

**CITY OF CHICAGO
COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

June 6, 2024

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

**RAMOVA THEATER
3508-3518 S. HALSTED ST.**

Docket No. 2024-06

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 the Ramova Theater (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 March 7, 2024, when the Commission approved a preliminary landmark recommendation (the "Preliminary Recommendation") for the Building as a Chicago Landmark. The Commission preliminarily 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, including the blade sign and marquee from 1944.

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated March 7, 2024, the most current iteration of which is dated June 6, 2024, incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit A** (the “Designation Report”).

At its regular meeting of April 4, 2024, the Commission received a statement from Ciere Boatright, Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, supporting the proposed landmark designation of the Building.

On May 16, 2024, the Commission received written consent to landmark designation of the Building in a form dated May 10, 2024, and signed by Tyler Nevius of Our Revival Chicago, LLC, 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, completed in 1929, is an excellent example of a historic motion picture theater, a novel building type that emerged in the early twentieth century designed to entertain its patrons through the new medium of cinematic art, and

WHEREAS; with its practical combination of commercial storefronts with a theater, the Building is a fine example of a “theater block,” a historic building type found in Chicago’s neighborhood commercial districts combining entertainment and commercial storefronts in a single building, and

WHEREAS; the Building represents the contributions of newcomers to Chicago’s cultural and economic heritage as the theater was built by Jokūbas (Jacob) Maskoliūnas, a Lithuanian immigrant to serve the immigrant neighborhood of Bridgeport, and

WHEREAS; with its twisted columns, cartouches, scallop shells, scrolls, pinnacles, niches, and swirling, naturalistic plant forms, the façade of the Building exemplifies the Spanish Baroque style of architecture examples of which are rare in Chicago, and

WHEREAS; the elaborate decoration of the façade is rendered in glazed terracotta which was formed in hand-carved molds requiring a high degree of design and handcraftsmanship, and

WHEREAS; the scale and ornate quality of the Building's architecture reflect the ideals of historic movie theater design to use architecture as advertisement and to attract customers with a promise of luxury and escape from the ordinary, and

WHEREAS; The Building is representative of a practical building type that developed in the late 1920s. The theater block was characterized by a traditional commercial block anchored by a prominent theater visually tied together through exterior architectural detailing, 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 June 6, 2024; and
3. Finds, based on the Designation Report and the entire record before the Commission, that the Building meets the criteria for landmark designation 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, including the blade sign and marquee from 1944.

6. Recommends the designation of the Building a Chicago Landmark.

This recommendation was adopted unanimously (7-0).

Dated: June 6, 2024


Ernest Wong, Chair
Commission on Chicago Landmarks