

**CITY OF CHICAGO
COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

March 5, 2026

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

ST. PAUL C.M.E. CHURCH

4644 S. DEARBORN STREET

Docket No. 2026-02

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 St. Paul C.M.E. Church (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 (3) 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, the State of Illinois, or the United States.*

I. BACKGROUND

The formal landmark designation process for the Building began on January 8, 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:

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

- The education wing constructed in approximately 1961 as an addition to the Building, and as depicted in **Exhibit A**, attached hereto, is specifically excluded from the significant historical and architectural features of the Building.

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated January 8, 2026, the most current iteration of which is dated March 5, 2026, incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit B** (the “Designation Report”).

At its regular meeting of February 5, 2026, the Commission received a statement from Ciere Boatright, Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, supporting the landmark designation of the Building.

On February 14, 2026, the Commission received written consent to landmark designation of the Building in a form dated February 11, 2026, and signed by Reverend Dr. Curlee L. Adams, representing St. Paul C.M.E. Church, 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 St. Paul Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church is significant as the first and oldest congregation of the C.M.E. denomination in the city of Chicago. The denomination was founded by people recently freed from slavery in the southern states, including Bishop Isaac Lane, who co-established the St. Paul congregation in 1907; and,

WHEREAS, the Building was constructed in 1917 to host the 1918 General Conference of the C.M.E. Church. The conference was the first in the history of the C.M.E. denomination to be held north of the Mason-Dixon Line. At the conference, the construction of St. Paul C.M.E. Church represented the spread of the church northward following Reconstruction in the south and the fledging movement of the Great Migration; and,

WHEREAS, the St. Paul C.M.E. Church has served as a stable and enduring presence in the Grand Boulevard Community Area and Bronzeville neighborhood for over a century. The congregation has served as an anchor, as the community experienced shifts in demographics, socioeconomics, and the built environment. Through its mission work, the church has extended beyond its boundaries of religious affiliation to become a devoted pillar to the broader community; and,

WHEREAS, the St. Paul C.M.E. Church is significant as a representation of C.M.E. ecclesiastical architecture in the city of Chicago in the early decades of the 1900s, first prototyped in the design of the headquarters of the C.M.E. church in Jackson, Tennessee; and,

WHEREAS, the Building is also an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style within the Grand Boulevard Community Area and Bronzeville neighborhood. The architecture of the church embodies the character-defining features of the Tudor Revival style through its form, massing, materiality, and ornamentation. Inspired by Medieval castles, the form and massing create a sense of monumentality through an emphasis on verticality. The monochromatic red brick façade creates a sense of permanence and stability desired by the steadfast congregation. The brick façade is then juxtaposed against the reserved use of intricately carved limestone ornamentation which reflects an embodiment of motifs of the Tudor Revival style; and,

WHEREAS, the Building was designed by Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp, an architectural firm that only practiced for three years. In that short time, they designed many notable buildings in the city, including multiple Methodist churches and the development of many apartment buildings in the Streeterville neighborhood; and,

WHEREAS, the Building represents the early work of prolific Chicago architect John Reed Fugard, Sr. Over a six-decade career, Fugard worked on some of the city's most recognizable buildings, including the Moody Memorial Church, Trustees System Service Building, and the Jeweler's Building; and,

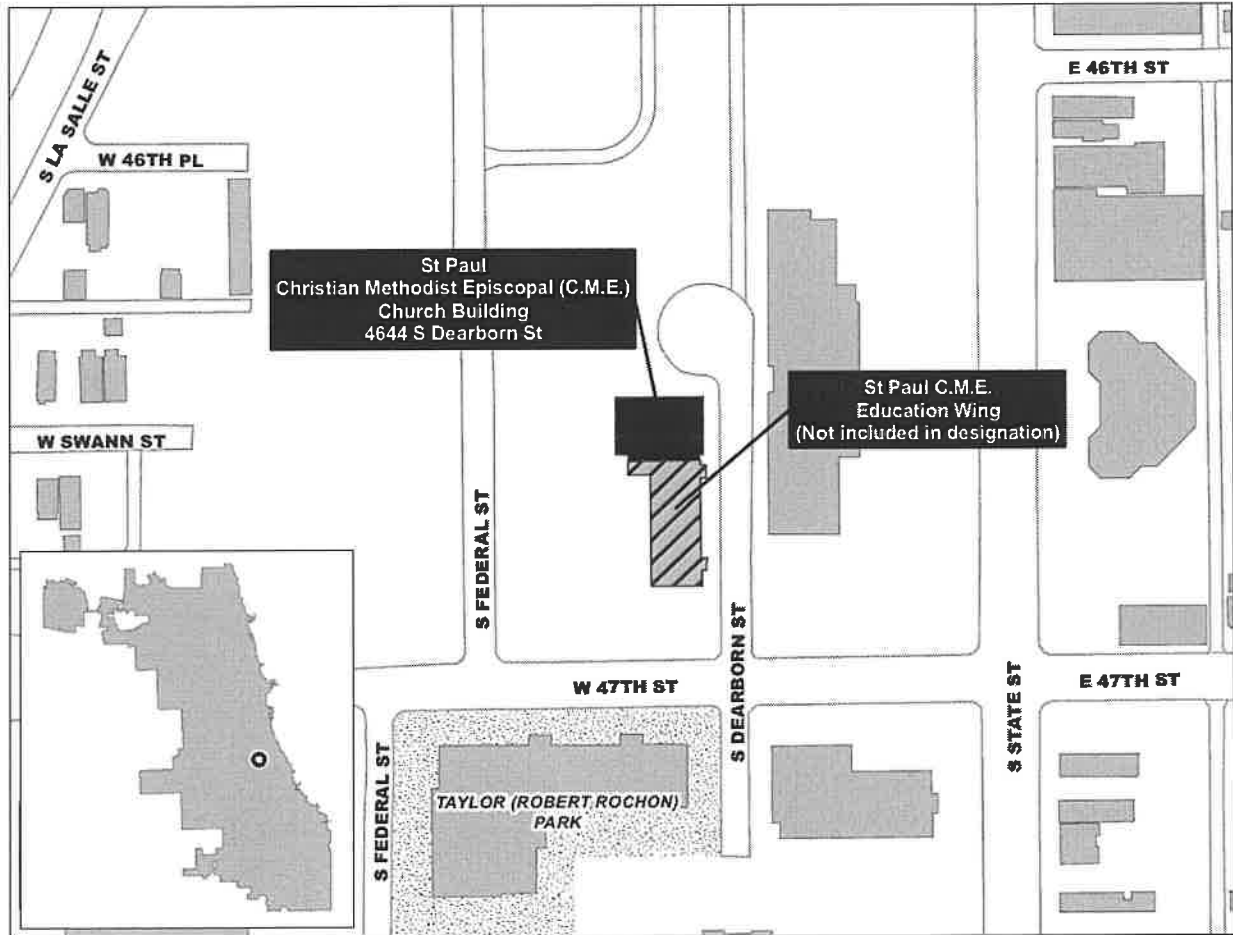
WHEREAS, the Building meets three criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4) and (5) of the Municipal Code; and

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 March 5, 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:
 - All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building.

Exhibit A



- The education wing constructed in approximately 1961 as an addition to the Building, and as depicted in Exhibit A, attached hereto, is specifically excluded from the significant historical and architectural features of the Building.

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

This recommendation was adopted unanimously (8-0).



Ernest C. Wong, Chair
Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Dated: March 5, 2026

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



ST. PAUL CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH 4644 S. DEARBORN STREET

**FINAL LANDMARK RECOMMENDATION ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION
ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS, ON MARCH 5, 2026**



**CITY OF CHICAGO
Brandon Johnson, Mayor**

**Department of Planning and Development
Cierra Boatright, Commissioner**

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Building Location Map	2
Building Design and Construction	3
Later History of St. Paul C.M.E. Church	7
The Architecture of St. Paul C.M.E. Church	10
<i>Architects: Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp</i>	14
Criteria for Designation	16
Significant Historical and Architectural Features	17
Selected Bibliography	18
Acknowledgments	21

ST. PAUL CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL (C.M.E) CHURCH
4644 S. DEARBORN STREET

DATES OF CONSTRUCTION: 1917; 1925

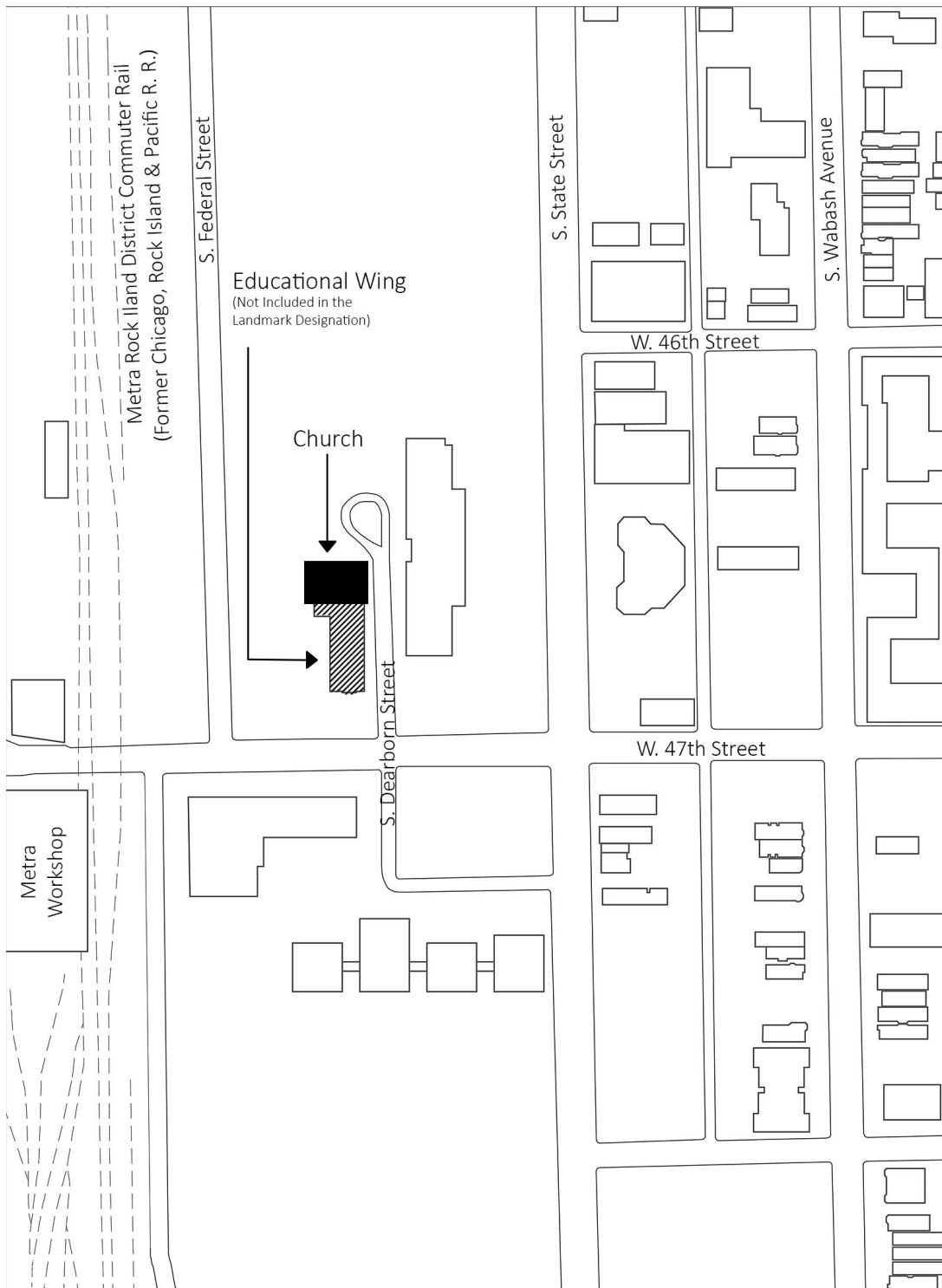
ARCHITECT: ECKLUND, FUGARD & KNAPP

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1917-1925

Established in 1907, St. Paul Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church is the oldest C.M.E. congregation in the city of Chicago. The church is the congregation's first and only dedicated house of worship. It was constructed in two phases, in 1917 and 1925, in the Tudor Revival style. The overall design of the church, as planned by the architectural firm of Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp, illustrates the building traditions of the Methodist faith and is inspired by "Mother Liberty," the former headquarters of the C.M.E. Church in Jackson, Tennessee (demolished). The building also symbolizes the northern expansion of the historically Black Christian denomination from its roots in the southern United States, a movement that paralleled the Great Migration of Black Americans.

St. Paul C.M.E. Church stands within the Bronzeville neighborhood and Grand Boulevard Community Area of Chicago. For over a century, it has remained a steadfast center of community, becoming a stable presence throughout times of immense change during the twentieth century. Since 1917, the congregation has stewarded the preservation of the church, preserving the original architectural and character-defining features of Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp's design, which typifies national trends in architecture interpreted through the beliefs of the congregation. The period of significance for the building is from 1917-1925. This period spans the original construction of the church as a "basement" church in 1917, to the completion of upper floors, including the "auditorium," in 1925.

A sincere and special thank you to Reverend Curlee Adams for sharing the history, stories, and traditions of the St. Paul C.M.E. congregation.



St. Paul C.M.E. Church, shaded in the map above, is located at the northwest corner of S. Dearborn Street and W. 47th Street in the Grand Boulevard Community Area of Chicago.



BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Organized in 1907, St. Paul C.M.E. Church is the oldest the Christian Methodist Episcopal congregation in Chicago. The founding of the church occurred as part of a plan to establish a C.M.E. mission in the city by church leader and co-founder, Bishop Isaac Lane (1834-1937). In partnership with Georgia native, Reverend John H. T. Walls (1869-1938), the St. Paul C.M.E. congregation was established in the Grand Boulevard Community Area, and the burgeoning Black settlement of Bronzeville. The initial meeting of the congregation was held by Reverend Walls and attended by his wife, Leah Thomas, and Mother J. L. Reeves, all of whom fled the south following the Atlanta Race Massacre in September 1906. Other early founding members included Irene Battle (Harden), L. C. Wheeler, Lena Jones, (Rice), George Hilary, and W. W. Peters.

St. Paul C.M.E Church is part of the Christian Methodist Episcopal denomination, a historically Black Christian denomination founded and organized by formerly enslaved people in the southern United States in 1870, five years after the Civil War ended slavery.

The Christian Methodist Episcopal denomination grew from fundamental disagreements within Methodism going back to that denomination's establishment. A co-founder of Methodism, George Whitefield, participated in the proliferation of the institution of slavery in the colony of Georgia in the 1730s through his advocacy efforts in support of its legalization. Another founder, John Wesley, was ardently opposed to slavery and created church legislation against it. Fundamental disagreements continued within the church over the following century.

In 1843, a faction of members, known as the Wesleyans, withdrew from the Methodist Church to create an anti-slavery church of their own. After the Wesleyans left, the Methodists adopted reforms dictating that members could not be slaveholders. In the southern United States, many white members of the church opposed these reforms. This led to a fracture in the church divided between states in the North and South. In 1844, Methodists in the southern states formed the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, a separate denomination with its own conferences, legislation, and leadership. The Southern church was not racially exclusive, but it did support the institution of slavery. In 1860, the southern church had over 200,000 Black, largely enslaved, members. But, after the Civil War, that number fell to less than 50,000.

While both the Methodists and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South are founded on the Twenty-five Articles, the denominations follow a marked difference to their approach of social and political causes. In Methodism the denomination adopted liberalist and abolitionist values in the 1800s, which continues today as the denomination has taken an active stance on social justice and political reform. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the denomination took a more conservative approach and abandoned initiatives focused on social and political causes.

During the 1866 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, leaders discussed the formation of an independent ecclesiastical body with membership and clergy exclusively composed of people of African descent. In December 1870, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (C.M.E.) was founded. The first bishops of the C.M.E. were William Miles and Richard Vanderhorst, both formerly enslaved individuals. During the 1880 conference of the C.M.E. Church, the membership was listed as 78,000. Ten years later, it grew to 103,000. With missionary activity and the early stages of the Great Migration in effect, the church began to settle in major cities across the country, including St. Paul C.M.E Church which was established in Chicago in 1907.

At the time of organization, the congregation had fifteen members and no dedicated church building. The congregation rented a storefront at 4008 S. State Street (demolished) utilizing funds from Reverend J.H.T. Wall's family member, Reverend A. W. Walls. By 1908-09, the congregation grew to fifty members with a robust missionary program which necessitated the relocation of the congregation to a devoted house of worship. The congregation moved to a small frame church on Dearborn Street, owned by the Emanuel Society of the United Evangelical Church, sharing the space with the existing congregation.

In July 1910, the trustees of the congregation purchased the church building from the Emanuel Society of the United Evangelical Church located at the site of the present church. The St. Paul C.M.E. congregation met in the frame church for seven years, growing to 1,000 members. In 1914, Reverend T. L. Scott led a split in the membership that caused 250 members to leave St. Paul. Nevertheless, in August 1917, the thriving congregation moved forward with plans to replace the frame church and construct a new building on the site. Many Black congregations founded in Chicago during the Great Migration worshipped in churches purchased from other congregations. St. Paul C.M.E. holds the distinction of being one of a few Black congregations that had the resources to build their own edifice.

For the construction of the new building, St. Paul C.M.E. Church hired the architectural firm Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp, who secured J.M. Higginbotham as General Contractor. To begin construction, the congregation raised \$2,000 for a mortgage down payment. To minimize the amount of debt, the project began with only the construction of the first story (the "basement") with plans to construct the second and third stories (the "auditorium") at a later date. On December 2, 1917, the congregation walked from their temporary location on State Street to the 4644 S. Dearborn Street property. A ceremony was held in which the cornerstone was laid, rites were given by three fraternal groups, and a speech was made by founder, Bishop Isaac Lane.

The "basement church" was completed in time for the C.M.E. General Conference which St. Paul hosted in 1918. A major topic at the conference was the Great Migration of Black Americans north of the Mason-Dixon line in search of job opportunities and escape from the Jim Crow south. With so many Black members of the C.M.E. denomination moving north, the General Conference needed to consider two things: how to maintain and conserve the standards of the southern churches and how to organize members in the north into new congregations, as well as any financial considerations to support each of those aspects. As the host for the conference, St. Paul represented the goals of the church as it departed from the repression of the South and looked toward the possibilities of growth and freedom of the North. This was solidified in the record of the 1918 conference, which noted that it was the denomination's first General Conference north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

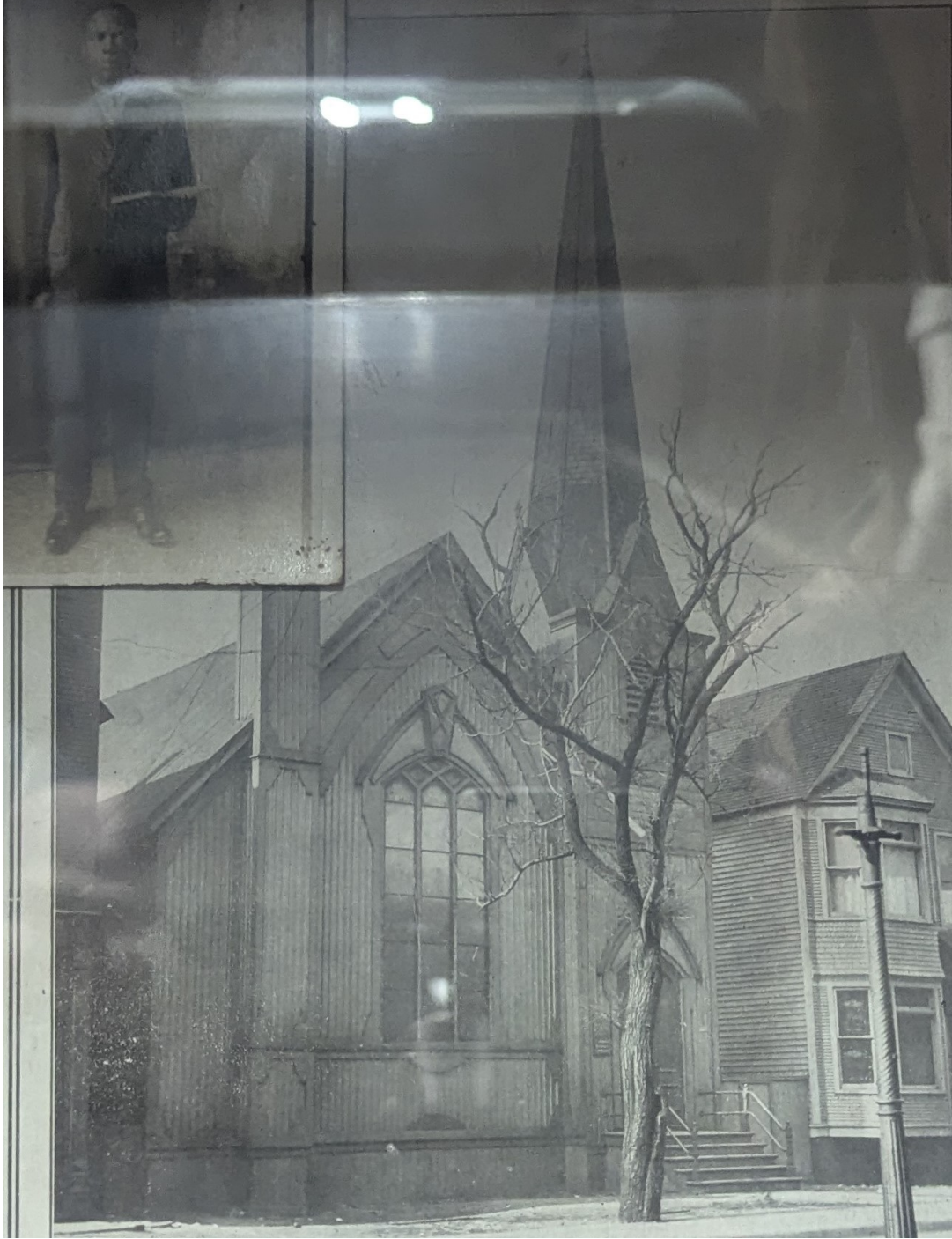
By 1920, St. Paul C.M.E. Church paid off its mortgage for the first phase basement level of the church, which was \$18,000 at the time, and began plans to construct the upper floor auditorium. The project was delayed by financial constraints and a second split in the congregation which peeled away some congregants. However, in 1925, construction finally began and was completed within that calendar year. The building utilized the 1917 plans by Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp, and the construction was completed by general contractor Erickson & Crumlich. The mortgage for that project was \$50,000, which the congregation paid off in 1944. During the construction, the congregation met in the Zenos Colman Public School building located immediately across the street.



Pictured above is an artist rendering of the original “Mother Liberty,” the former headquarters of the C.M.E. Church in Jackson, Tennessee. The church served as the inspiration for all C.M.E. churches, including St. Paul’s, between 1895-1930. It was lost during a devastating tornado in May 2003. Source: *The Jackson Sun*.



St. Paul C.M.E. Church was founded by Reverend John H.T. Walls in 1907. Reverend Walls established the congregation in partnership with co-founder Bishop Isaac Lane. The first meeting of the congregation was held by Reverend Walls and attended by his wife, Leah Thomas, and Mother J. L. Reeves, all of whom fled the south following the Atlanta Race Massacre in September 1906. Other early founding members included Irene Battle (Harden), L. C. Wheeler, Lena Jones, (Rice), George Hilary, and W. W. Peters. St. Paul C.M.E. Church is the oldest the Christian Methodist Episcopal congregation in Chicago. Source: St. Paul C.M.E. Church.



By 1908-09, the congregation had outgrown the small storefront at 4008 S. State Street and required a dedicated house of worship. The congregation moved to a small frame church on S. Dearborn Street, owned by the Emanuel Society of the United Evangelical Church, pictured above. In July 1910, the trustees of the congregation purchased the church from the Emanuel Society of the United Evangelical Church and continued to meet in the frame church for seven years, again outgrowing the space as membership reached 1,000. In August 1917, St. Paul moved forward with plans to replace the frame church and construct the existing church to house the flourishing congregation. Source: St. Paul C.M.E.

LATER HISTORY OF ST. PAUL C.M.E. CHURCH

The congregation not only utilized the dedicated church building as a house of worship, but also as the heart of its societies and clubs which have enriched the lives of its members and the broader community for over a century.

As the height of The Great Migration arrived in the mid-twentieth century, the landscape of the Grand Boulevard community and Bronzeville began to transform over the next three decades (1940s-1960s). The population increase caused by the Great Migration did not keep pace with job opportunities for Black citizens. This resulted in large-scale unemployment that impacted the businesses supported by the community. Additionally, the introduction of chain stores in the 1920s created impassable competition for local Black businesses. Finally, the Great Depression struck in 1929. Many of the community's banks, insurance companies, and other businesses, unable to secure credit and financial backing, were closed. The built environment began to deteriorate as storefronts remained vacant, and unemployment and poverty enveloped the community.

St. Paul C.M.E. played a pivotal role in uplifting and supporting the community during this time through its ministries. One of the first organizations formed was the Missionary Council, which can trace its roots back to the co-founder of the congregation, Reverend John H. T. Walls. In 1907, he also organized the Senior Stewardess Board and the Senior Steward Board. Funds raised by the groups allowed for the furnishing of the congregation's early meeting places. The growing congregation formed additional groups, including the Friendship Club (1908), Sunday School (1908), Senior Choir (1912), Busy Bee Club (1915), Progressive Club (1922), the N.L. Smith Club (1923), the J.H.T. Walls Club (c. 1930), Women's Committee of St. Paul's (c. 1960).

In the late 1940s, the St. Paul C.M.E. congregation also established a prison ministry organized by Odell Bruce and well-known Chicago humanitarian, Reverend Jessie "Ma" Houston. The ministry visited prisons twice monthly to share the message of their faith and to fellowship with people who were incarcerated. Beyond their visits, the congregation provided burial services to people who were sentenced to death by electrocution and who had little to no family support.

Institutions like St. Paul C.M.E. continued to expand their mission to fill the gap in community and social services. Between 1960 and 1961, the church expanded its campus and mission through the construction of a two-story educational wing, which adjoins the church at the south. The addition first housed the Howalton Day School, a private school intended to provide education and cultural enrichment for gifted students at a low tuition rate. When the formerly adjacent Robert Taylor Homes were constructed in 1962, the school provided much needed after school programming for children. This was an urgent need, as the city was unable to provide infrastructure improvements to the nearby Zenos Colman Public School. St. Paul C.M.E. continued to serve the residents of Robert Taylor Homes with the establishment of the St. Paul Head Start program soon thereafter.

In 1962 the Robert Taylor Homes public housing project was constructed on 92 acres of land located immediately adjacent to the St. Paul C.M.E. Church. The Taylor Homes were a series of twenty-eight high-rises housing 27,000 residents. During the latter quarter of the twentieth century, the Taylor Homes had an immediate impact on the history and health of the St. Paul C.M.E. congregation, as the church provided essential community services, including after school programming for children, and in turn residents worshipped at the church. St. Paul



By 1920, St. Paul C.M.E. Church paid off its mortgage for the first phase basement level of the church, and began plans to construct the upper floor auditorium, pictured above. Construction began in 1925 and was completed within that calendar year. The building utilized the 1917 plans by Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp. The mortgage for that project was \$50,000, which the congregation paid off in 1944. During the construction, the congregation met in the Zenos Colman Public School located immediately across the street, as seen pictured right. Source: St. Paul C.M.E. (top photograph).





St. Paul C.M.E. Church has played a pivotal role in supporting the community for nearly 120 years through its community and social services. The congregation has maintained an active roster of clubs and programs, including the Friendship Club, Sunday School, Senior Choir and the Women's Committee of St. Paul's, alongside its prison ministry, clothing pantry, food assistance, annual recovery programs, and financial workshops. Pictured above, is the Women's Committee, planning a "Beautify Your Church" drive in 1961 and below is "Little St. Paul" hosted as part of the 1962 Women's Day Program. Source: *The Chicago Defender*, June 17, 1961; *The Chicago Defender*, June 16, 1962 (bottom).



C.M.E. maintained an active congregation of approximately 1,200 members with thriving community outreach programs, such as the local Girl Scout Troop, holiday food distributions, and the Prison Ministry. Several notable members of the congregation during this time include State Representative Robert H. Holloway, educational activist and community leader Verdell Trice, Congressman Bennet McVey Stewart, and Appellate Court Judge Justice Bertina E. Lampkin.

For over a century, St. Paul C.M.E. has continued as an active congregation. Today, it is led by Reverend Curlee Adams with a dedicated congregation of approximately 130 members. The congregation maintains a strong community outreach mission including clothing pantry, food assistance, annual holiday community events, recovery programs, and financial planning and entrepreneurial workshops.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ST. PAUL C.M.E. CHURCH

Designed by architects, Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp, St. Paul C.M.E. Church is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style. A popular romantic revival style from the first half of the twentieth century, Tudor Revival was inspired by English Medieval architecture. The style naturally lent itself to the architecture of the Methodist Church, which was founded by John and Charles Wesley at Oxford University in the eighteenth century. When the C.M.E. church was founded in 1870, the denomination continued the building traditions of English Methodism. This adoption of the Tudor Revival is first expressed in the design of “Mother Liberty,” the former headquarters of the church located in Jackson, Tennessee (constructed 1893, demolished 2003). “Mother Liberty” was then used as the prototype for all C.M.E. churches within the United States, including St. Paul C.M.E. Church, constructed between 1895 and 1930.

Character-defining features derived from the Tudor Revival style present in the design of St. Paul C.M.E. Church focus on the form, massing, material, and ornamentation. The form and massing are inspired by Medieval castles through the incorporation of corner towers crowned with crenelated parapets. An overall feeling of monumentality is achieved through an emphasis on verticality, including the towers, tall arched windows, and a pronounced steeply pitched gable roof form. The front (east) façade is clad with monochromatic red brick, creating a sense of permanence. The heavy, brick façade is contrasted with a reserved use of finely carved limestone ornamentation to accentuate window and door openings, floor levels, and roof lines embodying the motifs of the Tudor Revival style, including the Tudor Rose, illustrated as a larger rose with a smaller rose superimposed at the center and quatrefoils.

St. Paul C.M.E. Church was constructed in two phases. The first phase, commonly referred to as the “basement” church, was constructed in 1917 and encompassed the first floor and basement. The second phase was built in 1925 and included the upper second and third floors.

The building is rectangular in plan on an east-west axis with the front façade facing Dearborn Street. The church rises approximately three-and-a-half stories from a limestone base to a steeply pitched gabled roof marked by a shouldered parapet - a hallmark of the Tudor Revival style. The roofline is accentuated by limestone coping and a brick cornice. Despite the building’s low height, a sense of monumentality is created through an emphasis on verticality by entrance towers which flank the front façade. The tower at the south end of the front façade projects from the main footprint and ascends four stories in height, rising above the main roof line. At the north end, the entrance tower is three-stories in height and engaged with the main footprint and only slightly projects from the northeast corner of the building.



The exterior of St. Paul C.M.E. Church, pictured above, exhibits the hallmarks of the Tudor Revival style through form, massing, material, and ornamentation. The overall form and massing are inspired by Medieval castles. The front (east) façade is clad with monochromatic red brick, creating a sense of permanence. The heavy, brick façade is contrasted with a reserved use of finely carved limestone ornamentation to accentuate window and door openings, floor levels, and roof lines. Architectural detailing embodies the motifs of the Tudor Revival style, including the Tudor Rose and quatrefoils, concentrated on the main entrances as pictured in the left.

The towers are architecturally detailed in a similar manner. At the first floor, each tower is encompassed by a recessed entrance composed of a pair of non-historic flush doors within a Tudor arch opening with a decorative limestone surround. The arched opening is adorned by a label moulding and archivolts. The spandrel of the arch is carved with a quatrefoil design and crowned by a keystone. The top of the surround is defined by a limestone cornice ornamented with bas relief, stylized Tudor roses.

Set within the base of each outer pier is a limestone cornerstone. The south tower cornerstone was placed first and honors the construction of the first floor “basement” church. It is inscribed: “ST. PAUL’S C.M.E. CHURCH, ORGANIZED 1907, ERECTED 1917, REV. J. A. WINTERS, PASTOR.” The north tower cornerstone was laid in 1925. It reads: “ST. PAUL C.M.E. CHURCH, ORGANIZED 1907, COMPLETED 1925, REV. N. L. SMITH D.D. PASTOR,” and continues to list six trustees.

A limestone stringcourse wraps the front façade and partially returns to the side façades to denote the end of the first floor. This also marks the upper limits of the “basement” church. At the upper floors of the front and side façades of each tower, there is a single window opening, composed of either a pair or a single stained glass window. Each masonry opening is accentuated by a limestone Gibbs’ surround, which features a rusticated surround composed of alternating large and small blocks of stone. On the third floor, the windows are further articulated and set within a segmental arch opening. Both towers are crowned by a shaped and crenelated parapet emphasized by a limestone cornice.

Between the two towers, is the primary section of the front façade. At the first floor, the façade is composed of a curved projecting bay crowned by a stylized, crenelated parapet. On the second and third floors, the façade is defined by a two-story Tudor arch Gibbs’ surround, crowned by limestone archivolts and label moulding. Five stained glass windows are set within a single masonry opening at each floor. Centered on the façade below the peak of the gable roof is a circular attic vent, enframed by a wide limestone surround.

The north façade is constructed of Chicago common brick simply treated with five stained glass windows illuminating the interior of the second and third floors of the church. The matching south façade is largely obscured by a two-story educational wing constructed by the congregation in 1961. The rear (west) façade is also relatively plain though with a large stained glass window lighting the worship space.

On the interior, the building is divided into a first floor or basement level and upper auditorium level. One enters the building through the entrances located at the base of the towers. Once inside, the first floor lobby spans the width of the east end of the building. Stairways at each end of the lobby lead to the basement level known as Murchison Hall and the second-floor auditorium.

The auditorium is a double-height space with a U-shaped balcony at the third floor. Historically, the space was defined by a soaring barrel-vaulted ceiling, which has since been obscured by a suspended ceiling. Seating is provided by pews installed in 1926 divided by central and side aisles. At the western end of the auditorium is the raised pulpit or rostrum separated from the congregational seating area by a short, paneled wood railing. Located in each corner of the auditorium is a staircase which ascends to the balcony. The balcony is composed of three rows of tiered seating. The primary character-defining feature of the auditorium are the stained glass



On the interior, the primary space is the second floor auditorium, pictured above. Access to the auditorium is provided through the second floor vestibule, pictured right. Once inside the auditorium, the two-story space is defined by a U-shaped balcony which encircles the auditorium at the third floor. The primary character-defining feature of the auditorium are the stained glass windows which fill the room with soft green, blue, and yellow light, meaningful colors to the Methodist faith which symbolize new life, hope, and divinity, respectively.



windows which fill the room with soft green, blue, and yellow light, meaningful colors to the Methodist faith which symbolize new life, hope, and divinity, respectively.

Architects: Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp

St. Paul Christian Methodist Episcopal Church was designed by the architecture firm of Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp. It was formed in 1916 by Moline, Illinois, architect Henry C. Ecklund and Chicago architects John R. Fugard Sr. and George A. Knapp. Although the firm was in business for only three years, its designs were prolific throughout Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. In Chicago, their extant work ranges from large apartment buildings and churches to single-family residences. The St. Paul C.M.E. Church stands as one of the few remaining examples of their collective work in the city. Other extant commissions by the firm include Irving Park Swedish Methodist Church, 3938 W. Belle Plaine Avenue (1916); First Swedish Methodist Church, 6350 N. Paulina Street (1918); the Robert J. and Georgia Whyte Residence, 9544 S. Winchester Avenue (1916); and multiple Streeterville apartment buildings, including 230 E. Delaware Place (1916) and 229 E. Lake Shore Drive (1919).

The most senior partner, Henry Ecklund (1868-1941), was a Swedish immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1888 to study architecture at the University of Illinois. Around 1896 he established his own architecture firm in Kewanee, Illinois. Notably, an early associate at his firm was recent graduate Walter T. Bailey, who later became the first African American to become a licensed architect in Illinois. In 1911, Ecklund joined architect Frank DeArment and established a firm in Moline, Illinois. In 1916, after the retirement of his partner, Ecklund joined the Chicago-based architecture team of John R. Fugard, Sr. and George A. Knapp and managed a branch in Moline. Throughout his career, Ecklund designed many Protestant church buildings. This is due, in large part, to his affiliation with the Swedish Methodist Church, of which he was a lifelong member.

George Arnold Knapp (1888- 1934) was born and raised in Chicago. According to his obituary he obtained his architectural training at “universities in the east”. Although trained as an architect, Knapp was intended to succeed his father as President of the farm machinery and steel company, Knapp Brothers Manufacturing. After graduation, he was given the title of “Vice President” of the Knapp Brothers operation while also working at an architecture firm in Chicago.

As early as 1912, Knapp began his partnership with architect John Reed Fugard, Sr. (1886-1968), who had recently finished a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Illinois. The young duo was prolific in their early years, designing several residences, theaters, and churches. Often, early permits show Knapp as the building owner and Fugard as the architect, indicating instances of project funding by Knapp. By 1913, Fugard & Knapp's headquarters were based in the newly opened Harris Bank Building (111 W. Monroe Street). By 1916, the men partnered with Henry Ecklund and organized Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp. The firm was busy and successful in the years 1916 and 1917. However, in April 1918, Fugard enlisted in the Army Signal Corps during World War I. The work of the firm continued while he was deployed, largely to complete projects which were already in progress.

In January of 1919, the firm was dissolved. Ecklund left the firm to establish Henry Ecklund & Co. and his career largely continued outside of Chicago. The remaining partners reestablished Fugard & Knapp. Together, they created an impressive portfolio, which includes The Mutual Insurance Building (1921) and the D. L. Moody Memorial Church (1924). In 1925, Fugard & Knapp was dissolved to allow Knapp to follow his legacy of becoming President of Knapp

Brothers Manufacturing. The architectural works of John R. Fugard continued to proliferate throughout Chicago between 1925 and 1968 in the firms of Thielbar & Fugard (1925-1941); Fugard, Burt, Wilkinson, & Orth (1942-1962); and Fugard, Orth & Associates (1962-1968).



Though only in partnership for three years, the firm of Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp were prolific across Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. Together they designed several noteworthy Methodist churches in the City of Chicago including Irving Park Swedish Methodist Church, 3938 W. Belle Plaine Avenue (1916) and First Swedish Methodist Church, 6350 N. Paulina Street (1918), pictured above. In their time, they were also well known for the development of several apartment buildings in the Streeterville neighborhood including 229 E. Lake Shore Drive (1919), pictured left, and 230 E. Delaware Place (1916).

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 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” and it 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 St. Paul C.M.E. Church 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 St. Paul Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church is significant as the first and oldest congregation of the C.M.E. denomination in the City of Chicago. The denomination was founded by people recently freed from slavery in the southern states, including Bishop Isaac Lane, who co-established the St. Paul congregation in 1907.
- The building was constructed in 1917 to host the 1918 General Conference of the C.M.E. Church. The conference was the first in the history of the C.M.E. denomination to be held north of the Mason-Dixon Line. At the conference, the construction of St. Paul C.M.E. Church represented the spread of the church northward following Reconstruction in the south and the fledging movement of the Great Migration.
- The St. Paul C.M.E. Church has served as a stable and enduring presence in the Grand Boulevard Community Area and Bronzeville neighborhood for over a century. The congregation has served as an anchor, as the community experienced shifts in demographics, socioeconomics, and the built environment. Through its mission work, the church has extended beyond its boundaries of religious affiliation to become a devoted pillar to the broader community.

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.

- St. Paul C.M.E. Church is significant as a representation of C.M.E. ecclesiastical architecture in the City of Chicago in the early decades of the 1900s, first prototyped in the design of the headquarters of the C.M.E. church in Jackson, Tennessee.
- The church is also an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style within the Grand Boulevard Community Area and Bronzeville neighborhood. The architecture of the church embodies the character-defining features of the Tudor Revival style through its form, massing, materiality, and ornamentation. Inspired by Medieval castles, the form and massing create a sense of monumentality through an emphasis on verticality. The monochromatic red brick façade creates a sense of permanence and stability desired by the steadfast congregation. The brick façade is then juxtaposed against the reserved use of intricately carved limestone ornamentation which embodies the motifs of the Tudor Revival style.

Criterion 5: Work of Significant Architect or Designer

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, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The St Paul C.M.E. Church was designed by Ecklund, Fugard & Knapp, an architectural firm that only practiced for three years. In that short time, they designed many notable buildings in the city, including multiple Methodist churches and the development of many apartment buildings in the Streeterville neighborhood.
- The building represents the early work of prolific Chicago architect John Reed Fugard, Sr. Over a six-decade career, Fugard worked on some of the city's most recognizable buildings, including the Moody Memorial Church, Trustees System Service Building, and the Jeweler's Building.

Integrity Criterion

The integrity of the proposed Landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and ability to express such historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value.

St. Paul C.M.E. Church retains its historic location, exterior design, materials, and workmanship. The St. Paul congregation over the last 100 years has served as the stewards of the building and preserved the original design and character-defining features of the church. On the exterior, minor alterations have occurred at the first floor of the front (east) façade with the replacement of historic stained glass windows at the projecting bay. Also, at the exterior, the two-story educational wing has obscured the original south façade. However, the addition was designed in a manner to mitigate impacts to the exterior character-defining features, and thus it was setback from the front façade and the original stained glass windows at the south façade were left in place. Within the interior of the church, minor alterations and improvements were undertaken in 1968 including new interior finishes in the first floor and basement spaces, as well as the installation of acoustical ceiling tiles in the auditorium.

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 St. Paul C.M.E. Church, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as follows:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building.
- The education wing constructed in approximately 1961 as an addition to the building is specifically excluded from the significant historical and architectural features of the building.

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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 that individual building, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Bureau of Citywide Planning, Historic Preservation Division, City Hall, 121 North LaSalle Street, Room 905, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200); www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks

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.

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