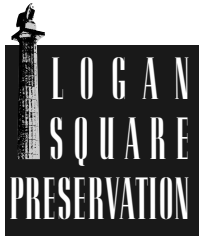


# Round the Square

THE NEWSLETTER OF LOGAN SQUARE PRESERVATION LATE SUMMER/EARLY FALL 2019 EDITION



## PRESERVATION, NOT GENTRIFICATION

By Leslie Gray

Some landmarks wear their significance on their exteriors; other structures are notable for the stories they contain. Both are worth saving. The buildings around us are a historical record of who we were, how we changed over time, and the urban cycles that will shape us going forward.

The *Chicago Historic Resources Survey* (CHRS), is a comprehensive record of architecturally significant structures in the City of Chicago. A 12-year undertaking, it was never intended to be a guide for what to keep and what to demolish, but rather a catalog of historic buildings that meet certain criteria of significance, age and upkeep. Its publication resulted in the passage of a 90-day demolition delay ordinance for buildings deemed noteworthy, but the survey did not generally include post-1940s structures, making exceptions for buildings of outstanding significance, such as the work of Mies van der Rohe and Bertrand Goldberg.

The completion of the survey in 1995, unsurprisingly, was not enough to stop the tide of destruction in Logan Square. In 2017, *Chicago Magazine* reported that 109 buildings were demolished in the neighborhood, the most torn down that year in any area of the city.

The following Logan Square buildings were not included in the survey, and are therefore at risk for demolition.



*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*  
3235 W. Wrightwood Avenue



*Father & Son Restaurant*  
2475 N. Milwaukee Avenue

## PRESERVATION IS ABOUT MORE THAN ARCHITECTURE

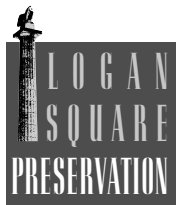
As Elizabeth Blasius, architectural historian, cultural resources consultant and Logan Square Preservation member says, "History is not static, and old buildings are continually taking on the mantle of significance. It is up to everyone to decide what deserves to be a landmark, and not be limited by the opinions of city researchers over a quarter-century ago."



*2800 block of W. Fullerton Avenue*

It is part of LSP's mission to "preserve the historic character" of Logan Square. While there are a lot of homes that may not be architecturally significant, they tell stories about the people who live here. As small, one- and two-story residences are replaced with "luxury" developments, it is not only old buildings that are lost, but the families and community that define our multifaceted neighborhood.

Stay tuned to see how you can share your story. ■



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## Let's Get Ready to Plant!

Logan Square Preservation was awarded a TreePlanters Grant in partnership with Openlands, a community forestry non-profit, to start planting healthy, new trees along the boulevard.

The planting will begin on Saturday, October 5, from 9 am to 1 pm. The reforestation is scheduled to take place along the north and south medians of Logan Boulevard between Sacramento and Richmond.

Logan Square Preservation is currently seeking volunteers who live on these blocks and would be willing to water the newly planted trees.

If interested, please contact Shana Liberman at [Shana.Liberman@gmail.com](mailto:Shana.Liberman@gmail.com).

**UPDATE: 23 new trees were planted!!**

## THE SOUNDS OF SOLSTICE: AN EVENING ON THE BLOOMINGDALE TRAIL

*By Ben Helphand and Ronit Mitchell*



*Lurrie Bell (seated)*

For a century, the Bloomingdale Trail, or 606, was a rail embankment. But for one evening this summer, the reclaimed park blossomed into a series of intimate musical performances and site-specific art installations as part of a new music and art festival.

The Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, Freakeasy Chicago, a network of artists and performers who share the Friends' sustainable, do-it-yourself vision, and the Chicago Park District joined forces to present The Sounds of Solstice on June 22, 2019. The free, family-friendly event took place at sunset on the western end of the trail from Spaulding to Drake Avenues.

The event highlighted music from the surrounding neighborhoods. The Afro-Puerto Rican sounds of Los Pleneros de Don Segundo, from the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Center, were part of an eclectic lineup of music and performances. Famed blues artist Lurrie Bell – a regular at nearby Rosa's Lounge – played soulful guitar, and festival patrons danced to the beats of Chicago house music legend Paul Johnson.

As the sun began to set, neighbors and friends gathered for intimate performances lining the trail. Young and old alike meandered from the hill at the trail's Spaulding Avenue entrance, picked up bites to eat at Kimball Avenue, and paused to listen at "Camp Bloomingdale" at St. Louis Avenue. One person commented that it was reminiscent of New Orleans street life.

Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail is an all-volunteer, community-based organization that advocated for the conversion of the underused rail embankment and now acts as the trail's community stewards. To get involved in next year's Sounds of Solstice or other Bloomingdale Trail activities, visit [bloomingdaletrail.org](http://bloomingdaletrail.org) or email [info@bloomingdaletrail.org](mailto:info@bloomingdaletrail.org).



## New Home Research Guide by Marcy Marzuki: HOW TO RESEARCH YOUR HOUSE WITHOUT EVER LEAVING IT

*If you can go online, you don't have to go outdoors to find out about your Logan Square home. With our handy tips, you'll be able to find out the timeframe in which your house was built, see changes and additions made over the years, and even find out who lived there before you.*

*Check out the online guide in the "Current Newsletter" section of our website at [logansquarepreservation.org](http://logansquarepreservation.org)*

## MEETING CALENDAR

All meetings take place  
the third Thursday  
of every month at:

### The Minnekirken

2614 N. Kedzie Boulevard  
(Norwegian Church Hall at the Square)

Be sure to mark your  
calendar to attend these next  
important and informative  
meetings!

### October 17

Members only election night for  
Officers/Board off-site at Bixi,  
2515 N. Milwaukee Ave 6-8 pm

### November 21



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Logan Square  
Preservation  
has the need for  
some experienced  
volunteers  
to assist  
in our ongoing  
projects.

### Grant Writer:

We are constantly  
engaged in community-  
based activities that  
would lend themselves  
to grants.

### QuickBooks:

LSP needs a  
volunteer to assist  
in the growing volume  
of activity.

### Events Volunteer Committee:

We are organizing  
our 2019-20  
schedule.

It's a good way  
to get engaged in  
Logan Square.

## Meet-ups

Update with dates at fall  
meetings/community  
meetups and/or election.  
stay tuned for details.

In the meantime, we  
welcome new members  
who want to help maintain  
and share the beauty  
and history of our  
neighborhood.

**IT WAS THE SUMMER OF 1986.** One hundred angry residents were gathered for a vigil on Logan Boulevard near the expressway viaduct, not far from St. John Berchmans church. The evil they gathered to combat was the “tunnel of terror,” a walkway constructed under the Kennedy Expressway. Part of the original expressway construction, it was designed to connect pedestrians on the north and east sides of the viaduct at Campbell Avenue with the church and school on the south and west.

But much had changed since the expressway opened in 1958. The



A Chicago Tribune article covered the initial outcry.

In the months leading up to the furor, 23 violent crimes and assaults had been reported in connection with the tunnel, including the stabbing of a 20-year-old. One resident told the paper the last time he walked through the tunnel, a gun had been put to his head. “Going in after dark,” he said, “you take your life into your own hands.” Residents, church members, and members of the Logan Square Residents Association (a precursor to the Logan Square Neighborhood Association) met with local aldermen, but were told the CTA would have to study the impact of a closure.

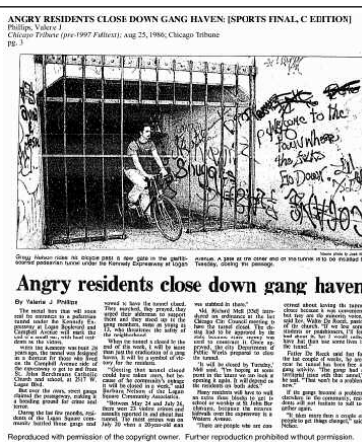
# LOGAN SQUARE'S LOST TUNNEL

By Marcy Marzuki



Welders close the tunnel.

block-long tunnel now had a foreboding look. Murals that Berchmans students had painted were covered with graffiti: “Welcome to the Town where the Folks Go Down,” read one gang’s scrawl, while the words “Latin Kings” shouted its dominance at the peak of the entranceway. “There are fights, gunshots, knives, you name it in there,” said one church volunteer who labeled the tunnel “a battle zone.” The *Chicago Tribune* covered the August 8 vigil with the headline “Walkway Leads to Gang Turf.”



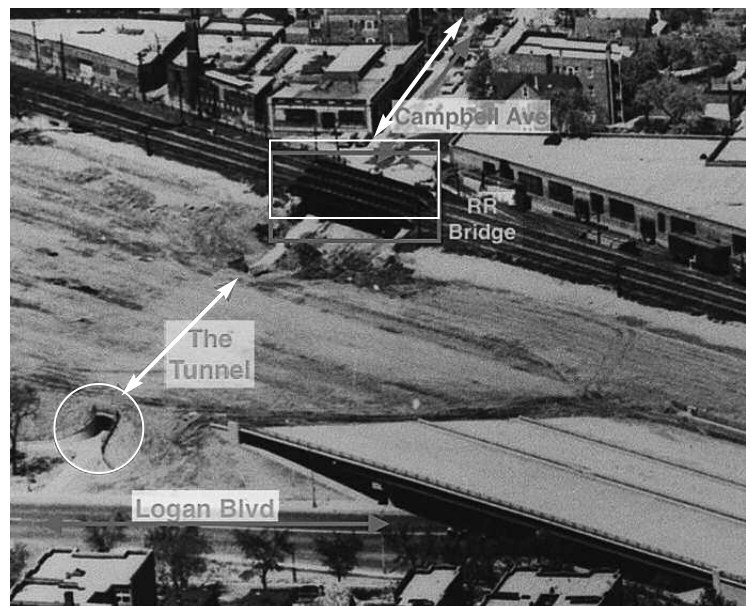
Just over two weeks later, the city restricted access to the tunnel

Residents didn’t want to wait; they pressured then-Alderman Richard Mell into proposing the tunnel be closed. The city had to seek permission from IDOT, which had funded the tunnel’s construction, but on August 24, as the *Tribune* reported, “Angry Residents Close Down Gang Haven.” The city’s Public Works department installed iron gates at both ends, and the entrances were later filled in. “I’m hoping at some point in the future we can look at opening it again,” Mell said wistfully.

Aerial photos obtained by Logan Square Preservation’s own Steve Isakson show reopening the tunnel now would be a long shot,

despite the fact that the same viaduct has again come under scrutiny by planners looking for ways to expand bicycle and pedestrian access.

Isakson was able to pinpoint the trajectory of the tunnel, which shows where a railroad bridge was added and then removed, likely filling in the central portion of the tunnel.



Aerial photos show the location of the tunnel, which permitted foot traffic under the expressway along a lost stretch of Campbell Avenue.

Nonetheless, the history of the lost tunnel provides for some modern musings: how crime can impact and imperil public spaces (I’m talking to you, 606), and how an invigorated grassroots movement can cut through intertwined layers of state, county and city government. It is also worth reflecting on the changes in Logan Square during the life of the tunnel: the view from its opening in 1958 versus its nadir in 1986—and all that has happened since it last saw daylight. ■

# The Hospitality Side of Logan Square Remembered

By Edward M. Bury

**F**ROM UPSCALE TO CASUAL, FROM ETHNIC TO AMERICAN, modern-day Logan Square offers residents and visitors a cornucopia of options for places to eat and drink — some of which, like Lula Cafe, have received national accolades.

But the rise in the neighborhood's culinary and nightlife stature is a relatively recent development, driven in large part by Logan Square's desirability as a place to live, work and visit.

When my wife and I moved here in 1992, there were relatively few restaurants of note, and even fewer places to enjoy a beer or cocktail.

Here is, to the best of my memory, a recap of a few places around the Square that are well-remembered, but no longer open for business.

## **ABRIL 2607 N. Milwaukee Avenue**

A wonderful and authentic Mexican restaurant operated by a Norwegian couple. I can still savor memories of the delicious *guisado de puerco*.  
Now: RENO.

## **THE BIG O 2631 N. Kedzie Avenue**

A decidedly divey bar that I visited only a handful of times.  
Now: PASSION HOUSE COFFEE.

## **GOLDEN RISE BAKERY 2597 W. Diversey Avenue**

Another family-run operation, the bakery produced delicious breads and croissants. Before that, the corner storefront was a bar with live music.

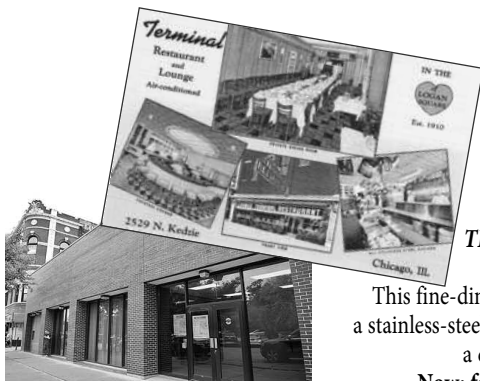
Now: FAT RICE.



## **BOULEVARD CAFÉ 3137 W. Logan Blvd.**

An American-themed restaurant and bar, with live music most nights of the week. (Side note: My band, Love House, played there a few times.)

Now: MERCHANT.



## **TERMINAL RESTAURANT**

**2529 N. Kedzie Avenue**

This fine-dining establishment boasted a stainless-steel kitchen, air conditioning, a cocktail lounge and a view.

Now: former MIDWEST BANK.

## **TANIA'S RESTAURANT**

**2659 N. Milwaukee Avenue**

Operated by a Cuban family, this restaurant and nightclub thrived until New Year's Eve 1998, when it closed.

Now: YOUR PET'S WELLNESS.

## **JOHNNY'S GRILL**

**2545 N. Kedzie Avenue**

The proverbial greasy spoon was a mainstay for decades on the corner of the Logan Square Auditorium building.

Now: YOUNG AMERICAN.

While many, many other places opened, closed and changed hands in Logan Square over the past two decades, one restaurant has remained in its space, remodeled to meet the changing times:

the McDonald's at Milwaukee and Sawyer. ■