



Zepf's Hall

Address: 630 West Lake (Lake Street at DesPlaines Street)

Date: 1882

Architect: Unknown

Style: Italianate Hall, with Germanic details

CHRS

Rating: Orange

Threat: For several years prior to Preservation Chicago's founding, its members have sought landmark status for Zepf's Hall. No indication has been given by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks that landmarking of the building is being considered.

According to the recently released Central Area Plan, high-density office construction is planned for the West Loop. Already, an office high-rise is planned at the corner of Lake and Jefferson Streets, a site on the same block as Zepf's Hall. Clearly, the West Loop office boom will soon reach Zepf's Hall itself and will likely lead to its demolition.

One bright spot in the preservation effort for Zepf's Hall is that Mayor Daley has directed the Department of Cultural Affairs to coordinate a plan to erect a monument near Crane's Alley, a prominent landmark that is one-half block from Zepf's Hall. In 2001, a grant of \$300,000 was allocated by the Illinois State legislature to plan and erect this monument and to help stimulate related commemoration of the Haymarket Square area.

Fulfillment of Landmark Criteria:

Zepf's Hall meets a required number of the criteria established by the Chicago Landmarks Commission for preliminary landmark status.

Integrity: The cornice and triangular pediment have been removed decades ago. However, these features can be rebuilt and reapplied. The first floor exterior has wood siding applied, obscuring what may or may not have been lost in terms of original exterior detailing. The original doorway, unfortunately, has been removed.

Nevertheless, the main structure of Zepf's Hall remains in good shape, and more dramatically altered landmarks have been restored in Chicago before. The extent of work is similar to that required during the successful restoration of the landmark Reliance Building.

2. Significant Architecture: Zepf's Hall reflects a German influence on small-scale American urban architecture during the early 1880s. A massive influx of German immigrants into Chicago at that time brought craftsmen who brought German-styled detailing to Italianate structures, as seen on Zepf's Hall.

3. Critical Part of City's Heritage: Zepf's Hall is the last standing building directly related to the Haymarket Riot. Charles Zepf opened his tavern and meeting hall in 1882, declaring in his native German tongue that it would be the "headquarters of Socialism." His works proved prescient, as the huge Lumpshovers Union was based at Zepf's Hall, as well as the Furniture Workers Union. During the Haymarket Riot—which took place at the close of a May 4, 1886 rally for the eight-hour work day—two of the four conspirators who were later tried and executed by hanging were actually inside Zepf's Hall. Men pushed through the door of Zepf's Hall as bullets whizzed past. Bullets actually penetrated the building's façade.

Haymarket Square, once the most famous public space in Chicago, has fallen from local prominence. Labor historians worldwide have looked to the events at Haymarket Square as an important turning point. Long neglected, and as our last building directly linked to the Riot, landmarking Zepf's Hall is of critical importance.