



# Office of the City Clerk

City Hall  
121 N. LaSalle St.  
Room 107  
Chicago, IL 60602  
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## Legislation Details (With Text)

**File #:** O2016-7293  
**Type:** Ordinance **Status:** Passed  
**File created:** 10/5/2016 **In control:** City Council  
**Final action:** 11/16/2016  
**Title:** Historical landmark designation for Elizabeth Palmer Peabody School at 1438-1454 W Augusta Blvd  
**Sponsors:** Dept./Agency  
**Indexes:** Designation  
**Attachments:** 1. O2016-7293.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
11/16/2016		City Council	Passed	Pass
11/15/2016	1	Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards	Recommended to Pass	
10/5/2016	1	City Council	Referred	

### Department of Planning and Development

city of chicago

September 26, 2016

The Honorable Susana Mendoza City Clerk  
City of Chicago Room 107, City Hall 121  
North LaSalle Street Chicago, IL 60602

**RE: Recommendation for the designation of the Elizabeth Palmer Peabody School as a Chicago Landmark, 1438-1454 W. Augusta Blvd.**

Dear Clerk Mendoza:

We are filing with your office for introduction at the October 5, 2016, City Council meeting as a transmittal to the Mayor and City Council of Chicago the recommendation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks that the Elizabeth Palmer Peabody School be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

The material being submitted to you for this proposal includes the:

1. Recommendation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks; and <<jj
- 2.

Proposed Ordinance.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Esser Gorski, AIA Deputy

Commissioner

Planning, Design and Historic Preservation Division Department  
of Planning and Development

ends.

*Alderman Brian Hopkins, 2<sup>n</sup> Ward (via email without enclosure)*

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 1000. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

### **ORDINANCE**

#### **Elizabeth Palmer Peabody School Building 1438-1454 W. Augusta Blvd. (evens)**

WHEREAS, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Municipal Code of Chicago (the "Municipal Code"), Sections 2-120-630 through -690, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the "Commission") has determined that the Graeme Stewart Public School Building (the "Building"), located at 4505-4545 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, legally described in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein, satisfies two (2) criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1) and (4) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the Building exemplifies the importance of Chicago's public schools to the City's social and cultural history; and

WHEREAS, Public education has historically been one of the most important responsibilities of Chicago government, and public school buildings are visual and social anchors in the City's neighborhoods - opened in 1895, the Elizabeth Peabody Public School was one such institution in the West Town community area for almost 120 years, serving initially German and Polish immigrants and their children; and

WHEREAS, as the Building is a handsome example of a public school building, a building type of significance to the history of Chicago and its neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the Building is finely designed, combining both historic architectural styles, including the Richardson Romanesque and Queen Anne, with progressive visual elements influenced from the Arts and Crafts and the contemporary work of Louis H. Sullivan; and

WHEREAS, the Building's exterior, with its finely-detailed red brick and stone walls embellished with decoration in stone, molded brick, terra cotta and decorative metal, exemplifies the fine craftsmanship that defines historic architecture; and

WHEREAS, in its emphasis on large windows and high ceilings which provided large, airy, well-lighted classrooms, the Building reflects late-nineteenth century school ideals; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Building has a 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; and

WHEREAS, on September 1, 2016, the Commission adopted a resolution recommending to the City Council of the City of Chicago (the "City Council") that the Building be designated a Chicago Landmark; now, therefore,

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**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:**

SECTION 1. The above recitals are hereby adopted as the findings of the City Council.

SECTION 2. The Building is hereby designated a Chicago Landmark in accordance with Section 2-120-700 of the Municipal Code.

SECTION 3. For purposes of Sections 2-120-740 and 2-120-770 of the Municipal Code governing permit review, the significant historical and architectural features of the Building are identified as:

- a) All exterior-elevations, including rooflines, of the building.

SECTION 4. The Commission is hereby directed to create a suitable plaque appropriately identifying the Building as a Chicago Landmark.

SECTION 5. If any provision of this ordinance shall be held to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the invalidity or unenforceability of such provision shall not affect any of the other provisions of this ordinance.

SECTION 6. All ordinances, resolutions, motions or orders in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 7. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and approval.

**EXHIBIT A**

**Building Address**

1438-1454 W. Augusta Blvd. (evens), Chicago, Illinois

**Permanent Index Number**

17-05-309-080-0000

**Legal Description**

LOTS 31 TO 36, BOTH INCLUSIVE, IN BLOCK 2 IN MCCAGG'S SUBDIVISION OF BLOCK 19 IN CANAL TRUSTEE'S SUBDIVISION OF THE WEST 1/2 (EXCEPT THE SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF THE NORTHWEST 1/4 AND THE NORTHEAST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4) OF SECTION 5, TOWNSHIP 39 NORTH, RANGE 14, EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

CITY OF CHICAGO COMMISSION ON CHICAGO  
LANDMARKS

September 1, 2016

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

ELIZABETH PALMER PEABODY SCHOOL

Including the Following Address Ranges (even/odd addresses):

1438-1454 W. Augusta Boulevard (evens)

Docket No. 2016-08

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 Elizabeth Palmer Peabody School (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 two (2) criteria set forth in Section 2-120-620 of the Municipal Code:

- /. *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.*

**I. BACKGROUND**

The formal landmark designation process for the Building began on July 7, 2016, 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 two (2) of the seven (7) criteria for designation, as well as the integrity criterion, identified in the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance (Municipal Code,

Section 2-120-580 et seq.). The Preliminary Recommendation, incorporated herein and attached hereto as Exhibit A, initiated the process for further study and analysis of the proposed designation of the Building as a Chicago Landmark. As part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission identified the "significant historical and architectural features" of the Building as:

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

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated July 7, 2016, incorporated herein and attached hereto as Exhibit B.

At its regular meeting of August 4, 2016, the Commission received a statement from David Reifman, Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, supporting the proposed landmark designation of the Building.

In a letter dated August 8, 2016, the Commission officially requested the consent to the proposed landmark designation from the owner of the Building. On August 23, 2016, the Commission received a consent form dated August 23, 2016, and signed by Nick Vittore, the owner of the Building, consenting to the proposed landmark designation of the Building.

## **II. FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 2-120-650 of the Municipal Code, the Commission shall notify the owner of its determination with respect to the proposed Chicago Landmark designation within 45 days after receipt of the owner's consent; and

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 Building meets the two (2) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Sections 2-120-620 (I) and (4) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the Building exemplifies the importance of Chicago's public schools to the City's social- and cultural history- and

WHEREAS, Public education has historically been one of the most important responsibilities of Chicago government, and public school buildings often are visual and social anchors in the City's neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, opened in 1895, the Building was one such institution in the West Town community area for almost 120 years, serving initially German and Polish immigrants and their children; and

WHEREAS, the Building is a handsome example of a public school building, a building type of significance to the history of Chicago and its neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the Building is finely designed, combining both historic architectural styles, including the Richardson Romanesque and Queen Anne, with progressive visual elements influenced from the Arts and

Crafts and the contemporary work of Louis H. Sullivan; and

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WHEREAS, the Building's exterior, with its finely-detailed red brick and stone walls embellished with decoration in stone, molded brick, terra cotta and decorative metal, exemplifies the fine craftsmanship that defines historic architecture; and

WHEREAS, in its emphasis on large windows and high ceilings which provided large, airy, well-lighted classrooms, the Building reflects late-nineteenth century school ideals; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Building has a 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 1<sup>st</sup> day of September 2016; and
3. Finds, based on the Designation Report and the entire record before the Commission, that the Building meets the two (2) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1) and (4) 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:
  - a) All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building.

Recommends the designation of the Building a Chicago Landmark.

Rafael MTL eor tr Cr Tainnarr ~ Commission on Chicago Landmarks

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EXHIBIT A

Resolution by the  
Commission on Chicago Landmarks on the  
Preliminary Landmark Recommendation for

**ELIZABETH PALMER PEABODY SCHOOL**

Including the Following Address Ranges 1438-1454 W. Augusta  
Boulevard (evens)

July 7, 2016

Whereas, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the "Commission") preliminarily finds that:

- the Elizabeth Palmer Peabody School (the "Building"), located at the addresses noted above, meets the two criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1) and (4) of the Municipal Code of Chicago (the "Municipal Code"), as specifically described in the Preliminary Summary of Information submitted to the Commission on this 7<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2016, by the Department of Planning and Development (the "Preliminary Summary"); and
- *the Building satisfies the historic integrity requirement set forth in Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code as described in the Preliminary Summary; now, therefore,*

***Be it resolved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks:***

Section 1. The above recitals are expressly incorporated in and made part of this resolution as though fully set forth herein.

Section 2. The Commission hereby adopts the Preliminary Summary and makes a preliminary landmark recommendation concerning the Building in accordance with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code.

Section 3. For purposes of Section 2-120-740 of the Municipal Code governing permit review, the significant historical and architectural features of the Building are preliminarily identified as:

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

Section 4. The Commission hereby requests a report from the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development which evaluates the relationship of the proposed designation to the City's governing plans and policies and the effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding neighborhood in accordance with Section 2-120-640 of the Municipal Code.

Date of Signature:                      7 ^ Q>

Rafael M. LeorrTChairman Commission on Chicago Landmarks

This resolution was adopted July 7, 2016.

**EXHIBIT B**

# Preliminary Summary of Information

Submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in July 2016

# Elizabeth Peabody Public School

1444 W. Augusta Blvd.

CITY OF CHICAGO Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development David Reifman, Commissioner

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# Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building

1444 W. Augusta Blvd.

Built: 1894

Architect: W. August Fiedler  
(Board of Education Architect)

The Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building is a handsomely-designed and detailed public school building, a significant building type in the context of Chicago history. With its crisp geometric forms, paired with boldly-contrasting red pressed brick and stone walls, it exemplifies Chicago architecture of the 1890s, embracing both tradition and innovation in design. The building has finely-detailed and crafted ornament in stone, molded brick, terra cotta and decorative metal, reflecting the late Victorian love of detail in architecture.

The building was an early design by W. August Fiedler as newly-appointed Architect to the Chicago Board of Education. During Fiedler's tenure, the Board Architect position became an integral part of the Board of Education staff with greater professional support on design matters made readily available to the Board through Fiedler and his fellow architects.

The Peabody Public School Building occupies several lots on the north side of west Augusta Boulevard in Chicago's West Town community area on the Near Northwest Side of Chicago. The school was built in response to the growth of the area's primarily Polish and German immigrant population. Thousands of immigrant families arrived in the area during the turn of the nineteenth century, and West Town became home to the largest Polish population outside of Warsaw. Peabody relieved older, over-crowded schools and gave the neighborhood a new educational "landmark" which would serve Chicago school children for roughly 120 years.

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H Elizabeth H J^f Peabody ^■Public School^H

Augusta Boulevard

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The Elizabeth Peabody School (or simply the Peabody School) occupies a portion of a block on the north side of Augusta Boulevard east of Noble Street.

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## The History of Public School Architecture in Chicago up to 1894

Chicago's first public schools were created following Chicago's incorporation in 1837 with the founding of a managing board appointed by the City Council. Several rudimentary frame schoolhouses were constructed in the 1840s, during which time the Illinois state legislature granted additional power to Chicago to purchase and manage school land, and to fund the construction of new schools through taxation. Tax funds allowed for the construction of Chicago's first brick school, later known as the Dearborn School, which was completed in 1845 in the Greek Revival style. In the 1860s, school buildings, such as the Chicago High School, built in 1856 in the Gothic Revival style (and demolished in 1950), and the Haven School completed in the Italianate style in 1862 (and demolished after it closed in 1974), followed conventional rectilinear floor plans with classrooms arranged around central hallways.

Across the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, the design of school houses followed a few standard formulas for size and layout. The intended purpose of the school building was primarily to contain classrooms where long-established methods of recitation and memorization could be performed. School buildings of this period were simple, either single room structures in rural areas and small towns, or larger multiple room buildings in cities. All schoolhouse designs featured a standard square or rectangular footprint. A few schoolhouses offered more than just classrooms, with some allowing for office space for teachers and principals.

While most school houses shared similar basic design principals, concerns about the healthfulness of enclosed indoor air and the benefits of improving the illumination of classrooms led to the publication of guides for the design of school buildings, including one published in 1848 by Henry Barnard, the commissioner of the public schools of Providence, Rhode Island. In his book *School Architecture; or Contributions to the Improvement of School-houses in the United States*, Barnard proposed a series of standards for the location of schools, the size and layout of classrooms, the size and position of windows for light, and most importantly the ventilation of buildings. Having toured schools of every type across the country during his career, he asserted that existing buildings were largely unhealthful and uninspiring. School children, he felt, "should spend a large part of the most impressionable period of their lives," in school, in buildings that could positively shape their lives. Overall, "the style of the exterior should exhibit good, architectural proportion, and be calculated to inspire children and the community generally with respect for the object for which it is devoted." Barnard's moral-driven enthusiasm for the purpose and design of public school buildings helped slowly propel changes in American school design.

In Chicago, the Great Fire of 1871 destroyed much of the city, including ten public school buildings. The loss of these buildings offered the opportunity to rebuild following new methods popularized by education thinkers such as Henry

Barnard. While student enrolment dropped initially, by 1874 nearly 48,000 students were enrolled in the city's 39 school buildings. One of the new post-fire buildings was the King School, completed in 1874 by architects Johnston & Edelmann in the Italianate style (Harrison Street and Western Avenue, demolished). Its form

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KING SCHOOL.

**The King School, designed by Johnston & Edelmann in 1874, was designed in the Italianate style, which was popular in the 1870s. This school building was favored by the school board, and it influenced the design of Chicago school buildings through the early 1880s.**

**The Ruben Salazar Elementary School (originally the North Division High School) at 160 W. Wendell St. was one of the last Chicago school buildings completed following the form and style of the King School model. Designed by school board architect Julius S. Enderand completed in 1883, it was designated as a Chicago landmark in 1978.**

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followed the standard template with a symmetrical square footprint with rooms set around a central hallway. While similar to previous schools in form, the King School featured many of the improvements to design, layout, ventilation, and lighting which had been advocated by educators for over a half century. The three-story, twelve-room King School featured tall windows and special ducted ventilation systems and other new features. In addition, as a precaution against fire, brick interior partitions were used instead of the previous standard of frame. The King School's modern design and low construction budget made it the school board's favored design. Nearly all public school houses built in Chicago through the 1890s followed this basic form.

It was also during the 1880s that the job of designing Chicago public school buildings became more defined. The role of school board architect had developed unofficially in the late 1870s with early Chicago architect Augustus Bauer, who designed over twenty new school buildings following the standard form established by Johnston & Edelmann. The Chicago Board of Education then officially created the position of architect to the Board in 1882 and appointed Bauer to the position. Bauer held the official position for less than a year before contract controversy ended his term. The Board elected three architects in succession, each serving brief terms of fewer than six months, before appointing architect John J. Flanders as architect.

Flanders altered the standard school building design by introducing asymmetrical footprints and elaborate architectural design elements. An early example of his work near the Peabody School is the 1884 John Lothrop Motley School Building at 739 North Ada Street, (given a preliminary Chicago Landmark recommendation by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in May 2016). In between Flanders' two terms as school architect was Charles Rudolph, the architect of the James Muriigan Public School Building at 1855 to 1863 North Sheffield Avenue (1889-1890; a designated Chicago Landmark).

Architect William August Fiedler, commonly known as August Fiedler, was elected Architect of the Chicago Board<sup>1</sup> of Education in 1893, and like his predecessors, he was confronted with the issue of overcrowding and during the 1880s and 1890s, Chicago's population more than doubled as a steady stream of immigrants settled in the city. Large-scale annexations of land in 1889 also brought additional populations into the city, including over 35,000 students. All wanted city services, including public schools.

The student population also increased after the state's 1883 Compulsory Education Law was both strengthened with the appointment of truant officers and a Superintendent of Compulsory Education and expanded to require that all children ages 7 to 14 attend school for 16 weeks per year. Despite criticism of the law as unenforceable and despite the School Board freely granting "good cause" exemptions to keep children at home or at work, the new law increased demand for seats in Chicago's public schools, particularly in the city's growing immigrant communities like West Town.

During 1894, the School Board approved and built nineteen new schools designed by board architect William Fiedler, including the Peabody School. This was the greatest period of school building construction since the Board's concentrated efforts to address overcrowding began a decade earlier.

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John J. Flanders developed a new design for Chicago's public school buildings following his appointment as Architect to the Board of Education in early 1884. His prototype design was applied to schools erected between 1884 and 1885, including the John Lothrop Motley Public School Building (right), located at 739 N. Ada St. and built in 1884. A preliminary landmark recommendation was approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks for the building in May 2016.

## Building Construction and Description

In early 1893, the Chicago Board of Education approved the purchase of land for a new school site on the north side of west Augusta Boulevard, between north Noble Street and north Greenview Avenue. The site, which would be the location of the new Peabody Public School, was one of ten across the city where new schools were authorized to be built by the Board that year.

Peabody was built to relieve overcrowding at two older West Town schools: the William H. Wells School (1836, North As School (formerly the Division and Cleaver Street School, built in 1876 and later replaced by Holy Trinity High School). A September 1895 Chicago Tribune article commented that "the increase in population of such a character that the School Board will not see its work of erecting new buildings completed for many years." Peabody's foundation was laid early in 1894, and by August, the roof was complete and finish plasterwork had begun. The school's fifteen classrooms opened on January 7, 1895.

### *Description of the Peabody Public School Building*

The Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building was one of Fiedler's first school designs. His design was bold yet utilitarian; it follows a rigid geometric design which is emphasized by ornament. Its design is based on historic architectural styles popular during the period, including the Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne architectural styles, while being evocative of buildings designed by progressive Chicago architect Louis Sullivan and others that were involved in defining new American architectural styles through the embrace of Arts-and-Crafts theories. Trained in Germany, Fiedler may also have incorporated aspects of contemporary German architecture, including crisp geometry and contrasting brick and stone walls.

Fiedler's design for the Peabody School represents an excellent balance of tradition and innovation that was characteristic of much Chicago architecture of the 1890s. It was unusual among Fiedler's other school designs of the period in that he used the standard school footprint and overall building form established by the King School in 1874. Other schools completed by Fiedler in 1894 and 1895 frequently used the same footprint, centrally-located stairwells, entrances, and

lines. Fiedler's other school/designs primarily echo the Renaissance Revival style, with no two alike.

In contrast, the general form of the Peabody School was rather like earlier school buildings. Its symmetrical footprint, with projecting side wings on the east and west sides accommodating stairwells and classrooms, resembles the King School and subsequent schools designed by Augustus Bauer: The main entrance is neither recessed nor set in a vestibule as in Fiedler's other designs; instead it is centered on the Augusta Boulevard facade following long-established architectural standards for school design. Similarly the school's exterior configuration and materials, including a stone base and brick-clad upper floors, trimmed with a pressed metal cornice, give Peabody some of the visual character of earlier Chicago schoolhouses.

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**W. August Fiedler's 1894 Peabody school was one of his first designs. While maintaining the traditional tripartite design of base, middle, and crown, it blends older school building forms and styles with hints of modern new American Architectural styles.**

Despite these similarities with earlier school buildings, the clean-lined Peabody School embraces some of the prevalent modern design edicts of the 1890s without letting go of precedent. The school's elevations have a tripartite design from bottom to top. Above a base of rusticated Joliet limestone, the first floor is faced in smooth-faced limestone. (This limestone replaced deteriorated original smooth sandstone in 1998. A sandstone keystone and voussoirs remain as part of the main entrance arch. Upper-floor sandstone lintels and sills remain as well.) Above the first floor, three floors are clad in red pressed brick. Decorative brick provides borders framing windows within structural bays, emphasizing vertically. A simple metal cornice and a brick parapet with a decorative square pattern caps the building.

In addition, the main (Augusta) elevation is symmetrically divided into three sections from side to side, with a central section projecting towards the street and side sections more recessed. The central bay features the main entrance, which is framed by a triumphal arch set into the limestone base with plain spandrels and a simple, fluted keystone. The coursed limestone cladding of the base extends above the entrance to the first floor and frames a set of three windows. Sets of three windows on the second and third floors are bordered on either side by a brick dentil, or saw tooth, pattern that extends from the second-floor limestone sill through to the metal cornice above the third floor. Between the second and third floors there is an oversized

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**Above: The Peabody School features several decorative elements. A terra cotta panel with the school's name in raised letters entwined with foliate leaves can be seen above the main Augusta Boulevard entrance. A shallow metal cornice with a slim profile wraps around the school just below the parapet. The parapet over the main entrance has decorative blind arches set in brick and terra cotta.**

**.Left: The verticality of the school's design is emphasized by a decorative molded brick border combined with bricks set in a dentil pattern. Spandrels between windows have fields of pattern brick, which also highlight the building's vertical proportions.**

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W. August Fiedler's design for the Peabody School incorporates forms from John J. Flanders 1884 school building prototype. Above left, the Von Humboldt School designed by Flanders in 1884 follows the prototype plan below. Four corner classrooms each follow the same layout with a wall of four windows to the right and a wall with two windows to the left. The classroom is copied and rotated 90 degrees for each corner. This floor plan and method of creating similar classroom spaces can be seen in Fiedler's design for the Peabody School, above right. Banks of four windows can be seen on the right side of each elevation, similar to the Von Humboldt School. On the left side of each elevation, Fiedler added an additional window in place of Flanders's chimney stacks.

panel of terra cotta with the name "ELIZABETH PEABODY" set among molded foliate motifs. The central bay is topped by a parapet with a "blind" arcade pattern of brick with terra cotta spandrels and keystones.

The east section features a set of four windows per floor that are separated by brick mullions. Pressed brick with raised circles creates a uniform spandrel field between floors from the top of limestone lintels to the bottom of limestone sills. A brick dentil pattern borders either side of these sets of windows, running continuously from the top of the limestone base through to the metal cornice. The west section is similar to the east section, except that there are three individual bays of evenly spaced windows. Each narrow bay features similar fields of circle-decorated pressed brick between floors, and each bay is bordered on each side by a brick dentil pattern.

The Peabody School's interior layout features five classrooms per floor with mechanical and play and washrooms in the

basement. Each floor features four corner classrooms, where each classroom has a wall of four tall windows and a second wall of two or three single windows. These identical rectangular classrooms are oriented in a pin-wheel pattern so that the right side of each exterior wall of the school features a bay with sets of four windows.

This floor design was adapted from a standardized school plan developed by Board of Education Architect John J. Flanders in 1884 (The 1884 John Lathrop Motley school shares this same general layout.) School design advocates prescribed many features to make schools more effective and efficient. One important component was the allocation of natural light to classrooms, especially at a time when artificial lighting was insufficient and seen as contributing to poor health. Flanders's floor plan allowed for a school to be built regardless of its north-south orientation, thereby ensuring that most classrooms would benefit from optimal sun light during the day. Fiedler copied Flanders's standardized floor plan and cloaked them within the walls of a school house of his own design. "

#### *Design influences in the Peabody Public School Building*

Taken as a whole, the Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building synthesizes a number of historically-significant architectural trends found in Chicago architecture of the late nineteenth century. It utilizes historic styles such as the Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne. It incorporates Arts-and-Crafts theories about the primacy of building materials in the creation of a visual style. It references the innovative architecture of Chicagoan Louis Sullivan, a contemporary of Fiedler.

Based on the designs of noteworthy Massachusetts architect Henry Hobson Richardson, the Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style was influenced by the medieval architecture of 11th and 12th century European churches, but simplified visually to emphasize underlying geometric forms. The Peabody School's bold stone base and round-arched entrances for both front and side entrances show the influence of the Richardsonian Romanesque.

The Queen Anne style as used by the Peabody School was based on English buildings built in the 1870s and 1880s that embraced visual complexity and a plethora of ornament, especially in brick and terra cotta. The Peabody School has a large terra-cotta panel atop the main facade

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**The bold central stone arch entrance and side arches of the Peabody School reference modern American architectural styles of the 1880s and 1890s. The arches reflect the weight of Romanesque forms by architect Henry Hobson Richardson, but also suggest the geometric simplicity of an arch within a square that is found frequently in the work of Louis Sullivan.**

**Below right: The triumphal arched entrance of Louis Sullivan's 1894 Chicago Stock Exchange building, which was under construction around the same time as the Peabody School.**

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that shells: put "ELIZABETH PEABODY" and is embellished with Victorian style foliate and geometric patterns, is used to edge structural piers and ornament spaces between windows.  
Brick is also used for roof-parapet panels and blind arches.

The influence of modern American design aesthetics in the Peabody School, especially the Arts

and Crafts can be seen in the geometry. The building

lines of the building, which emphasize sharp lines of applied ornament, Emphasizing the

inherent;^isuafquali'Ues^ stone.:Tipper floors'utiize the deep red hue, accentuate^thelbverall sense .of  
taCtil^srhpdthhessm  
mass^ndJvoW is clearly expressed through \yindqw <file:///yindqw> groupings,  
separated by piers outliriedln dentil brick; rrioldings and spandrels covered' in circle-embellished bricks. Limestone  
lintels and sillsprovide visual contrast to the red of the bricks.

The round-arched main entrance, set within a simple squared-off surround and devoid of applied ornament, resembles the Romanesque-influenced entrances to several of Louis Sullivan's buildings,- including the Schiller Building of 1891 and especially the Chicago Stock Exchange Building of 1894, under construction at the same time as the Peabody School. Fiedler's architectural office for the Board of Education was located in the Garrick Theater building, and Fiedler would have been well aware of Sullivan's work.

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**Above right and left: types of pressed pattern brick that can be found between windows.**

**Left: Smooth brickwork, contrasting deep red brick and ivory-colored stone, and strong vertical lines with sharp geometry point to modern American design aesthetics.**

**Below: Louis Sullivan's Schiller Building of 1891 where Fiedler had his offices.**

Small Building in the Heart of Chicago

### *Architect W. August Fiedler*

Born in Elbing, Germany, William August Fiedler (1842-1903) was educated in architecture before emigrating to the United States in 1871. He worked as an architect in New York City for several years, and then moved to Chicago in 1874 as part of a large influx of architects that saw professional opportunity in the rapidly-growing city. Fiedler was also one of a number of German-born architects who were drawn to Chicago with its large German-American population.

Once in Chicago, Fiedler (generally known by his middle name August) entered the field of interior design and high-quality furniture and furnishings, first in partnership with John W. Roberts and then by himself as ATFiedler & Co., "Designer and Manufacturer of Artistic Furniture." Fiedler's clients included many of the city's social elite, with one of his most elaborate interior designs created in 1879 for Samuel M. Nickerson's sumptuous residence at 40 East Erie Street (1883, a designated Chicago Landmark).

During the 1880s, Fiedler formed an architectural firm with John Addison, who was known for his "Modern Gothic" designs. The firm designed grand homes and commercial buildings in Chicago and across the Midwest. One of their best Chicago works was the Germania Club Building of 1889 at West Germania Place and North Clark Street (a designated Chicago Landmark). In 1890, Fiedler and Addison ended their partnership, and Fiedler briefly practiced independently until he was appointed Board of Education Architect in 1893.

Prior to Fiedler's appointment, the position of Architect to the Board of Education had been held by architects who worked on commission rather than salary; they were paid a percentage of the cost of each school in compensation for their work. As a result, architects had tended to produce standard designs that were not site-specific and could easily be copied across the city, guaranteeing a stream of income without the need for great customization. • • •

However, Fiedler was faced with a new employment system and a growing public desire for unique and site-specific architecture. He was hired at \$6,000 per year as an architect employed within the Board of Education. As a result, he took over design and supervisory roles that previously had been performed by the school board and its staff. When he started in 1893, Fiedler employed two superintendents and two draftsmen. However, by 1896, the amount of work required

ofhim necessitated the employment of six-draftsmen ^ superintendents. The resulting professionalism and the ability for clbser'coOperatori between the Board of Eduction, and the Architect's office was a specific expression of<sup>1</sup> the larger professionalish that was spreading through the architectural profession at the turn of the last century!;

During his three years as Architect to the Board of Education, Fiedler designed 58 new school buildings and dozens of additions! Itwas the greatest period of construction in the school board's history until that time. Among the many school buildings that he designed were the Augustus Burley Public School at 1630 West Barry Avenue, the Richard Yates Public School at 1839 North Richmond Street, and the Goethe Public School at 2236 North Rockwell Street.

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Above left: W. August Fiedler around 1880.

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Below right: Ad for Fiedler's first Chicago design firm the A. Fiedler & Co., which produced exceptional interior furnishings for some of Chicago's finest homes.

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## //. fiedler & co. Artistic Furniture

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Left: Fiedler's Germania Club Building of 1889. The building is a designated Chicago

W. August Fiedler designed 58 new schools and dozens of additions for the Chicago Board of Education during his 3 years as board architect. No two schools followed the same plan. Each was designed for its site and neighborhood.

The Augustus H. Burley Public School (left), located at 1630 W. Barry

In 1896, the Board of Education audited Fiedler's department and discovered that the cost of designing new buildings and superintending construction had climbed by 61% during his tenure. This was due to the many new employees required to complete each project, and the Board was unhappy and intended to fire Fiedler. A subsequent investigation exonerated Fiedler, who then chose to resign his position and return to private practice.

Among his later private commissions, one of his more notable was the expansion of the West Side Grounds (Taylor and Wolcott streets), which was at the home of the Chicago Cubs until the team moved to Weeghman Park (now Wrigley Field) in 1916.

Educator Elizabeth Peabody The Peabody School is named for educator Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (1804-1894). Born in Billerica, Massachusetts, in 1804, Peabody was an abolitionist, an advocate for women's suffrage, and a member of the "Transcendental Club" with close acquaintances Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Channing, and Henry Thoreau. A natural linguist, she learned ten languages, including Polish, which she studied later in life to better understand the United States as it changed thanks to immigration.

Peabody is best remembered today for her pioneering advocacy of kindergartens and early-childhood education. In 1867, she traveled to Germany to study the teaching methods of educator Friedrich Froebel, who had established the first "kindergarten" in 1837 to offer enriching play and recreation to children between the ages of 4 and 6. Educator Elizabeth P. Peabody returned to Boston where she established a course to train kindergarten teachers, introducing the kindergarten concept to the United States at a time when early childhood was becoming more recognized as an important stage of childhood. As an author, she completed many works on education and the methods of teaching kindergarten.

Progressive school advocates in the late nineteenth century viewed kindergarten as one of several components that were important in the healthy development of young children. Peabody's advocacy of early childhood learning led to the adoption of kindergarten classes across the country. The Elizabeth Peabody Public School, named for her in honor of her work, was one of the first Chicago public schools to pioneer kindergarten classes in the Chicago Public School system. All subsequent school buildings and school additions in Chicago were built with dedicated kindergarten classrooms.

## Downtown

The Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building is located in the West Town community area on the Near Northwest Side of Chicago. This area grew quickly in the last decades of the nineteenth century as countless European immigrants to the United States fled to the United States seeking a better life by escape Old-World poverty, political upheaval, and religious or ethnic oppression. New schools such as Peabody were built to accommodate the new families that were quickly entering the area. Polish immigration to West Town was especially strong, and quickly surpassed the area's existing German and Scandinavian populations. West Town soon emerged as the largest Polish community outside of Warsaw centered on Milwaukee Avenue near Division Street.

A history of political repression accompanied by much economic deprivation, encouraged millions of Poles to seek their fortunes in the New World. Between 1850 and 1914, an estimated three million Poles fled their homeland. A majority became Americans, entering the United States by way of New York's emigration processing center at Ellis Island, and then settling in predominantly Polish communities in growing American industrial cities such as New York, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

West Town was first settled by Germans before the 1850s as a farmland. The land was on the northwest fringe of a growing metropolis whose boundaries ended at Wood Street on the west and North Avenue on the north. Immediately northwest of the city lay the vast and largely rural Jefferson Township, which was dotted by clusters of frame houses, and farming communities. The fire of 1871 prompted an exodus of city residents to surrounding townships, which were lightly developed, relatively inexpensive, and free of mounting building restrictions. Scores of new frame houses quickly filled areas both beyond the city and within the West Town area before post-fire building laws were passed in 1874. An even greater development boom transformed West Town following Chicago's 1889 annexation of surrounding townships including Jefferson. New utility connections, city services, and transportation connections raised land values and led to the construction of thousands of new brick cottages and two or more unit flats.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the West Town area was largely built up. It became the primary home of Chicago's Polish community, which was centered on Milwaukee Avenue near Division Street, and known to local residents as "Stanislawowo-Trojczakowo" (after the area's two earliest Polish Catholic parishes St Stanislaus and Holy Trinity) and to the rest of Chicago as "Polish Downtown." It was home to tens of thousands of Chicago Poles who lived, worked, worshipped, and learned within a one-square-mile area of the intersection of Division Street, Ashland Avenue, and Milwaukee Avenue, a busy traffic crossing commonly known as the "Polish Triangle," less than a third of a mile to the northwest of the Peabody Public School Building.

Between 1890 and 1937, the city's Polish population grew more than ten-fold to over 500,000, making the Polish Downtown the economic and cultural heart of Chicago Polish life. Polish

Downtown's main commercial streets—Noble Street, Division Street, Ashland Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue—were lined with Polish-owned businesses serving both Polish-speaking neighborhood residents and far-Hung Polish Chicagoans visiting from other parts of the metropolitan area.

The area's initial growth during the 1890s was met with the same challenges of overcrowding and limited resources found in other immigrant neighborhoods across the city. At the same time, industry and other uses had begun to fill the community, entering at its borders along Grand Avenue and the river. Like Jane Addams's Hull House and the greater Settlement Movement in the United States, settlement organizations aimed at helping newly arrived citizens become familiar with and settled in their new home appeared across the city. Several such organizations were founded by local universities including Northwestern University, which started the financially-independent Northwestern Settlement in West Town in 1892. In 1901, the settlement moved to their current location at the corner of Augusta and Noble, just east

of the Peabody School, in a building designed for them by the architectural firm of Pond and Pond. (The Northwestern University Settlement House is a designated Chicago Landmark.) The proximity of the settlement house to the Peabody School made it possible for the two to share resources. Peabody students frequently participated in activities at Northwestern Settlement, and were in later years allowed to use its large Allison Gymnasium.

After a development peak in the 1940s and 1950s, post-World War II changes to the community, including the 1960 completion of the Northwest Expressway (renamed the Kennedy Expressway) and the arrival of new ethnic groups in the area, caused many of Polish Downtown's older residents to relocate out of the community into other Chicago neighborhoods and suburbs. As the area's population shifted and declined, the Peabody School was quickly identified as being inefficient. During the 1940s, school officials proposed razing Peabody and four other schools, including the nearby Motley School, without replacing them, citing them as obsolete. In the late 1960s, urban renewal advocates proposed an expansive redevelopment project for the triangular area between Augusta Boulevard and Milwaukee Avenue, and the

**The "Polish Downtown" was centered around the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue, Division Street, and Ashland Avenue.**

**This view is facing east along Division towards Milwaukee in 1941.**

demolition of Peabody was again proposed. This neighborhood revitalization plan was sold to the public as a requirement for replacing the aging Peabody School, which residents wanted. However, residents successfully fought the plan, leaving Peabody in place. A single-story, freestanding school building was instead built to the east of the existing school building.

Peabody continued to serve the West Town area through 2013. In the decade before its closure, the Board of Education made several repairs including the replacement of windows and the rebuilding of stonework and the parapet in 1998 and 2005, and the rebuilding of the large rear chimney in 2012.

## **CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sections 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art or other object with the City of Chicago if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of historic integrity to convey its significance.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

### ***Criterion 1: 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, the State of Illinois, or the United States.*

- The Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building exemplifies the importance of Chicago's public schools to the City's social and cultural history.
- Public education has historically been one of the most important responsibilities of Chicago government, and public

schools often are visual and social anchors in the City's neighborhoods. Opened in 1895, the Elizabeth Peabody Public School was one such institution in the West Town community area for almost 120 years, serving initially German and Polish immigrants and their children.

#### ***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.*

- The Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building is a handsome example of a public school building, a building type of significance to the history of Chicago and its neighborhoods.
- The building is finely designed, combining both historic architectural styles, including the

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Richardson Romanesque and Queen Anne, with progressive visual elements influenced from the Arts and Crafts and the contemporary work of Louis H. Sullivan.

- The building's exterior, with its finely-detailed red brick and stone walls embellished with decoration in stone, molded brick, terra cotta and decorative metal, exemplifies the fine craftsmanship that defines historic architecture.
- In its emphasis on large windows and high ceilings which provided large, airy, well-lighted classrooms, the building reflects late-nineteenth century school ideals.

#### ***Integrity Criterion***

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

The Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building retains its historic integrity in location, site, setting, form and details. Overall, the building maintains a very high degree of architectural integrity on its exterior. The building retains historic red-brick upper walls and exterior ornamental detailing, including red molded brick, red terra cotta and light-painted decorative metal.

Changes to the building's exterior are relatively minor and do not detract from its ability to convey its architectural and historical significance. Damaged first-floor stone cladding was replaced with a similar, but more durable stone and carved to match the original design and profiles. Ground-floor doors have been replaced, a common change found in school buildings from the nineteenth century. Windows have also been replaced.

Despite these changes, the Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building retains its ability to express its architectural and historical values as a finely-designed and -crafted public school building. The building exemplifies the significance of public school buildings to the history of Chicago and its neighborhoods. The building's historic integrity is preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express such values.

#### **SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

Whenever an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art or other object 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 preliminary evaluation of the Elizabeth Peabody Public School Building, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

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

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## Illustrations

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- 15 Bottom Main Entrance, Chicago Stock Exchange Building, *Inland Architect*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1894).
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- 20 20 Middle Chuckman Collection, Chicago Photographs, Vol. 14.
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## Acknowledgements

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### Project Staff

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### **Children exit the Peabody School down the west stairwell during a fire drill, 1953.**

*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, Planning, Design & Historic Preservation Division, City Hall, 121 North LaSalle Street, Room 1101, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; (312-744-9140) fax, web site: [www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks](http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks) <<http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>>*

*This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the final landmark designation ordinance as approved by City Council should be regarded as final.*