

May 4, 2022

Commission on Chicago Landmarks
c/o Chairman Ernest Wong
City of Chicago
Chicago City Hall
121 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags

Dear Chairman Wong and Commissioners:

As the Commission prepares for a vote to move the Paseo Boricua Landmark nomination along to the City Council, Preservation Chicago commends DPD staff and Commissioners for their work to this point.

The Puerto Rican flags that stand proudly on Division Street mark a commercial corridor that has undergone some tremendous revival thanks in part to the effort to install these flags as a demonstration of pride from and for the Puerto Rican community – lifting up Puerto Rican heritage and culture as well.

These 55-foot-tall flags are a monumental gateway to a community that is too often underrepresented. The flags have bolstered the commercial corridor, and it creates a great place to embrace Puerto Rican culture and heritage. We are proud to be a part of a city that honors its rich and diverse history, and we are excited to see this Landmark nomination move along to the City Council.

Thank you as always for the great work you do. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there is any way we can support this important work.

Sincerely,



Mary Lu Seidel
Director of Community Engagement

May 3, 2022

Commission on Chicago Landmarks

c/o Chairman Ernest Wong

City of Chicago

Chicago City Hall

121 N. LaSalle Street

Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: Monumental Baptist Church, 729 East Oakwood Boulevard

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

Preservation Chicago reaffirms their support for the landmarking of Bronzeville's Monumental Baptist Church at 729 East Oakwood Boulevard. This architecturally impressive and historically significant structure designed by prolific firm Patton, Fisher & Miller is more than deserving of official Chicago Landmark status, and we are happy to see it on today's agenda for a final Landmark recommendation.

This detailed and magnificent Romanesque Revival church was completed at the turn of the century, yet it does not fail to stun today. The rich masonry work and incredible attention to scale and massing on display are central facets of what can certainly be considered one of Patton, Fisher & Miller's greatest works. The trio worked both as a group and as separate entities, bringing to life beautiful architecture across the nation. Patton & Fisher's powerful works on the IIT campus, the Main Building and Machinery Hall (both officially designated Chicago Landmarks), demonstrate compelling precedent for the Landmarking of Monumental Baptist Church, one of Chicago's finest religious buildings.

As Landmarks staff has spoken about at length, the church's long association with the Civil Rights movement and its place in the community for decades further reinforces the criteria for Landmarking, showing that the church is not only an architectural and artistic achievement, but that it also represents a significant human resonance for the surrounding Bronzeville community. The decision to designate Monumental Baptist Church is commendable, and shows a powerful commitment to the history of Chicago's South Side.

In the wake of the tragic fire at Antioch Baptist Church, it is essential that we continue to protect Chicago's historic Black churches in every way possible. The Landmarking of Monumental Baptist Church does exactly that, and Preservation Chicago offers unequivocal support towards this end. We want to express our sincerest thanks to Landmarks staff, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, and Monumental Baptist Church for their dedicated work on this Landmark designation.

Sincerely,

Max Chavez

Director of Research & Special Projects

Preservation Chicago

May 3, 2022

Commission on Chicago Landmarks

c/o Chairman Ernest Wong

City of Chicago

Chicago City Hall

121 N. LaSalle Street

Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: 2229 West Augusta Boulevard, Ukrainian Village District

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

Preservation Chicago commends Landmarks staff's preliminary recommendation to disapprove a demolition application for the brick two-flat structure at 2229 W. Augusta Boulevard in the Ukrainian Village District. The two-flat, constructed in 1909, is a contributing property within the historic district, and an approved demolition would set an alarming precedent for other contributing buildings in other Chicago Landmark districts.

Rampant and unnecessary demolition in Chicago daily threatens our built environment, both historic and otherwise, wiping much-needed housing units from the map, wasting extant building materials in the face of a looming climate crisis, and often resulting in vacant lots that erode our communities, serving no one in the process. In any instance where demolition is proposed, outside of those involving safety or structural issues, we must be considering creative reuse, maintenance, and restoration as our very first options. There is simply no excuse for the wrecking ball when decades of successful adaptive reuse examples demonstrate the manifold benefits of working with what we already have.

Chicago's vernacular housing, in particular, is on the frontline of the battle against demolition. Chicago's two-, three-, and six-flats, bungalows, and workers cottages are excellent examples of how our city has successfully created dense and more affordable housing for Chicagoans of all walks of life. The destruction of these buildings for empty lots or new construction single-family homes exacerbates the affordable housing crisis, and erodes Chicago's rich history of residential design.

We encourage the disapproval of this demolition permit, and hope to see the future enacting of additional policies that will discourage the unneeded demolition of otherwise functional structures, while also incentivizing reuse and rehabilitation.

Sincerely,

Max Chavez

Director of Research & Special Projects

Preservation Chicago

April 30, 2022

Ernest Wong Chairman, Commission on Chicago Landmarks
121 N. LaSalle St., 10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Opposition to Demolition Permit, 2229 W. Augusta

Dear Mr. Wong,

We are writing this letter to express our opposition to the demolition of the building at 2229 W. Augusta.

Many years ago, when the Ukrainian Village Landmark District was first established, we were proud that our historic house was recognized as being part of a greater whole, made up of a combination of historic structures. And, now, we are even prouder, as time has proven that the preservation of this neighborhood was the smart, forward looking thing to do.

When friends come over, they ask about the landmark sign on the lamp post out front, and we explain what it means to live here and what it means to all of us in the district..

We are dismayed, therefore, to discover that one of the buildings that forms a part of the Ukrainian Village Landmark District could be destroyed. While it is only one building, it is a piece of this greater whole that is the Landmark District.

When one piece is removed the entire District is weaker, which is why we ask you to deny the demolition permit for 2229 W. Augusta.

Sincerely,

Lee Gerstein and John Gregg
2225 W. Augusta