

SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS

Glenview



“This place is an extraordinary example of the work of my firm, Perkins & Will, from the mid-20th century. It represents a modernist approach to an emerging building typology — a corporate campus. I believe this place is important to the community because it provides variety both in its design and purpose that makes for a more vibrant and interesting place to live and work.”

JERRY JOHNSON
DESIGN PRINCIPAL, PRINCIPAL, PERKINS&WILL



SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS



Credit: Hedrick Blessing

LOCATION

1900 E. Lake Avenue
Glenview, Cook County

YEAR BUILT

1966

ARCHITECT

Perkins & Will

CURRENT OWNER

Inland Real Estate Investment Corporation
(affiliate of Oak Brook-based Inland Group)

WHY IT'S ENDANGERED

The former Scott Foresman Headquarters complex is architecturally distinctive for its Midcentury Modern corporate design and use of modern materials and construction methods within a peaceful campus setting. The site, however, has been vacant since June 2020 and the property is [currently listed for sale](#) and faces potential foreclosure. The site is being marketed for single-family residential

redevelopment, which would be permitted by the village. Instead, it should be prioritized for reuse, which will preserve its important suburban design legacy.

The company's final iteration, Savvas Learning, was leasing the complex from Inland Real Estate before vacating in June of 2020. Since then, the Inland Group has struggled to make the mortgage payments, including missing one in August of 2020. The fate of the Scott Foresman site is symbolic of the ongoing uncertainty over the future of high-end, modern designed suburban corporate campuses. The pandemic has given further incentive for companies to downsize their real estate footprints as many companies will continue to allow employees to work remotely in the months and years to come. While corporate campuses remain desirable by some companies and would serve well as sites for learning institutions, many will be redeveloped for residential or commercial use, posing big suburban land-use questions regarding zoning changes and storm water challenges.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE & BACKGROUND

In 1889, E.H. Scott and C.J. Albert started their textbook publishing business in a modest, 100-square-foot office in Chicago. Its first publication was a high school Latin textbook. Hugh Foresman bought Albert's share of the company in 1894. With a third partner, W. Coates Foresman, Scott Foresman and Company

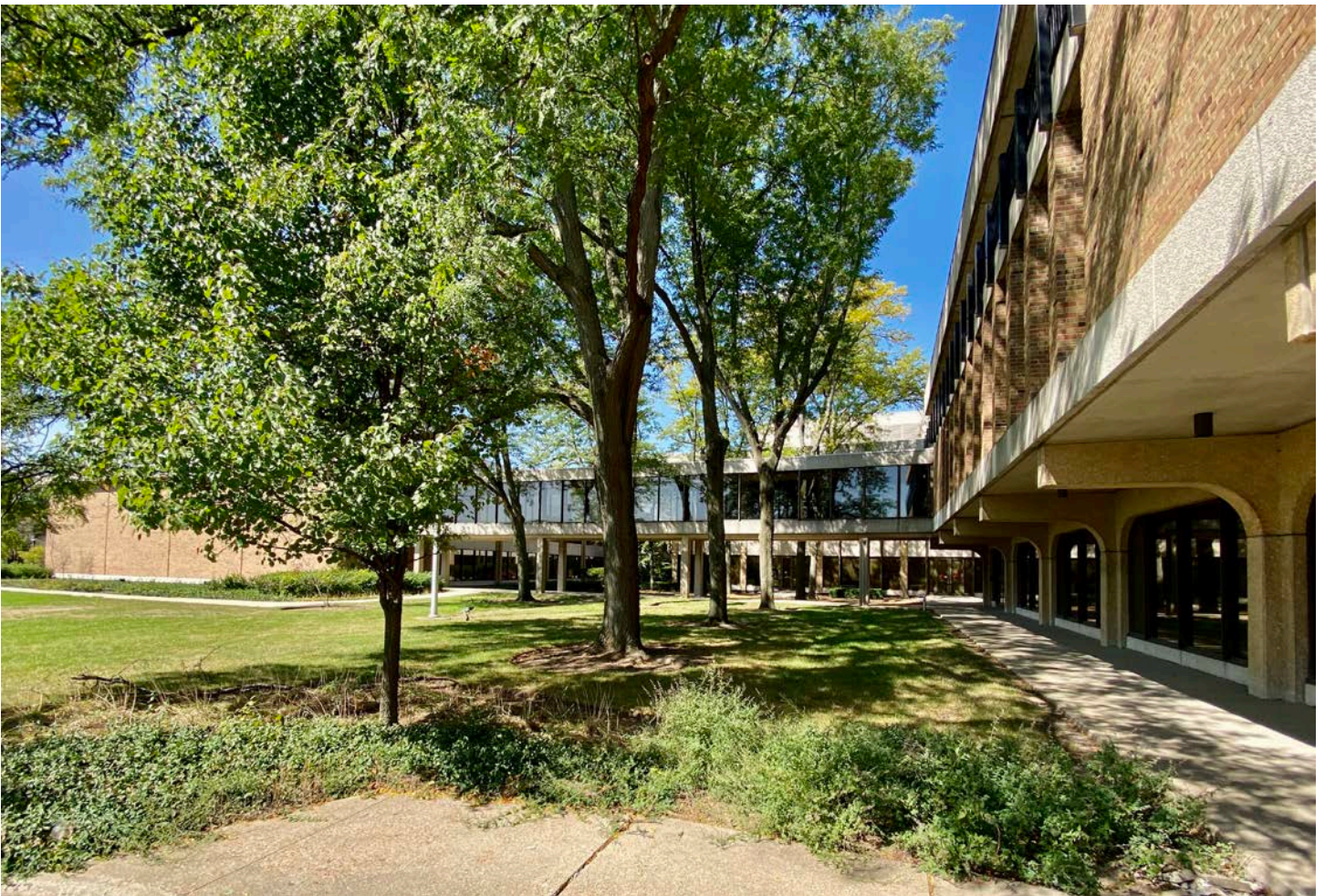


SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS

was founded in 1896. Publishers of the 20th century's popular Dick and Jane readers, the company was one of several successful educational publishers based in Chicago.

In 1966, Scott Foresman moved out of Chicago to a new 44-acre campus at 1900 E. Lake Ave. in Glenview designed by Perkins & Will. Until 1985, Scott Foresman continued to grow through the purchase of additional publishers. The company changed ownership multiple times from the mid-1980s through the early 2000s. The property was [acquired by Inland Real Estate Investment Corporation in 2006](#), while the textbook publishing company continued to occupy the Glenview campus as its headquarters until 2020.

Perkins & Will's Modernist Scott Foresman corporate headquarters links four buildings with over 255,000 square feet by glass enclosed walkways. The complex is now just under 20 acres, and its landscaped grounds and pathways have historically been used by residents of the surrounding community. Three outdoor plazas and a fountain pool were placed between the structures to provide employees with tranquil outdoor areas. The campus was featured in the October 1968 edition of *Architectural Record*, which noted "[G]reat stress was made in the program for the use of materials, scale and landscaping that would be compatible with both rather special working needs and the surrounding neighborhood." ([page 133](#))





SCOTT FORESMAN HEADQUARTERS

The columns and overhangs at Scott Foresman are cast-in-place sandblasted concrete as are the retaining walls that define the courtyard spaces. Building elevations are clad in brick and articulated with bands and cornices of sandblasted precast concrete. A large skylight over the main reception hall is intact. It is made up of 36 pyramids in 12 rows of three. The expansive use of large-scale windows allowed employees from all locations to view the landscaped plazas and gardens. Perkins & Will's design of Scott Foresman and nearby New Trier High School West, which is similar in massing and materials, came out of the C. William Brubaker-led design studio. Brubaker, in an oral history interview, noted their similar aesthetic. ([page 106](#))

The Scott Foresman site is one of many suburban corporate campuses that are important Midcentury Modern designs by significant architectural firms, unprotected by any type of landmark designation. Other significant corporate campuses include [Allstate in Northbrook](#) (designed by Schmidt Garden and Erickson and built in 1963-67), [Baxter International Corporate Headquarters](#) in Deerfield (designed by Bruce Graham of Skidmore, Owning & Merrill) and A.C. Nielsen Company Headquarters in Northfield (designed by L.A.-based architect Welton Becket).





Suburban municipalities and organizations such as American Planning Association and the Municipal Design Review Network are discussing the land-use challenges of redeveloping suburban corporate campuses. Landmarks Illinois urges planning, community and economic development departments of suburban municipalities to study reuse options for these large building complexes. Many of these corporate campuses are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, which gives access to federal historic tax credits for their rehabilitation and reuse. National Register-eligibility also gives area residents the ability to participate in state regulatory review processes regarding the future of these sites.

Most suburban municipalities are focused on sustainable development practices, particularly around the problems of flooding, wastewater treatment and storm water runoff. Retaining the current building complex at Scott Foresman complex not only will prevent large quantities of building material waste from entering a landfill, but will also allow the municipality and neighboring community to address storm water issues related to the site without the complication of new construction. Addressing reuse opportunities of former corporate campuses, a recent seminar featured the developer Somerset [discussing its work](#) adapting the former Bell Works campuses in New Jersey and suburban Chicago into “metroburbs.” These are successful multi-tenant reuse models to consider.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

[Contact Glenview officials](#) to urge a reuse of the historic Scott Foresman campus, rather than replacement.

If you are a Glenview residents, [please sign this petition](#) asking the Village of Glenview to consider community input on the future of the Scott Foresman Headquarters.

FURTHER READING

- [Inland Group affiliate trying to work out short sale of Scott Foresman campus in Glenview](#)
Crain’s Chicago Business, March 23, 2021
- [Broker Seeks Buyer for Scott Foresman Site](#)
Journal & Topics, June 15, 2020
- [Dick and Jane say goodbye to Glenview; A broker courts developers for Scott Foresman campus as publisher moves out](#)
Crain’s Chicago Business, June 15, 2020
- [30 buildings honored for their design](#)
Chicago Tribune, April 18, 1968
- [50-acre Scott, Foresman Complex Designed to Blend with Surroundings](#)
Chicago tribune, January 14, 1968