



Metropolitan (Apostolic) Community Church

Address: 4100 South Dr. Martin Luther King Drive

Date: 1888

Architect: John T. Long
Remodeled 1913, Charles S. Frost

Style: Romanesque

**CHRS
Rating:** Orange

Threat:

For several decades, the Metropolitan (Apostolic) Community Church was led by Reverend Theodore Richardson, who retired recently. He was succeeded by the Reverend Leon Perry III. Reverend Perry surprised long-time church members by soon announcing a plan to demolish the historic church. A demolition permit was applied for in 2001. Reverend Perry has been met with strong opposition by the "Coalition to Save the Met" an organization made up chiefly of current and former members of the congregation.

Fulfillment of Landmark Criteria:

The Metropolitan Community Church meets a required number of criteria established by the Chicago Landmarks Commission for preliminary landmark status.

Integrity: The exterior and interior of the church possess nearly complete integrity. The only exceptions are recent and include the removal of historic stained glass elements of the interior from the building, in violation of City Hall orders, and in violation of city ordinances governing demolition.

- 1. Significant Architect:** John T. Long was one of Chicago's earliest architects, designing large and luxurious apartment buildings throughout the city, including the recently landmarked Yale Apartments in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood. He also designed ecclesiastic and transportation structures, such as Metra's landmarked 111th Street Station.
- 2. Significant Architecture:** The church is organized in a cruciform shape, which allows for circular seating to surround the altar. The interior features extensive woodwork, elaborate detailing, unique lighting, and a one-of-a-kind pipe organ. The huge arching doorways and window portals give the building a sense of gravity and power, especially when combined with the large blocks of beautifully mottled, multi-hued red, brown and tan sandstone used throughout the exterior.
- 3. Critical Park of City's Heritage:** Since the 1920s, the church has served as a beacon for African-Americans who came north as part of the Great Migration. "The Met" had been a strong provider of social services in Bronzeville, as well as a focal point for community discussions about spirituality, job training, civil rights, and political change. Famous individuals who have spoken at Metropolitan Community Church include W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, and Eleanor Roosevelt. The legendary A. Philip Randolph held his most important meetings there to organize his nationwide Pullman Porters organization.
- 6. Unique Visual Feature:** The red sandstone used for the church can be found on only one other Chicago church, the Church of the Epiphany, an Episcopal church located on Ashland Avenue on the Near West Side.