

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



Chicago Orphan Asylum Building

5120 S. King Dr.

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, December 4, 2008



CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning
Patricia A. Scudiero, Commissioner

Cover illustrations

Top: The Chicago Orphan Asylum Building. Left bottom: Detail of terra-cotta ornament. Right bottom: Horace Cayton, Jr., the director of the Parkway Community House, located in the building during the 1940s and early 1950s.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose ten 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 which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

CHICAGO ORPHAN ASYLUM BUILDING

(FORMERLY PARKWAY COMMUNITY HOUSE; NOW CHICAGO BAPTIST INSTITUTE)

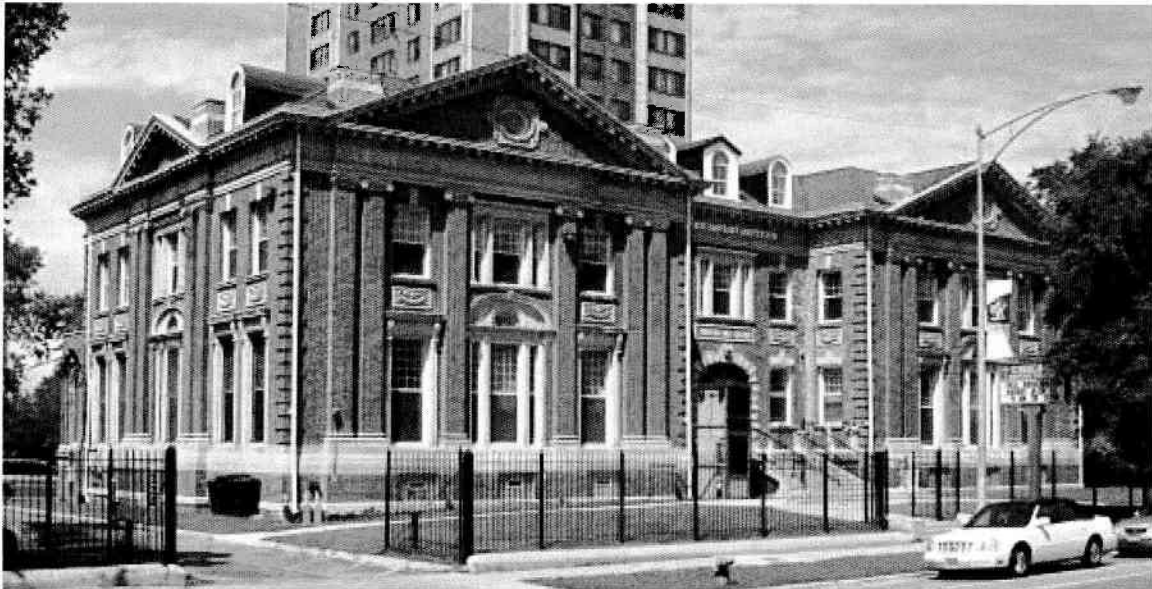
5120 S. KING DR.

BUILT: 1898-1899

ARCHITECTS: SHEPLEY, RUTAN, & COOLIDGE

The Chicago Orphan Asylum Building (now the Chicago Baptist Institute) exemplifies multiple significant aspects of Chicago cultural and institutional history. The building was built originally to house the Chicago Orphan Asylum, founded in 1849 to house orphaned or abandoned children. The building is finely designed in the Colonial Revival architectural style, a style of significance to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The building's architects were Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, a nationally-significant firm that is noteworthy for their designs in Chicago of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Cultural Center, and buildings for the University of Chicago.

In 1940 the Chicago Orphan Asylum sold the building to the Good Shepherd Community Center. Soon renamed the Parkway Community House, this community center was a significant institutional anchor for the Bronzeville community and is associated with the literary and artistic movement of the 1930s and 1940s known as the "Chicago Black Renaissance." The center's founding director, Horace R. Cayton, Jr., was a nationally-significant sociologist, co-authoring (with St. Clair Drake) *Black Metropolis*, an in-depth



The Chicago Orphan Asylum Building is located on the northeastern edge of the Washington Park community area at 5120 S. King Dr., facing Washington Park itself. Built between 1898-99, the Asylum Building was designed in the Colonial Revival architectural style by Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge.





Top: The Chicago Orphan Asylum Building is 2 1/2-stories in height and designed in the Colonial Revival architectural style. Red-brick walls are ornamented with brick Ionic pilasters and terra-cotta cornices, window surrounds, and spandrel panels.

Right: The building's main entrance is centered on the front facade and sheltered within a quoin-decorated archway reached by a short flight of steps.





Top: The side elevations are similarly decorated with brick pilasters and Classical-style terra-cotta ornament.

Bottom: The rear (west) facade is somewhat more simple in its display of Classical details.



The Chicago Orphan Asylum Building is a visually-distinctive building with its red-brick walls and pale yellow terra-cotta Classical-style ornament.



Photos of the Building's Classical-style ornament.



Additional details.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building 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 on its preliminary evaluation of the Chicago Orphan Asylum Building, the Commission recommends that the significant historical and architectural features of the building be identified as:

- all exterior building elevations, including rooflines, of the Building.

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