

**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**

BYRNE HALL

2219 N. KENMORE AVE.

Docket No. 2026-04

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 Byrne Hall (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 three 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.*
5. *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, State of Illinois, or the United States.*

I. BACKGROUND

The formal landmark designation process for the Building began on March 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 three 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:

- The exterior portions of the Building that are included in Property Index Number (PIN) 14-32-208-007-0000, generally the east and south elevations and their rooflines, and a portion of the west elevation and its roofline.

Portions of the Building that are part of Property Index Number (PIN) 14-32-208-009-0000 are specifically excluded from the significant historical and architectural features. These include the north elevation, and a portion of the west elevation and its roofline.

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated March 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 April 2, 2026, the Commission received a statement 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 the information on the proposed landmark designation of the Building; and

WHEREAS, the Building has served as an educational center for the Lincoln Park community for over a century. It has fostered the St. Vincent de Paul congregation as its first dedicated educational building; and

WHEREAS, the design of the Building embodies the evolving trends in architecture at the turn of the twentieth century through precise, well-crafted architectural details. With the construction of Byrne Hall, J.E.O. Pridmore moved away from the stylistic precedents of the St. Vincent campus and adopted a modern approach, engaging with the more popular Italian Renaissance Revival style; and

WHEREAS, though modest in its design, the exterior of the Building illustrates the details of the Italian Renaissance Revival style, popular at the time of construction. The design adheres to the style's principles, including a symmetrical composition, and a humble, restrained use of Classical ornamentation applied to the monochromatic limestone exterior; and

WHEREAS, the design of the Building embodies the evolving trends in architecture at the turn of the twentieth century through precise, well-crafted architectural details. With the construction of Byrne Hall, architect J.E.O. Pridmore moved away from the stylistic precedents of the St. Vincent campus and adopted a modern approach, engaging with the more popular Italian Renaissance Revival style; and

WHEREAS, born in England and educated in Birmingham, John Edmund Oldaker (J.E.O) Pridmore was a Chicago architect, best known for his theater and residential designs, including Bush Temple of Music (108 W. Chicago Avenue, 1901, City of Chicago Landmark), The Preston Bradley Center of People's Church of Chicago (941 W. Lawrence Avenue, 1925, City of Chicago Landmark); Chapel of St. John the Divine (Champaign, IL, 1925); The Beaconsfield (Southeast corner of Winthrop and Hollywood avenues, c. 1910); the Stickney School (1054 W. Hollywood Avenue, 1903); and nearly two dozen theaters across the upper Midwest between 1904 and 1937; and

WHEREAS, Pridmore's career spanned 50 years and, in his time, was regarded as one of Chicago's most notable architects, specifically for the quality of his work and not for quantity. He was well known for an exceedingly technical and well-researched approach to every project. His designs are considered to be picturesque, and reflect a high level of finesse with blending historic architectural styles with the contemporary trends of his time; and

WHEREAS, after the Iroquois Fire disaster of December 1903, Pridmore became an outspoken and successful advocate for increased fire safety measures in the Chicago Building Code. He publicly urged city officials and singled out Mayor Carter Harrison, Jr., demanding that all theaters in the city be closed until new building codes could be met. His efforts made him the face of innovation in fire safety in the city of Chicago. His work led him to become the president of the Iroquois Fire Memorial Fund. After the fire, he only designed "fireproof" buildings that utilized the latest advances in material design. In 1907, he was hired by St. Vincent's College (later DePaul University) to design three fireproof buildings, including Byrne Hall; and

WHEREAS, the Building is the birthplace of DePaul University. It stands as a tangible example of the Vincentian Order's educational efforts in Chicago. The Building rests on the site of the city's first Vincentian building, converted to an educational facility in 1898. In 1907, the academic program expanded, and the first building was replaced with the extant Byrne Hall. Byrne Hall hosted DePaul High School for girls, DePaul Academy for boys, and St. Vincent's College. In 1907, the college was rechartered as DePaul University, to honor St. Vincent De Paul. By 1924, DePaul University outgrew Byrne Hall and began expanding its physical campus. The building continued to serve as the DePaul Academy until ownership was transferred to the university in 1968; and

WHEREAS, the Building meets three criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4) and (5) 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 three criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4) and (5) 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:
 - The exterior portions of the Building that are included in Property Index Number (PIN) 14-32-208-007-0000, generally the east and south elevations and their rooflines, and a portion of the west elevation and its roofline.

Portions of the Building that are part of Property Index Number (PIN) 14-32-208-009-0000 are specifically excluded from the significant historical and architectural features. These include the north elevation, and a portion of the west elevation and its roofline.
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