



Cook County Hospital

Address: 1825 West Harrison Street

Date: 1913

Architect: Paul Gerhardt

Style: Classical Revival, with French Renaissance Revival Details

**CHRS
Rating:** Orange

Threat:

In 1994, the Illinois Medical District, an agency designated by the State of Illinois, made a decision that the old County Hospital required demolition. No report or study was made public that showed the reasons for the agency to opt for demolition. Construction of a new Cook County Hospital followed, with the new facility to open by the end of 2002.

On August 1, 2002, the Cook County Board of Commissioners voted to grant a 2.9 million dollar contract to a consulting firm that would plan the demolition of the Old Cook County Hospital. Demolition is expected to cost another 20 million dollars. The land under the Main Building is planned to be converted to park space. Nearby, non-descript buildings from the 1950s are being retained, while the historic Main Building as been slated for demolition

Fulfillment of Landmark Criteria:

Cook County Hospital meets a required number of the criteria established by the Chicago Landmarks Commission for preliminary landmark status.

Integrity: The north facade of the Main Building is almost completely intact and the building looks much as it did in 1913. The building was constructed with solid, thick, dense, high quality materials, making it incredibly durable from an engineering standpoint, and allowing the building to age gracefully. The only loss to the facade was the removal of two mansard roof projections several decades ago, but these features could certainly be replaced.

- 1. Significant Architect:** Paul Gerhardt served as Cook County Architect, and also was the designer of a host of other municipal and educational buildings throughout Chicago. Most prominent among these is Lane Technical High School, at Addison Street and Western Avenue.
- 2. Significant Architecture:** The classical appearance of Cook County Hospital was intended to set the massive hospital apart from all other hospital buildings in the nation, and to suggest a "government" building. The heavily ornamented facades of the Main Building are composed in a Classical Revival style with French Renaissance features, and their materials are of the highest quality. The base is composed of Maine granite with several courses of glazed terra cotta following, in imitation of polished granite. The remainder of the facade is cream-colored impervious brick trimmed with white glazed terra cotta.
- 3. Critical Part of City's Heritage:** Cook County Hospital, at one time the largest hospital in the nation, is the stuff of legends. The facade of the building is world famous, having appeared in movies, including *The Fugitive*, and having served as the basis for hit television shows, including *ER*. Numerous medical advances have also occurred at Cook County Hospital. Most important of all, countless early immigrant and low-income residents, of all backgrounds, have seen Cook County Hospital as a place for medical care. The Main Building of Cook County Hospital has even been referred to as "Chicago's Statue of Liberty." Preserving the Main Building is about making the Illinois Medical District the very best that it can be for future generations of Chicagoans.