Opila Paper Company
2010-2012 South Ashland Avenue
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1277

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C. St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

OPILA PAPER COMPANY

HABS No. IL-1277

Location:	2010-2012 South Ashland Avenue, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois The building is located at latitude: 41.854658, longitude: -87.666449. This point was obtained on February 16, 2022, using Google Earth (WGS84). There is no restriction on its release.
Present Owner/ Occupant:	Casa Durango LP
Present Use:	Vacant
Significance:	The two-story industrial warehouse structure at 2010-2012 S. Ashland Avenue was constructed ca. 1910 for the Opila Paper Company, a wholesale paper product and woodware business founded by Peter and Anton Opila in the early 1890s. The building is a contributing structure within the Pilson Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.
Historians:	Emily Ramsey and Lara Ramsey, Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc. February 2022
Project Information:	This project was undertaken in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. § 306108). This building was recorded as a stipulation of the Memorandum of Agreement among the City of Chicago Department of Housing, the City of Chicago Department of Assets, Information and Services, and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office regarding the demolition of the building.

Part I: Historical Information

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1910[1]

2. Architect: Unknown

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, and uses:

Owners[2]

ca. 1910-1925	Peter Opila and Frank Biedka
1925-1937	Peter Opila
1937-1941	Opila family
1941-1960	Julia Snisgowski (daughter of Peter Opila)
1960-1961	Steven Geller
1961-1965	Archer Plumbing & Heating Company
1965-1966	Sherwin Simon
1975-2000	Fernando Cinta
2000-2020	Ofilia Cinta Trust
2020-2021	TRP 2008-2012 Ashland LLC
2021-present	Casa Durango LP

Occupants[3]

ca. 1910-1962	Opila Paper Company
ca. 1962-1965	Archer Plumbing & Heating Company

[1] Approximate date of construction is based on available maps for the area, as well as title records, city directories, and newspaper research.
[2] Owners of the building and approximate dates of ownership were taken from title records, city directories, and local newspapers.
[3] Occupants of the building and approximate dates of occupancy were compiled from city directories and local newspapers.

1974	Form Pack
1975-ca. 2005	Fernando Cinta, physician

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown

5. Original plans and construction: No original plans for the building were found during research.

6. Alterations and additions:

Exterior

Building permit research indicates that the two-story brick garage addition that extends north from the rear of the building was constructed in 1913.[4] It is also likely that the one-story frame connector between the ca. 1910 two-story brick warehouse building at the south end of the parcel and the one-and-one-half-story brick secondary structure at the southwest corner of the parcel was also constructed around the time of the addition. The 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for the property shows the building in its current configuration, with the addition and frame connector in place. A small one-story entrance enclosure at the intersection of the north façade of the one-story connector and the east façade

Other alterations to the exterior of the building are minor. The door at the center entry on the front façade of the building has been replaced with a metal and glass door with single-light transom above. The secondary entrance at the west end of the north façade of the ca. 1910 two-story brick building features a non-historic paneled replacement door and non-historic wood deck and stair. Two first-story windows on the north façade of the ca. 1910 two-story brick building feature wood replacement windows within downsized openings, and two second-story window openings on the west façade of the building have been filled with concrete masonry units.

The front (east) façade of the two-story garage addition features a non-historic metal overhead garage door within the central opening on the first story. Three window openings on the second story of the façade have been filled in with glass block; the center-north window opening has been fitted with a one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl window. The center opening on the rear (west) façade of the addition has been filled in with wood panels; a ventilation fan has been installed at the south end of the opening, and a metal door at the north end. Four window

[4] Chicago building permit #12061, Book West #2, Page 430, April 2, 1913.

openings on the second story of the rear façade have been filled with brick; the window in the northernmost opening has also been removed.

Two window openings on the rear (west) façade of the one-and-one-half story brick secondary structure at the northwest corner of the lot have been filled with brick and glass block.

Interior

No historic plans or images have been located to show the historic condition of the building's interior. Given its original function as a warehouse and storage facility, it is likely that most of the building's interior spaces were open and utilitarian with exposed structure and few decorative finishes or details. The interior partitions and finishes that are currently in place, primarily on the first floor of the warehouse building, were installed after 1975, when the building was converted to a physician's office.

B. Historical Context:

Summary

The Opila Paper Company Building at 2010-2012 S. Ashland Ave. in Chicago, is a two-story industrial warehouse building and garage constructed ca. 1910 within the city's Pilsen neighborhood, located west and south of downtown. The area had historically been associated with Chicago's Bohemian community, which settled there in large numbers after the Great Fire of 1871. The neighborhood was also home in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to other European immigrant populations, including Slovaks, Lithuanians, Poles, and Germans.[5] For over fifty years, the building at 2010-2012 S. Ashland Ave. housed the Opila Paper Company, a wholesale company that provided paper products and woodenware to local businesses. The company's founders, Peter and Anton Opila, were Polish immigrants who initially ran a small wholesaling concern from their residence on S. Wood Street. After Anton's death in 1903, Peter Opila brought in Frank Biedka as partner, and the company expanded into its new purpose-built office and warehouse ca. 1910, where it remained until 1962.

In the mid-twentieth century, the ethnic makeup of the Pilsen neighborhood began to evolve. The neighborhood continued to draw immigrants from Poland, Czechoslovakia,

[5] "Preliminary Summary of Information: Pilsen Historic District," report submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, February 2019, p. 10.

and Lithuania through the 1930s and 1940s, but the Great Depression and subsequent housing shortages of World War II placed a strain on the area's aging housing stock, and the more established Bohemian families left the city for other neighborhoods or nearby suburbs like Cicero and Berwyn. In the 1960s, Pilsen's Mexican and Mexican American population rose dramatically, as construction of the Stephenson Expressway, Eisenhower Expressway, and the University of Illinois's Circle Campus destroyed commercial and residential areas centered along Maxwell Street and displaced the existing Mexican community in the adjacent Near West Side community area. During this later period of the neighborhood's history, the building at 2010-2012 S. Ashland Ave. was occupied by the Archer Plumbing and Heating Company (ca. 1962-1965), and by a medical practice run by Dr. Fernando Cinta (1974-ca. 2005).

Bohemian Settlement and the Development of Pilsen

Bohemians first began arriving in Chicago in significant numbers in the mid-nineteenth century, following a series of failed revolutions against the Habsburg monarchy in 1848. By 1855, most of the Bohemian population in the city had coalesced within a small settlement between South Polk Street, the Chicago River, South Halsted Street, and South Canal Street. The settlement was named "Prague" after the largest city in Bohemia and served as the first permanent Bohemian community in Chicago through the early 1870s.

The 1871 Chicago Fire, which originated on DeKoven Street, destroyed most of the buildings within Prague, and subsequent Bohemian settlement shifted west to what is now known as the Pilsen neighborhood within the city's Lower West Side community area. Although the area had been home to small numbers of German and Irish settlers beginning in the 1830s and 1840s and had been largely subdivided before the fire, most of the land had not yet been developed, allowing more room for the growing numbers of Bohemian immigrants to establish themselves in the 1870s and 1880s. The location of the neighborhood, which was defined by the physical boundaries of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad to the north, the Union Pacific Railroad to the west, and large-scale industrial development along the South Branch of the Chicago River to the south and east, created the ideal conditions for a cohesive Bohemian community to evolve. The neighborhood—dubbed Pilsen by the Bohemian residents after a local tavern near S. Carpenter and W. 19th streets named "U Města Plzně" ("Near the City of Pilsen")—quickly grew within these boundaries into a dense and lively Bohemian enclave that served as a gateway community for immigrants arriving from Bohemia and, to a lesser extent, other parts of Europe.[6]

The area of the Pilsen neighborhood east of Ashland Avenue was home the highest concentration of Bohemians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was

[6] Ibid.

very densely developed. With income supplied through jobs from nearby industries and support from dozens of building and loan societies, recent Bohemian immigrants with modest means could afford to build and own their own homes and businesses within the neighborhood.[7] Many residents initially constructed small houses toward the rear of their lots; when their financial circumstances improved, they then constructed larger residential or mixed-use buildings at the front of the parcel, while retaining the original rear buildings for use as additional residential or commercial spaces.[8] Most buildings in this section of the neighborhood were built close to lot lines and housed multiple families or generations of the same family.

The west end of Pilsen between Ashland and Western Avenue, although still considered part of the Bohemian community, developed slightly later than the area east of Ashland and was also home to other European immigrant groups, including Germans, Poles, Lithuanians, Swedes, Dutch, and Croats. Resident Frank Fucik described the progress of the neighborhood in the March 7, 1886 edition of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*: "The district between Halsted street and Ashland avenue is now almost built up, and the Bohemians are beginning to build in the district between Ashland and Western avenue. The Scandinavians are also building in there. But west of the limekiln on Hoyne Avenue and thereabouts the Bohemians seem to have it all to themselves."[9]

As the population of Pilsen rose in the 1880s, West 18th Street emerged as the neighborhood's center, with commercial, residential, religious, cultural, and educational buildings all co-existing along this east-west corridor. Among the most impressive buildings constructed along West 18th Street was Thalia Hall (1893), which included a hall for community meetings and cultural activities, as well as retail and residential spaces. More modest commercial and industrial concerns were also scattered throughout the neighborhood, often located within the first-floor storefronts of multi-level mixed-use buildings or within modest structures at the rear of residential lots. This mixing of residential and non-residential functions, as well as the density of construction, led to the vibrant urban character of the neighborhood.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Pilsen had become the largest Bohemian community not only in Chicago, but in the United States, with a Bohemian population third only to that of Prague and Vienna.[10] An article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in December 1904 declared the neighborhood "the metropolis of all the cities of Bohemian Chicago. It is to Pilsen the Bohemian emigrant comes first before locating definitely. It is in Pilsen that

[7] National Register of Historic Places, Pilsen Historic District, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, National Register #10240018, Section 8, p. 24.
[8] Ibid, Section 8, p. 25-26.
[9] "Bohemian Chicago," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 7, 1886, p. 3.
[10] National Register of Historic Places, Pilsen Historic District, Section 8 p. 17.

Bohemian activity in Chicago centers."[11] Through the first two decades of the century, the neighborhood only continued to increase in population and density, largely due to the continual influx of new immigrants. Although the contemporary reports of over 100,000 people living within the boundaries of the neighborhood were exaggerated, census numbers placed the population of the Lower West Side community area (largely taken up by the Pilsen neighborhood) at over 85,000 at its peak in 1920.[12]

Commerce and Industry in Pilsen

Contributing to this sense of Pilsen as a Bohemian "city within a city" was the sheer number of businesses and industries woven into the fabric of the neighborhood.[13] Because of its location near the South Branch of the Chicago River and multiple rail lines, the area in and around Pilsen housed large manufacturing concerns that revolved around the lumber, grain, and brewing industries. At the northwest end of the neighborhood, the Chicago Union Lime Works operated a limestone quarry that by the 1870s was producing 1300 barrels of lime per day—when the quarry was depleted in the early twentieth century, Chicago's West Park Board purchased part of the site for the creation of Harrison Park.[14] Companies processing and distributing coal, rubber, lead, iron, tin, steel, and glass were also operating within the neighborhood in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[15]

Alongside these larger operations, the residents of Pilsen also owned and worked in a variety of small industrial workshops, often within mixed-use buildings or in small structures toward the rear of residential and commercial lots. Meat-packing companies, sausage factories, and commercial bakeries were plentiful, and had ready access to ingredients through Chicago's grain train and meat-packing industry.[16] The most widespread cottage industry in the neighborhood was garment-making. Dozens of small tailor shops served as part of the system of sweated labor, in which laborers—often women and children—worked on various tasks in the garment-making process for large clothing manufacturers like Hart, Schaffner and Marx. Most garment-makers were poorly paid and worked under conditions that Hull-House resident Florence Kelley described as "ruinous to the health of the employees."[17] In 1910, sixteen women walked out of Hart,

[11] "Chicago Has Ten Bohemian Towns," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 18, 1904, p. 28.
[12] "Bohemia of Chicago: A City Within a City," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 20, 1906, pp. 46-47; "Preliminary Summary of Information: Pilsen Historic District," p. 26.
[13] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 20, 1906, pp. 46-47.
[14] National Register of Historic Places, Pilsen Historic District, Section 8, pp.44-45.
[15] Ibid, Section 8, pp. 37-54.
[16] Ibid, Section 8, p. 30.
[17] Ibid, Section 8, p. 36.

Schaffner and Marx's Shop No. 5 (located at the corner of 18th and Halsted streets in Pilsen) in protest, launching one of the largest strikes in the city's history.[18]

In addition to industry, numerous commercial enterprises in Pilsen were established to meet the needs of the community. Groceries and butcher-shops provided food for residents, while the many saloons in the neighborhood offered a place outside of often crowded living quarters for refreshment and socializing. Banks, undertakers, music stores, photography studios, and scores of other small businesses provided an array of goods and services to the community, helping to create a neighborhood that was largely self-sufficient. In his 1920 dissertation on the Czech community in Chicago, Jakub Horak noted that "it was not very difficult to find women. . .who lived there as long as twenty years and who have never been downtown."[19]

The Opila Paper Company

Among the many small businesses operating in Pilsen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the Opila Paper Company, a wholesale company selling paper products and woodenware that occupied the building at 2010-2012 from ca. 1910 to the early 1960s.[20] The company was founded by brothers Anton and Peter Opila, Polish immigrants who came to Chicago from Germany. Anton Opila came to the city first, in 1887; Peter followed in 1890.[21] Chicago city directories indicate that the two men had begun operating the business (originally called Opila Brothers) at 251 W. 13th Street in the Near West Side around 1894.[22] By 1898, the business had moved to 846 S. Wood Street, at the northwest end of Pilsen. Anton Opila owned and resided in the building, while Peter lived across the street.[23] At the time that the brothers relocated to Pilsen, the area west of Ashland Avenue in Pilsen, also known as Heart of Chicago, was home to a growing Polish community.[24] Census records show that in 1900 the enumeration districts around Wood and 18th Streets were populated with Polish immigrants in addition to

[18] Jade Ryerson, "Women of the 1910 Chicago Garment Workers' Strike," National Park Service website (https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/women-of-the-1910-chicago-garment-workers-strike.htm, accessed December 1, 2021)
[19] NR nomination, Section 8, p.36-37.
[20] *Poles in America: Their Contribution to a Century of Progress* (Chicago: Polish Day Association, 1933), p. 192.
[21] Anton Opila. Year: 1900; Census Place: Chicago, Ward 9, Cook County, Illinois; Page: 16; Enumeration District: 0241; FHL microfilm: 1240254; Peter Opila. Year: 1910; Census Place: Chicago Ward 11, Cook, Illinois; Roll: T64_242; Page: 16B; Enumeration District: 1565; FHL microfilm 1374265.
[22] Reuben H. Donnelley, compiler, *The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago, 1894* (Chicago: The Chicago Lakeside Directory Company, 1894), 2138.
[23] *The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago, 1898* (Chicago: The Chicago Directory Company, 1898), 2138.
[24] Gabriela F. Arredondo, "Lower West Side," Encyclopedia of Chicago website (http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/765.html, accessed December 15, 2021).

Bohemians, and by 1910 the number of Polish and Polish-American residents far outnumbered Bohemian residents.

During its first decade, the Opila Paper Company appears to have been a relatively small operation. In 1902, Anton and Peter Opila purchased a lot at 726 W. 19th St. (now 1803 W. 19th St.) across from what would later become Harrison Park and built a three-story brick flat building—it is likely that the brothers intended to move the company's operations into the new building.[25] Anton died the following year, and Peter relocated the Opila Paper Company to the new building and continued running the business on his own for the next six years.[26]

In 1909, Peter Opila brought in Franciszek (Frank) Biedka as partner in the Opila Paper Company. Biedka was also a Polish immigrant who came to Chicago from Germany in 1885; he and his wife Victoria initially settled in the Polish community on the Northwest Side near the intersection of Division Street and Milwaukee Avenue, where Frank worked as a butcher.[27] In October of 1909, Opila and Biedka purchased three adjacent lots along the west side of the 2100 block of S. Ashland Avenue and constructed a two-story brick building to house the paper company's operations. The business thrived in the years following the formation of Opila and Biedka's partnership—in 1913, a two-story addition was constructed on the north two lots to accommodate more warehouse storage. The company also began taking out ads in local Polish newspapers. A large advertisement in the *Dziennik Chicagoski*, Chicago's most widely read Polish daily, proclaimed that the company was "the oldest Polish warehouse of its kind in Chicago" providing paper products and woodenware for "butchers, bakers, and other merchants."[28]

The Evolution of the Pilsen Neighborhood in the Twentieth Century

Although Pilsen continued to serve as a point of entry for Bohemians and other European immigrants, by the first decade of the twentieth century many more established and upwardly mobile Bohemian families had already moved out of the neighborhood to less crowded areas of the city. The South Lawndale neighborhood around 26th Street and California Avenue attracted so many Bohemian residents that it became known as "Czech California."[29] As they had done in Pilsen, the Bohemian community in South Lawndale erected businesses, Sokols, theaters, and churches, most clustering along 26th Street

[25] "Building Permits," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 25, 1902, p. 9.
[26] Reuben H. Donnelley, compiler, *The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago, 1904* (Chicago: The Chicago Directory Company, 1904), 1632; *Insurance Maps of Chicago, Illinois*, Volume 8, 1914 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1914), Sheet 53.
[27] Franciszek Biedka. Year: 1900; Census Place: Chicago, Ward 16, Cook County, Illinois; Page: 17; Enumeration District: 0523; FHL microfilm: 1240266.
[28] *Dziennik Chicagoski*, December 15, 1914, p. 17.
[29] Frank S. Magallon, "A Historical Look at Czech Chicagoland," Chicagoland Czech American Community Center website (http://www.chicagocacc.org/the-historical-czech-chicagoland, accessed December 16, 2021).

between California Avenue and Pulaski Road. This westward movement continued through the 1920s and 1930s, as the population of western suburbs Cicero and Berwyn swelled with Bohemian residents.[30]

With the steep drop in Bohemian immigration after Czech independence in 1918, the curtailing of European immigration by the 1924 Immigration Act, and the continual exodus of residents, Pilsen's population declined sharply. Between 1920 and 1940, the neighborhood lost nearly 30,000 residents.[31] The closure or relocation of many nearby industries in the years following World War II further strained the neighborhood, and by 1960 its population stood at around 48,500.[32]

In the 1950s, the process of ethnic succession began in Pilsen, as Mexican immigrants began to replace the lost population of Bohemian residents. The first wave of Mexican migration to Chicago had occurred in the late 1910s and continued through the 1920s, as workers came directly from Mexico and from the American Southwest to work in the city's railroad, steel yards, and packing houses.[33] Although the lack of available work and US deportation measures severely curtailed immigration through the 1930s, subsequent labor shortages caused by World War II led to the creation of a system of labor permits for temporary workers (*braceros*) from Mexico, and the number of Mexican immigrants coming to Chicago again rose in the late 1940s.[34]

Before 1950, most Mexicans settled in neighborhoods that were close to industry and had historically been ports of entry for European immigrants, including the Southeast Side, Back of the Yards and the Near West Side; many Mexican immigrants who arrived after 1940 also settled outside of the city in suburbs like Arlington Heights and Berwyn.[35] Through the 1950s, increasing numbers of Chicago's Mexican population were drawn to Pilsen; even with this influx, Mexicans and Mexican Americans remained a minority of the neighborhood's overall population through the early 1960s.[36]

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[30] "Berwyn, IL," Encyclopedia of Chicago website (http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/132.html, accessed December 15, 2021).
[31] "Lower West Side, Chicago," Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lower_West_Side,_Chicago, accessed December 15, 2021).
[32] Ibid.
[33] Gabriela F. Arredondo and Derek Vaillant, "Mexicans," Encyclopedia of Chicago website (http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/824.html, accessed December 16, 2021).
[34] Ibid; Lilia Fernández, "From the Near West Side to 18th Street: Mexican Community Formation and Activism in Mid-Twentieth Century Chicago," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Autumn, 2005, Vol. 98, No. 3, Mexican Immigrants in Illinois History: Across Generations and Borders (Autumn, 2005), pp.165-166.
[35] "Mexicans," Encyclopedia of Chicago website.
[36] "The Lower West Side," Encyclopedia of Chicago website. The population table on the Encyclopedia of Chicago's entry on the Lower West Side community area in 1960 show that nearly 99% of the population was white, 1.1% were Black, and 0.3% were "other races."

Pilsen's relatively rapid transition to a majority-Mexican neighborhood between 1960 and 1970 was due in large part to the displacement of the existing Mexican community in the Near West Side, north and east of Pilsen. The construction of the Stevenson Expressway (I-155) in 1960 and the construction of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Circle Campus beginning in 1963 necessitated the demolition of a wide swath of properties settled by Italian, Black, Jewish, Greek, and Mexican residents, and caused massive disruption to these communities—between 1960 and 1970, the Near West Side lost 47,000 residents.[37] The development of the UIC Circle Campus was particularly painful for the Near West Side's Mexican community. The Near West Side Planning Board (NWSPB), a multi-ethnic coalition of community organizations in the neighborhood, had successfully lobbied the federal government to have the area around Harrison and Halsted Streets, "the heart of the Mexican neighborhood" designated for urban renewal.[38] The NWSPB proposed affordable housing for the site, a plan that the city initially supported. However, in 1960, Mayor Richard J. Daley offered the Harrison-Halsted site to the University of Illinois for its new Chicago campus, without any consultation from the NWSPB or community members.[39] Most of the 9,000 Mexican and Mexican-American families displaced by the new campus relocated to Pilsen, and their experience in the Near West Side became "part of a collective historical narrative" that led to the residents "claiming 18th Street/Pilsen as a permanent Mexican community."[40]

Over the next two decades, new Mexican and Mexican American residents continued to settle in Pilsen, instituting their own businesses and institutions within the existing fabric of the neighborhood. Many families faced hostility from predominantly blue-collar Polish residents who had remained in the neighborhood after World War II, many of whom eventually left Pilsen for Little Village and later the suburbs. Undaunted, the new residents continued the process of making the neighborhood their own, refurbishing existing residential buildings and establishing a thriving commercial district along 18th Street. Local artists also began a tradition of creating large-scale murals on existing buildings as a way to mark and celebrate the culture of the Mexican community in Pilsen; this tradition continues to the present day.

Work to organize and support the burgeoning Mexican community in Pilsen in the late 1960s and 1970s was driven in part by activist movements of the era. The Howell Neighborhood House, a settlement house established in 1905, was taken over by local activists led by the Brown Berets in 1970 and renamed Casa Aztlán. The building served as "a completely independent hub of community and political organizing," providing

[37] Fernández, 170.
[38] Ibid, 169.
[39] Ibid, 170.
[40] Ibid, 171.

affordable housing, a free clinic, and meeting space for activists.[41] A year after the establishment of Casa Aztlán, El Centro de la Causa, a community youth center, opened in a vacant Catholic church and school building at the east end of the neighborhood. El Centro's programs quickly expanded to include a community library, drug rehab program, and mental health training program.[42] After a "protracted struggle" that "included school boycotts and demonstrations," residents in Pilsen also succeeded in getting a new high school constructed in the neighborhood.[43] Benito Juarez Community Academy opened in 1977 on an expansive campus at the northwest corner of Ashland Avenue and Cermak Road.

The expansion of Pilsen's Mexican community continued through the 1980s, and by 1990, the Latino population in Pilsen accounted for just over 88 percent of the neighborhood's total population.[44] Although facing gentrification, the neighborhood continues to serve as a center of Chicago's Mexican community.

The Opila Paper Company (1920-1963) and Subsequent Tenants of 2010-2012 S. Ashland Ave

The Opila Paper Company continued to operate at 2010-2012 S. Ashland Ave. through the beginning of this period of evolution in Pilsen. Frank Biedka retired from the company in 1925 and sold his interest in the property to Peter Opila. Biedka and his family left Pilsen to return to the Near North Side.[45] Peter Opila's son Peter Opila Jr. joined his father in the business around the time of Biedka's retirement. Following in the footsteps of many middle-class Polish and Bohemian families during the early twentieth century, the Opila family also left Pilsen in the 1920s, relocating in Cicero.[46] After Peter Opila's death in 1939, his son took over the business, which continued operation through 1962. The Archer Plumbing and Heating Company purchased the building in 1961, and newspaper research indicates that the company operated out of the building from 1962 to at least 1965.

In 1975, local physician Fernando Cinta opened a medical practice in the building. Cinta practiced from his office at 2010-2012 S. Ashland Ave. in Pilsen through the early 2000s.

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[41] Jessica Pupovac, "History of Pilsen," WTTW Chicago website (https://interactive.wttw.com/my-neighborhood/pilsen/history, accessed December 21, 2021).
[42] "From the Near West Side to 18th Street," 174-176.
[43] Ibid, 177-178.
[44] "Lower West Side," Encyclopedia of Chicago website (http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/765.html, accessed December 20, 2021).
[45] Frank Biedka. Year: 1930; Census Place: Chicago, Cook County, Illinois; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 1278; FHL microfilm: 2340205.
[46] Peter Opila. Year: 1930; Census Place: Cicero, Cook County, Illinois; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 2090; FHL microfilm: 2340233.

Part II: Architectural Information

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character:

The building at 2010-2012 S. Ashland Ave. in Chicago, Illinois is a two-story brick warehouse building with three connected rear structures, which together form an L-shaped building. The two-story warehouse stretches west from Ashland Avenue along the south end of the property. A one-story frame addition extends from the west façade of the two-story warehouse, connecting to a one-and-one-half-story brick secondary structure that extends west to the alley and fills the southwest corner of the property. A two-story, rectangular brick garage addition constructed in 1913 extends north from the north facade of the southwest corner addition, along the west boundary of the parcel, to the northwest corner of the property. A small frame entrance enclosure with a shed roof, which was constructed after 1950, at the south end of the garage addition's east façade.

The building's distinguishing architectural features are located on its primary façade, facing east onto South Ashland Avenue. This façade is clad in red face brick. Window bays are separated by corbeled brick pilasters with capitals of contrasting yellow brick. Above the second story, the slightly recessed window bays are capped by yellow corbeled brick detailing in a dentil pattern. Above the pilasters is a continuous limestone cornice with red brick dentil detail below. Atop the cornice is a red brick parapet with an arched center and limestone copings. Yellow brick diamond-shaped corbeled brick ornaments the center arch.

2. Condition of Fabric:

The overall condition of 2010-2012 S. Ashland Ave. is fair. Exterior architectural elements appear to be in fair condition. The interior of the building, which was historically industrial warehouse and storage space, has been modified with non-historic partitions, flooring, ceilings, and wall coverings.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions:

The original warehouse building is two stories tall above a full basement and rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 25' wide and 86' long. The one-story frame addition at the rear of the warehouse building is approximately 27' wide by 29' long. The rectangular one-and-one-half-story secondary structure west of the frame connector is 27' wide and 29' long. The two-story rear garage

that runs along the west edge of the property is approximately 29’ wide and 45’ long.

2. Foundations:

The foundation of the original warehouse building is brick; on the exterior, the brick at the base of the building is parged with a cement coating. On the interior at the basement level, the lower half of the brick foundation wall is parged with cement.

The foundation of the one-story frame addition at the rear (west) façade of the original warehouse building is unknown. This addition has no basement.

The foundations of the one-and-one-half-story southwest addition and the two-story garage at the west end of the property are brick. These addition and garage have no basements.

3. Walls:

The exterior of the original warehouse building’s primary east façade is red brick laid in running bond, with a limestone and brick cornice and brick parapet with limestone copings. Window openings on primary east façade feature brick lintels and painted limestone sill. The secondary north, south, and west facades are common brick laid in common bond; window openings on these facades feature segmental arched brick lintels and painted stone sills. The common brick at the east end of the north façade has been parged with cement to the first-story windows. The exposed second floor on the west façade of the original warehouse building has been painted, and window openings in this location have been infilled with concrete block.

The exterior of the one-story frame addition is clad in painted plywood and composite paneling on its exposed north and south facades.

The exterior of the one-and-one-half-story southwest addition is common brick laid in common bond. Window openings feature segmental-arched brick lintels and concrete sills.

The exterior of the two-story garage addition is common brick laid in common bond. The east, north, and south facades of the garage are parged with cement. Window openings on the east west facades, at the second story, feature segmental-arched brick lintels and concrete sills.

4. Structural system, framing:

The two-story original building is built with loadbearing brick walls and wood floor framing and roof framing.

The one-story frame addition is wood frame.

The one-and-one-half-story secondary structure at the southwest corner of the property is built with loadbearing brick walls, wood floor framing, and wood roof framing.

The two-story garage addition is built with loadbearing brick walls, wood floor framing, and wood roof framing.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:

On the primary east façade of the original warehouse building, the center entrance is accessed by short set of non-historic concrete steps with wrought iron railings.

On the west end of the original warehouse building's north façade, a secondary entrance is accessed by a non-historic unpainted wood porch with unpainted wood steps and railings.

6. Chimneys:

A small, square, brick vent chimney is located at the near the northeast corner of the original warehouse building.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

The primary entrance to the two-story warehouse building is located in the center bay of the east façade and is accessed by a short flight of concrete steps with a wrought iron railing. The entrance is set in a simple punched opening with ornamentation. The door itself is a non-historic aluminum and glass door with aluminum frame and single-lite transom above.

A secondary entrance is located near the west end of the warehouse building's north façade. The door frame is unpainted wood, and the door is a non-historic painted paneled door, accessed by a small unpainted wood porch.

There are no exterior entrances in the one-story frame addition or the one-and-one-half-story secondary structure.

The two-story garage addition has large vehicular entrances near the center of the east and west facades. The east entrance houses a non-historic painted metal overhead garage door. The west entrance houses a painted wood overhead garage door, which has been covered with wood panels and modified to accommodate a non-historic pedestrian entrance, which is secured from the exterior with a metal gate.

A single pedestrian entrance is located near the south end of the garage addition's north façade, obscured from the exterior by the non-historic shed entrance enclosure.

b. Windows and shutters:

The south façade of the two-story warehouse building is regularly fenestrated with one-over-one double-hung wood windows. This façade is vertically divided into three evenly-spaced bays. At the first story, window openings flank the center entrance, with one double-hung window in the east and west bays. On the second floor, each window bay houses one double-hung window. The window frames and sashes are painted.

The north façade of the two-story warehouse is regularly fenestrated with rectangular window openings along the first and second stories, and smaller window openings at the basement level. The easternmost bay of the north façade is largely unfenestrated, with one small, one-over-one double-hung wood window at the first story. West of this window, the first story houses four evenly-spaced window openings. These openings contain non-historic single-lite fixed windows within the original openings. The second story houses four-evenly spaced window openings, which contain one-over-one double hung wood windows. The window frames and sashes on all the north façade's windows are painted.

The south façade of the two-story warehouse is unfenestrated.

The east façade of the two-story warehouse features two window openings at the second story—both openings have been infilled with concrete block.

There is one non-historic window opening on the north façade of the one-story frame addition, which houses a one-over-one aluminum window.

At the top of the one-and-one-half-story secondary structure's east façade, there are two small, non-historic window openings that house aluminum slider windows. The south façade is unfenestrated. There are two large window openings at the center of the west façade. Both openings have been infilled with brick.

The two-story garage addition is five bays wide and regularly fenestrated at the second story on both the east and west facades.

On the east façade, the northernmost bay houses large rectangular window openings at the first and second stories. Both openings have been infilled with brick. The remaining bays each house one rectangular window opening at the second story. The center window openings at the second story houses a non-historic one-over-one aluminum window. The remaining window openings have been infilled with glass block.

The east façade houses five evenly-spaced, rectangular window openings at the second story. The two northernmost windows are smaller than the three southernmost windows. All openings have been infilled with brick.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:

The roof of the original warehouse building, secondary structure, and two additions are all flat and covered with asphalt roofing material.

b. Cornice, eaves:

The primary east façade of the two-story warehouse building is topped by a brick parapet with rounded center, which is capped with limestone copings. The brick parapets on the secondary north, south, and east facades are capped with terra-cotta coping tiles.

Metal gutters run along the top of the north and south facades of the one-story frame addition.

The brick parapets on the one-and-one-half-story secondary structure are capped with terra-cotta coping tiles.

The brick parapets on the two-story garage addition are capped with terra-cotta coping tiles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

Two-Story Warehouse Building

The two-story warehouse building houses a full basement and two upper floors.

Basement
The basement of the warehouse building is open with no partitions.

First Floor
The first floor of the warehouse building houses multiple partitions that were installed after 1975, when the building was converted to a physician's office. A small vestibule is located on the center of the east wall, at the east entrance. A door on the south wall of the vestibule enclosure opens into a C-shaped reception area. A door at the north end of the reception room's west wall opens into a small restroom. West of the reception room, a central double-loaded corridor extends to the east end of the floor, with small exam rooms lining the north and south walls. West of the corridor, at the west end of the floor, an enclosed interior stair is located on the south wall. On the north wall is another small exam room. A small vestibule to the secondary entrance is located at the northwest corner of the floor.

Second Floor
The second floor is accessed by the stair located at the southwest corner of the warehouse building. The west half of the floor is open. The east half of the space is divided into office space by non-historic wood frame and drywall partitions. An angled enclosure on the south wall houses a restroom and mechanical room. Two enclosed offices are located on the south wall east of the restroom and mechanical room.

One-Story Frame Connector Addition

The frame connector addition to the west of the warehouse building is one-story with no basement.

First Floor
The interior of the frame addition is one large, open space. There is a small closet on the west wall of the room.

One-and-One-Half-Story Brick Secondary Structure

The brick secondary structure to the west of the frame addition houses a full first floor and a half-story upper level.

First Floor
The first floor of the one-and-one-half-story brick secondary structure is one large open space. An open wood stair at the southeast corner of the room provides access to the upper level.

Half-Story Upper Level

The upper level of the secondary structure houses two non-historic enclosed rooms along the east wall. The rest of the floor is one open space.

Two-Story Brick Garage Addition

The brick garage addition houses two floors with no basement.

First Floor
The first floor of the brick garage addition is one open space for vehicular parking. There is a non-historic frame mezzanine along the north wall of the first floor.

Second Floor
The second floor of the garage addition is one large open room with no partitions.

2. Stairways:

A painted wood stair with wood treads and risers near the southwest corner of the two-story warehouse building provides access to the basement and second floor. The stair is enclosed on the north by a frame partition wall. Simple wood railings are attached to the south wall of the stair.

A quarter-turn wood stair is located at the southeast corner of the brick secondary structure. The stair features wood treads and risers and a simple painted wood railing.

A short wood stair on the north wall of the brick secondary structure provides access to the second floor of the garage addition.

3. Flooring:

Two-Story Warehouse Building

Basement
The flooring throughout the basement is non-historic composite tile.

First Floor
The flooring in the entrance vestibule, reception room, corridor, and adjacent offices is non-historic vinyl composite tile. West of the corridor, the first floor has strip wood flooring.

Second Floor
The flooring throughout the second floor is strip hardwood flooring.

One-Story Frame Connector Addition

The flooring in the one-story frame connector addition is wood covered with non-historic carpeting.

One-and-One-Half-Story Brick Secondary Structure

First Floor
Flooring throughout the first floor of the brick secondary structure is concrete.

Half-Story Upper Level
Flooring on the upper level of the brick secondary structure is wood, which has been covered with non-historic flooring in the enclosed offices.
Two-Story Garage Addition:

First Floor
The flooring in the center of the first floor of the garage addition, between the two garage doors, is stone or concrete pavers. The flooring in the remainder of the first floor is concrete.

Second Floor
The flooring throughout the second floor of the garage addition is wood plank flooring.

4. Walls and ceiling finish:

Two-Story Warehouse Building

Basement

The brick perimeter walls in the basement are exposed on all sides, and the brick beneath the window openings is parged with cement. The wood framing at the ceiling is exposed and unpainted.

First Floor
The reception room at the east end of the floor features drywall walls with Masonite wood panel wainscoting. The non-historic corridor walls are clad in Masonite wood paneling. The offices on the north side of the corridor feature primarily walls of painted drywall. The offices on the south side of the corridor have walls with Masonite wood paneling. Ceilings throughout the reception room, corridor, and adjacent offices are non-historic acoustical tile ceilings with lay-in fluorescent lighting. The drywall along the perimeter brick walls extends only to the underside of the dropped ceilings; the brick above the ceilings is not covered.

West of the corridor, the partition walls are drywall. The brick on the west wall and along the south wall at the stair is exposed. There are no dropped ceilings west of the corridor and adjacent offices and the wood ceiling structure is exposed.

<u>One-Story Frame Connector Addition</u>

The walls in the one-story frame connector addition are covered with painted drywall. The exposed wood structural columns are painted. Ceilings throughout the space are dropped acoustical tile with lay-in fluorescent light fixtures.

<u>One-and-One-Half-Story Brick Secondary Structure</u>

First Floor
The walls throughout the first floor of the brick secondary structure are painted brick. The wood ceiling structure is exposed.

Half-Story Upper Level
The unpainted brick perimeter walls on the upper level of the brick secondary structure are clad in painted drywall, which does not extend the full height of the walls. The office enclosures are drywall partitions. The offices have dropped acoustical tile ceilings with lay in fluorescent lighting. In the remaining space on this level, the wood ceiling structure is exposed.

<u>Two-Story Brick Garage Addition</u>

First Floor
The walls throughout the first floor of the garage addition are exposed brick; the lower half of the walls is painted. The wood ceiling structure is exposed.

Second Floor
The walls throughout the second floor of the garage addition are painted brick. The wood ceiling structure is exposed.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

Two-Story Warehouse Building

Basement
There are no interior doors in the basement of the warehouse building.

First Floor
One historic metal fire door remains at the center of the west wall. The remaining interior doors on the first floor of the warehouse building are non-historic stained or painted flat-panel wood doors in non-historic stained or painted frames.

Second Floor
The interior doors on the second floor of the warehouse building are all non-historic stained or painted flat panel doors in non-historic frames.

One-Story Frame Connector Addition

The historic metal fire door on the west wall of the warehouse building is visible through a cutout opening in the drywall on the east wall of the one-story frame connector addition. The door to the closet on the west wall of the addition is a non-historic painted flat panel door. The door at the south end of the west wall, which gives access to the stair in the adjacent secondary structure, is a painted six-panel wood door in a painted wood frame.

One-and-One-Half-Story Brick Secondary Structure

First Floor
There are no interior doors on the first floor of the brick secondary structure. A large opening near the east end of the north wall provides access to the adjacent garage addition.

Half-Story Upper Level

The doors to the enclosed offices on the upper level of the brick secondary structure are non-historic painted paneled doors.

Two-Story Brick Garage Addition

First Floor
There are no interior doors on the first floor of the garage addition.

Second Floor
There are no interior doors on the second floor of the garage addition.

b. Windows:

Two-Story Warehouse Building

First Floor
The windows on the first floor of the two-story warehouse building have painted wood frames and sills.

Second Floor
The windows on the second floor of the two-story warehouse building have painted wood frames and sills.

One-Story Frame Connector Addition

The single window opening on the north wall of the frame addition is set within the drywall and has no casings.

One-and-One-Half-Story Brick Secondary Structure

First Floor
The masonry infill in the historic window openings on the first floor is set flush to the wall and there are no interior casings or decorative features.

Half-Story Upper Level
The small non-historic window openings on the east wall of the brick secondary structure have no interior casings or decorative features. The masonry infill in the historic window opening on the west wall is set flush to the wall and there are no interior casings or decorative features.

Two-Story Brick Garage Addition

First Floor

The masonry infill in the historic window opening at the north end of the east wall is set flush to the wall and there are no interior casings or decorative features.

Second Floor
The masonry infill in the historic window openings on the second floor is set flush to the wall and there are no interior casings or decorative features.

6. Decorative features and trim:

There is evidence of an historic pressed tin ceiling above the non-historic acoustical tile ceilings at the east end of the first floor in the original warehouse building. The extent of this ceiling is unknown. No other notable historic decorative features or trim remain on the interior of the original warehouse building, brick secondary structure, or two additions.

7. Hardware:

No original hardware remains in the warehouse building, brick secondary structure, or two additions.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, Air Condition, Ventilation:

The present system is a modern HVAC system with ducts to distribute heating and air conditioning.

b. Lighting

No historic light fixtures remain in the warehouse building, secondary structure, or additions.

Part III: Sources of Information

A. Selected Sources

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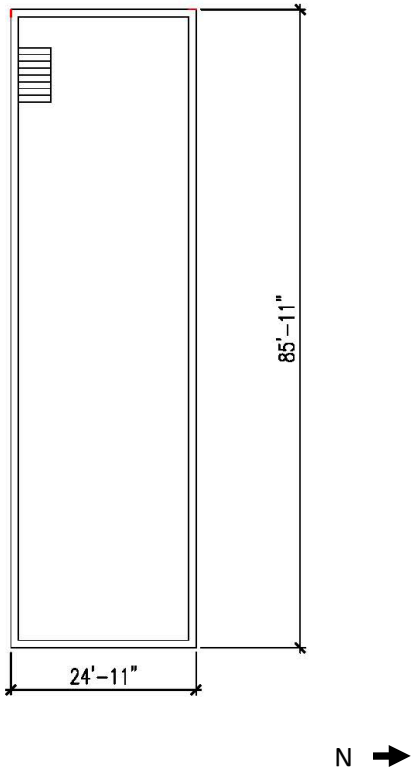
Figure 1: Basement level plan
(drawn by Kirk Sippel, 2021)



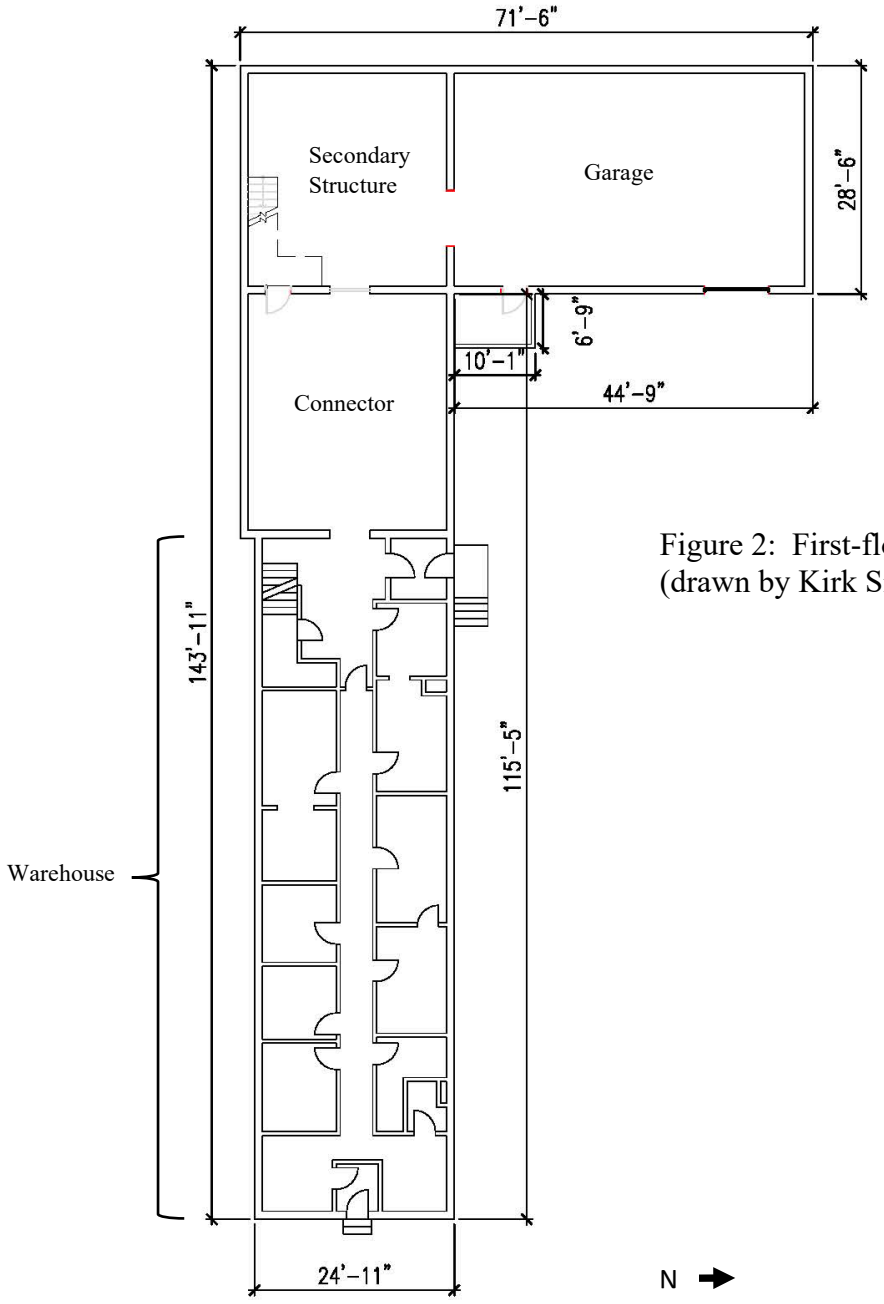


Figure 2: First-floor plan
(drawn by Kirk Sippel, 2021)

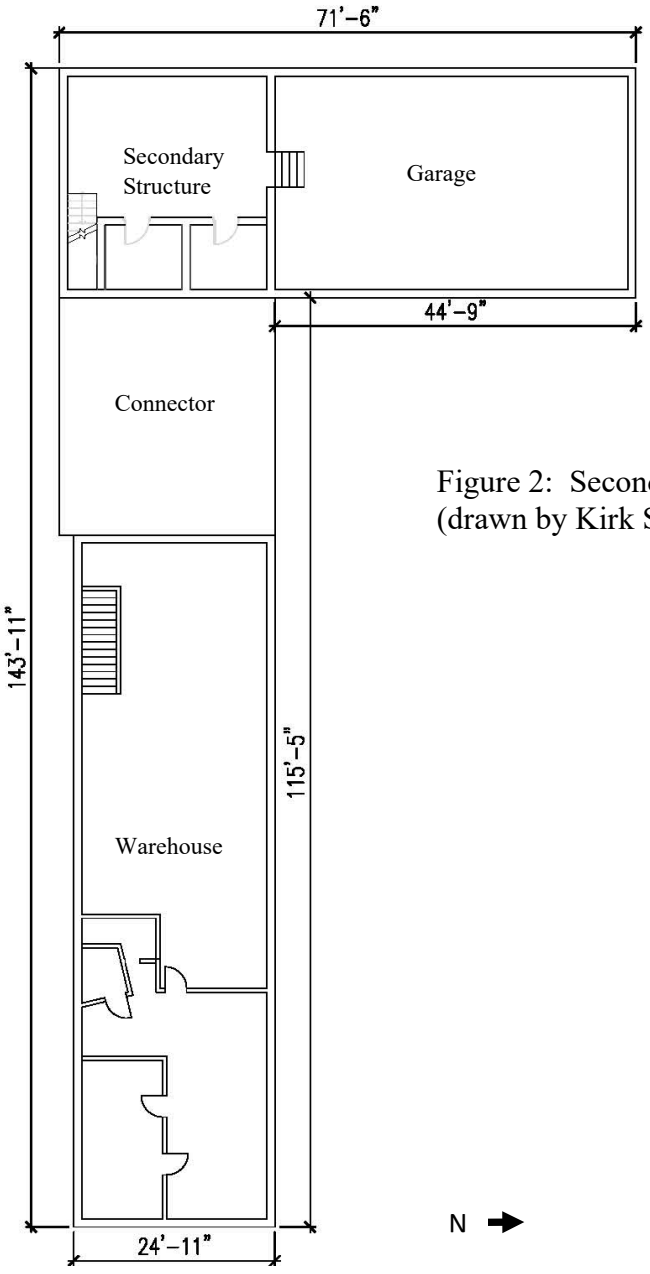


Figure 2: Second-floor plan
(drawn by Kirk Sippel, 2021)

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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2010-2012 South Ashland Avenue
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1277

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Leslie Schwartz, photographer, July 2021

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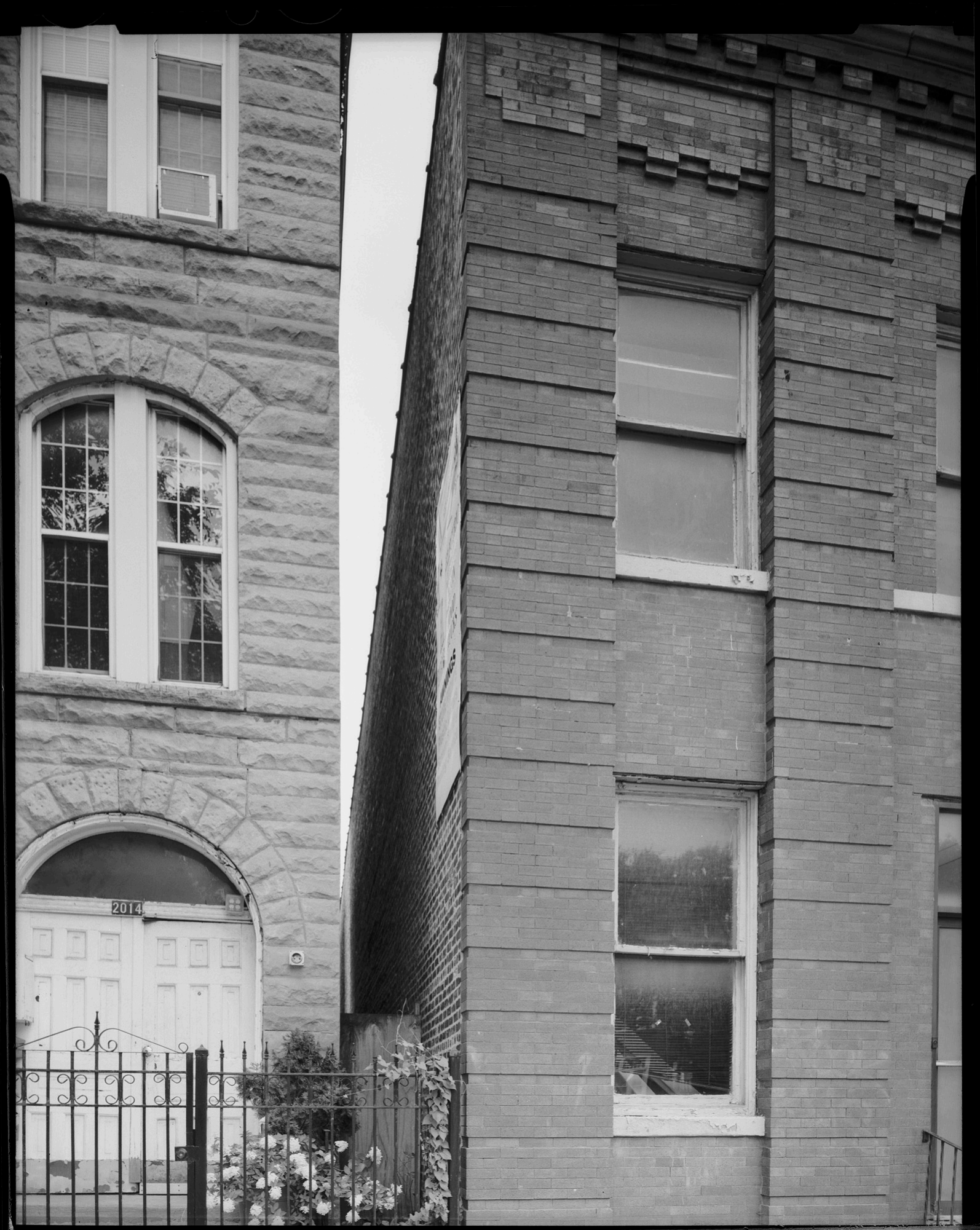
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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099 Warehouse building, first floor, view north to secondary entrance at northwest corner.

100 Warehouse building, first floor, west fire door, view southwest.

101 Warehouse building, basement, view east from stair.

102 Warehouse building, basement, view east from stair.

103 Warehouse building, basement, view south to stair.

104 Warehouse building, basement, view northeast along north wall.

105 Warehouse building, basement, east end, view east.

106 Warehouse building, basement, view west from east end.

107 Warehouse building, basement, view west along south wall.

108 Warehouse building, basement, west end, view southwest.

109 Warehouse building, basement, view east along south wall.

110 Warehouse building, basement, view east along north wall.

111 Warehouse building, basement, view west at southwest corner.

112 Warehouse building, second floor, view west at west end with stair at left.

113 Warehouse building, second floor, view west at west end with stair at left.

114 Warehouse building, second floor, view west at west end with stair at left.

115 Warehouse building, second floor, ceiling detail.

116 Warehouse building, second floor, view northeast from west end.

117 Warehouse building, second floor, view east from west end.

118 Warehouse building, second floor, view east from west end.

119 Warehouse building, second floor, view northwest to northwest corner.

120 Warehouse building, second floor, lower window detail.

121 Warehouse building, second floor, upper window detail.

122 Warehouse building, second floor, view south to stair.

123 Warehouse building, second floor, view north to window on north wall.

124 Warehouse building, second floor, west side, flooring detail.

125 Warehouse building, second floor, view east to partitions on east side.

126 Warehouse building, second floor, east side, view east to east wall.

127 Warehouse building, second floor, east side, view west.

128 Warehouse building, second floor, view west to restroom on south wall.

129 Warehouse building, second floor, restroom, view southwest.

130 Warehouse building, second floor, restroom, view southwest.

131 Warehouse building, second floor, mechanical room, view southwest.

132 Warehouse building, second floor, center north windows, view north.

133 Warehouse building, second floor, enclosed southeast corner office, view southwest.

134 Warehouse building, second floor, enclosed southeast corner office, view south.

135 Warehouse building, second floor, east end, ceiling detail, view south.

136 Warehouse building, second floor, enclosed southeast corner office, view west.

137 Warehouse building, second floor, enclosed southeast corner office, view east.

138 Warehouse building, second floor, enclosed southeast corner office, view northeast.

139 Warehouse building, second floor, enclosed southeast corner office, flooring detail.

140 Warehouse building, second floor, enclosed southeast corner office, ceiling and wall detail.

141 Warehouse building, second floor, enclosed southeast corner office, view east to east window.

142 Warehouse building, second floor, east end, view north

143 Warehouse building, second floor, east end, view northeast to northeast corner.

144 Warehouse building, second floor, upper window detail, view east.

145 One-story frame addition interior, view northeast.

146 One-story frame addition interior, view north.

147 One-story frame addition interior, view west.

148 One-story frame addition interior, view east to fire door.

149 One-story frame addition interior, view southeast.

150 One-story frame addition interior, view above dropped ceiling.

151 One-story frame addition interior, view west to door to brick secondary structure.

152 One-story frame addition interior, view south to north door in non-historic shed enclosure.

153 Brick secondary structure, first floor, view south from northeast corner.

154 Brick secondary structure, first floor, view southwest to southwest corner.

155 Brick secondary structure, first floor, view west to northwest corner.

156 Brick secondary structure, first floor, view south to south wall.

157 Brick secondary structure, first floor, view east.

158 Brick secondary structure, first floor, view southeast to stair.

159 Brick secondary structure, upper level, view north.

160 Brick secondary structure, upper level, view south.

161 Brick secondary structure, upper level, ceiling detail.

162 Brick secondary structure, upper level, view west.

163 Brick secondary structure, upper level, flooring detail.

164 Brick secondary structure, upper level, view north to stair connecting to second floor of garage addition.

165 Brick secondary structure, upper level, enclosed office on south wall, view east.

166 Brick secondary structure, upper level, enclosed office on south wall, view southeast.

167 Garage addition, first floor, view northwest from east garage door opening.

168 Garage addition, first floor, paver flooring detail.

169 Garage addition, first floor, ceiling detail.

170 Garage addition, first floor, view west to west garage door.

171 Garage addition, first floor, detail of west garage door.

172 Garage addition, first floor, view east.

173 Garage addition, first floor, view southeast

174 Garage addition, first floor, detail of pedestrian entrance inserted into west garage entrance.

175 Garage addition, first floor, view northwest to northwest corner

176 Garage addition, first floor, view south.

177 Garage addition, first floor, view south to infilled window openings on south wall.

178 Garage addition, first floor, view south to infilled window openings on south wall.

179 Garage addition, first floor, view southeast to stair at second floor.

180 Garage addition, first floor, entrance on south end of east wall, view southeast.

181 Garage addition, second floor, view north from south end.

182 Garage addition, second floor, flooring detail.

183 Garage addition, second floor, view south from north end.

184 Garage addition, second floor, view southwest along west wall.

185 Garage addition, second floor, view west at north end of west wall.

186 Garage addition, second floor, view southeast to east wall.

187 Garage addition, second floor, view northwest to west wall.

188 Garage addition, second floor, view north from south end.

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