

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station 3600 N. Halsted St.

Final Landmark Recommendation adopted by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, June 6, 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.

42ND PRECINCT / TOWN HALL POLICE STATION

3600 N. HALSTED ST.

BUILT: 1907
ARCHITECT: NOT KNOWN

The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station, located in Chicago's Lake View community area, is one of the oldest and most architecturally significant extant historic police station buildings in Chicago. It was constructed in 1907 on the site of Lake View Township's Town Hall and subsequently has been commonly referred to as the "Town Hall Police Station." Only three older police station buildings are extant in Chicago, and the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is arguably the finest-designed and crafted of these early neighborhood police station buildings.

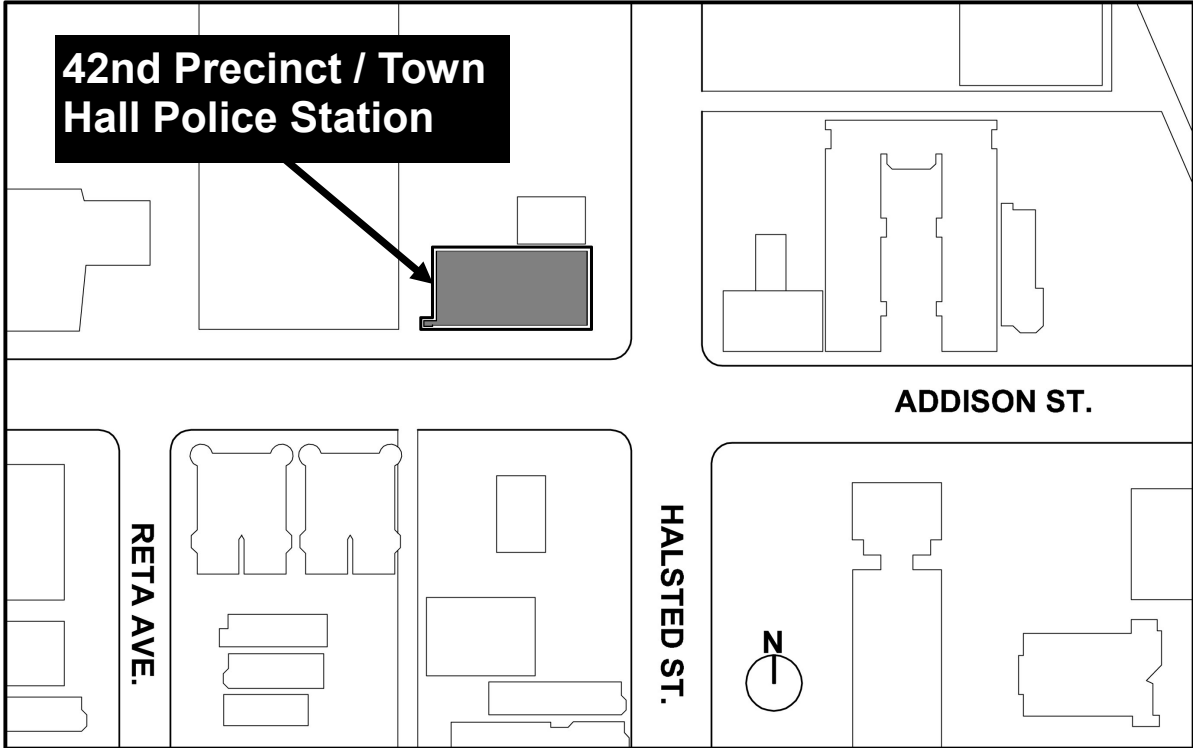
The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station also is significant as a finely-designed Classical Revival-style police station. Distinguished by its symmetrical façade arrangement, classically-inspired ornament, and distinctive copper cornice, this well-preserved police station exemplifies the influence of Classicism on the architecture of government and public buildings in Chicago in the early twentieth century.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Built in 1907, the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is a remarkably well-preserved example of a neighborhood police station, a building type found throughout Chicago in the early twentieth century. These stations were among the most visible physical manifestations



The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is one of the City of Chicago's oldest buildings built as a police station. It was constructed in 1907 on the former site of the Lake View Township Town Hall.



The building is located on the northwest corner of N. Halsted St. and W. Addison St. in the Lake View community area.

of law enforcement to most Chicago citizens. Most police stations of the age as the Town Hall station have been demolished, making its survival even more significant.

The history of the Chicago Police Department reflects the metamorphosis of Chicago from a small town on the shores of Lake Michigan into the “Metropolis of the Mid-West.” Law enforcement in newly-established Chicago in the 1830s was left to a “Police Constable,” whose office was established in 1835. During the 1840s, deputy constables were chosen from each city ward, marking the beginnings of police decentralization.

By the mid-1850s, this system was seen as undermanned and inadequate for the needs of the rapidly growing city, and in 1855 the Chicago Police Department was established. Supervised by a Board of Commissioners, the newly-established police force, numbering roughly 100 men, was divided between three police stations, or precinct houses. Their locations in or near Chicago's bustling downtown was a reflection of the city's relative geographic compactness at this time.

During the 1860s, the Chicago Police Department kept the three-precinct structure but added several sub-precinct houses in outlying neighborhoods. But the real growth in the police force and its buildings did not occur until the 1870s and 1880s. In the two decades following the Chicago Fire of 1871, Chicago grew from a city of 298,000 to a metropolis of almost 1,100,000, an astounding 268 per cent growth rate. Chicago's police force grew accordingly, from 455 policemen assigned to 11 precinct stations and sub-stations in 1872 to over 1,255 spread among 20 district police stations in 1888.

The expansion of the Chicago Police Department during these years reflects not only the sheer growth of Chicago's population and the need to patrol a larger geographic area, but also certain social and economic tensions that rocked Chicago society during the last quarter of the 19th century. The struggle of factory workers for reasonable pay and work conditions is a major theme that runs through this period of Chicago's history. Influenced by economic conditions that waxed and waned during the 1870s and 1880s in response to national economic trends, workers fought for their economic rights through political organization and rallies. Several became bloody conflicts with the Chicago Police Department, most famously the “Haymarket Tragedy,” which occurred on May 4, 1886. The death and injury by a thrown bomb of policemen dispatched to disperse a worker's rally on Desplaines Street near Randolph Street was a *cause-celebre* for both police supporters and labor activists, and, along with other incidents, led to the City's construction of new police stations and the hiring and training of additional policemen.

The speed with which the Chicago Police Department was growing accelerated in 1889, when Chicago annexed large tracts of land to the north and south, including Lake View, Jefferson, Hyde Park, and Lake townships. The resulting need to police the much larger city led to a reorganization and expansion of the Chicago Police Department. Existing police stations in the former suburbs became part of Chicago's network of neighborhood police stations, while new stations were constructed for newly-developing neigh-



The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station exemplifies the important history of the Chicago Police Department.

Representative Chicago Police Department images:

Top left: A photograph of Chicago policemen, circa 1895. Top right: A police wagon and patrolmen, circa 1900. Bottom left: An arrested man in handcuffs being booked at the Harrison Police Station, 1907. Bottom right: Chicago policemen carrying the body of a victim of the *Eastland* disaster, 1915.

borhoods that lacked an adequate police presence. By 1895 there were 43 police stations in Chicago, including the main Central Headquarters downtown.

The turn-of-the-twentieth century saw continued growth. Six new police stations, were built between 1906 and 1909, including the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Station. Three more were constructed during 1917 and 1918, one was built in 1926, and six were built in the late 1930s. In addition, improvements in police equipment improved the efficiency of the department. For example, the motorization of the police force began in 1908 with the purchase of three automobiles, and by 1915 all 50 department vehicles were motorized.

The Lake View community area before 1907

European settlement of Lake View Township in the nineteenth century established it as a sparsely-settled territory of farms and estates situated between Lake Michigan on the east and the north branch of the Chicago River on the west. The township's southern boundary was Fullerton Ave., for many years Chicago's north boundary, while Lake View's northern boundary, with Rogers Park Township, became Devon Avenue. Farmers from Germany, Sweden, and Luxembourg were among Lake View's earliest settlers, and the raising of celery was an early important crop.

In 1854, James Rees and Elisha Hundley built the Lakeview House hotel near today's Lake Shore Drive and Byron Street as a countryside resort for Chicagoans. Wealthy Chicagoans subsequently bought land near Lake Michigan for country homes. The 1871 Chicago Fire encouraged the development of the southern end of the township, as many Chicagoans in the 1870s and 1880s bought newly-built houses outside the city and its more restrictive building codes. Railroad lines such as the Chicago & North Western and Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul provided access from Chicago to growing suburban developments such as Ravenswood and Edgewater. The Lake View Township Town Hall, on the future site of the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station, was built in 1872 to serve the township.

In 1889, Lake View Township voted in favor of annexation by Chicago. Development began to accelerate at a rapid pace, encouraged by infrastructure improvements, including, at first by improved streetcar service, then, in 1900, the opening of the Northwestern Elevated Railroad (now the Chicago Transit Authority's Red Line). City services continued to be upgraded, and new city facilities, including the new 42nd Precinct Police Station at Halsted and Addison, were built.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

The 42nd Precinct/Town Hall Police Station was authorized by Chicago City Council in 1906 and completed in 1907 at an estimated cost of \$35,000. Research has not determined an architect, although it is probable that the City of Chicago Architect's office designed the building. The building is located on the northwest corner of North Halsted and West Addison streets in the Lake View community area. Its location, historically considered the municipal center of the township of Lake View, was the site of Lake View's Town Hall prior to

Right: The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station was built on the site of the Lake View Township Town Hall.



A photograph of the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station, circa 1920.

the township's annexation to Chicago in 1889. Consequently, the 42nd Precinct Police Station has from its earliest days been commonly referred to as the "Town Hall Police Station."

The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is a two-story brick-and-stone governmental building set on a raised basement. The primary (east and south) elevations are constructed of reddish-brown face brick and smooth-faced limestone ornament. The unadorned secondary (north and west) elevations are constructed of pressed brick and common brick, respectively. The building is rectangular in shape and regular in profile, and its overall massing is boxy with few building elements projecting beyond the wall plane or roofline.

The station's primary street-facing elevations—fronting east onto North Halsted Street and south onto West Addison Street—incorporate similar composition and detailing and building materials. Characteristic of the Classical Revival style, a substantial limestone base anchors the building, while an elaborate copper cornice with a heavy overhang and dentils runs uninterrupted along the building's east and south elevations and terminates with returns on the unadorned north and west elevations. These elevations are organized into orderly bays defined by slightly projecting brick pilasters which alternate with slightly recessed wall planes. To further emphasize the symmetry of each bay, pilasters are finished in running-bond brickwork while a common-bond pattern is employed for the recessed portions of the wall. A simple limestone plinth and Tuscan capital accentuate each pilaster. Between the pilasters, within the recessed portions of the façade, window openings at the first and second floors are aligned vertically in symmetrical rows. The window openings are separated by a slightly recessed masonry panel which is framed by a decorative molding featuring an egg-and-dart motif. Generally, paired one-over-one, double-hung, non-historic replacement windows are set below a fixed transom within each window opening.

The most prominent ornamental feature of the Halsted Street façade, the building's main pedestrian entrance, is framed by a richly detailed Classical Revival-style limestone surround that projects from the wall plane. Atop the elaborate entrance, the words "POLICE STATION" are carved in relief on an entablature supported by geometric stepped corbels. Below the entablature, a limestone cartouche ornamented with prominent scrollwork frames an oval window which is set atop a bracketed stepped lintel. Below the lintel, "42nd Precinct" is carved in relief on the head of the door frame. On the Addison Street elevation, a former vehicular entry (now converted to a pedestrian entrance) features an entablature bearing the word "PATROL" set atop a bracketed lintel.

To provide a visual transition, a finished return, incorporating reddish-brown brick and copper cornice, extends approximately three feet from the primary façades unto the west and north façades. These otherwise unadorned secondary elevations are constructed of common brick and pressed brick, respectively. The west elevation fronts onto a service drive. A single-story masonry connection (built in 1994) links the police station to an adjacent single-story auxiliary building (built circa 1931) just to the north. The masonry connector and the adjacent one-story structure are constructed of red brick and feature simple cast-stone banding. Slightly north of the auxiliary structure is a service drive and parking lot. A multi-bay, single-story brick garage (built circa 1931) is located north of the parking lot. (The auxiliary



The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is two-stories in height and built of brown brick and limestone trim. Top: A view of the building's Halsted Street façade. Bottom: The Addison Street façade.

building, connector, and garage building are not considered significant features for the purpose of this proposed Chicago Landmark designation.)

THE CLASSICAL REVIVAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IN CHICAGO

With its Classical Revival-style design, the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station exemplifies the importance of the Classical architectural tradition, arguably the most important architectural stylistic tradition found in historic Chicago architecture. The use and adaptation of Classicism to a modern building type such as neighborhood police stations is consistent with how Americans in general, and Chicagoans in particular, saw architectural design in the early twentieth century. With a few exceptions, most Americans wanted buildings that were modern and up-to-date in function, but were designed using traditional architectural styles and materials.

In that context, the Classical Revival style remained an important part of American cultural life. Classical design was seen as a significant aspect of Western civilization, and buildings intended to house important governmental, cultural, economic, or social institutions, whether public or private, often utilized Classical forms and ornament as part of their designs.

The influence of Classicism was strengthened by Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition, held in Jackson Park in 1893. This grandly-scaled "White City" of Classical Revival-style exposition buildings and monuments on the city's south lakefront was immensely influential in the popularization of the style, both among Chicagoans and throughout the United States in the subsequent decades. In the years after the 1893 fair, city architects often turned to the Classical Revival style in designing public buildings such as police stations and firehouses as the style fit well with the general architectural tastes in America during the early 1900s.

Within the context of Chicago's surviving historic police stations, the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is one of the most elaborate in exterior design with its Classical-style entrance ornament and cornice. Older police station buildings that remain are the Italianate-style 40th Precinct Police Station at 2126 N. Halsted St. (built in 1888, a contributing building in the Armitage-Halsted Chicago Landmark District and currently used for retail); the Romanesque-style 7th District Police Station at 943-949 W. Maxwell St. (also built in 1888, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and now owned by the University of Illinois at Chicago); and the Romanesque-style 15th Precinct Police Station building at 2938 E. 89th St. (built in 1893 and now housing the City of Chicago's South Chicago Health Center). Later police stations built after the Town Hall station in the 1910s and 1920s were also built in the Classical Revival style, but with simpler overall designs and detailing. Stations built in the 1930s typically were designed in the Art Deco style.



The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is handsomely designed in the Classical Revival architectural style. Top: The building's boldly-projecting copper cornice, detailed with Classical-style dentils. Right: The stone surround ornamenting the Halsted Street entrance has Classical-style swags. It also is carved with the words "42nd Precinct" directly over the doorway and "Police Station" above an oval window lighting the building's entrance vestibule.



LATER HISTORY

During the twentieth century, the Chicago Police Department went through many changes, including the consolidation of precincts and the construction of new larger police stations to replace most of the City's earlier stations. The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station continued in police use until 2010, when a new police station built just to the west on West Addison Street replaced it. The building is color-coded "orange" in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. Current plans are for the building to be rehabilitated as part of a larger affordable-housing development geared to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered seniors.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Section 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 sufficient historic design integrity to convey its significance.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station 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 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station exemplifies the historic importance of the Chicago Police Department and historic police station buildings to the history of Chicago's neighborhoods.

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 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is one of the oldest surviving police station buildings in Chicago and is an excellent example of this building type of importance to Chicago neighborhoods.
- The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station is finely designed and crafted in the Classical Revival architectural style, with handsomely-carved limestone ornament and a finely-molded copper cornice.

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 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station retains its historic integrity in location, site and setting. Overall, the building maintains a high degree of architectural integrity on its exterior facades and its massing is intact. The main entrance surround bearing the inscriptions “Police Station” and “42nd Precinct” and the vehicular entry bay inscribed with “Patrol” are intact on the east and south elevations and visually exemplify the building's history as a neighborhood police station.

Changes to the building's exterior are relatively minor and do not detract from its ability to convey its architectural and historical significance. The original windows have been replaced with non-historic metal windows within the original openings on all elevations. Historic light fixtures originally flanking the police station's main entrance off Halsted have been removed and a modern metal door and handrails have been installed (c.1966-1985).

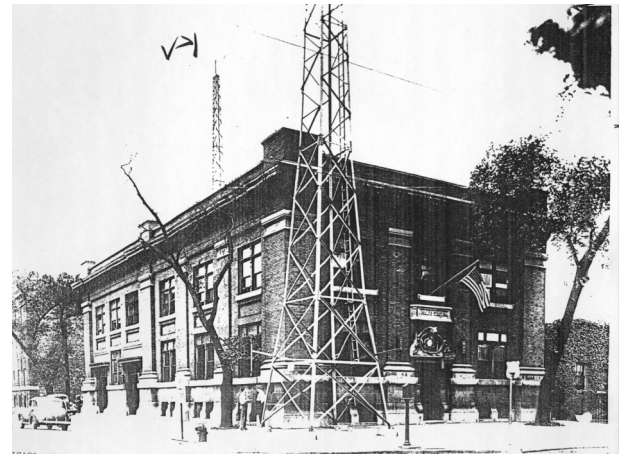
On the south (Addison) elevation, two basement window openings in the second easternmost bay were enlarged to create an entrance to the basement; a rail and a set of concrete stairs leading below grade were installed to create this entry (c. 1966-1985). Also on the south elevation, the limestone surround of the westernmost vehicular bay was removed and the bay was completely infilled with masonry (c. 1950-1965). The eastern vehicular bay which retains its limestone surround has been substantially infilled with masonry and a pair of modern metal doors has been installed (post-1985).

Despite these changes, the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station retains its ability to express its architectural and historical values as a finely-designed and -crafted police station building in the Classical Revival architectural style. One of the oldest surviving police station buildings in Chicago, the building exemplifies the significance of the Chicago Police Department to the history of Chicago. The building's historic integrity is preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express such values.

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.

Based upon its evaluation of the 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as follows:



The 42nd Precinct / Town Hall Police Station has very good historic exterior integrity, retaining its historic site, overall form and the vast majority of exterior details. Photos show the building from (clockwise from top left) circa 1920; 1950, 1985, 2012.





Top: The police station has a small auxiliary building, built circa 1931, that is located on the north side of the building. It originally was physically separate, but was connected to the police station by a narrow connector in 1994. Bottom: North of the police station is a one-story garage building built circa 1931. Neither of these small buildings are considered significant features for the purpose of this proposed landmark designation.

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building.

The police station's north and west elevations are considered secondary for the purposes of this Chicago Landmark designation and Commission building permit review.

A one-story brick auxiliary building, built circa 1931 and attached to the police station's north elevation by a brick connector built in 1994, and a separate one-story brick garage building north of the station, also built circa 1931, are not considered significant features for the purpose of this landmark designation.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Historic Preservation Division: pp. 4 (top), 10,12, 15 (bottom), and 16.

Yesterday's Chicago: p. 6 (top left).

Burke and O'Gorman, *End of Watch*: p. 6 (top right).

Chicago Daily News Photograph Collection, Chicago History Museum: pp. 6 (bottom left & right).

Clark and Schutt, *Lake View Saga*: p. 8 (top).

Chicago Tribune: pp. 8 (bottom), 15 (top left).

Chicago Sun-Times: p. 15 (top right & middle).

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