



5529 South Lake Park Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637 + 773.493.1893

April 17, 2018

Ms. Abby Monroe  
Coordinating Planner  
City of Chicago, Department of Planning and Development  
121 N. LaSalle, Room 1000  
Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Historic Preservation in Jackson Park and the Current Section 106 Review

Dear Ms. Monroe:

Thank you for another opportunity to comment on the 106 Review process following the March 29, 2018 meeting. As we said in our previous letter to you, "The Hyde Park Historical Society takes very seriously the preservation of the important historic resources' in Jackson Park." We continue to be concerned about the Obama Presidential Center plans for entirely removing a section of Cornell Drive and are confused about the OPC's intentions for the Women's Garden. In addition, we urge more diligent attention be paid to remaining archaeological evidence, especially regarding Louis Sullivan's World's Columbian Exposition Transportation Building.

Cornell Drive:

The current intention of the City to entirely remove a section of Cornell Drive remains insensitive to the historic character of Jackson Park, and it is not the only solution to mitigate traffic near the OPC. A narrower two-lane road with protected bike lanes and pedestrian paths would restore Olmsted's safe, leisurely passage through the park for all – cars, bikes and pedestrians. Even if this restored park road were paved in historic brick it would be considerably cheaper than what is being proposed. Leaving Cornell as a roadway should also reduce the scope of the proposed widening of Stony Island Avenue, a project that currently would demolish the remnant berms along the east side of Stony Island Avenue between 57th and 63rd Streets intended in the Olmsted plan to muffle traffic noise before it enters the park. This berm was finally executed by Alfred Caldwell in 1939 and is now heavily wooded. Retaining Cornell Drive would also eliminate the need to widen southbound Lake Shore Drive, a project that would destroy much valuable parkland and plant material.

Women's Perennial Garden:

It has been mentioned that the OPC now intends to retain the Women's Garden albeit with some disruption/modification. One account says that the garden will be completely taken apart during construction and then reassembled at a later date. This seems unnecessary and wasteful. It also

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appears that the surrounding terrain will be redesigned with a severely undulating grade. This will obscure sight lines both to and from the garden. We ask that clear plans be presented to the public before any decisions are made that would damage this important historic feature of Jackson Park.

Archaeology:

The OPC buildings will be constructed on the site of Louis Sullivan's World's Columbian Exposition Transportation Building. Recent test diggings have revealed historic material. Given the historic importance of Sullivan's building and the entire site of the World's Columbian Exposition, we ask that the excavations for the OPC be supervised by an archaeologist who would monitor the work to preserve historic material.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

*Michal Safar*

Michal Safar, President  
Hyde Park Historical Society