

**CITY OF CHICAGO
COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

APRIL 2, 2026

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF CHICAGO THAT
CHICAGO LANDMARK DESIGNATION BE ADOPTED FOR THE**

CORTELYOU COMMONS

2324 N. CHALMERS ST.

Docket No. 2026-03

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago:

Pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code of the City of Chicago (the “Municipal Code”), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the “Commission”) has determined that Cortelyou Commons (the “Building”) is worthy of designation as a Chicago Landmark. On the basis of careful consideration of the history and architecture of the Building, the Commission has found that it satisfies the following two criteria set forth in Section 2-120-620 of the Municipal Code:

1. *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.*
4. *Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.*

I. BACKGROUND

The formal landmark designation process for the Building began on February 5, 2026, when the Commission approved a preliminary landmark recommendation (the "Preliminary Recommendation") for the Building as a Chicago Landmark. The Commission found that the Building meets two of the seven criteria for designation, as well as the integrity criterion, identified in the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance (Municipal Code, Section 2-120-580 *et seq.*). As part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission preliminarily identified the “significant historical and architectural features” of the Building as:

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

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated February 5, 2026, the most current iteration of which is dated April 2, 2026, incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit A** (the “Designation Report”).

At its regular meeting of March 5, 2026, the Commission received a report incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit B** (the “Department of Planning and Development Report”) from Ciere Boatright Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, stating that the proposed landmark designation of the Building supports the City’s overall planning goals and is consistent with the City’s governing policies and plans.

On March 16, 2026, the Commission received written consent to landmark designation of the Building in a form dated March 16, 2026, and signed by Sherri Sidler, Executive Vice President and CFO of DePaul University, the owner of the Building.

II. FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code, the Commission has reviewed the entire record of proceedings on the proposed Chicago Landmark designation, including the Designation Report and all of the information on the proposed landmark designation of the Building; and

WHEREAS, the Building was built as the Commons, or dining hall for the McCormick Theological Seminary and is a rare physical survivor of that institution’s presence in the Lincoln Park neighborhood from 1864 before moving to the Hyde Park neighborhood in 1974 and the building being acquired by neighboring DePaul University; and

WHEREAS, institutions of higher education have contributed to the built environment and culture of several of Chicago’s neighborhoods, including McCormick Theological Seminary and DePaul University in Lincoln Park, the University of Chicago in Hyde Park, and Loyola University in Rogers Park; and

WHEREAS, the McCormick Theological Seminary planned the Building as part of a complete reconstruction of its campus in the 1920s. Though thwarted by the Great Depression, the seminary’s plan was representative of a broader movement of higher education in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a period marked by institutional ambition to expand and modernize in response to changing educational and social demands; and

WHEREAS, the Building is dedicated to Reverend John R. Cortelyou (1914-1996), president of Depaul University from 1964 to 1981, who guided the university through a period of expansion both physically, in the construction of new buildings and acquisition of property like Cortelyou Commons from McCormick Theological Seminary, and academically by revising the curriculum and adding doctoral programs; and

WHEREAS, with its horizontal proportions, large windows with intricate tracery, buttresses, leaded glass, carved figures and extensive moldings, the Building is an exceptional example of Collegiate Gothic architecture, a substyle of the Late Gothic Revival style of architecture that flourished in America in the late nineteenth century up to the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, the Building embodies the architectural philosophy of the Collegiate Gothic style in creating academic spaces that evoke a sense of timeless scholarly tradition. Its design reflects the broader trend among American universities and institutions to construct buildings that symbolize intellectual gravitas through architectural references to medieval European academic and ecclesiastical structures; and

WHEREAS, the Collegiate Gothic style of architecture offered colleges and universities a functional style of architecture that could be easily adapted as curriculums evolved and which could be easily added to without aesthetic concerns; and

WHEREAS, the Building meets two criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1) and (4) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Building has significant historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value, the integrity of which is preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and ability to express such historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value; now, therefore,

THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS HEREBY:

1. Adopts the recitals, findings and statements of fact set forth in the preamble and Sections I and II hereof as the findings of the Commission; and
2. Adopts the Designation Report, as revised, and dated this April 2, 2026; and
3. Finds, based on the Designation Report and the entire record before the Commission, that the Building meets two criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1) and (4) of the Municipal Code; and

4. Finds that the Building satisfies the "integrity" requirement set forth in Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code; and
5. Finds that the significant historical and architectural features of the Building are identified as follows:
 - All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building.
6. Recommends designation of the Building a Chicago Landmark.

This recommendation was adopted 6-0 with one Commission member recusing herself.


Ernest C. Wong, Chair
Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Dated: April 2, 2026