



RFQ # 2817-0424 Request for Qualifications

Joliet Area African American Historic Context Study

Prepared by: Preservation Futures, LLC
53 W Jackson Blvd., Suite 1637
Chicago, IL 60604

Contact: Jonathan Solomon, FAIA, Partner
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jonathan@preservationfutures.com

5/16/2024

To Whom it May Concern,

Please find attached materials in response to RFQ # 2817-0424, Request for Qualifications Joliet Area African American Historic Context Study.

It is our pleasure to respond to a request that aligns so well with the principles of our firm. Over the past four years, Preservation Futures has developed experience in all aspects of this project, including historic context statements, production of oral histories, and collaboration and engagement throughout the area to help tell the full history of Black life in the Joliet region and beyond.

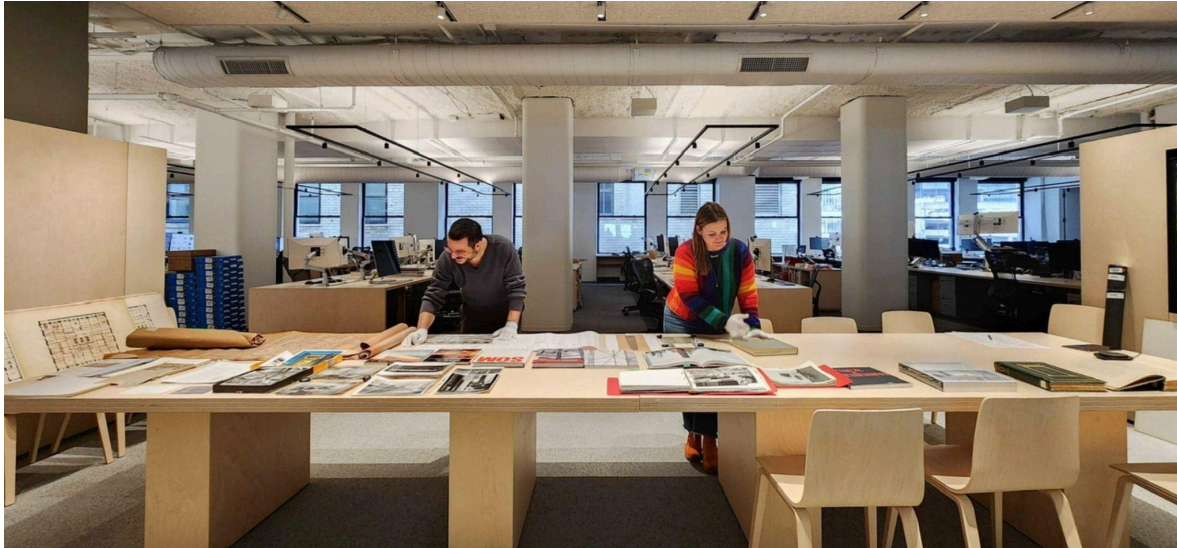
Thank you for considering our qualifications and interest.

Yours Sincerely,

Elizabeth Blasius
Partner

Jonathan Solomon, FAIA
Partner

I. Statement of Qualifications



A. Summary of Qualifications

Preservation Futures is a Chicago-based firm exploring the future of historic preservation through research, action, and design. Founded by partners Elizabeth Blasius and Jonathan Solomon in 2021, Preservation Futures goes beyond historic preservation's traditional approach to saving buildings to identify and shepherd future landmarks that elevate the social and cultural history embedded in places and spaces. Our work includes preservation of public buildings and spaces; preservation of the recent past; and preservation as a tool to increase justice, equity, and resiliency in the built environment. We prepare landmark register nominations and navigate tax incentives and other benefits related to preservation; produce research that informs public processes and policy decisions; and we plan programming and design creative interventions that develop audiences and engage communities.

Preservation Futures has experience in all aspects of the proposed work, including research and writing of historic context statements and other documents, management of oral history projects, and engagement and collaboration with communities that preservation has historically underserved. Preservation Futures staff meets or exceeds the Secretary of the Interior's Standards professional qualification standards and a track record of successfully completing projects of equivalent scope and complexity in the Joliet region.

Based in Chicago, Preservation Futures is committed to being present in Joliet regularly in completion of this project. We detail this commitment in the attached scope of work.

B. Project Understanding

We understand the purpose of this project to include documentation of Joliet-area Black history in a narrative that is comprehensive, accurate, and reflective of the priorities of those who have lived experience or expertise, generational wisdom, and are residents of the groups, families, organizations and communities that comprise the Black community in Joliet. This necessitates that we acknowledge racial injustice; recognize historic properties important to the Black community, challenge misinformation about the Black community, listen to, and record Black voices for future generations. We also understand that it is a priority of the project to place Route 66 history in context with the history of the south side and Black residents.

African Americans called the Joliet region home long before the establishment of the city in 1852. Black residents were instrumental in the development of Joliet, helping to the city's culture, economy, and religious life overall. During the decades where de facto segregation was the standard, this legacy provided Black residents of Joliet with the ability to thrive against systems of exclusion, particularly as Black southerners moved north in search of better economic, social, and educational opportunities. Like communities in many cities in the United States during the Civil Rights era, Joliet's Black residents organized and participated in nonviolent resistance movements, defining a critical moment in the history of the region and the nation.

Our understanding of this project is informed by our prior experiences successfully completing projects of equivalent scope and complexity in the Joliet region, including our work to produce an oral history, and to research and write a comprehensive history of the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House in Chicago for Blacks in Green, with support from a Telling the Full History Grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation; our work to write a State of Significance for Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ in Chicago for the National Trust for Historic Preservation as part of the establishment of the Emmet Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument. Both projects required thoughtful engagement with the region's Black community and detailed research to establish accurate, meaningful, and holistic historic narratives.

Our experience in these projects, and in nominating the Ward Chapel AME Church of Cairo, IL, to the National Register of Historic Places has taught us that patience, trust, and listening are critical skills in helping communities tell their stories. The greatest resources we have as historians are people. This is especially true of communities that preservation has historically underserved.



Our experience advocating to changing the name of Chicago's Oldest House, now called the Clarke-Ford House in recognition of Bishop Louis Henry Ford and nearly 40 years of stewardship of the property by the Church of God in Christ, has taught us that historic preservation plays a crucial role in acknowledging racial injustice, recognizing historic properties important to the black community, and challenging misinformation about the Black community.

We understand the critical and timely nature of this project. The end product must educate and inform while also providing a functional framework for expanding knowledge over time, and sharing knowledge broadly. We have experience in facilitating community conversations and in establishing community partnerships around efforts to improve the diversity, equity, and inclusion of historic resources, and are prepared to produce a report that will serve as an analytical framework for future historic resource surveys, nominations, and placemaking projects in the Joliet area's historically underserved communities occupied by African Americans and other people of color.

Preservation Futures acknowledges that the work to recognize, record and contextualize the histories of communities that have been underserved or even obfuscated from preservation requires sensitivity and empathy. We approach our research of and engagement with communities that have been underserved by preservation with the knowledge that sources of information may be divergent from traditional historic research.

II. Key Staff

Elizabeth Blasius



- Partner, Preservation Futures
- Master of Science in Historic Preservation, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2008
- Author of over 25 regulatory documents, ordinances, and private-sector white papers in preservation
- Exceeds the Secretary of the Interior (SOI) Professional Qualification Standards as published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61 for architectural history and historic architecture

Elizabeth Blasius is an architectural historian and writer, and a partner in Preservation Futures. She has worked extensively in the public and private sector, consulting clients in following the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Her specialization within this work is how preservation policies come into play in the recovery and mitigation of the historic built environment following an event of climate violence, or other act of destruction. Blasius writes a monthly column for *MAS Context*, a non-profit architecture and design platform. Blasius has previously served as the Midwest Editor of *The Architect's Newspaper* and has had her writing published in *Bloomberg CityLab*, *Curbed*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *Block Club Chicago*.

II. Key Staff

Jonathan Solomon, FAIA



- Partner, Preservation Futures
- Master of Architecture, Princeton University, 2003
- Registered Architect in the State of Illinois and Fellow of the American Institute of Architects
- Over 20 years experience as a researcher in architecture and urbanism

Jonathan Solomon, FAIA, is a Professor of Architecture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a partner in Preservation Futures. His diverse work includes award-winning adaptive reuse design, preservation consultation, and scholarship. Solomon has extensive international experience in arts leadership. He has directed schools, taught, and developed programming with institutions worldwide, including serving as founding editor of 306090 Books, curator of the US Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, and director of the independent Chicago gallery Space p11. Solomon is a registered architect in the State of Illinois and a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.



III. Summary of Previous Project Experience

- Nomination of the Ward Chapel AME Church of Cairo, IL, to the National Register of Historic Places, ongoing in 2024
- Preservation consultant to Blacks in Green, Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House restoration and development, ongoing in 2024
- Completion of a comprehensive history of the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House for Blacks in Green, with support from a Telling The Full History grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2023
- Listing of the Will County Courthouse, Joliet, IL, to the National Register of Historic Places, 2023
- Approval of the nomination of James R. Thompson Center, Chicago, IL, to the National Register of Historic Places by National Park Service (listing rejected by owner), 2023
- Completion of a Statement of National Significance for Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, Chicago, IL, for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as part of the establishment of the Emmett Till National Monument, 2022-2023
- Completion of two surveys of mid-century modern housing in Naperville, IL, for Naperville Preservation, Inc., 2022
- Listing of East Side Tap/9401 S Ewing Street, Chicago, IL, to National Register of Historic Places, 2022
- Successful listing of the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House, Chicago, IL, as a Chicago Landmark, 2021

IV. Project Specific Approach and Timeline

A. Proposed Project Scope

1. Internal Project Management

We will manage all aspects of the proposed scope in consultation with the City of Joliet's Historic Preservation Commission staff liaison, including attending bi-monthly project meetings, completing bi-monthly project reports, and other communication as needed. We will work to establish a strong basis of knowledge from existing historical information, prior research, and resources in the city and community. We will coordinate with all parties for proper sequencing and non-duplication of effort in the completion of the project.

2. Project Steering Committee Engagement

We will work with the project Steering Committee to identify key stakeholders, review the community engagement strategy, establish a communication protocol, and identify and request key data; and coordinate with the Committee in its work to review and comment on all drafts and final deliverables; guide preparations for a minimum of two public education events; and promote this project as we execute the work. We will commit to attend up to three meetings in person with the Steering Committee in Joliet. We will rely on the local knowledge and networks of the Steering Committee to ensure that we are reaching the right groups, communities, and individuals to ensure that the outcome represents each facet of the Black experience in Joliet in a fair manner.

3. Public Presentations

We will prepare and deliver two public presentations at venues identified and scheduled by City staff on topics derived from the findings of this context study.

4. Website Content Development

We will contribute to maintaining a project webpage by preparing and uploading text and images with the support of the City Website Coordinator.

5. Community Engagement Strategy

We will work with the Steering Committee and City staff to prepare a community engagement strategy that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion. This shall include the number and type of outreach activities, the intended outcomes, and the approximate timing of each activity, including at least two public presentations on topics derived from the findings of the project. We will suggest collaboration with community partners on outreach and research tasks and

In addition to public presentations, we propose to work with the Steering Committee to schedule and additional three in-person community meetings or equivalent information-gathering exercises to gather feedback and collect data on the Historic Context Statement.

6. Oral History Guidance

We will assist the city with an oral history project by confirming desired deliverables and providing quality assurance review of historic resource documents provided to us by the City or third parties retained by the city.

7. Historic Context Statement

We will undertake general and focused historic research leading to the preparation of a historic context statement to include:

- Comprehensive history of the Joliet area's African American community from the first residents through the late 20th century;
- Associated places connected to this history (some places or areas may no longer be extant but will need to be included);
- Defined historical themes connected with the African American experience in Joliet;
- Framework for evaluating historic integrity, acknowledging that properties possessing significant social-cultural associations might not meet standard architectural design integrity registration criteria;
- Recommendations for future historic resource surveys, nominations, policies and placemaking projects as well as preliminary recommendations for how the information generated from the context study can be disseminated to actualize project goals and objectives;
- Excel-based database of places (extant and non-extant); and
- Comprehensive bibliography.

Anticipated historic themes will likely include African American settlement patterns over time, occupational characteristics, development of civic and social institutions, development of the community's business and professional sectors, social and economic status of the African American community and the dynamics of structural racism present in Joliet over time, and the fight for civil rights, equality, and full inclusion.



8. Limited Intensive-Level Historic Resource Documentation

We will guide intensive-level historic resources documentation by City staff or third parties retained by the City by confirming desired deliverables and providing quality assurance review of historic resource documents; and incorporate any findings into the final context statement report.

B. Proposed Additional Services

1. Surveying and Digital Mapping

The project goals call for a document that can inform decision-making over time. In our experience, a full digital survey of historic resources would allow the city to track changes in the built environment and threats to historic resources over time. Digital mapping of the survey would allow for enhanced analysis and communication of the findings.

2. Media and Communications

Our experience teaches us that an informed public is the first step in crafting lasting successful preservation legislation and policy. Preservation Futures has experience developing communications strategies, and producing social media and website content including text, images, and videos.

3. Expanded Oral History Production and Management

Capturing the voices of the Black community of Joliet is vital to this project. Preservation Futures has experience managing Oral Histories, including collaborating with community partners to identify interview subjects, project communication, identification and preparation of appropriate interviewers. We can provide these services if additional funding or staff support becomes available.

4. Expanded Historic Resource Documentation

Preservation Futures has experience producing historic resource documentation ranging from historic building reports to local landmark listings, and nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. With available funding or staff support from the City we are prepared to perform Historic Resource Documentation of properties or districts encountered in the completion of the project.

V. Deliverables, Timeline, and Budget

A. Proposed Project Deliverables

1. Bi-monthly project updates submitted to the City's Staff Liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission.
2. Draft and Final Digital copies of any Excel databases prepared for this project.
3. Draft and Final Digital copies of any Survey Forms prepared for this project.
4. Draft and Final Digital copies of the Joliet Area African American Historic Context Study report, including a comprehensive bibliography.
5. Digital copies of all presentation materials (PowerPoint, handouts, etc.)

All digital submittals will be transmitted electronically. All final digital submittals will include high-resolution .jpg files of any images



B. Proposed Project Timeline

July 2024, Project Initiation

- Knowledge-building and internal project preparations
- Initiate regular Project Management and Steering Committee Meetings
- Initiate bi-monthly reports to City Liaison
- Initiate research towards Historic Context Statement
- Initiate planning of fieldwork

August-December 2024 Project Execution Phase I

- Develop engagement framework and schedule
- Develop guidance for oral history interviews
- Begin research towards Historic Context Statement
- Conduct preliminary fieldwork

January-March 2024 Project Execution Phase II

- Conduct engagement meetings (three in total)
- Determine schedule of project presentations (2 in total)
- Continue research towards Historic Context Statement

March-August 2025, Project Execution Phase III

- Analyze results of engagement meetings
- Complete research towards Historic Context Statement
- Complete, analyze, and contextualize fieldwork data
- Review and edit Oral History transcripts

September-October 2025, Project Completion

- Complete and edit all draft deliverables

November 14, 2025: Project Draft Deliverables submitted

- Draft digital copies of the Joliet Area African American Historic Context Study report, including a comprehensive bibliography submitted
- Draft digital copies of any Excel databases submitted
- Draft digital copies of any Survey Forms submitted
- Draft digital copies of all presentation materials submitted

December 1, 2025

- City to return any actionable comments or feedback on submitted drafts



December 31, 2025: Project Deliverables submitted

- Final digital copies of the Joliet Area African American Historic Context Study report, including a comprehensive bibliography submitted
- Final digital copies of any Excel databases submitted
- Final digital copies of any Survey Forms submitted
- Final digital copies of all presentation materials submitted
- Project presentations (2 in total) completed by this date



C. Proposed Project Budget

Preservation Futures calculates fees based on Federal Paperwork Burdens when available for proposed services or their equivalents, and an hourly rate of \$200/hr.

1.	Planning, Communications, and Management	
a.	Internal Project Management	\$6,250.00
b.	Project Steering Committee Engagement	\$6,250.00
c.	Public Presentations	\$4,000.00
2.	Media	
a.	Website Content Development	\$3,000.00
	<i>Budget is to prepare and upload content to the project website with City support as described in the Scope. If the City wishes Preservation Futures to perform additional digital media production work, we would require a separate contract and additional fee.</i>	
3.	Engagement	
a.	Community Engagement Strategy	\$9,250.00
b.	Oral History Guidance	\$5,250.00
	<i>Budget is to consult in the production of an oral history project as described in the project scope. If the City wishes to retain Preservation Futures to produce the oral history, we would require a separate contract and additional fee.</i>	
4.	Research and Technical Writing	
a.	Historic Context Statement	\$35,000.00
b.	Limited Intensive-Level Historic Resource Documentation	\$5,250.00
	<i>Budget is to consult in the production of limited intensive-level historic resource documentation as described in the project scope. If the City wishes to retain Preservation Futures to produce Historic Resource Documentation we would require a separate contract and additional fee.</i>	
	TOTAL	\$74,250.00

VI. Partner Resumes

Elizabeth Blasius

Professional Experience

Preservation Futures, Partner, 2021-

College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, IL Adjunct Professor, 2021-

The Architect's Newspaper, Midwest Editor 2018-2019

EBI Consulting, Architectural Historian, Midwest Region, 2013-2016

Hawaii State Historic Preservation Division, Project Manager, 2012

Partners for Sacred Places, Project Manager, 2009-2012 Clarke House Museum, Project Manager, 2009

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, New Delhi, India Photographer and Surveyor, 2008-2009

Professional Affiliations and Service

DOCOMOMO US/Chicago, Board of Directors, 2019-

Logan Square Preservation, Board of Directors, 2016-2022

Recent Past Preservation Network, Board of Directors, 2013-2017

Society of Architectural Historians, Chicago Chapter, Board of Directors, 2013-2017

Education

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Master of Science, Historic Preservation, May 2008

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Art History, May 2005

Selected Preservation Experience

Ward Chapel AME Church of Cairo, Cairo, IL

Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2024

Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House, Chicago, IL

Preservation consultant, 2021-

Will County Courthouse, Joliet, IL

Listing to the National Register of Historic Places, 2023

James R. Thompson Center, Chicago, IL

Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2023

Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, Chicago, IL,
Completion of a Statement of National Significance as part of the establishment of the
Emmett Till National Monument, 2022-2023
East Side Tap/9401 S Ewing Street, Chicago, IL,
Listing to the National Register of Historic Places, 2022

Selected Lectures

"Tracing/Traces 2022" Mas Context, November 2022
"Saving Vernacular Architecture from Climate Change" AIA National Conference on
Architecture, June 2022
"Whose House? The Widow Clarke, Bishop Ford and the Story of Chicago's Oldest
Residence" Chicago Architecture Center, May 2022
"What's Worth Preserving" Chicago Architecture Center, January 2022

Selected Authored Articles

"The Century and Consumers Buildings: Their Complicated Saga and the Precedent
They Might Set" *MAS Context*, March 2024
"Changing Narratives and Confronting History Through Two Chicago Monuments: The
Christopher Columbus Memorial and the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial" *MAS
Context*, December 2023
"Chicago School Closures 10 Years Later" *MAS Context*, January 2023
Commentary: "Wrecking the Century & Consumers buildings is 'Durbin Renewal,' not
urban safety" *Chicago Tribune*, April 2022
Commentary: "Thompson Center 2.0 is a preservation win for 2022" *Chicago Tribune*,
January 2022
"The Thompson Center, a blend of patriotism and Postmodernism, should be a Chicago
landmark" *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 2021
"Bishop Louis Henry Ford, Namesake of Freeway and Eulogist at Emmett Till's Funeral,
Was Chicago's 1st Historic Preservationist" *Block Club Chicago*, April 2021
"How a Plan to Save Buildings Fell Apart" Elizabeth Blasius and Zach Mortice,
Bloomberg City-Lab, April 2021
"Hurricane Harvey, the Golden Triangle, and the inequality of relief" *MAS Context*,
January 2020
"A History of Union Station architecture" *Curbed* (Chicago), January 2020
Commentary: "Restore-don't demolish-the Thompson Center as a symbol of activism"
Chicago Tribune, June 2019
"Chicago needs a new architectural survey to protect its vernacular and postmodern
heritage" *The Architect's Newspaper*, September 2018

VI. Partner Resumes

Jonathan Solomon, FAIA

Professional Experience

Preservation Futures, Partner, 2021-
Acute Angles, Director, Space p11, 2018-2022
306090 Books, Series Editor, 2006-2014

Professional Licenses and Memberships

American Institute of Architects, Member, 2008-
Member, College of Fellows, 2024-
State of Illinois, Registered Architect, 2008-

Academic Experience

School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2014-
Professor (Tenured), 2024-
Director, Department of Architecture, 2014-2019
Syracuse University School of Architecture, Associate Dean and Associate Professor
(Tenured), 2012-2014
University of Hong Kong, Department of Architecture, 2006-2011
Acting Head and Chief Examiner, 2009-2012

Education

Princeton University, School of Architecture, Master of Architecture, 2003
Columbia University, Bachelor of Arts, Urban Studies, 2000

Selected Preservation Experience

Ward Chapel AME Church of Cairo, Cairo, IL
Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2024
Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House, Chicago, IL
Preservation consultant, 2021-
Co-author of nomination as a Chicago Landmark, 2021
Will County Courthouse, Joliet, IL
Listing to the National Register of Historic Places, 2023
James R. Thompson Center, Chicago, IL
Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2023



Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, Chicago, IL,
Completion of a Statement of National Significance as part of the establishment of the
Emmett Till National Monument, 2022-2023
East Side Tap/9401 S Ewing Street, Chicago, IL,
Listing to the National Register of Historic Places, 2022

Authored Books

Cities Without Ground, ORO Editions, 2012
13 Projects for the Sheridan Expressway, Princeton Architectural Press, 2004

Selected Lectures

National Building Arts Center, St. Louis, 2023
Chicago Architecture Center, 2018
ETH Zurich, 2018
China Academy of Arts, Shanghai, 2015
University of Illinois, Urbana, 2014
University of Hong Kong, 2012
TU Delft, 2012
UTS Sydney, 2012
University of Tokyo, 2012
Illinois Institute of Technology, 2011
Alliance for Global Sustainability, Chalmers, Gothenburg, 2010

Selected Exhibitions

M+, Hong Kong, Nov 2021 – June 2023
La Biennale de Venezia 2018, May – Nov, 2018
Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa, Oct – Dec 2016
International Biennale of Architecture Rotterdam, June – Aug 2014
La Biennale de Venezia 2014, July – Nov, 2014
X Sao Paulo Architecture Biennale, Oct – Dec 2013

Selected Grants and Awards

Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, PI for Acute Angles, 2020
New York State Council for the Arts, PI for 306090, 2010
American Institute of Architects, Merit Award, 2009
Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, PI for 306090, 2008
National Endowment for the Arts, PI for 306090, 2005
Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, PI for 306090, 2004
Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, PI for 306090, 2003

VII. Previous Project Experience

Preservation of the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House

Date: 2021-

Location: Chicago, IL

Work Categories: Historical Research, Technical Writing, Oral History Management, Community Engagement

Summary

Preservation Futures partner Jonathan Solomon co-authored the successful nomination of the Till-Mobley House to the Chicago Landmarks Register in 2020. In 2023, Preservation Futures completed a comprehensive history of the Till-Mobley House and produced an Oral History of the house including Till family members, Till-Mobley House neighbors and friends and associates of Mamie Till. This work was completed in partnership with the House's owner, Blacks in Green, with support from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Impacts

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks listed the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House as a Chicago Landmark in 2021. Preservation Futures supported Blacks in Green in successful applications for funding from the city of Chicago and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2022.



"Preservation Futures practice displays a technical, yet thoughtful and culturally competent approach to historic preservation which supports the growing emphasis on making sure places associated with people of color and underrepresented communities are equitably represented in the preservation movement."

- Tiffany Tolbert
Senior Director for Preservation
National Trust for Historic Preservation

Above: Dedication of the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley House as a Chicago Landmark. Photo by Preservation Futures

VII. Previous Project Experience

Preservation of the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ

Date: 2022-2023

Location: Chicago, IL

Work Categories: Historical Research, Technical Writing

Summary

Preservation Futures is proud to have participated in the realization of the Till Monument as authors of the Statement of National Significance for Roberts Temple. This document, which incorporates the eye witness testimony of Till family members and others, establishes the framework for the restoration and ongoing interpretation of this historic Chicago property in a manner that focuses on the joy and freedom of Emmett's life and the bravery and forgiveness that guided Mamie's work.

Impacts

On what would have been Emmett Till's 82nd birthday, President Joe Biden created the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument, which includes Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ in Chicago, Illinois; the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi; and Graball Landing on the banks of the Tallahatchie River in Mississippi. With this Order, Emmett Till's life and legacy, along with his mother Mamie Till Mobley who courageously catalyzed the American civil rights movement, receives long overdue national recognition.



Left: Crowds gather for Emmett Till's viewing at Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ in Chicago in 1955. Photo by Chicago Sun-Times. Right: Roberts Temple in 2023. Photo by Preservation Futures.

VII. Previous Project Experience

Preservation of the Ward Chapel AME Church

Date: 2024

Location: Cairo, IL

Work Categories: Historical Research, Technical Writing

Summary

Ward Chapel AME Church was organized in 1863. In 1875, Bishop Wayman of Baltimore, MD, traveled to Cairo to dedicate the church on August 19th. A fire destroyed the church in 1916, and the current church building was completed in 1918.

Ward Chapel was the first Black church in Cairo, and is associated with significant events relating to the multi-decade, multi organizational effort to desegregate the city, and improve the social and economic circumstances of Black Cairoites that were harmed by systemic and structural racism. These events include strategization by Black Cairo School District Teachers and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for pay equality in 1945, Non-violent protest trainings and “sit-ins” of businesses and public facilities organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1962, the organization and deployment of a three-year economic boycott of white businesses in Cairo from 1969 to 1971, and the establishment of a medical clinic run by the “Flying Black Medics” in 1970, a group of doctors and nurses that flew from Chicago to provide medical services to Black Cairoites in the basement of Ward Chapel.



Left: Ward Chapel AME Church in Cairo, IL. Photograph by Preservation Futures. Right: Dr. Leonidas Berry (far left), Reverend Charles Koen, and members of the “Flying Black Medics” in the basement of Ward Chapel, February 15, 1970. (Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature)

VII. Previous Project Experience

Re-interpreting Chicago's Oldest House

Date: 2021

Location: Chicago, IL

Work Categories: Historical Research, Technical Writing, Community Engagement

Summary

The 1836 Henry B. Clarke House is the home to the Clarke House Museum, a city-run house museum expressing a history of antebellum Chicago using period furnishings. From 1941 to 1977, the Henry B. Clarke House was under the care of Bishop Ford and the church, encouraging its landmarking and maintaining it through specialized African-American labor, all while the church served as an important center for political, social and community life. The museum opened in 1982 with no acknowledgement of this history.

Working closely with Pastor Kevin Anthony Ford, Bishop Ford's grandson and current pastor of the St. Paul Church of God in Christ, Preservation Futures assisted in bringing the injustice of the obfuscation into the public's view. Preservation Futures built energy around the renaming and reprogramming effort, building both broad support and attention from the media.

Preservation Futures co-wrote a municipal ordinance seeking a name change, and after gaining support from architects, the union construction trades, and elected officials, moved the City of Chicago to recognize Bishop Ford and the St. Paul Church of God in Christ's role in the preservation of the landmark.

Impacts

An ordinance co-written by Preservation Futures to rename the Henry B. Clarke House to honor Bishop Louis Henry Ford (commonly known as the Clarke-Ford House) was approved by Chicago City Council in November 2022. Working with the church and the city, Preservation Futures will assist in developing a curatorial vision for the newly named Clarke-Ford House and Museum.



Above: Chicago's Oldest House, seen as it appeared in a photo from 2021 and in the 1960s in an image from the archives of the St Paul's Church of God in Christ. Photographs by Colin Boyle.

VII. Previous Project Experience

Preservation of the Century and Consumers Buildings

Date: 2024

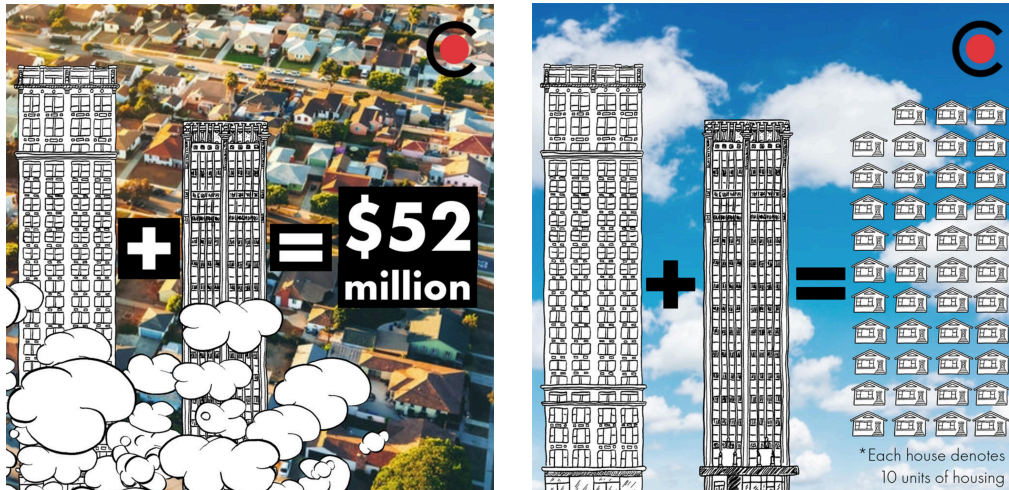
Location: Chicago, IL

Work Categories: Historical Research, Communications, Media Production

Summary

These two historic Chicago high-rises were seized by the Federal government in 2005 to expand their office holdings, but never occupied. After rejecting a bid by private developers to adaptively reuse the buildings, the GSA now claims that they pose a security threat to the neighboring Dirksen U.S. Courthouse and must be demolished.

Working with the Chicago Architecture Center and Alex Ensign, Preservation Futures developed a multimedia information campaign to raise awareness about the threats to the Century and Consumer Buildings. Including original research, short videos, and images, the campaign puts the proposed demolition in an economic, social, and environmental context for the public to consider.



Above: Excerpts from a video and social media campaign to raise awareness of the threats to the Century and Consumer Buildings in Chicago, IL.

VII. Previous Project Experience

Preservation of the East Side Tap

Date: 2021-2022

Location: Chicago, IL

Work Categories: Historical Research, Technical Writing

Summary

Preservation Futures is supporting The East Side Tap, a new neighborhood bar in a former Schlitz Brewery Tied House on the far Southeast Side of Chicago, Illinois. The firm consulted on the building owner's successful application for a city grant for restoration, and nominated the building to the National Register of Historic Places.

The historic Tied House at 9401 South Ewing was commissioned by Edward Uihlein, the manager of Schlitz brewery operations in Chicago, and designed by architect Charles Thisslow in 1907, with additions designed by William C. Presto in the 1930s. The design used European and Classically influenced architectural features to convey the legitimacy and decency of the neighborhood saloon in the face of rising social opposition to alcohol consumption by the temperance movement, all attributes of tied house architecture in Chicago.

Impacts

The East Side Tap received approximately \$250,000 in support from a City of Chicago grant for exterior restoration in 2021. The Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council approved the nomination of the building to the National Register of Historic Places in 2022, and it was Listed by the Keeper of the National Register in 2022.



Left: The former Schlitz Brewery Tied House at 9401 S. Ewing Avenue in Chicago, now known as the East Side Tap. Photo by Preservation Futures. Right: Historic photo of the art glass and signage, courtesy Mike Medina

VII. Previous Project Experience

Preservation of the Will County Courthouse

Date: 2023

Location: Joliet, IL

Work Categories: Historical Research, Technical Writing, Community Engagement

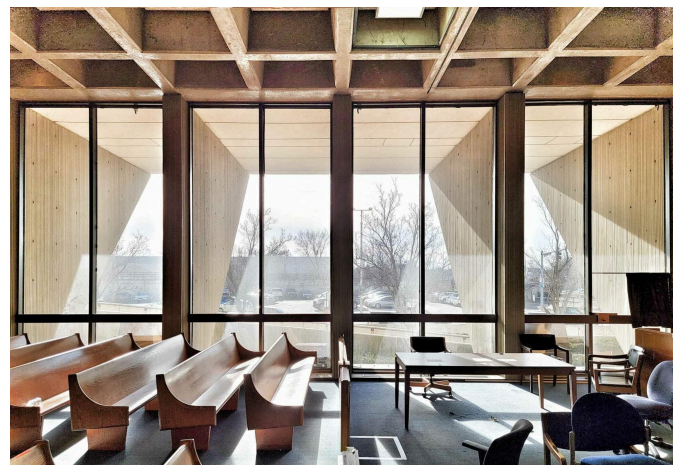
Summary

Preservation Futures is supporting the Courthouse Preservation Partners, a local coalition working to preserve the 1969 Will County Courthouse in Joliet, IL. The firm is consulting with the partnership on advocacy for adaptive reuse, and nominated the building to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Will County Courthouse was designed by Otto Stark of Charles F. Murphy & Associates and completed in 1969. It was one of the first buildings in the Brutalist style to be completed in the Chicago area and influenced a generation of public and civic architecture in the region. Its distinctive features: bare, textured concrete used throughout the interior and exterior of the building, bold, angled brackets transferring structural loads from its broader upper floors past a glassed-in entry lobby with stairs and ramps sweeping pedestrians into and through it, make the courthouse a recognizable landmark in downtown Joliet.

Impacts

The Will County Courthouse was Listed by the Keeper of The National Register in 2023. In 2024, the building was demolished by Will County.



Left: The 1969 Will County Courthouse in Joliet, Illinois, sits in a plaza marked by the outline of its demolished Victorian style predecessor. Photo by Preservation Futures. Right: The interior of the Will County Courthouse. Photo by Greg Peerbolte

VII. Previous Project Experience

Preservation of the James R. Thompson Center

Date: 2021-2022

Location: Chicago, IL

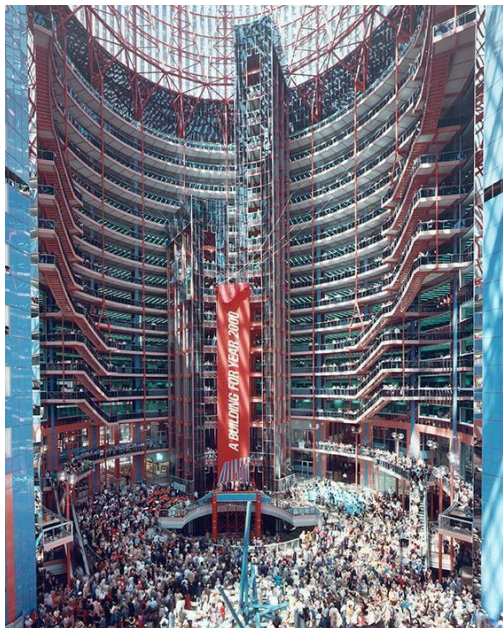
Work Categories: Historical Research, Technical Writing, Community Engagement

Summary

In 2020, Preservation Futures Partners Elizabeth Blasius and Jonathan Solomon began advocating for the preservation of Chicago's James R. Thompson Center, a 1985 post-modern office building for the State of Illinois. Their work included the development and delivery of public tours, support for community engagement projects, and production of a podcast. That year, they were commissioned by Landmarks Illinois to nominate the Thompson Center to the National Register of Historic Places.

Impacts

The Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council approved the nomination in 2021 and in 2022 the National Park Service found it eligible for listing on the National Register. The property remains unlisted due to objection by its new private owners.



Above: A Historical Image of the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. Photo courtesy JAHN.

"Blasius and Solomon's advocacy on behalf of postmodern architecture, as founders of Preservation Futures, has been nothing less than profound. The group has brought awareness of the style's significance to members of the general public, which perhaps had not been engaged in preservation efforts in the past. Tours and collective partnerships to preserve the Thompson Center, a public building, owned by the State of Illinois, have all been part of grassroots efforts orchestrated to raise further appreciation for the building, as well as convey and express its uniqueness and rarity."

- Ward Miller
President, Preservation Chicago



VIII. Client References

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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
SUBMITTER INFORMATION PAGE

PLEASE INCLUDE THIS PAGE WITH YOUR EMAIL OR MAIL SUBMITTAL FOR THE RFQ

The executing of this Submitter Information Page certifies understanding and compliance with the total Request for Qualifications submittal.

Submitter (Person, Organization, Business or Company): Preservation Futures

Address: 53 W Jackson Blvd. Suite 1637

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Contact Person: Jonathan Solomon

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Acknowledgement that all Addendum have been reviewed: Y /N Y

Signature of Submitter or Authorized Agent: 

Date: 5/16/2024