



# Office of the City Clerk

City Hall  
121 N. LaSalle St.  
Room 107  
Chicago, IL 60602  
www.chicityclerk.com

## Legislation Text

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File #: O2020-742, Version: 1

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Department of Planning and Development city  
of chicago

February 10, 2020

The Honorable Anna M. Valencia City Clerk City  
of Chicago Room 107, City Hall 121 North LaSalle  
Street Chicago, Illinois 60602

**RE: Ordinance designating the Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Complex (4600-4628 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) as a Chicago Landmark**

Dear Clerk Valencia:

We are filing with your office for introduction at the February 19, 2020, City Council meeting as a transmittal to the Mayor and City Council of Chicago the recommendation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks that the Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Complex 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

Proposed Ordinance.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathleen E. Dickhut Bureau Chief  
Bureau of Planning, Sustainability and Historic Preservation Department  
of Planning and Development

ends.

*Alderman Dowell, 3<sup>r</sup> Ward (via email w/ enclosure)*

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

### ORDINANCE

**Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Complex 4600 - 4628 S.**

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive**

WHEREAS, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Municipal Code of Chicago (the "Municipal Code"), Sections 2-120-620 through -690, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the "Commission") has determined that the Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Complex (the "Complex"), located at 4600-4628 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Chicago, Illinois, as more precisely described in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein, satisfies four (4) criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (3), (4) and (5) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Complex, formerly Sinai Temple and Corpus Christi High School, has served as a center for community, religion, culture, and society in the Grand Boulevard community and Bronzeville neighborhood for 107 years; and

WHEREAS, as Sinai Temple, the Complex was home to an early Jewish Reform temple and the Sinai social settlement house which hosted progressive speakers in the early twentieth century such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary McDowell, and Dr. Preston Bradley; and

WHEREAS, from 1944 to 1962, the Complex housed Corpus Christi High School, a Roman Catholic institution that in addition to education used the Complex to host local clubs and community organizations; and

WHEREAS, when Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church moved into the Complex in 1962, the congregation of the church expanded their community programming in this Complex, helping to establish the South Park Urban Progress Center, the Southern Christian League Conference Chicago (SCLC) Headquarters, and the National offices for "Operation Breadbasket" and "Operation PUSH"; and

WHEREAS, from 1969 to 1971, the Complex served as the Chicago headquarters for the SCLC. The SCLC fought for open housing, quality education, job access, healthcare, criminal justice system reform, community development, tenant's rights, and quality of life enhancements for African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, when the SCLC left the Complex in 1971, Reverend Jesse Jackson founded Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) in the Complex. PUSH focused on black self-help and raising public awareness to initiate corporate action and government sponsorship; and

WHEREAS, the Complex is associated with significant, national figures who led the nation in social reform, philosophy, religion, politics and civil rights activism in different eras, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Reverend Jesse Jackson, Ralph Metcalfe and Eleanor Roosevelt; and

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WHEREAS, on August 27, 1967, Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church welcomed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to preach on gospel themes in a sermon "Why Jesus Called A Man A Fool"; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jesse Jackson lead the national headquarters for the SCLC, the national office for Operation Breadbasket and Operation PUSH, and NAACP rallies at the Complex; and

WHEREAS, the Complex exhibits fine architectural details and craftsmanship through its design and use of traditional masonry materials. Designed in the Neoclassical style, the Complex features monumental porticos; pedimented entrances; swags, olive branches, scrolls, and leaf-and-dart motifs in mouldings and sculptural bas reliefs; and

WHEREAS, the interior of the sanctuary is embellished with delicate stained-glass and elaborate mouldings and trim finished with geometric and Classical motifs; and

WHEREAS, though more utilitarian in its design, the exterior of the former Sinai social settlement house expresses the Neoclassical style through restrained ornamentation which carries over window and entrance details, cornices, and roof lines from the synagogue building to create a unified whole; and

WHEREAS, the Complex was designed by Alfred S. Alschuler, one of Chicago's most prominent early twentieth-century architects. A prolific architect, he specialized in commercial and industrial architecture, and also designed a wide range of structures including public buildings, automobile showrooms, synagogues, and apartment buildings, with nearly 1,800 commissions between 1908 and 1939; and

WHEREAS, Alschuler is credited with some of the city's most noteworthy buildings including the London Guarantee and Exchange Building, K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Temple, and the Goldblatt Brothers Department Store, all designated Chicago Landmarks; and

WHEREAS, the Complex is only one of eight synagogues designed by Alschuler. Two of Alschuler's most noteworthy synagogues are KAM Isaiah Israel (a designated Chicago Landmark) and his own North Shore Congregation Israel, both of which were noted in his obituary as "two of the most beautiful in the country"; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Complex 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 January 9, 2020, the Commission adopted a resolution recommending to the City Council of the City of Chicago (the "City Council") that the Complex be designated a Chicago Landmark; now, therefore,

**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.

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SECTION 2. The Complex 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 Complex are identified as:

- all exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Complex;
- the interior of the entrance lobby, sanctuary and balcony of the former synagogue, now church, as

depicted and identified on Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein, and as further described below;

- the significant features of the interior spaces include: overall historic spatial volumes; historic decorative wall and ceiling materials, historic finishes and ornamentation; historic metal wall grilles; historic marble stairs, newel posts, and railings; historic entrance lobby fireplace; and historic stained-glass windows. Specifically excluded as significant features of the interior spaces are the sanctuary seating, wood organ screen and any non-historic elements of the sanctuary and lobby, including without limitation non-historic lighting, ceiling fans, flooring, flush doors, cylindrical wood handrails, and audio-visual equipment;

SECTION 4. The Commission is hereby directed to create a suitable plaque appropriately identifying the Complex 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**

4600-4628 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Chicago, Illinois

### **Permanent Index Number**

20-03-323-016-0000

**Legal Description**

LOTS 1, 2 & 3 IN LOGAN'S SUBDIVISION OF LOT 1 IN ASSESSORS DIVISION OF THE SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  OF THE SE Va OF THE SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  OF SECTION 3, TOWNSHIP 38 NORTH, RANGE 14, LYING EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN IN COOK COUNTY ILLINOIS.

**EXHIBIT B**

The significant historical and architectural features of the interior of the former synagogue, now church, include the entrance lobby (top), sanctuary (middle) and balcony (bottom) as depicted the hatched areas of these building plan drawings.

**CITY OF CHICAGO COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

**January 9, 2020**

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

**MT. PISGAH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH COMPLEX 4600-4628 SOUTH DR.**

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DRIVE Docket No. 2020-01**

**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 Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Complex (the "Complex") is worthy of Chicago Landmark designation. On the basis of careful consideration of the history and architecture of the Complex, the Commission has found that it satisfies the following four (4) criteria set forth in Section 2-120-620 of the Municipal Code:

- 1. 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.*
- 2. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspects of the development of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.*
- 3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspects of the development 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.*
5. *Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.*

## **I . BACKGROUND**

In 2018, members of the Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church congregation approached the City about the possibility of landmark designation. In 2019, Department of Planning and Development (DPD) staff and the City's historic preservation consultant met with church

members to gather additional information and discuss the landmark designation process itself.

At its regular meeting of November 7, 2019, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks ("Commission") approved a "preliminary landmark recommendation" (the "Preliminary Recommendation") for designation of the Complex as a Chicago Landmark. The Commission found that the Complex appeared to meet four of the seven criteria for designation, as well as the integrity criterion, identified in the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance (Municipal Code of the City of Chicago, Section 2-120-580 et seq.). The Preliminary Recommendation, identified as Exhibit A, initiated the consideration process for further study and analysis of the possible landmark designation of the Complex. As part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission preliminarily identified the significant historical and architectural features of the Complex as:

- all exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Complex; and
- the interior of the entrance lobby, sanctuary and balcony of the former synagogue, now church, as further described below;
- the significant features of the interior spaces include: overall historic spatial volumes; historic decorative wall and ceiling materials, historic finishes and ornamentation; historic metal wall grilles; historic marble stairs, newel posts, and railings; historic entrance lobby fireplace; and historic stained-glass windows.

Specifically excluded as significant features of the interior spaces are the sanctuary seating, wood organ screen and any non-historic elements of the sanctuary and lobby, including without limitation non-historic lighting, ceiling fans, flooring, flush doors, cylindrical wood handrails, and audio-visual equipment.

As part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission also adopted a Preliminary Summary of Information, dated November 7, 2019, and identified as Exhibit B. In a letter dated November 18, 2019, DPD, on behalf of the Commission, notified the owner of the Complex, of the Preliminary Recommendation.

At its regular meeting of December 5, 2019, the Commission received the DPD Report, identified as Exhibit C,

from Commissioner Maurice D. Cox of DPD, stating that the proposed landmark designation of the Complex supports the City's overall planning goals and is consistent with the City's governing policies and plans.

In a letter dated December 9, 2019, the Commission officially requested the consent to the proposed landmark designation from the owner of the Complex. The Commission received consent for the proposed landmark designation on December 18, 2019.

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### **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 Preliminary Summary of Information, the DPD Report and all of the information on the proposed landmark designation of the Complex; and

WHEREAS, the Complex meets the four (4) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (3), (4) and (5) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Complex, formerly Sinai Temple and Corpus Christi High School, has served as a center for community, religion, culture, and society in the Grand Boulevard community and Bronzeville neighborhood for 107 years; and

WHEREAS, as Sinai Temple, the Complex was home to an early Jewish Reform temple and the Sinai social settlement house which hosted progressive speakers in the early twentieth century such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary McDowell, and Dr. Preston Bradley; and

WHEREAS, from 1944 to 1962, the Complex housed Corpus Christi High School, a Roman Catholic institution that in addition to education used the Complex to host local clubs and community organizations; and

WHEREAS, when Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church moved into the Complex in 1962, the congregation of the church expanded their community programming in this Complex, helping to establish the South Park Urban Progress Center, the Southern Christian League Conference Chicago (SCLC) Headquarters, and the National offices for "Operation Breadbasket" and "Operation PUSH"; and

WHEREAS, from 1969 to 1971, the Complex served as the Chicago headquarters for the SCLC. The SCLC fought for open housing, quality education, job access, healthcare, criminal justice system reform, community development, tenant's rights, and quality of life enhancements for African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, when the SCLC left the Complex in 1971, Reverend Jesse Jackson founded Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) in the Complex. PUSH focused on black self-help and raising public awareness to initiate corporate action and government sponsorship; and



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WHEREAS, the Complex is associated with significant, national figures who led the nation in social reform, philosophy, religion, politics and civil rights activism in different eras, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Reverend Jesse Jackson, Ralph Metcalfe and Eleanor Roosevelt; and

WHEREAS, on August 27, 1967, Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church welcomed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to preach on gospel themes in a sermon "Why Jesus Called A Man A Fool"; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jesse Jackson lead the national headquarters for the SCLC, the national office for Operation Breadbasket and Operation PUSH, and NAACP rallies at the Complex; and

WHEREAS, the Complex exhibits fine architectural details and craftsmanship through its design and use of traditional masonry materials. Designed in the Neoclassical style, the Complex features monumental porticos; pedimented entrances; swags, olive branches, scrolls, and leaf-and-dart motifs in mouldings and sculptural bas reliefs; and

WHEREAS, the interior of the sanctuary is embellished with delicate stained-glass and elaborate mouldings and trim finished with geometric and Classical motifs; and

WHEREAS, though more utilitarian in its design, the exterior of the former Sinai social settlement house expresses the Neoclassical style through restrained ornamentation which carries over window and entrance details, cornices, and rooflines from the synagogue building to create a unified whole; and

WHEREAS, the Complex was designed by Alfred S. Alschuler, one of Chicago's most prominent early twentieth-century architects. A prolific architect, he specialized in commercial and industrial architecture, and also designed a wide range of structures including public buildings, automobile showrooms, synagogues, and apartment buildings, with nearly 1,800 commissions between 1908 and 1939; and

WHEREAS, Alschuler is credited with some of the city's most noteworthy buildings including the London Guarantee and Exchange Building, K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Temple, and the Goldblatt Brothers Department Store, all designated Chicago Landmarks; and

WHEREAS, the Complex is only one of eight synagogues designed by Alschuler. Two of Alschuler's most noteworthy synagogues are KAM Isaiah Israel (a designated Chicago Landmark) and his own North Shore Congregation Israel, both of which were noted in his obituary as "two of the most beautiful in the country"; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Complex 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,

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**THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS HEREBY:**

1. Incorporates the preamble and Sections I and II into its findings; and
2. Adopts the Final Designation Report, as revised, and dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of January 2020; and
3. Finds, based on the Final Designation Report, the DPD Report, and the entire record before the Commission, that the Complex meets the four (4) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Sections 2-120-620 (1), (3), (4) and (5) of the Municipal Code; and
4. Finds that the Complex 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 Complex are identified as follows:
  - all exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Complex; and
  - the interior of the entrance lobby, sanctuary and balcony of the former synagogue, now church, as depicted and identified on Exhibit D, attached hereto and incorporated herein, and as further described below;
  - the significant features of the interior spaces include: overall historic spatial volumes; historic decorative wall and ceiling materials, historic finishes and ornamentation; historic metal wall grilles; historic marble stairs, newel posts, and railings; historic entrance lobby fireplace; and historic stained-glass windows.

Specifically excluded as significant features of the interior spaces are the sanctuary seating, wood organ screen and any non-historic elements of the sanctuary and lobby, including without limitation non-historic lighting, ceiling fans, flooring, flush doors, cylindrical wood handrails, and audio-visual equipment; and

Rafael M. Leon, Chairman Commission on Chicago Landmarks

6. Recommends that the Complex be designated a Chicago Landmark.

This recommendation was adopted /, <■ t^.^.^v^ » u ^.t -...j-

**EXHIBIT D**

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**The significant historical and architectural features of the interior of the former synagogue, now church, include the entrance lobby (top), sanctuary (middle) and balcony (bottom) as depicted the hatched areas of these building plan drawings.**

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