

The Michael Reese Hospital Campus: A Case for Preservation

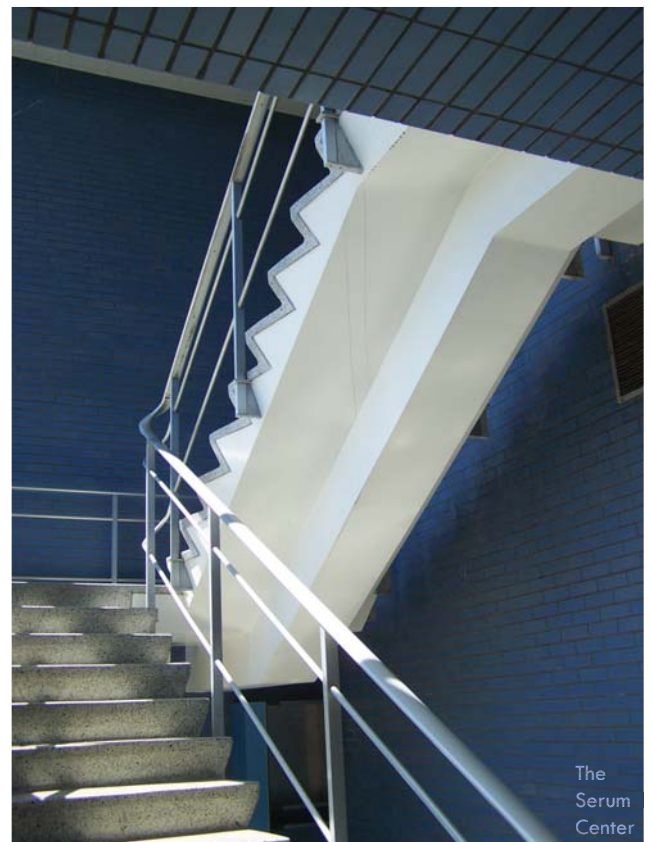
Why Save Michael Reese Hospital (MRH)?

Historic Rationale For Preservation

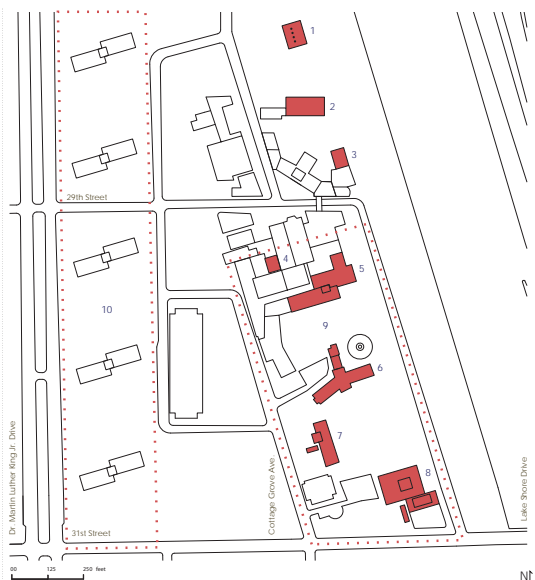
- **Unique Importance to Field of Planning in the US**
The Planning effort at MRH was the first privately funded urban renewal effort in Chicago. The charitable efforts pioneered at Michael Reese Hospital set the standard for physical and ethical planning in the Modern era, and were the basis of State and Federal legislation.
- **Unparalleled Architectural Significance**
Largely led by Walter Gropius, one of the world's most famous and important architects, MRH is a rich repository of Modernist architecture of international significance, unlike any other in the world.
- **Relevance to the Jewish Community**
The hospital was one of the primary outlets for Jewish charity, starting in the late 1800s. It prided itself in non-discriminatory practice, in both treatment and teaching capacities.
- **Relevance to Medical History**
Countless innovations and medical events took place on this site, including major advances in the fields of premature infant care and cancer research. In fact, two books on the rich medical history of the hospital have been written. The physical campus also was a breakthrough in hospital design.
- **Relevance to the African American Community**
The neighborhood redevelopment effort that took place at the campus was generally multiracial, intended for the betterment of the all community members. The resulting housing, for example, was among Chicago's most integrated.
- **Historic Landscape Designs**
Landscapes by some of America's most famous designers grace the campus, and their integration with the architecture is unique.
- **Synergy into a "Bauhaus Historic District"**
With Mies van der Rohe's IIT campus nearby, the South Side is a vast collection of Bauhaus-style architecture, rivaling any in the world.

Present-Day Rationale For Preservation

- **Environmental Impact of Demolishing 28 Buildings**
- **Loss of Mature Vegetation**
- **Adds Variety and Richness to Urban Fabric**
- **Inherent Value in Campus and Marketing Potential**
Chicago has an unparalleled opportunity to capitalize on its "Bauhaus District," an artistic and cultural resource that could pay dividends indefinitely in the future as a tourist draw and source of pride in the community.



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Walter Gropius's work at Michael Reese Hospital lasted at least 15 years, from 1945-1960, including site planning and design of buildings. Shown in red are buildings for which Gropius served as a consulting design architect. Dotted areas represent those campus sections most fully developed to the design specifications of the Gropius master plans.



How Michael Reese Can Support Chicago's Olympic Bid

- **Speaks to Local Culture and History**

As a key component of the Near South Side for decades, the Michael Reese Hospital campus can be reused as a living piece of Chicago's history, bringing our rich, established culture to the focus. The IOC directives concerning local materials, tradition, and trends are fulfilled in a novel way by the site's reuse.

- **Embodies Established Local Traditions**

With a history of well over 100 years, Michael Reese Hospital responds perfectly to the IOC directive that the Olympic Village should reflect "general culture and traditions."

- **Mature Vegetation and Turn-key Parklands**

The design of the hospital centers its buildings astride lavishly landscaped parklands, each having a unique design and site integration. The fully grown parks are fed with electricity and have been beautifully maintained.

- **Supports "Blue-Green" Olympics Goals**

As Chicago strives to make its Olympic Games the most environmentally friendly possible, the Michael Reese Hospital represents an unparalleled opportunity for Chicago to establish on a world stage its foresight and commitment to environmental matters. Adaptive reuse of key elements of this campus would reflect Chicago's commitment to environmentally sustainable practices.

- **"An International Story"**

The story of Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe emigrating to the US as a refuge from Nazi Germany embodies the story of America as a harbor for all peoples. The Michael Reese Hospital campus is indeed an international story.

- **Discovery and Rescue of a World Architectural Site**

The worldwide importance of architect Gropius is indisputable, and the multi-racial, multicultural effort that produced the Reese campus is the perfect background for an international event of peace and harmony. Properly celebrated, Michael Reese could eventually be one of Chicago's best-known architectural sites, and the 2016 Olympic Games can be the vehicle for its restoration and promotion.

- **Built to Highest Standards**

Michael Reese Hospital was intended to be much more than a medical facility: It was planned as a precedent-setting initiative that would create a standard for redevelopment on the South Side, benefitting all people. Its quality buildings reflect this ideal. The designers of Michael Reese Hospital intended this place to last for posterity, and its buildings were built to the highest standards, employing the best design talent available and the longest-lasting materials.

- **Built for High Adaptability**

Reese's buildings were designed for efficiency, expansion, and adaptability. Many structures on the campus were built with provisions for vertical and horizontal expansion, and major interior spaces were almost always conceived for maximum flexibility.