



Landmarks Illinois Statement

Regarding the Renaming of the Henry B. Clarke House

To the Chicago City Council Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs, and
Recreation

November 14, 2022

Good Morning, Mr. Chair and Committee Members. My name is Kendra Parzen and I am the Advocacy Manager for Landmarks Illinois, the statewide preservation nonprofit working with communities to save the places that matter to them. We have served Chicago's preservation community since 1971.

Landmarks Illinois ardently supports renaming the Henry B. Clarke House to recognize and honor the steadfast dedication of Bishop Louis Henry and Margaret Ford and the St. Paul Church of God in Christ to preserve Chicago's oldest remaining home. The new name also recognizes the important role of women in the stewardship of this place by including and naming Caroline Clarke and Margaret Ford.

The collective achievements of the stewards of this home have been largely overlooked in this home's preservation record and programming until very recently. We have been proud to advocate to correct this error for the past 18 months in support of Pastor Kevin Anthony Ford, the St. Paul Church of God in

Christ congregation, and architectural historian Elizabeth Blasius. We made our support known to Alderman Pat Dowell, DCASE Commissioner Erin Harkey, and advocates, early in this process, and are proud to go on record today that the renaming is long overdue.

Renaming a historic home to recognize long-term owners is in keeping with preservation practice, and there is no rule or guideline against renaming historic properties. In fact, it is appropriate to re-examine how we present history to ensure that we are telling the full story. With this in mind, we also urge the Department of Planning and Development to revisit the Clarke-Ford House's landmark designation to amend the report to include the information missing regarding Bishop Ford's and the St. Paul Church of God in Christ's preservation efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our enthusiastic support for the Ordinance before you to commemorate Caroline Clarke, Bishop Louis Henry and Margaret Ford, and the St. Paul Church of God in Christ congregation.