



# City of Chicago



O2023-2000

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	5/24/2023
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Misc. Transmittal
<b>Type:</b>	Ordinance
<b>Title:</b>	Historical landmark designation for Epworth Church at 5253 N Kenmore Ave
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards



**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
CITY OF CHICAGO**

May 18, 2023

MAY18 '23 1:45PM

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

CHGO CITY CLERK1

COUNCIL DIVISION

**RE: Ordinance designating the Epworth Church (5253 North Kenmore Ave.) as a Chicago Landmark**

Dear Clerk Valencia:

We are filing with your office for introduction at the May 24, 2023, City Council meeting as a transmittal to the Mayor and City Council of Chicago the recommendation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks that Epworth Church 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
2. Proposed Ordinance.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Dickhut  
Deputy Commissioner  
Bureau of Citywide Systems and Historic Preservation

encls.

cc: The Honorable Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth, Alderwoman, 48<sup>th</sup> Ward

## ORDINANCE

### Epworth Church 5253 North Kenmore Avenue

**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 Epworth Church (the "Building"), located at 5253 North Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, as more fully described in **Exhibit A**, attached hereto and incorporated herein, satisfies four criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4), (5) and (7) of the Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building exemplifies the important role that religious institutions played in the development and sustenance of Chicago's neighborhoods; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building is a picturesque, suburban-scaled church that reflects Edgewater's first phase of growth as a suburban residential development with close proximity to the lakeshore and convenient transit service to downtown; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building is a manifestation of a community working toward a common goal: the land on which the Building sits was granted to the congregation by John L. Cochran, the developer of Edgewater; the design of the Building was donated by architect and congregation member Frederick P. Townsend, and funds for the construction were raised from the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building is, if not unique, a rare example of fieldstone architecture in Chicago that employs uncoursed granite boulders in its wall construction. This method of construction requires a high degree of design and craftsmanship in traditional masonry construction; and

**WHEREAS**, the design of the Building combines influences of both the Gothic and Romanesque Revival styles of architecture, picturesque styles of architecture that were popular in the late-19th and early-20th centuries; and

**WHEREAS**, the church portion of the Building was designed by architect Frederick B. Townsend, who specialized in residential construction in late-19th century Chicago. Notable examples of his work include the William C. Groetzinger House of 1895, a contributing building in the Arlington-Deming Chicago Landmark District, and the Jan Kralovec House in the Five Houses on Avers Avenue Chicago Landmark District; and

**WHEREAS**, the community house addition to the Building and 1930 renovations at Epworth are the work of Thielbar & Fugard, a significant architectural firm in the history of the City of Chicago, designing the Trustee's System Service Building (182 W. Lake St., 1930), the McGraw-Hill Building (520 N. Michigan Ave., 1928-1929), and as associated architects for the Jewelers Building (35 E. Wacker Dr., 1925-1927), all designated Chicago Landmarks; and

**WHEREAS**, architect John Fugard also is significant as the designer, through his earlier firm of Fugard & Knapp, of several luxury apartment buildings on Chicago's East Lake Shore Drive – a Chicago Landmark district and was associated with the design of the Allerton Hotel (701 N. Michigan Ave., 1922), also a designated Chicago Landmark; and

**WHEREAS**, with its uncoursed granite fieldstone walls and picturesque towers, the Building possesses a familiar and unique visual presence in the Edgewater neighborhood; 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 April 13, 2023, 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,

**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:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building including the church building and community house addition.

For the purposes of Section 2-120-740 of the Municipal Code governing the review of permit applications, the following additional guidelines shall also apply:

- The Commission's review of proposed work should ensure that the significant historic and architectural features of the Building are preserved while allowing reasonable change and flexibility to meet continuing and new needs, whether related to the continued current uses of the Building or in accommodating future uses. In particular, the Commission may approve modifications to existing windows and doors to meet code-required light and vent requirements.

The foregoing is not intended to limit the Commission's discretion to approve other changes.

**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**

5253 North Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

### **Permanent Index Numbers**

14-08-212-001-0000

14-08-212-002-0000

### **Legal Description**

LOTS 22, 23 AND 24 IN BLOCK 12 IN JOHN LEWIS COCHRAN'S SUBDIVISION OF THE WEST HALF OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 8, TOWNSHIP 40 NORTH, RANGE 14 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

**CITY OF CHICAGO  
COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

**April 13, 2023**

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

**EPWORTH CHURCH  
5253 North Kenmore Avenue**

**Docket No. 2023-04**

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**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 Epworth Church which includes a church building and attached community house (collectively the “Building”) is worthy of Chicago Landmark designation. On the basis of careful consideration of the history and architecture of the Building, 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.*
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.*
7. *Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.*

**I. BACKGROUND**

On May 15, 2022, the Historic Preservation Division received an application to demolish the Building. The Building was rated “orange” in the *Chicago Historic Resources Survey* and was therefore subject to the 90-day Demolition Delay Ordinance. As is standard practice during Demolition Delay, staff evaluated the Building against the legal criteria for landmark designation and determined that it met criteria for landmark designation.

The formal landmark designation process for the Building began on July 7, 2022, 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 four of the seven criteria for designation, as well as the integrity criterion, identified in the *Chicago Landmarks Ordinance* (Municipal Code, Section 2-120-580 *et seq.*). As part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission preliminarily identified the “significant historical and architectural features” of the Building as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building including the church building and community house addition.

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated July 7, 2022, the most current iteration of which is dated April 13, 2023, incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit A** (the “Designation Report”).

At its regular meeting of August 4, 2022, the Commission received a report incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit B** (the “Department of Planning and Development Report”) from Maurice D. Cox, Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, stating that the proposed landmark designation of the Building supports the City’s overall planning goals and is consistent with the City’s governing policies and plans.

On August 5, 2022, the Commission officially requested consent to the proposed landmark designation from the owners of the Building. On August 15, 2022, the owner requested a 120-day extension of the request-for-consent period, an extension provided for in the Municipal Code. The extension was granted, and the owner was notified that the expiration of the request-for-consent period was extended until January 17, 2023. On January 12, 2023, the Commission received a form from the owner of the Building indicating their non-consent to the proposed landmark designation.

Without consent from the owner of the property, the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance requires the Commission to hold a public hearing on the Preliminary Recommendation with respect to the designation of the Building as a Chicago landmark. In a letter dated March 1, 2023, the Commission notified the owner of the Building of the public hearing on the proposed designation



scheduled for March 30, 2023. Notices of the time and date of the hearing were also (a) posted on a sign in the right-of-way in front of the Building, and (b) published as a legal notice in the *Chicago Tribune*, as required by the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance. A notice was also posted on the Department of Planning and Development's web site.

## **II. PUBLIC HEARING**

The hearing was convened, as scheduled and noticed, via Zoom on Thursday, March 30, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Commission member Suellen Burns served as Hearing Officer, assisted by Suzanne Hilal, Assistant Corporation Counsel Supervisor of the Real Estate and Land Use Division of the City's Law Department, as legal counsel to the Commission, and Dijana Cuvalo, head of the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Planning and Development. The hearing was conducted in accordance with the Commission's Rules and Regulations, specifically Article II regarding the conduct of public hearings for landmark designation.

The Commission staff's presentation recommending the proposed landmark designation was given by Matt Crawford, Coordinating Planner and author of the preliminary summary.

The owner of the Building is Church Properties Reimagined of the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. A representative of the owner requested and was granted Party status to the hearing. The owner submitted text of his testimony illustrated with photos which became an exhibit to the hearing and was incorporated into the hearing record. The owner testified that their intention is to convert the Building into 100% affordable housing. He further stated that the owner supports landmark designation of the Building with the exception of its windows and doors, so that more efficient and functional windows and doors can be installed.

A potential partner in the proposed conversion of the Building into affordable housing was also granted party status. His testimony provided additional information on the conversion of the Building to affordable housing. He also indicated that preservation of windows and doors would be burdensome on the conversion.

Three members of the general public made statements, including two representatives of Preservation Chicago and one representative of the Edgewater Historical Society. All were in support of the landmark designation. A representative of 48<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Harry Osterman's staff also made a statement in support of the landmark designation.

The transcript (the "Hearing Transcript") and related exhibits from the public hearing are incorporated herein and attached hereto.

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

**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, the Department of Planning and Development Report, the Hearing Transcript and all of the information on the proposed landmark designation of the Building; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building exemplifies the important role that religious institutions played in the development and sustenance of Chicago's neighborhoods; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building is a picturesque, suburban-scaled church that reflects Edgewater's first phase of growth as a suburban residential development with close proximity to the lakeshore and convenient transit service to downtown; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building is a manifestation of a community working toward a common goal: the land on which the Building sits was granted to the congregation by John L. Cochran, the developer of Edgewater, the design of the Building was donated by architect and congregation member Frederick P. Townsend, and funds for the construction were raised from the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building is, if not unique, a rare example of fieldstone architecture in Chicago that employs uncoursed granite boulders in its wall construction. This method of construction requires a high degree of design and craftsmanship in traditional masonry construction; and

**WHEREAS**, the design of the church building and community house at Epworth combines influences of both the Gothic and Romanesque Revival styles of architecture, picturesque styles of architecture that were popular in the late-19th and early-20th centuries; and

**WHEREAS**, the church portion of the Building was designed by architect Frederick B. Townsend, who specialized in residential construction in late-19th century Chicago. Notable examples of his work include the William C. Groetzing House of 1895, a contributing building in the Arlington-Deming Chicago Landmark District, and the Jan Kralovec House in the Five Houses on Avers Avenue Chicago Landmark District; and

**WHEREAS**, the community house addition to the Building and 1930 renovations at Epworth are the work of Thielbar & Fugard, a significant architectural firm in the history of the City of Chicago, designing the Trustee's System Service Building (182 W. Lake St., 1930), the McGraw-Hill Building (520 N. Michigan Ave., 1928-1929), and as associated architects for the Jewelers Building (35 E. Wacker Dr., 1925-1927), all designated Chicago Landmarks; and

**WHEREAS**, architect John Fugard also is significant as the designer, through his earlier firm of Fugard & Knapp, of several luxury apartment buildings on Chicago's East Lake Shore Drive – a Chicago Landmark district and was associated with the design of the Allerton Hotel (701 N. Michigan Ave., 1922), also a designated Chicago Landmark; and

**WHEREAS**, with its uncoursed granite fieldstone walls and picturesque towers, the Building possesses a familiar and unique visual presence in the Edgewater neighborhood; and

**WHEREAS**, the Building meets four criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4), (5) and (7) of the Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Building has 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. Incorporates the preamble and Sections I, II and III into its findings; and
2. Adopts the Final Designation Report, as revised, and dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April 2023; and
3. Finds, based on the Designation Report, the Department of Planning and Development Report, the Hearing Transcript and the entire record before the Commission, that the Building meets the four (4) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Sections 2-120-620 (1), (4), (5) and (7) 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:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building including the church building and community house addition.


For the purposes of Section 2-120-740 of the Municipal Code governing the review of permit applications, the following additional guidelines shall also apply:

- The Commission's review of proposed work should ensure that the significant historic and architectural features of the Building are preserved while allowing reasonable change and flexibility to meet continuing and new needs, whether related to the continued current uses of the Building or in accommodating future uses. In particular, the Commission may approve modifications to existing windows and doors to meet code-required light and vent requirements.

The foregoing is not intended to limit the Commission's discretion to approve other changes.

6. Recommends the designation of the Building a Chicago Landmark.

This recommendation was adopted unanimously (7-0).

  
Ernest C. Wong, Chair  
Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Dated: April 13, 2023



## Exhibit B

### DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CITY OF CHICAGO

August 4, 2022

Report to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
on the  
**Epworth Church Building**  
**5253 North Kenmore Avenue**

**The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) finds that the proposed landmark designation of the Epworth Church Building supports the City's overall planning goals for the surrounding neighborhood and is consistent with the City's governing policies and plans.**

The Epworth Church Building is located in the Edgewater Community Area and DPD's North Planning Region. Epworth consists of a church building completed in 1891 and a community house addition completed in 1930 by a Methodist congregation. Architecturally the church is, if not unique, a rare example of fieldstone architecture in Chicago that uses uncoursed granite boulders in its wall construction. Epworth is located at Berwyn and Kenmore Avenues, 7 miles north of the loop in the Edgewater Community Area on Chicago's North Side.

Epworth is rated "orange" in Chicago Historic Resources Survey. Orange-rated buildings are subject to the Demolition-Delay Ordinance, one that DPD is charged with administering. The ordinance establishes a hold on the issuance of any demolition permit for historic buildings rated in order that the DPD can explore options, as appropriate, to preserve the building, including landmark designation. On May 12, 2022, a demolition permit was applied for Epworth, and though it has since been withdrawn, the threat to the building became clear. Subsequent calls for a historic preservation solution for Epworth show the effectiveness of the demolition delay ordinance.

Three blocks west of Epworth lies Broadway, a prominent mixed-use corridor in Edgewater and Uptown. DPD's North Planning Region is collaborating with the community, the 48th Ward Office and other city departments on the Broadway Community Vision to define its future in the 21st century. In addition to identifying opportunities for complete streets, affordable housing, and corridor vibrancy, the vision also includes recommendations preserving and thoughtfully integrating key elements of the historic fabric. Landmark designation of Epworth aligns with this vision.

Throughout the city, DPD is committed to Design Excellence which includes strengthening the culture of our communities, committing to cultural longevity and environmental sustainability. These goals are also consistent with landmark designation of historic works of high-quality architecture exemplified by the Epworth Church Building.

Maurice D. Cox, Commissioner  
Department of Planning and Development

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



# EPWORTH CHURCH

5253 NORTH KENMORE AVENUE

Final Landmark Recommendation Adopted by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks,  
on April 13, 2023



CITY OF CHICAGO  
Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development  
Maurice Cox, Commissioner

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# **EPWORTH CHURCH**

**(FORMERLY EPWORTH METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AND  
EPWORTH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH)**

**5253 NORTH KENMORE AVENUE**

**CONSTRUCTED: 1891 (CHURCH)  
1930 (COMMUNITY HOUSE ADDITION & RENOVATION)**

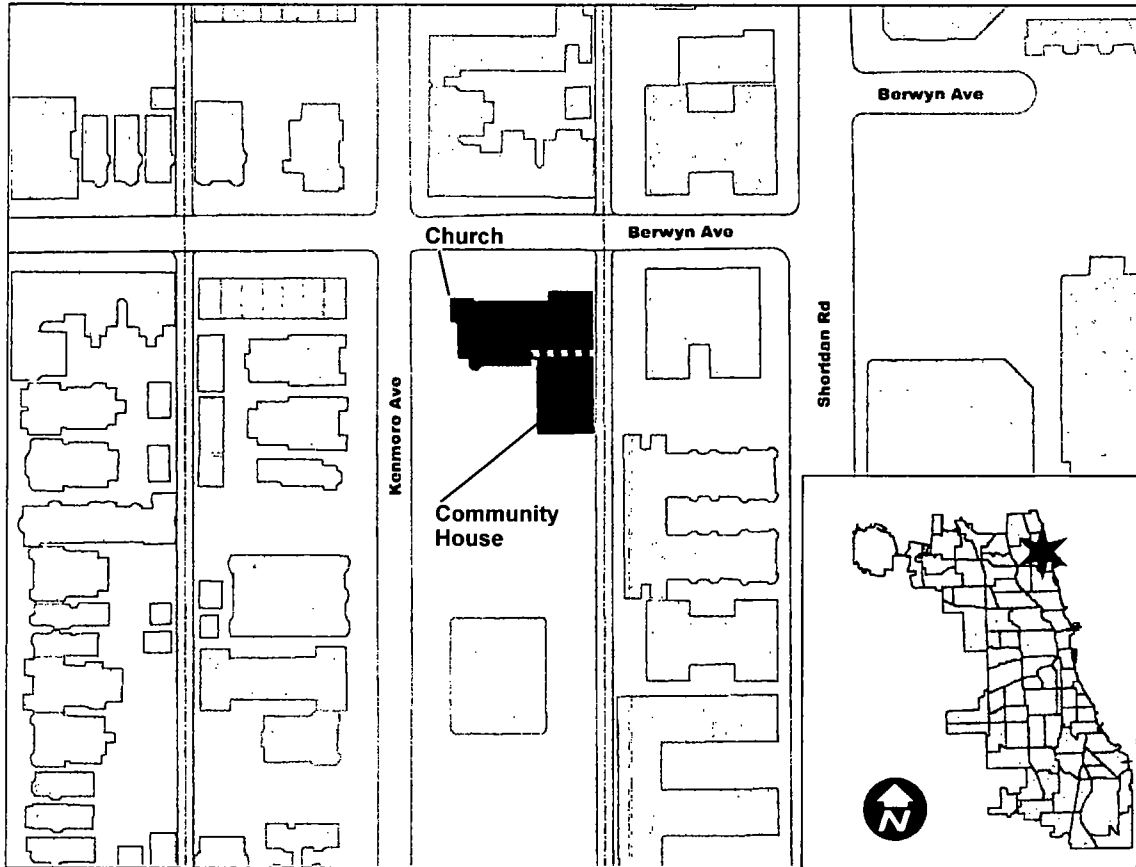
**ARCHITECTS: FREDERICK B. TOWNSEND (CHURCH)  
THIELBAR AND FUGARD (ADDITION & RENOVATION)**

Epworth Church consists of a church building completed in 1891 and a community house addition completed in 1930 by a Methodist congregation. The building is located in Edgewater on Chicago's North Side, a neighborhood that initially developed as a suburb outside the city limits of Chicago. Edgewater's suburban growth was led by developer John Lewis Cochran who donated land for the fledgling Epworth Methodist Episcopal congregation to build the church. Architect Frederick B. Townsend, an early member of the congregation, donated his design services. Thus, the church building reflects the initial suburban development of Edgewater. Architecturally the church is, if not unique, a rare example of fieldstone architecture in Chicago that uses uncoursed granite boulders in its wall construction. This method of construction requires a high degree of design and craftsmanship in traditional masonry.

As the population of Edgewater and the congregation at Epworth grew in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the congregation added an addition to the church known as the community house. It was designed by the noteworthy Chicago architectural firm of Thielbar and Fugard and its facade combines granite fieldstone like the church, as well as cast stone, a new material in the 1930s. The picturesque design of both the church and community house display influences of Gothic Revival and Romanesque styles of architecture.

Epworth was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2008 and it is published in the *AIA Guide to Chicago*. The congregation no longer worships at Epworth and at time of writing the property is for sale.





**Epworth Church consists of a church building from 1891 to the north and an attached wing known as the community house from 1930. The building is located at Berwyn and Kenmore Avenues in the Edgewater Community Area on Chicago's North Side.**

## **BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION**

Epworth is a work of architecture in two parts, the first consisting of the 1891 church building and second being the attached community house addition of 1930 that together form an L-shaped site plan. Both parts of the building combine elements of the Gothic and Romanesque Revival styles, and both feature distinctive uncoursed fieldstone wall construction. The different age and program of each of these parts of the church merits separate architectural descriptions

### *Church Building Design and Construction*

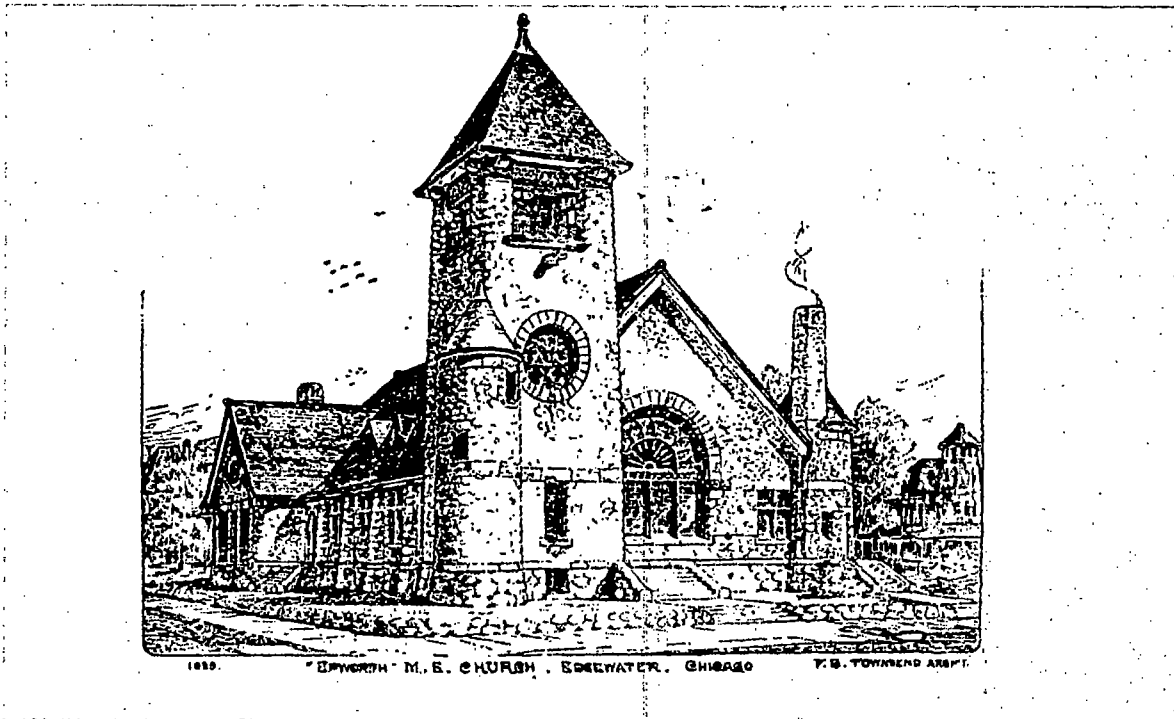
The Epworth church building is located in the Edgewater Community Area which borders Lake Michigan on the Chicago's North Side. The name Edgewater was created by residential developer John Lewis Cochran (1857-1923) who in 1886 platted a 200-acre subdivision between Lake Michigan, Broadway, Bryn Mawr and Foster Avenues. At the time this area was in Lake View Township and outside the borders of Chicago. Cochran envisioned Edgewater as a fashionable lakefront suburb of large residences with easy access to downtown via commuter rail.

The land on which the church stands was donated by Cochran to the fledgling congregation, and when the Church was completed, the nearest house was two blocks away. In 1889 Edgewater became a Chicago neighborhood as part of the larger annexation of Lake View Township. Despite becoming part of the sprawling city early on, Cochran's subdivision was intended to be suburban in character, with large single-family houses set on large lawns and with wide setbacks. When Epworth was dedicated in 1891 (two years after annexation), contemporaries still regarded it as a picturesque suburban-style church.

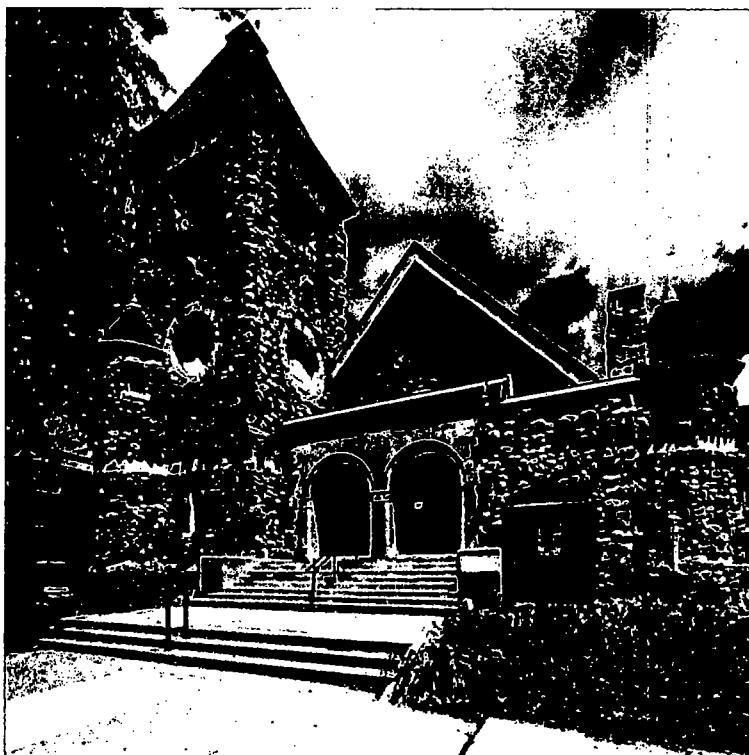
As a congregation, Epworth traces its origins to August 1888 when three persons began meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. L. T. M. Slocum at 5047 N. Kenmore, and then at a school near Broadway and Argyle Street (both buildings are no longer extant). The granite fieldstone walls of the church came from Slocum's summer home and farm in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Fundraising for the construction of the church began in 1889 through advocacy of the Slocums and Rev. G. K. Flack. In September of that year the *Chicago Tribune* reported that architect Frederick B. Townsend, who was also a member of the congregation, was preparing designs for the church *pro bono*. The cornerstone was laid in June 1890 and the following year the church was dedicated in a standing-room-only service.

The Epworth church building is T-shaped in plan with the 135-foot-long sanctuary oriented west-to-east and a 75-foot-long crossing of the T-shape situated at the east end that contains rooms behind the worship space. The structure consists of a stone foundation, load-bearing stone walls 16 inches thick and a wood-truss roof. Windows are deeply set within the wall to emphasize the massiveness of the structure. Most windows are wood sash with leaded art glass. There are some steel-sash windows that likely date to the 1930 renovation. The roof is a cross gable with dormers on the north and south slopes. Though now surfaced with asphalt shingles, the roof was originally slated.



Frederick B. Townsends pen-and-ink rendering of Epworth was published in *Inland Architect* in 1889 (Source: Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, Archival Image Collection). In reporting on the dedication of the church in 1891, *The Inter Ocean* newspaper described the church as a “unique, artistic and beautiful temple of worship” and stylistically “of the early English type with a dash of the Roman.”



The facade of the church showing the distinctive uncoursed fieldstone walls built of natural granite boulders. The gable front is framed by projecting, asymmetrical towers. The arched entrance doors open up into an enclosed vestibule, or narthex, added in a 1930 renovation.

The primary elevation is a front-facing gable on Kenmore Avenue. The side elevations face north onto Berwyn Avenue and south towards a landscaped yard in front of the 1930 addition. The east elevation faces an alley.

A distinctive feature of the church is its uncoursed fieldstone walls, described by a contemporary newspaper as a “picturesque structure of boulder (archaic spelling) stone.” As noted above, the granite boulders came from the property of L.T.M. Slocum in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. They were shipped to Chicago in barges via Lake Michigan and unloaded at a temporary pier at Berwyn Avenue (at the time of construction, the shore of Lake Michigan was around 600 feet from the building site, much closer than today). The stones are in their natural size and shape, and exhibit a range of colors from brown, gray, tan and pink. The wall construction demonstrates exceptional skill in traditional masonry and exhibits a remarkably picturesque quality. In addition to the granite fieldstone, dressed Joliet limestone is used for the water table, belt course and windowsills.

The west and primary elevation contains the primary entrance to the church, though the current entrance dates to the 1930 renovation to the church. In the original design, the primary entrance was at the base of the square tower. In the 1930 work, a one-story narthex, or enclosed vestibule, was added to the front elevation. A staircase leads up to two round-arched entrances with chevron moldings and Romanesque columns. The entrance doors are oak. The front of the narthex is cast stone tinted to mimic Joliet limestone. Above the entrance two gargoyles frame a tablet reading “Epworth Methodist Church.”

Above the narthex, the gable is pierced with a half-round stained-glass window with fanlight tracery resembling a sunburst. The age, artistry and design quality of the window makes it attributable to Healy & Millet, a prominent stained glass and decorative arts firm based in Chicago. This window is largely obscured from view on the exterior by the narthex addition. While the interior was not accessible to the author, photos of the interior show that this window is a significant feature of the sanctuary. The design combines geometric and floral forms with a wide palette of glass colors and textures.

The gabled front elevation is framed on either side by towers. The largest of these is square in plan and rises to a height of 65 feet at the northwest corner of the church. The first stage of this tower lies below a Joliet limestone belt course and contains lancet windows with leaded-art glass casements. The second stage contains oculus windows on three elevations which are currently boarded. These openings originally contained quatrefoil tracery executed in carved wood with art glass; it is unknown if these survive beneath the board-up. The third and top stage of the tower contains an open belfry with wrought-iron filigree railing and quatrefoil frieze. The square tower is topped with a pyramidal roof with a copper finial. A partial-height round turret engages the outside corner of the square tower. A conical roof tops the turret.

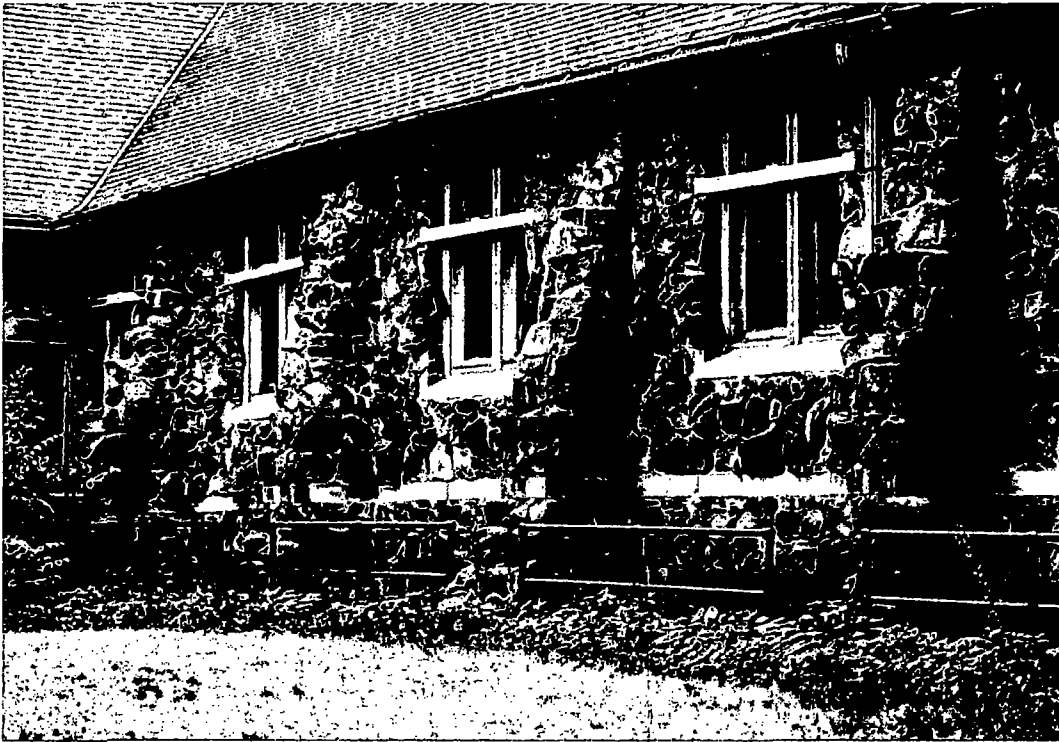
A second tower stands at the southwest corner of the church. It is octagonal in plan with a polygonal roof. In the original design of the church a second entrance door was located in this tower. This was infilled during the 1930 renovation that reconfigured the entrance sequence described above. A stone chimney is set between this tower and roof of the church.



**Detail of the 65-foot-tall square tower with the round turret bracing its corner. The oculus windows are boarded up, but the circa 1960 photo below shows that these openings contained quatrefoil tracery.**



**Circa 1960 photo of congregants entering the church. Source: Bruce Greene, Epworth historian and archivist, from a group of photos with Rev. Leland N. Lotz who served 1958 -1963.**



The side elevations of the church building feature buttresses dividing the wall into equal bays each with a pair of casement and transom windows,



The right gable in this photo is the cross gable forming the T-shape at the east end of the church. The left gable is the rear of the church facing the alley and faced in stone

The side elevation of the church facing south (toward the lawn in front of the addition) is relatively low at 16 feet from grade to the eave. Below grade a concrete wall creates a well that admits light into basement windows which are steel sash with clear glazing, likely from the 1930 renovation. The elevation has four bays divided by engaged buttress with battered walls. Each bay contains a pair of casement windows each topped with a transom window. The windowsills and horizontal mullion below the transom are Joliet limestone. The window head is trimmed with wood with bullseye rosettes. The wood-frame casements are glazed with leaded art glass set in a geometric pattern. Additional illumination to the interior of the church is provided by pedimented dormer windows piercing the roof..

The side elevation of the church facing north, toward Berwyn Avenue, is nearly identical to the south elevation with the exception of a cross gable at the east end (this feature was subsumed in the 1930 addition to the south). The wall of the cross gable is divided into two bays by a recess in the wall. Engaged columns frame large window opening in each bay at the first floor. Each opening contains three casement windows, each with transoms, glazed with art glass found elsewhere. Steel sash windows at the second-floor likely date to the 1930 renovation.

The east elevation of the church faces an alley, and while today it is the least visible it is rendered in fieldstone like the primary elevations likely reflecting that this elevation was once more visible in the yet-undeveloped setting in which the church was first built. The steel-sash windows at this elevation appear to date to the 1930 renovations, as does the pedimented dormer clad with shingle.

Like many late-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings in Chicago, the design of the Epworth church exhibits multiple stylistic influences. Indeed, in reporting on the dedication of the church in 1891, *The Inter Ocean* newspaper described the church as a “unique, artistic and beautiful temple of worship” and stylistically “of the early English type with a dash of the Roman,” while not academic, the early journalist’s description was accurate. The design shows the influence of two architectural styles popular in the late-19th century and derived from the picturesque aesthetic movement: the Gothic Revival and Richardsonian Romanesque. Character defining features of the former include the gable front flanked by a tower, deep buttresses, window tracery and quatrefoil decorative motifs. Richardsonian Romanesque features of the building are the textured wall surface created by fieldstone, the round-arched entrances with their chevron and knotwork motifs, the half-round window above the entrance, and the deeply recessed window openings which emphasize the wall thickness.

The author did not access the interior of the church, however available photos show a pleasant sanctuary with exposed wood trusses. In addition to the narthex mentioned above, the 1930 renovations of the church included redecoration of the sanctuary, new Sunday school rooms in the basement and the installation of a new organ donated by organist William Barnes. At time of writing this report, some furniture, fixtures and equipment in the church and addition have been removed.

### *Community House Design and Construction*

By World War I Edgewater was completely built out and more apartment and residential hotels were replacing first generation single-family suburban-style houses. The increased density in the neighborhood added to the congregation at Epworth which peaked at 1,200 members in 1929. That year, under the leadership of Rev. C. Claud Travis, planning began for a substantial addition to the church known as the community house as well as renovations to the exterior and interior of the church. The Chicago architectural firm of Thielbar & Fugard were commissioned for the project and ground was broken in May 1930.

The community house extends from the south elevation of the church forming an L-shape footprint. The program for the addition included a social hall with tile floors and beamed ceiling, kitchen, club rooms, gymnasium/auditorium and a chapel dedicated to Robert Cree, a member of the congregation killed in action in World War I.

Currently a large lawn lies in front of the community house, yet from the early twentieth century a wood frame residence occupied this site and partly obscured the front elevation of the 1930 community house. The house was destroyed by fire in 2005.

The community house is rectangular in plan extending 95 feet south from the church and 60 feet wide. It is three-stories tall with a concrete floor structure and wood-frame roof with a gambrel shape. The primary façade faces west toward a lawn and Kenmore Avenue. It is divided into four bays, one for the entrance and three for windows, each divided by projecting piers that lend the building a vertical quality.

The front façade of the community house is designed to complement the architecture of the church. The walls are granite fieldstone, like the church, and cast stone, pigmented to match the color of the Joliet limestone trim used at the church. The design includes Gothic Revival and Richardsonian Romanesque stylistic influences as does the church.

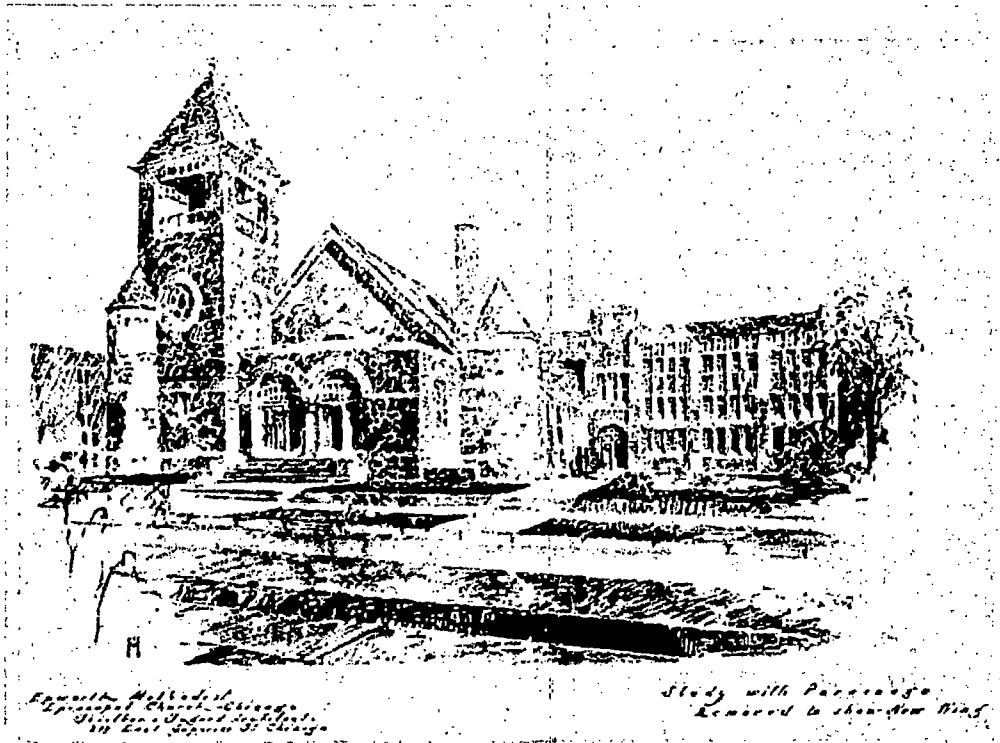
The entrance bay is framed by projecting piers that extend the full height of the building and are topped with cast-stone towers framing a crenellated parapet. The double-leaf entrance door is recessed within a cast-stone Gothic-style archivolt. Like the 1930 narthex of the church, gargoyles and a tablet above the doors identify the building as the “community house.”

The window bays are divided by projecting piers that extend the first two floors. At the third floor the granite fieldstone walls are flat and the stones here are faced flat. The windows are steel sash with clear glazing.

A prominent feature of the front façade design is the cast-stone walls in each window bay. At the first floor, the cast stone forms heavy mullions. At the second floor, each window opening is framed by cast-stone columns topped with an arcaded corbel table of Romanesque design.

The secondary south elevation of the community house is minimally visible and of plain face brick. The east façade facing the alley is similarly treated but with window openings fitted with steel sash.





Thielbar and Fugard's 1930 pen-and-ink study of the community house addition shows a more vertical composition compared to the church. A frame house used as a parsonage that stood in front of the addition was not drawn to show the new wing. Source: Bruce Greene, Epworth historian and archivist, from a Dedication Program for the community house, Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, February 22, 1931.



The front façade of the community house includes an entrance bay topped with Gothic Revival towers and a Romanesque arcaded corbel band above the second floor windows.

**The Epworth choir standing in front of the church, circa 1918. Dated by the presence of William H. Barnes (served 1910 - 1924) and Rev. Dr. E. Dailey Smith (served 1917 - 1920). Source: Bruce Greene, Epworth historian and archivist.**



**The congregation at Epworth formed a theatre group shown here in 1921. Dated by Wm. Barnes, and Rev. Dr. Harlow V. Holt (served 1920 - 1925). Source: Bruce Greene, Epworth historian and archivist.**



### **ARCHITECT FREDERICK B. TOWNSEND**

One of the earliest parishioners of the congregation at Epworth was architect Frederick B. Townsend who designed the church building free of charge.

Townsend was born in 1853, in Somerville, Massachusetts. He studied architecture at Harvard University, but was unable to complete his degree due to the death of his father. He began working as draftsman in Washington, D.C. before coming to Chicago in 1877 at age 24. In Chicago, he began working in the office of the architect L. B. Dixon and was made a partner in the firm in 1881. The partnership was dissolved after three years, and each founded an independent practice.

Designs by Townsend in Chicago include the Jan Kralovec House (1952 S. Avers Avenue, 1892) in the Five Houses on Avers Avenue District, a designated Chicago Landmark. Czech immigrant Jan Kralovec developed the five houses on Avers, and while not documented, all of the houses in the district are attributed to Townsend given that he designed the developer's own home there. The two-year time span between the building of the five houses and their similar architecture further supports the attribution to Townsend. His design of the Kralovec House is Romanesque Revival executed in course-faced limestone.

Another residential commission by Townsend is the William C. Groetzinger House (526 W. Deming, 1895), a contributing building in the Arlington-Deming Chicago Landmark District. The red sandstone mansion combines Gothic Revival and Romanesque details.

In 1882, Townsend completed the reconstruction of the Unity Church (later Scottish Rite Cathedral, 929 N. Dearborn) in Washington Square District, presently occupied by the Harvest Bible Chapel. The building, which had been badly damaged in the Great Fire of 1871 and never completely renovated, received two new towers and an interior reconstruction from plans by Townsend.

### **ARCHITECTS THIELBAR & FUGARD, 1930**

The architectural firm of Thielbar & Fugard, founded in 1925, designed the community house addition and renovations at Epworth in 1930. Frederick J. Thielbar (1886-1941), a native of Peoria, Illinois, attended the University of Illinois before going to work for the noted Chicago firm of Holabird & Roche. There, Thielbar served as a superintendent of construction and later as a partner. His most significant work while with Holabird & Roche was the Chicago Temple Building, located at Clark and Washington Streets and constructed in 1923 for the First Methodist Episcopal Church. Thielbar was a member of the Board of Directors of the Methodist Church in Chicago and secured the commission for the building which houses both church sanctuaries and rental offices. Thielbar was both principal designer and construction supervisor for this work.

John Reed Fugard (1886-1968) was born in Newton, Iowa, and also attended the University of Illinois, receiving a B.S. in architecture in 1910. His early practice was with George A. Knapp in the firm of Fugard & Knapp, and the pair designed several noteworthy luxury apartment and hotel buildings in Chicago during the 1910s and early 1920s, including three of the eight buildings that comprise the East Lake Shore Drive Chicago Landmark District. Fugard & Knapp also designed the Moody Memorial Church on N. Clark St. (1924) and the South Water Market complex on Chicago's Near West Side (1925). They also collaborated with New York architects Murgatroyd and Ogden in the construction of the Allerton Hotel, 701 N. Michigan Ave., built in 1924 and a designated Chicago Landmark.

Significant buildings designed by Thielbar & Fugard in partnership include the Trustee's System Service Building (182 W. Lake St., 1930), the McGraw-Hill Building (520 N. Michigan Ave., 1928-1929), both designated Chicago Landmarks. The firm also collaborated in 1926 with architects Giaver & Dinkelberg on the design of the Jewelers Building at 35 E. Wacker Dr., also a designated a Chicago Landmark.

#### **LATER HISTORY OF EPWORTH CHURCH**

After the completion of the community house addition, Epworth appears to have sustained a robust congregation for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1935, the Methodist denomination merged the Sheridan Road Methodist Episcopal Church of Uptown into Epworth, substantially increasing its congregation. The Methodist leaders stated that the closure of the Sheridan Road church was driven by the rise of the automobile that eliminated the need to have a church within walking distance of every family.

During the 1960s the congregation at Epworth began to decline. The surrounding neighborhood demographic also began to change with the arrival of immigrants from Cuba and Puerto Rico. In response, Epworth initiated new programs including bilingual worship, citizenship and English classes, child daycare, and employment services. In the 1980s Epworth established a shelter to respond to serve homeless men.

In May 2022, the Methodist Conference closed Epworth and the remaining congregation continues to worship at another church in Edgewater. At time of writing the property is for sale.

#### **CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION**

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Section 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a recommendation of Landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines that it meets two or more of the stated "Criteria for Designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of historic design integrity. The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in

determining whether to recommend that the Epworth Church be designated as a Chicago Landmark:

***Criterion 1: Value as an 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.*

- Epworth Church exemplifies the important role that religious institutions played in the development and sustenance of Chicago's neighborhoods.
- Epworth is a picturesque, suburban-scaled church that reflects Edgewater's first phase of growth as a suburban residential development with close proximity to the lakeshore and convenient transit service to downtown.
- Epworth is a manifestation of a community working toward a common goal: the land on which the church building sits was granted to the congregation by John L. Cochran, the developer of Edgewater, the design of the building was donated by architect and congregation member Frederick P. Townsend, and funds for the construction were raised from the community.

***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.*

- Epworth Church is, if not unique, a rare example of fieldstone architecture in Chicago that employs uncoursed granite boulders in its wall construction. This method of construction requires a high degree of design and craftsmanship in traditional masonry construction.
- The design of the church building and community house at Epworth combines influences of both the Gothic and Romanesque Revival styles of architecture, picturesque styles of architecture that were popular in the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

***Criterion 5: Important Architect***

*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.*

- The church building at Epworth was designed by architect Frederick B. Townsend, who specialized in residential construction in late-19th century Chicago. Notable examples of his work include the William C. Groetzinger House of 1895, a contributing building in the Arlington-Deming Chicago Landmark District, and the Jan Kralovec House in the Five Houses on Avers Avenue Chicago Landmark District.
- The community house addition and 1930 renovations at Epworth are the work of Thielbar & Fugard, a significant architectural firm in the history of the City of Chicago, designing the Trustee's System Service Building (182 W. Lake St., 1930), the McGraw-Hill Building

(520 N. Michigan Ave., 1928-1929), and as associated architects for the Jewelers Building (35 E. Wacker Dr., 1925-1927), all designated Chicago Landmarks.

- John Fugard also is significant as the designer, through his earlier firm of Fugard & Knapp, of several luxury apartment buildings on Chicago's East Lake Shore Drive – a Chicago Landmark district and was associated with the design of the Allerton Hotel (701 N. Michigan Ave., 1922), also a designated Chicago Landmark.

***Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature***

*Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or City of Chicago.*

- With its uncoursed granite fieldstone walls and picturesque towers, Epworth Church possesses a familiar and unique visual presence in the Edgewater neighborhood

**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, architecture or aesthetic value.*

The circa 1920 photo and the current image at the facing page show that Epworth Church possesses remarkable integrity to convey its aesthetic and architectural value. The 1930 community house addition to the building is sympathetic to the church and a change to the building that has, with the passage of time, achieved its own historic significance. The building remains in its original location in Edgewater. Throughout its history the setting around the building has been residential, albeit it is more densely populated today than its original suburban setting.

The design of the building is preserved, as are most of its materials. Changes to the exterior include replacement of the original slate roof with asphalt shingle, the boarding up of the oculus windows in the tower and deterioration of a concrete entrance stair at the north side elevation. These changes are typical of a building of this vintage and do not diminish its ability to convey its value.



**Epworth circa 1920, prior to 1930 community house and narthex additions. Source: Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, Archival Image Collection.**



**Epworth 2022, showing the addition of the narthex and a partial view of the community house addition which are historically significant changes.**

## **SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district 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 the most important to preserve the historic and architectural character of the proposed Landmark. Based on its evaluation of the Epworth Church, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Building including the church building and community house addition.

For the purposes of Section 2-120-740 of the Municipal Code governing the review of permit applications, the following additional guidelines shall also apply:

- The Commission's review of proposed work should ensure that the significant historic and architectural features of the Building are preserved while allowing reasonable change and flexibility to meet continuing and new needs, whether related to the continued current uses of the Building or in accommodating future uses. In particular, the Commission may approve modifications to existing windows and doors to meet code-required light and vent requirements.

The foregoing is not intended to limit the Commission's discretion to approve other changes.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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Maurice D. Cox, Commissioner

Kathleen Dickhut, Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Citywide Systems and Historic Preservation

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*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, First Deputy Commissioner's Office, City Hall, 121 North LaSalle Street, Room 905, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200); [www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks](http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks)*

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

**COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

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