



architectural and cultural heritage.”

To that end, the majority of the West Loop Mercantile district is identified within the Plan as a *Character District*, a place “where design, scale, use and materials combine to create a distinctive identity.” The Plan calls for protection of such districts by means of design review, zoning restrictions, and compatible in-fill development.

While these are admirable objectives, time has proven that that such measures are not enough to preserve an area’s existing architecture. Furthermore, as this part of the expansion area is nearest to existing transit stations, and as the plan sagely calls for a “new transit hub under Clinton Street,” re-development pressure on the area will be unprecedented. Landmark protection is urgently required if the city is to realize the plan’s goal, and the full potential of the area. Indeed, landmark-quality buildings in the district have been torn down within the last year, and development surrounds from virtually every side.

As can be seen from the accompanying map, significant available land remains with the district for additional growth. Preservation and development need not be mutually exclusive.

Fulfillment of Landmark Criteria:

The River North Historic District meets a required number of the criteria established by the Chicago Landmarks Commission for preliminary landmark status.

- Integrity:** The individual structures within the district maintain a high degree of their original integrity. The district as a whole is cohesive and tactile in character.
- 1. Significant Architect:** Major contributions to the district come from the hands of such well known architects as *Adler and Sullivan*, *Huehl & Schmid*, and *Samuel Atwater Treat*. Please see following page for further information.
 - 2. Significant Architecture:** The buildings within this district comprise the most clear and concise demonstration of mercantile architecture’s development in Chicago. Chief among these are the powerful, structurally expressive warehouse structures built in the Chicago School of architecture by Samuel Atwater Treat and Huehl & Schmid.
 - 3. Critical Part of City’s Heritage:** Chicago history is entwined with the West Loop Mercantile district in ways too numerous to mention. Chief among the area’s history, however, is the **Haymarket Riot** of 1886. This event, which shaped labor history worldwide, occurred near the northwest corner of the district. Zepf’s Hall, the only remaining building from this critical event, is included in this nomination.
 - 5. Theme as a District:** The district is a coherent and colorful reminder of our city’s surging growth and bustling past.

West Loop Mercantile District

Address: Area bounded roughly by Fulton Street at the North, Washington Street at the South, Clinton Street at the East, and Des Plaines Street at the West.
(Please refer to accompanying map.)

Date: c. 1875 - 1928

Architect: Various (major contributions by *Adler and Sullivan*, *Huehl & Schmid*, *S. A. Treat*)

Style: Various, Predominantly Chicago School Commercial

CHRS Rating: 1 Red (Site), 5 Orange, 13 Green

Threat:

Chicago’s visionary and generally well-conceived blueprint for the downtown area, Chicago Central Area Plan: Preparing the Central City for the 21st Century, calls for the highest density of development to occur in the “westward expansion” of offices uses in the West Loop. Simultaneously, however, the Plan wisely directs us to “preserve and strengthen the Central Area’s world renowned