Overview:
The Medic building, situated at the corner of Melrose and Ashland, is an extremely intact example of a Chicago building with art deco detailing. This intersection, in conjunction with Belmont and Ashland, was an important commercial hub when the building was constructed in 1929. Many of the structures from this time have already been lost to new development and these losses have erased much of this retail and commercial history. The Medic Building is a reminder of this time and provides much needed architectural interest in the area. In addition, Chicago does not have the wealth of art deco buildings that other cities, such as New York, do. This building is one stunning example of the style on the North Side that can be preserved to showcase its importance as an architectural expression around 1930.

History:
Work began on The Medic Building in 1929 after Frederick H. Meyer acquired the 50'x117' site in order to construct medical offices and a new space for his store, the Meyer Drug Company, which had already been in the neighborhood for a quarter century.
The architect, M. F. Strauch, was based out of Chicago and designed other various structures in the city, including St. Andrew’s Evangelical Lutheran School and Parish. The general contractor on the project was Paul Mueller and Sons, a local Chicago firm. The two story masonry structure initially housed twenty doctor’s offices and two retail spaces. These tenants changed over time and the most recent tenant was the Chicago Title Insurance Company.

Threat:

In 2007, the area was rezoned after a request was made by Lakeview Collection, LLC to create a Planned Development on the site. The proposal had included retail, residential and park space and would have involved the destruction of the Medic Building, which would have been replaced by a bank and a loading dock. The project never moved forward due to the depressed economy; however Lakeview Collection did take steps to vacate all tenants from the premises. In addition, the company has been involved in a complex lawsuit with their primary lessee, Bank of America, over the parcel. According to the 2007 report from the City Council in response to the request for a planned development, Lakeview Collection had until March of 2013 to begin construction or the parcel would revert back to its previous zoning. There is a provision that would allow Lakeview Collection one extra year if they could prove they have “good cause”. However, all of this became moot in February of 2013, when it was confirmed that the Target Corporation had purchased the entire site for a new retail store.

Recommendation:

Preservation Chicago has recommended to the Target Corporation that the Medic Building be preserved and incorporated into their new big box structure. Their recent rehabilitation of the Landmarked Carson Pirie Scott building by Louis Sullivan has proven that Target has the vision to incorporate historic preservation into their business plan and can be a respectful neighbor. Alderman Tom Tunney (44th) also supports preservation of the building. A preserved Medic Building incorporated into a new Target store would be a win-win for both the community and the Target Corporation.