I hope you joined us for our first-ever virtual annual meeting in June. Though we missed gathering with you in person, using a digital platform gave Landmarks Illinois members and supporters from across the state, and even across the nation, the opportunity to participate. It was our highest-attended Annual Meeting in the organization’s 49-year history, and it set a model for making future events more accessible. Missed the meeting? The presentation, in full, is available on our Facebook page, at our website www.landmarks.org, as well as on Landmarks Illinois’ YouTube channel. You can also check out our Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Annual Report, detailing the accomplishments your support made possible, at our website.

“I can’t speak highly enough of the 33 talented, dedicated and generous individuals who volunteer their time on our board.”

Landmarks Illinois members voted virtually this year to elect the organization’s board members. I can’t speak highly enough of the 33 talented, dedicated and generous individuals who volunteer their time on our board. They donate dozens of hours of pro bono expertise and serve as Landmarks Illinois’ best ambassadors. It is a privilege to work with them. Since 1971, more than 280 individuals have served on our Board of Directors.

We welcome the following new directors elected this June to serve their first two-year term:

- Robert Eschbach, attorney and former Mayor of Ottawa (Ottawa)
- Mike Jackson, FAIA, architect and former Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (Springfield)
- Mary Ottoson, Portfolio Associate, JP Morgan Chase & Co. (Montgomery)
- Emilio Padilla, AIA, Project Director, JGMA (Berwyn)
- Terri Salas, CPA, Associate, Plante Moran (Lansing, MI)
- Steve Schneider, Senior Vice President, Wintrust Commercial Banking (Deerfield)
- Allison Toonen-Talamo, Associate, Klein & Hoffman (Chicago)
- Alex Wolking, Realtor®, Keller Williams Chicago-Lincoln Park (Chicago)

We also welcome the following reelected board members and thank them for their continued service:

- Erika Block (Glencoe), Katie Kim (Peoria), Erica Meyer (Chicago), Kathleen Swien, General Counsel (Chicago), Cheryl Thomas (Chicago) and Christy Webber (Chicago).

Landmarks Illinois is grateful to the following retiring board members who have cumulatively served the organization for 40 years: Michael Altheimer, Joe Antunovich (our Pal Joe!), Ari Glass, Jeff Goulette, Peter Limberger and Elle Ramel. Thank you for the generous devotion of your time and talent. You will be greatly missed!

My team and I want to express what a pleasure it is to work with all of these individuals to help people save places for people.

Best wishes for a safe and enjoyable summer,

Bonnie McDonald
President and CEO
The map illustrates the geographical impact of Landmarks Illinois’ work helping people save places across the state during our most recent fiscal year from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020. The map marks where Landmarks Illinois staff has made site visits, given assistance, awarded grants and presented our Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Awards. (Locations of cities and towns are approximate.)

### SINGER PAVILION  CHICAGO

In May, the team in charge of redeveloping the former Michael Reese Hospital campus in Bronzeville presented its plans for a phased, mixed-income community that will also include reuse of the former Singer Pavilion, included on Landmarks Illinois’ 2017 Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois. The development team, known as GRIT (Farpoint Development, Loop Capital Management, McLaurin Development Partners, Draper & Kramer, Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives and Bronzeville Community Development Partnership) and chosen by the City of Chicago in 2017, will build retail and commercial uses, public green spaces plus market-rate and affordable housing at the Walter Gropius-designed medical campus. The entire campus was on Landmarks Illinois’ 2009 Most Endangered list after it was acquired for Chicago’s 2016 Olympic bid. The exact use of Singer Pavilion has yet to be determined. It is the last remaining building on the former medical campus.

Credit: Ed Torrez

### HILL MOTOR COMPANY BUILDING  OAK PARK

Local advocates with the Save the Hill Coalition continue to urge Pete’s Fresh Market to incorporate the south and east facades and portions of the interior of the Hill Motor Company Building into its new store design. The building, which Landmarks Illinois included on its 2019 Most Endangered list, is set to be demolished. Several meetings have taken place over the past six months between coalition members, Landmarks Illinois and representatives of Pete’s and its design team. The Save the Hill Coalition developed architectural plans to demonstrate the feasibility of partial building reuse and have made adjustments based on Pete’s feedback. To date, Pete’s officials plan to salvage the building’s decorative grotesque figures only. Oak Park residents are encouraged to reach out to Village Board members to support a partial reuse plan of the building. More information can be found on the @savethehillcoalition Facebook page.

Credit: Ed Torrez

### NEW HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  HIGHLAND

In October 2019, community advocates succeeded in establishing the Highland Historical Commission for the city of Highland, Illinois. The commission is currently working with Landmarks Illinois on ways to facilitate educational opportunities, survey, listings on the National Register of Historic Places and incentives for historic rehabilitation projects. One building of primary concern is the former Schott Brewery, constructed between 1870 and 1893, that has been vacant for several years with little signs of activity or maintenance. Many residents hope preservation education and incentives can generate economic activity and reinvestment in Highland, including a new use for the historic brewery.
Landmarks Illinois began advocating for the preservation of Old Cook County Hospital—the grand Beaux Arts structure spanning two city blocks on Chicago’s Near West Side—in 1998. At the time, many people (including elected officials) said it was crazy to try to save the behemoth of a building already slated for demolition—it was too big, too expensive and too difficult to reuse, we were told. Yet Landmarks Illinois refused to give up, insisting the former hospital, built in 1913-1916 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006, was too architecturally and culturally significant to be torn down.

More than two decades after first calling for reuse of Old Cook County Hospital, Landmarks Illinois is celebrating the building’s grand reopening this summer as a hotel, retail and office complex following an impressive $140 million renovation, led by Civic Health Development Group, which includes Murphy Development Group and Walsh Construction.

“It’s hugely gratifying to see over 20 years of advocacy pay off,” said Landmarks Illinois Director of Advocacy Lisa DiChiera. “Many individuals put their heart and soul into this long effort, and I am so happy to mark this milestone with them.”

Among Landmarks Illinois’ preservation partners during the 22-year effort to save Old Cook County Hospital is Joe Antonovich and his firm Antonovich Associates, which put thousands of pro-bono hours into producing multiple reuse studies for the building and attended dozens of public hearings alongside Landmarks Illinois staff. Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin also should be credited for being a strong advocate for the building’s reuse and for pushing his colleagues to change their minds on demolition. Additionally, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle was monumental in negotiating and ensuring a preservation path forward for the historic structure. Landmarks Illinois will always be grateful to her and her team.

In rehabilitating the long-vacant Old Cook County Hospital, developers have created a 210-room hotel and provided 25,000 square feet of retail space and 75,000 square feet of medical office space. This marks the completion of Phase 1 in an overall, four-phase redevelopment plan for what will be called Harrison Square. The plan includes the 1.2 million square-foot former hospital building and surrounding area.

“The old Cook County Hospital is rich in history, having served our community and nation for over a century, while at the same time being a fountain of medical research, innovation and advancements,” said Dan Walsh, Co-chairman of The Walsh Group. “The Walsh Group is proud to have played a lead role in saving and transforming this unique historic structure, and delivering a reborn building that welcomes visitors and economic revival to the Near West Side of Chicago for another 100 years.”

Part of our state’s pandemic recovery

This major rehabilitation project would be remarkable at any time in our state and nation’s history. The fact that it’s happening now, in the middle of a worldwide health crisis, makes the project even more monumental. Old Cook County, a former teaching hospital, made numerous major medical discoveries during its time in operation: It is where sickle cell anemia was discovered, for example, and it was home to the world’s first blood bank. It was also called Chicago’s “Ellis Island,” because it served and welcomed immigrants coming to the city.

In a May 2020 Chicago Tribune article on the rehabilitation of Old Cook County Hospital, Architecture Critic Blair Kamin wrote, “It preserves a powerful symbol of compassionate care for the poor, serendipitously coming amid a pandemic that has seen doctors, nurses and other medical professionals battle heroically against the deadly coronavirus.”

Landmarks Illinois included the Old Cook County Hospital on the Most Endangered list four times between the years 2001 and 2005—only one of two structures included on the annual list that many times. It is also Landmarks Illinois’ longest advocacy effort for a single building. Preservation Chicago included the building on its 2003 and 2004 “Chicago 7 Most Endangered” list, as well, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation called attention to it on its 2004 America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list.

DiChiera, who was involved with the advocacy effort from Day 1, knew saving Old Cook County Hospital would take time. But she also knew it was worth it. The building had everything the preservation field represents: great architecture and extremely important social history. Plus, its reuse would create jobs and economic activity—two critical things needed as Chicago and Illinois recover from the current pandemic.

“This place had an impact on the lives of thousands of Chicagoans of all races, nationalities, incomes and medical needs,” said DiChiera. “No one was turned away. Its rehabilitation proves how an investment in repurposing a building like this is a major jobs creator, jobs training opportunity and will be an economic driver for future investment in the area. Lastly, allowing an irreplaceable, reusable building of this magnitude to go into a landfill would have been environmentally catastrophic.”

Preservation is for people

For as many people who doubted the viability of reusing Old Cook County—such a large and long-vacant building—there are just as many who still cherish this highly visible place that sits prominently along the highway as people enter downtown Chicago from the west.

“So many people love this building,” DiChiera said. “Whether it’s because someone was born there, was treated there, worked there or because they have seen it all their lives driving on the Eisenhower.”

For those people, Landmarks Illinois persevered for 22 years to help save this impressive and important place. For Landmarks Illinois’ team of preservation, legal and architecture experts, gather in Landmarks Illinois’ office in 2014 preparing for a Cook County-sponsored charrette to develop a reuse solution for Old Cook County Hospital. Pictured (clockwise from lower left): Bonnie McDonald, Anne Vashel, Joe Antonovich, Jim Marie, Krista Gnatt, Clark Christensen and John Tully.

An exterior view of the rehabilitated Old Cook County Hospital. Credit: Walsh Construction. Landmarks Illinois Director of Advocacy Lisa DiChiera tours the halls of the former hospital in 2014, years before it would be rehabilitated. Credit: Jack Tribbia.
By the numbers

22
Years Landmarks Illinois spent advocating for the preservation & reuse of Old Cook County Hospital

$13.6 Million
Estimated cost in 2014 of demolishing Old Cook County Hospital

2003
The year Landmarks Illinois issued its first reuse plan of Old Cook County Hospital

2016
The year the Cook County Board approved redevelopment plans for Old Cook County Hospital

2018
The year developers broke ground on the massive rehabilitation project at Old Cook County Hospital

900
Estimated jobs the multi-phased redevelopment project will create

4,500
Number of pieces of terra cotta on the building’s exterior recycled for the renovation

$27 Million
State & federal historic preservation tax credits the developers will receive for the rehabilitation of Old Cook County Hospital.

Meet Ramona Lowery

Ramona is a Project Engineer for Walsh Construction who worked on the rehabilitation project at Old Cook County Hospital

Landmarks Illinois: Tell us about your involvement in the rehabilitation of Old Cook County Hospital.

RL: As a new Project Engineer to construction, I was fortunate to be involved in many parts of the rehabilitation and learn from the experience, such as identifying historical windows that needed additional interior detail work and selecting architectural details to color match flooring. With a background in architecture, I also assisted in giving tours during construction, offering insight on architectural details in the building.

Li: Were you aware of the history and/or significance of the building before you began working on it?

RL: I was not, but I became quickly aware of how architecturally significant the building was. While working on the project, I had the opportunity to learn more about its history and how significant the building was for medical developments.

Li: How has your appreciation for the historic building changed over the course of the project?

RL: I have always had an appreciation for historic buildings, but with an educational background in architecture, I appreciate the design and creativity of how buildings can be transformed from their original use and be converted to continue to function in a new way.

Li: What stood out about this project from other places you have worked on? And why was it unique?

RL: What stood out was how the building’s beginnings were as an innovative hospital, and it is amazing to see it transformed into a multi-use building. This building was unique for me because it was my first construction renovation project. I have worked and designed buildings for construction, but this gave me a new appreciation for challenges that arise during a historic building renovation.

Li: What is one thing you want people to notice or see when they visit the rehabilitated building?

RL: I would like people to notice the lobby space. When the former hospital needed more space, the lobby was filled in. Today, the lobby gives you a sense of scale, from the first to the second floor of the building. The column capitals are another architectural detail, and I hope people notice the detail in them.

Credit: Walsh Construction

Landmarks Illinois: How has your appreciation for the building’s legacy changed over the course of the project?

Li: Our appreciation for the building’s legacy has only grown. Although many potential purchasers were intimidates by the building’s unique layout and features that are tied to its original use as a women’s club, it was exactly those historic elements that drew the Barisiks to this property.

“Make no mistake, it was quite intimidating at first, but there is no courage without fear, and no magic without a bit of risk and a lot of imagination,” he said. “While in many ways it is an unconventional move with two small children, that lack of convention leaves so much room for creativity and a personal touch.”

The Barisiks said the home’s custom light fixtures as well as the crown windows in the auditorium are their current favorite features. They find themselves in awe of the architect’s design and the home’s craftsmanship. They also love the idea of using this house to continue the legacy of the women’s club, and have many ideas on how to do so – from creating custom art pieces that pay homage to former club members, to letting the community enjoy the home by hosting art installations on the exterior of the building and creating a library in the club’s former gallery.

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Landmarks Illinois shares this sentiment, and is extremely glad to once again have the building used, loved and cherished.

“The Barisiks outside their new home, the former historic River Forest Women’s Club. A 2003 photo showing the inside of the former women’s club building, with its auditorium on the main floor.

Photos courtesy of Barisiks family.

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Landmarks Illinois held its first virtual Annual Meeting June 24, welcoming nearly 200 people who joined us directly through the webinar and many more on Facebook Live. Landmarks Illinois Board Chair Sandra Rand led the business meeting with the election of new board members, board appointments and departing members. Bonnie McDonald, President & CEO, reported on Landmarks Illinois’ organizational impact across the state, highlighting programs and projects featured in Landmarks Illinois’ Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Annual Report, which can be downloaded at our website.

The event also included a special video presentation from Frank Butterfield, Director of Landmarks Illinois’ Springfield Office, on advocacy efforts in Springfield and Bloomington. Guests were treated to a virtual tour of Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, a Chicago Landmark in Bronzeville, led by Rev. E.F. Ledbetter III, as well as a video about Keller Station, a creative adaptive reuse project in Peoria, led by Landmarks Illinois Board Member Katie Kim of The Kim Group.

If you missed the Annual Meeting, you can watch it on Landmarks Illinois’ YouTube channel, on our Facebook page and at our website.

Pictured above: A screenshot of the Annual Meeting video on YouTube, featuring Rev. E.F. Ledbetter III, of Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, a Chicago Landmark in Bronzeville, led by Rev. E.F. Ledbetter III, as well as a video about Keller Station, a creative adaptive reuse project in Peoria, led by Landmarks Illinois Board Member Katie Kim of The Kim Group.

**Preservation Awards**

Celebrating its 27th year, the 2020 Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Awards will be held mid-October. For the first time, our “feel-good” event of the year honoring people preserving important and historic places in their communities will be reimaged as a virtual event due to the ongoing pandemic. Stay tuned to Landmarks Illinois’ social media pages, website and email newsletters for additional event details!

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You can help Landmarks Illinois endure as an important resource for people saving places for people by including us in your will or estate plans. Bequests or trust provisions enable you to make significant gifts without making financial sacrifices during your lifetime.

For more information, please contact Marija Rich, Membership Manager at mrich@landmarks.org

Legacy Society members Alan Salpeter and Shelley Gorson.