, p. 16.
- Locin, Mitchell. "Lakefront property rescued for park," *Chicago Tribune*, February 19, 1981, p. A1.
- Marquis, A.N. *The Book of Chicagoans*. Chicago: A.N. Marquis & Co., 1911 & 1917 eds.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Homes*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.
- Nagelberg, Alvin. "Building Pace Quickens in Sherican Road with Construction of New Apartments," *Chicago Tribune*, November 4, 1965, p. 3.
- Pacyga, Dominic A., and Ellen Skerrett. *Chicago, City of Neighborhoods: Histories & Tours*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986.
- Polk's Chicago Numerical Street and Avenue Directory*, 1928.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. atlases, 1894, 1928, 1950.
- Swanson, Stevenson. "Edgewater wouldn't let old mansions die." *Chicago Tribune*, December 6, 1987, p. A1.
- Taussig, Meredith. "Preliminary Staff Summary of Information on the Edwin M. Colvin House, 5940 North Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois." Chicago: Commission on Chicago Landmarks, 1985, resubmitted 1990.
- Tatum, Terry, "Pate-Comiskey House, 5131 South Michigan Avenue: Landmark Designation Report." Chicago: Commission on Chicago Landmarks, 2003.
- Whims, Christine M. "Berger Park," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2009.
- White, Marian A. *Book of the North Shore; homes, gardens, landscapes, highways & byways, past & present*. Chicago: J.H. White, 1910.
- Withey, Henry F., and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970.



Photos of the Wheeler House, published in 1910 in *The Book of the North Shore*.



Photos of the Gunder House, published in 1910 in *The Book of the North Shore*.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CITY OF CHICAGO

Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

Department of Housing and Economic Development

Andrew J. Mooney, Commissioner

Patricia A. Scudiero, Managing Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Planning and Zoning

Eleanor Esser Gorski, Assistant Commissioner, Historic Preservation Division

Project Staff

Terry Tatum, research, writing, photography and layout

Eleanor Esser Gorski, editing

Illustrations

Pacyga and Skerrett, *Chicago, City of Neighborhoods*: p. 6.

White, *Book of the North Shore*: pp. 7, 47, & 48.

Chicago Daily Tribune: pp. 9, 12 (bottom left), 35, 36 (top), & 37.

IDOT Traffic Photograph Collection, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago: p. 10.

Historic Preservation Division: pp. 12 (top, bottom right), 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 36 (bottom), 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44.

Flickr website (<http://www.flickr.com>): pp. 30 (top right, middle left & right, bottom) and 32 (middle left & right, bottom).

Wikipedia website site (en.wikipedia.org): p. 30 (top left).

Tatum, "Pulaski Park Fieldhouse: Landmark Designation Report:" p. 32 (top left).

COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

Rafael M. Leon, Chairman
James M. Houlihan, Vice-President
Andrew J. Mooney, Secretary
Anita Blanchard, M.D.
Victor Ignacio Dziekiewicz
Tony Hu
Mary Ann Smith
Ernest C. Wong

The Commission is staffed by the:



Department of Housing and Economic Development
Bureau of Planning and Zoning
Historic Preservation Division
33 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1600
Chicago, Illinois 60602
312.744.3200 (TEL) ~ 312.744.9140 (FAX)
<http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>

Printed December 2012; revised and reprinted April 2013.