

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



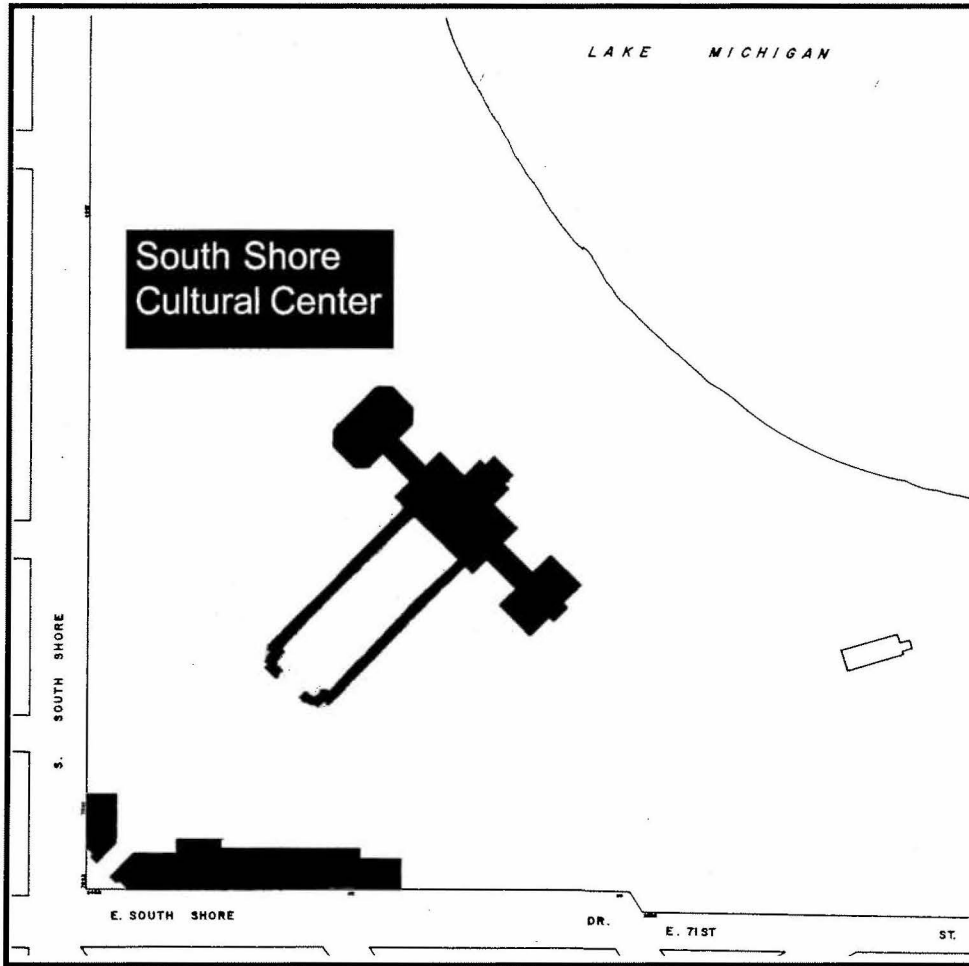
South Shore Cultural Center (Originally South Shore Country Club) 7059 South Shore Drive

**Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by
the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, October 2, 2003**



**CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor**

**Department of Planning and Development
Denise M. Casalino, P.E., Commissioner**



Top: The South Shore Cultural Center buildings are located on Lake Michigan at 7059 South Shore Drive in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood.

Cover: (clockwise from top): South Shore Cultural Center; gatehouse; pergola detail; and dining room.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

SOUTH SHORE CULTURAL CENTER

(ORIGINALLY SOUTH SHORE COUNTRY CLUB)

7059 SOUTH SHORE DRIVE

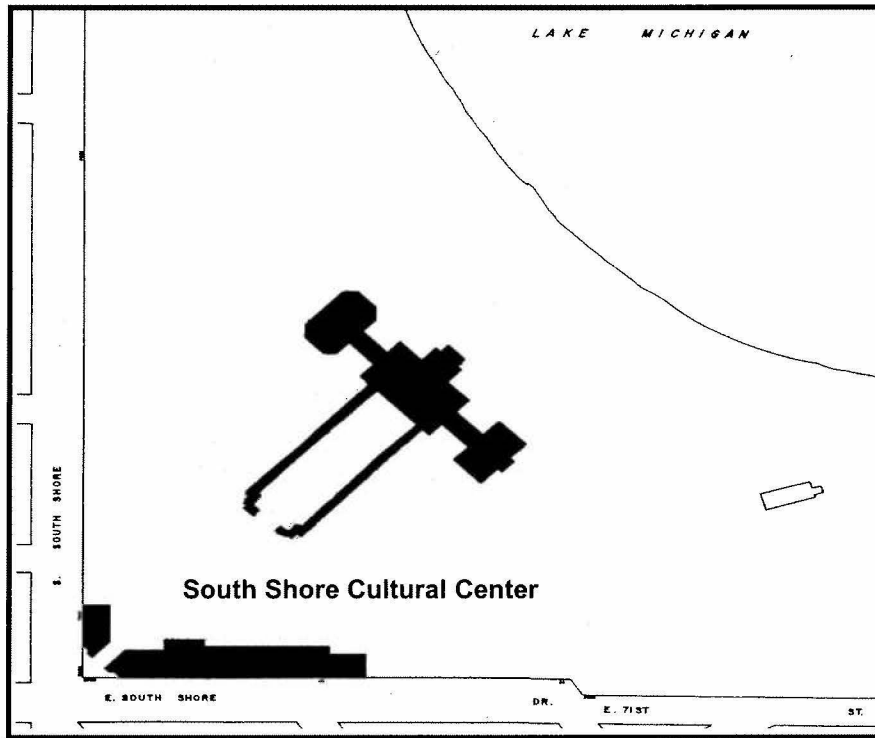
BUILT: 1906, 1909, 1916

ARCHITECTS: MARSHALL & FOX

Chicago's parks are among the city's most important historic resources with their abundance of historically and architecturally significant landscapes and buildings. The South Shore Cultural Center, originally built as the private South Shore Country Club and now operated by the Chicago Park District, is one of the most visually distinctive park buildings in Chicago. Built as an in-city country club with a riding stable, nine-hole golf course, lakefront beach, and other recreational amenities, the South Shore Cultural Center remains today an unusual example of resort architecture in the City.

The stucco-clad South Shore Cultural Center buildings, including the club building, gatehouse, and stable, are handsomely designed in the Mediterranean Revival style, an architectural mode rarely used for Chicago buildings although popular in Florida, Southern California, and other warm-weather parts of the United States. The club building's beautifully detailed first-floor interiors are designed in the Classical Revival and Adamesque styles and include a ballroom, solarium, and dining room arranged around a grandly-scaled, two-story-high "Passagio," or circulation foyer. These main first-floor spaces, plus the mezzanine corridors encircling the Passagio, are lavishly ornamented with finely-detailed Classical plaster ornament.

The South Shore Cultural Center was designed by Marshall & Fox, a prominent early 20th-century architectural firm in Chicago. Practicing together between 1905 and 1926, Benjamin Marshall and Charles Fox catered primarily to the City's elite, specializing in luxury apartment buildings, hotels, theaters, and clubs. Prominent Chicago buildings designed by Marshall & Fox include the Blackstone Hotel and Theatre on South Michigan Avenue; the Drake Hotel and several apartment buildings in the East Lake Shore Drive Chicago Landmark District; the 1550 North State Parkway apartment building overlooking Lincoln Park; and the original section of the Uptown National Bank Building.



Top: The South Shore Cultural Center buildings are located on the shore of Lake Michigan at 7059 South Shore Drive in the South Shore neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. Above: The Cultural Center's stucco-clad club building (above) and its gatehouse, stable and pergola were designed in the Mediterranean Revival style.

RECREATIONAL CLUBS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOLF CLUBS IN CHICAGO

Clubs devoted to recreational pursuits including riding, fox hunting, boating and tennis began in earnest in the United States during the early 1880s. The establishment of the private golf club soon followed in the late 1880s. As the leisure class grew, due partly as a result of more free time associated with the advances afforded by the Industrial Revolution, individuals began to form associations that revolved around games and recreational pursuits. According to the historian Richard J. Moss, author of *Golf and the American Country Club*:

The country club was clearly part of the attempt to respond locally to the nerve-racking pace of change. By drawing a line between public and private space, the country club founders effectively reestablished the vanishing village. They created small, stable, and easily understood corporate enterprises that, although democratic in practice, exercised nearly absolute control over access.

Recreational clubs became popular in Chicago during the 1890s. These clubs provided Chicago's business and industrial leaders a relaxed atmosphere for social and athletic activities and making important business contacts. One of the City's early recreational clubs was the Saddle and Cycle Club, which was opened in May 1895. The club was located at Kenmore and Bryn Mawr in the Edgewater neighborhood. It later moved to Foster Avenue and the lake in 1898. Both club buildings were designed by Jarvis Hunt, who was one of the organizers of the club along with Bert Erskine and Frank Remington, who had founded the Chicago's Skater's Club. The club served as a popular social gathering place where members could participate in bicycling, horseback riding and sailing competitions.

While golf was unknown to most Americans in the late 19th century, its popularity would quickly prompt the establishment of more private clubs than any other sport. No golf clubs existed in the United States before 1888. However, sixteen golf clubs were formed by 1893. While most of these clubs were established in the eastern United States, the Chicago area was home to one club, the Chicago Golf Club, originally located west of Chicago in a town known as Belmont (today part of suburban Downers Grove).

The Chicago Golf Club was founded in 1893 by Charles Blair Macdonald (1856-1939) and fellow members of the downtown-based Chicago Club. C.B. Macdonald, the first golf course architect in the United States, is recognized as the "Father of Chicago Golf" because he single-handedly led the crusade to bring the sport to Chicago. His efforts were bolstered during the World's Fair of 1893 when the British Commissioner General to the Columbian Exposition and the British delegation sought out a golf course.

In 1896, C.B. Macdonald designed what was believed to be the first golf course within the city limits. The short nine-hole course was constructed in the center of the racetrack of the Washington Park Club and Race Track, a private social club known for horse racing, that was once located on the City's South Side. Washington Park featured a grand clubhouse designed



C.B. Macdonald (above) is credited with bringing golf to Chicago. He designed the City's first golf course at one of Chicago's most popular recreational clubs, the Washington Park Club. Its clubhouse (top right; demolished) was designed by S.S. Beman in 1896.



Clubhouses were designed in a variety of styles. Above right: The prototype of the American golf clubhouse by Sanford White at Shinnecock Hills on Long Island (1892). Right: Holabird & Roche's clubhouse for the Glenview Golf Club (1897). Bottom: The Byzantine Revival-style clubhouse of the Medinah Golf Club by R.G. Schmid (1926).



in 1896 by Solon S. Beman and hosted the American Derby. Despite enormous success of the Washington Park Club, a strong anti-gambling movement forced the closure of the race track, as well as the golf course in 1905.

As Chicago's prominent citizens became infatuated with the game of golf, a flood of new clubs were established. By 1900, the City and neighboring suburbs had 30 of the approximately 1,000 courses in the United States. Chicago was also the home to the first public golf course west of the Alleghenies, the Jackson Park Public Links (opened in 1899). During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Chicago area became the hub of golf in the "West" (as the Midwest was called at the time), possessing 70 private golf clubs and nearly 20 public golf courses.

One of the most important aspects of the country club was its clubhouse. The architecture of the clubhouse, which ranged from traditional to fanciful, reflected the character of the institution and its members. The prototype of the American golf clubhouse was created in 1892 by architect Stanford White of McKim, Mead and White for the club at Shinnecock Hills on Long Island. White's functional but elegant design derived from the seaside resort architecture of the East Coast. Designs reflecting the character of the early golf clubs in Scotland and England were also popular for American clubhouses. This style is exemplified by Holabird & Roche's clubhouse for the Glenview Golf and Polo Club (1897). The clubhouse, located on Chicago's North Shore, resembled a Scottish baronial manor (the same architects designed a new clubhouse in the same style when the original was destroyed by fire in 1921). The traditional character associated with Georgian and Tudor styles also made them popular choices for clubhouses.

Several golf clubs, like the South Shore and Medinah Country Clubs, constructed lavish clubhouses in more unusual architectural styles. With a nine-hole course on the shore of Lake Michigan and an ornate Mediterranean Revival-style clubhouse, the South Shore Country Club, originally constructed in 1906 and replaced in 1916 in the same style, was distinguished by its unique site and dramatic architecture. The distinctive Byzantine Revival-style clubhouse of the Medinah Country Club (located in Medinah, a western suburb of Chicago) was designed by R.G. Schmid in 1926 to reflect the character of the club's founders, the Shriner organization, who also constructed the similarly designed Medinah Temple (a designated Chicago landmark), also by Schmid, in 1912. While clubhouse designs varied, all shared the common goal of using elaborate architecture to underscore the exclusivity and luxury of upper-class leisure.

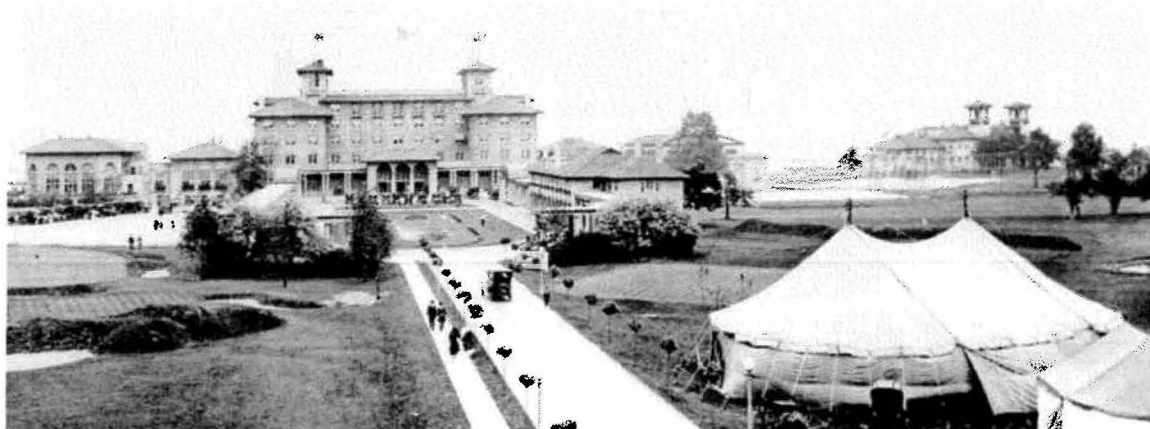
HISTORY OF THE SOUTH SHORE COUNTRY CLUB

The South Shore Country Club was conceived by Lawrence Heyworth in 1905. As the president of the Mutual Bank and the Chicago Athletic Club, Heyworth frequently traveled to New York and had visited the New York Athletic Club's outpost on Travers Island in Long Island Sound. It was there that he got the idea to establish a similar club in Chicago. In 1946, on the fortieth anniversary of the club, Heyworth recalled:



Above: The original two-story club building of the Shore Shore Country Club (seen in this photo from 1908), was designed by Marshall & Fox and completed in 1906. The in-city country club with a riding stable, riding ring, nine-hole golf course, lakefront beach and other recreational amenities enjoyed immediate success and before long additional facilities were needed. In 1909, Marshall & Fox designed a ballroom that was built as an addition to the clubhouse.

Below: Constructed in 1916, the new clubhouse (the current South Shore Cultural Center) is stylistically similar to the original. The old clubhouse (visible in the far right of the 1917 photo below) was moved from its original site so that the new club building could be constructed on that location. The new clubhouse, also by Marshall & Fox, incorporated the ballroom constructed in 1909 (it is seen to the right of the club building in the center of the photo below) .



Back in 1905 when I was President of the Chicago Athletic Club, I conceived the idea of having a Country Club in connection with the Athletic Club so the members of the Athletic Club could enjoy dining and wining in a beautiful place out in the country instead of having to resort to dives and saloons, which at that time were about the only available suburban places.

Lawrence Heyworth was familiar with the site that the South Shore Country Club would eventually occupy because he used to take his children there for recreation and to enjoy fried perch from “old man” Barnes, a local fisherman. His first attempts to form the new club on Chicago’s lakefront proved to be unsuccessful. Initially, he sent letters to members of the Chicago Athletic Club with the site in mind to gain support for the idea, but he was only able to convince a few members to endorse his plan. After this minor defeat, Heyworth used his connections to gather the support of prominent Chicago businessmen, including Honore Palmer, Harry Honore, Mason B. Staring, and William C. Thorne. With the endorsement of these influential individuals, Heyworth sent out 1,000 letters to other wealthy Chicagoans, but from this letter he received only 21 acceptances.

Not willing to abandon hope, Heyworth sent out another mailing. Fortunately for Heyworth, the letters arrived to prospective members just as the proprietors of the Washington Park Golf Club and Race Track announced that the popular racetrack and golf course would close. In less than 30 days, Heyworth received several hundred acceptances for club membership, each paying an initiation fee of one hundred dollars. With support from Chicago’s elite, including Ogden Armour, through whom Heyworth convinced the presidents of seventeen Loop banks to join his cause, he arranged for the purchase of the land east of Bond Street (now South Shore Drive) for the site of the future South Shore Country Club.

It was at this time that a committee of neighborhood residents got wind of Heyworth’s idea to develop the land which they wanted the city to extend 67th through 70th Streets to Lake Michigan. Heyworth called the committee, which was comprised of several prominent residents, many associated with local government, to meet with him at the Mutual Bank. At the meeting Heyworth coerced the committee into supporting the South Shore Country Club by assuring them that they would be unable to get a loan from any of the banks that were run by members of the soon-to-be club. Realizing that they would be unable to conduct their affairs, the committee agreed to support the club.

The club was incorporated on April 25, 1906, and the following day the first board of governors meeting was held in the Fine Arts Building. In addition to the founding members mentioned previously, the board included: Harold F. McCormick, Joseph Leiter, Charles A. Stevens, and Harry I. Miller, amongst others. At a later meeting, board member Frederick Bode proposed to limit the club to 200 perpetual members, 2,000 active members, and 250 nonresident members. These individuals would pay initiation fees of \$1,000, \$100, and \$50 respectively.

With this capital Heyworth was able to purchase furnishings, equipment and soil. Since the site was virtually all sand, soil had to be hauled in by train and wagon from Momence, Illinois. Golf



Above: The gatehouse is seen here in 1954. Right: A view of the pergola that leads to the grand entry of the club building. The pergola was reconstructed in the 1990s in a manner reminiscent of the original configuration. Below: The club building is four stories in height and features an H-shaped plan that is symmetrical with the ballroom wing on the south end of the building. The ballroom wing (seen at the far right of this 1955 photo) is the oldest portion of the current clubhouse. The ballroom was constructed in 1909 as an addition to the original club building.



course architect Tom Bendelow is credited with designing the golf course. The nine-hole course was constructed over a two-year period and many of its putting greens were purchased from the old Washington Park facility. Additionally, he was able to hire the prominent architectural firm of Marshall & Fox to design the clubhouse.

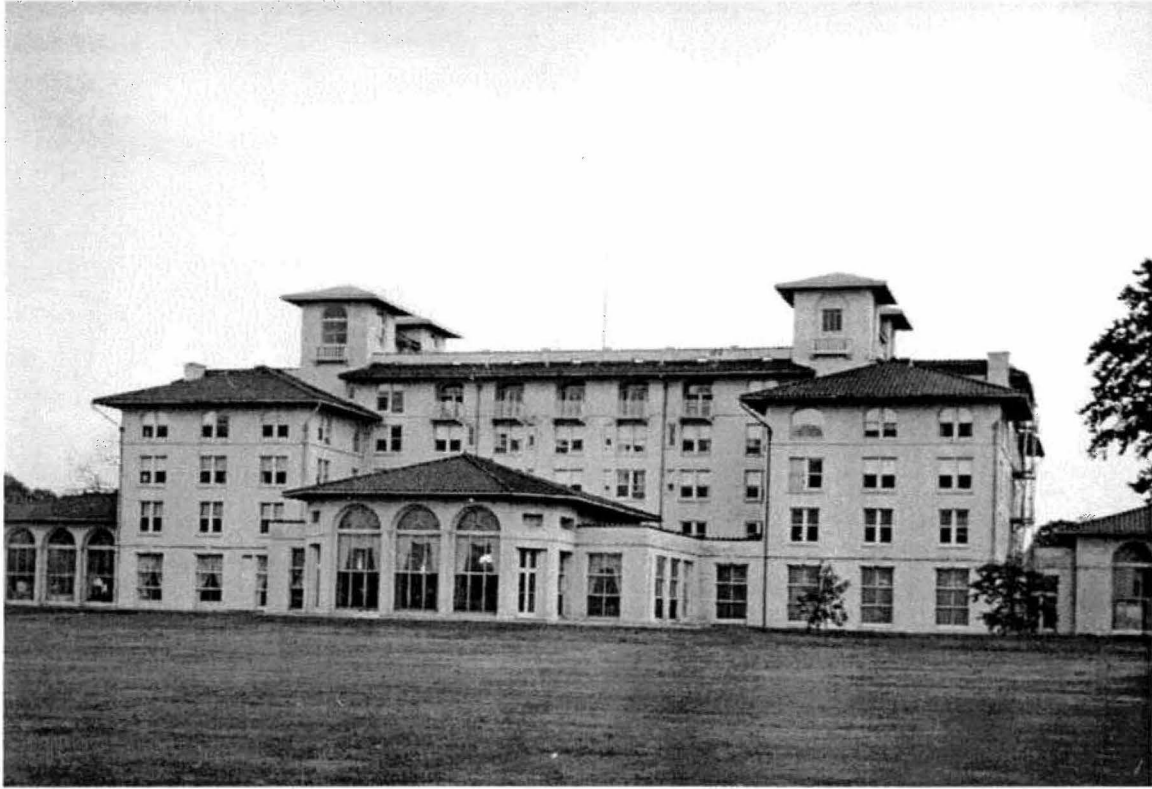
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

Heyworth wanted the South Shore Country Club to be modeled after a Mexico City club building. Initially still constrained by a relatively small budget, Heyworth recalled, “We engaged Marshall and Fox as architects and copied a picture which I had in my possession of an old Mexican Club in the City of Mexico, leaving out the expensive embellishments shown in the picture.” Built in 1906, the original South Shore Country Club building (demolished) was designed in the Mediterranean Revival style and was a smaller version of the present-day building. Similar to the present clubhouse, this early clubhouse was two stories in height and featured stucco-clad walls, pitched rooflines tiled in terra cotta, and a pair of symmetrical towers.

Growing in membership during its early years, the South Shore County Club quickly outgrew this original home. Marshall & Fox were asked to design a larger replacement building in 1916. The original clubhouse was moved on the club grounds to a site just southeast of its original location (it was later demolished). The new clubhouse, located on the original building’s site, incorporated the ballroom addition from the original clubhouse (now the Robeson Theater), also designed by Marshall & Fox and built in 1909.

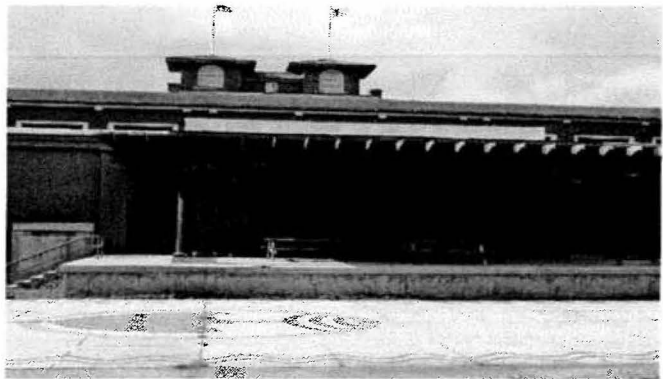
This replacement clubhouse—the current South Shore Cultural Center—is four stories in height and is an enlarged version of the original structure. Its H-shaped plan is symmetrical with the ballroom wing on the south, the dining room to the north, and the solarium projecting towards Lake Michigan. The building is topped by symmetrical twin towers with balconies. Like the earlier clubhouse, the structure is clad in cement stucco with a pebble dash finish. The rooflines of the main clubhouse and entrance gate are low pitched and hipped, with deep overhangs, and are clad in terra cotta Spanish tile. According to *The Architectural Record*: “The exterior of this building does not strive for effect through applied ornament. It is merely a building of good proportions, eminently suitable for its purposes.”

The grand approach to the clubhouse begins at the southwest corner of the property on South Shore Drive and 71st Street through an arched entranceway, constructed in the Mediterranean Revival style. The gatehouse (1906) is flanked by two towers, which feature bracketed balconies echoed by the main clubhouse building. Connected to the gatehouse is the stable (1906), which reflects its more utilitarian function with a rustic wooden shingle roof instead of terra cotta. The stable extends along the southern property line on South Shore Drive (71st Street), and is currently used by the Chicago Police Department’s Mounted Unit. The driveway is lined by a pergola, or trellis covered walk, that was reconstructed in the 1990s in a manner reminiscent of the original configuration. The driveway encircles a landscaped



The club building (east elevation is seen above in this photo from 1970), stable (right), and gatehouse are stucco-clad with a pebble dash finish. The buildings of the South Shore Cultural Center feature fine Mediterranean Revival details (below).

The South Shore Cultural Center also retains a terrazzo dance floor (right) from 1920.



garden, once known as the “court of honor,” which originally featured a fountain purchased from the Washington Park Club. In 1909, a race track was situated around the garden and sulky horse racing was held on the oval-shaped track. The grounds were originally designed by landscape architect Thomas Hawkes in conjunction with Marshall & Fox. Hawkes also designed small street planting projects along South Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago prior to working on the country club, but little else is known about his work. Although the overall layout of the grounds was important to the design of the club, only part of the original landscape plan was implemented.

Some of the notable exterior features of the clubhouse are the arched entranceway, symmetrical wings and exterior open-air pavilion, which once featured a bandstand and wooden dance floor. The space was originally unveiled in 1920 and currently consists of a small stage on the exterior of the ballroom wing and a sunken area with a terrazzo floor featuring the South Shore Country Club logo of a stylized tree.

A glass enclosed covered entry leads into the clubhouse’s vestibule, through which the solarium is visible. In contrast to the exterior, these interiors are designed in the Classical Revival and Adamesque styles. The entrance vestibule features a large skylight, which is echoed by the skylight in the adjacent solarium, and the floor is tiled in a white diamond pattern with blue accents and framed by a Greek key motif. This entryway leads to the circulation foyer, or “Passagio.”

The two-story-high Passagio connects all the major interior spaces on the ground floor, including the ballroom (now the Robeson Theater), solarium, and dining room. The Passagio is ornamented with Adamesque details in blue and pink contrasted with white. Details include festoons which line the trim underneath the second floor balconies, door surrounds, circular wall medallions depicting urns, and vaulted ceiling details and ribbing with floral motifs. This space features three large crystal chandeliers with classically-inspired ornamental metalwork.

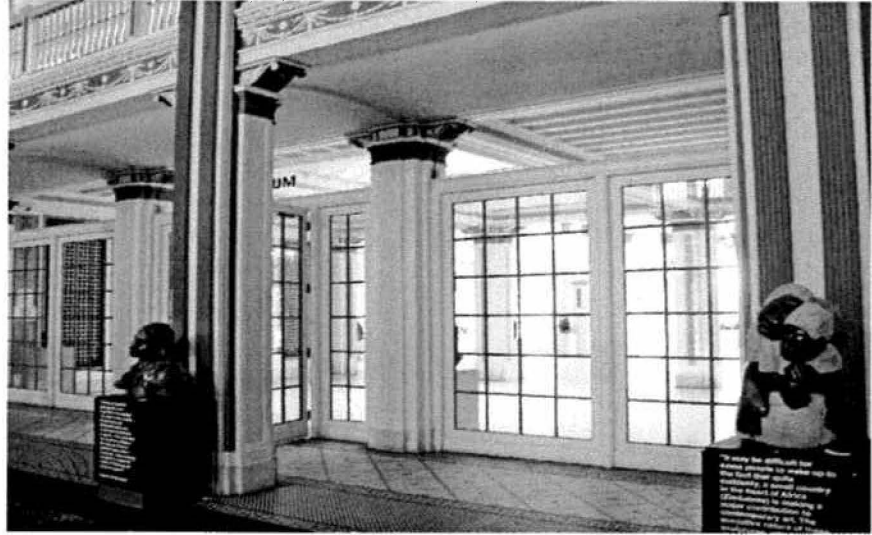
Located on the southern end of the club building, the ballroom (Robeson Theater) is the oldest part of the building and was constructed in 1909 as an addition to the original clubhouse. More restrained than the Passagio, it features Classical Revival details such as Ionic columns with gold capitals, clerestory windows, and dentils. The space features colonnaded side aisles surrounded by large arched windows set in between pilasters and simply detailed with small chandeliers with scalloped glass, and beamed ceilings.

The solarium faces the lake and is surrounded by large triple-paned triple hung windows on three sides which opened to allow lake breezes into the room. Similar to the entrance vestibule, the floor is tiled in a white diamond pattern with blue details. Decorative details are done primarily in light pink and white with light blue, aqua and gold accents. The center of the room features a ceiling medallion embellished with the signs of the zodiac and a large chandelier. The ceiling also incorporates Classical Revival and Adamesque details, similar to those of the Passagio, and a clerestory is capped by dentils. Pilasters with gold capitals punctuate the main space and frame the entrance to the solarium. The solarium entrance, like the main entrance vestibule features a large skylight, adding to the openness of the space.



The two-story-high circulation foyer, or Passagio (above, looking toward the entry foyer), connects all of the major spaces on the ground floor including the ballroom (below), now the Paul Robeson Theater, the solarium and the dining room. The ballroom was constructed in 1909 as an addition to the original clubhouse. Today, it is the oldest portion of the current building.





The club building's beautifully detailed first-floor interiors are designed in the Classical Revival and Adamesque styles and include the entry to the solarium (above), the solarium (left), and the dining room (bottom).



Similar in openness to the solarium, the dining room is surrounded by windows on three sides. The arched floor-to-ceiling windows are triple-paned and double-hung and are set into colonnaded walls overlooking the grounds. The Corinthian columns, made of plaster and faux painted to appear as marble, are topped with gold capitals. Painted in light pink, the ceiling features a central medallion which serves as a grille flanked by two elaborate crystal and metal chandeliers which feature cameo-like insets. It is embellished with four gold and white medallions which depict dancing female figures, one at each corner of the ceiling. The walls also feature blue medallions with figures and white Adamesque floral detailing is carried throughout the room. The floor is tiled in blue and white with a Greek key border.

An elegant white marble staircase at either end of the Passagio leads to the second floor mezzanine. The open mezzanine corridors encircling the Passagio are lavishly ornamented. Adamesque details feature a light pink vaulted ceiling, and blue and white columns, pilasters and railings with floral, urn, and animal motifs. Other original features on the second floor include two-over-two double-hung windows and a ticket booth at the south end of the space.

THE MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL STYLE

The South Shore Cultural Center, designed in the exotic-for-Chicago Mediterranean Revival style, remains today an unusual example of resort architecture in the City. Popular in the early decades of the twentieth century and characterized by Italian Renaissance and Spanish Colonial features, the Mediterranean Revival style was an architectural style rarely used for Chicago buildings, although it was quite popular in Florida, Southern California, and other warm-weather parts of the United States at the time.

The Mediterranean Revival style often was derived from the earlier Mission style, popular around the turn of the century. In addition to incorporating elements of the Mission style, the Mediterranean Revival style drew from an eclectic mix of Mexican, North African, Spanish, Greek, and Italian influences. Bright exterior colors were often common and included scarlet, orange, azure and other “Mediterranean” colors.

One of the primary proponents of the style in Florida was Addison Mizner, who designed several luxury hotels and resorts that were developed as a result of the railroad. Architectural historian and preservationist James Marston Fitch stated in Donald W. Curl’s monograph on Mizner:

Mizner worked in a number of the then-fashionable historicizing modes, his reputation rested on his astonishing repertory of Venetian, Spanish, and Latin American architectural styles. His freewheeling virtuosity in all these modes gave his work in them a grace and skill unmatched by any of his eclectic contemporaries.

Like Benjamin Marshall, architect of the South Shore Cultural Center, Mizner received no formal architectural training but, managed to work for an elite clientele. One project that Mizner



The Mediterranean Revival style is commonly associated with the grand resorts of Florida and Southern California. Flagler's Royal Poinciana Hotel (above left) in Palm Beach, Florida (1894), was an early and eclectic variant of the style. It set the tone for Addison Mizner's Everglades Club of 1916 (left) also in Palm Beach.

Above right: The style was popularized by Goodhue's California Building for the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 in San Diego which incorporates early California and Mediterranean style influences and Churrigueresque ornament.

Below: The Raymond Hotel (1901) in Pasadena exemplifies the Mediterranean Revival style as it was applied to Southern California resort architecture.



worked on almost contemporaneously with the South Shore Country Club was the Everglades Club and Villas in Palm Beach. The buildings were designed in a Moorish-influenced Mediterranean Revival style, characterized by tile roofs, arched windows and a main towered building. Designed in 1918, this club was preceded by large luxury hotels developed by Henry Flagler such as the Royal Poinciana in 1894 and, two years later, the Palm Beach Inn (known as The Breakers).

In the 1880s the state government in Florida offered free land to developers willing to construct railroads. Two of the primary railroad tycoons of this era were Henry Flagler and Henry Plant, who not only developed the railroads, but constructed expansive resort hotels at each new railhead. Perhaps the most notable and elaborate example of the Mediterranean Revival style in Florida is the Ponce de Leon in St. Augustine, which was designed by the New York firm Carrère and Hastings with Spanish Renaissance influences. These early resorts formed the core for what would become the winter resort for the social elite.

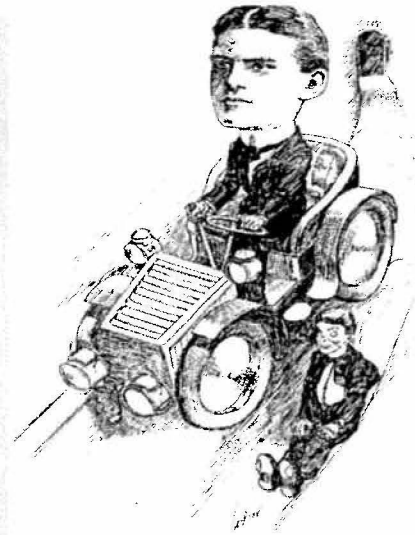
Resort booms in Florida and Southern California shared many of the same catalysts—national prosperity, construction of all-weather roads, and the attraction of a warm climate. The architecture of the grand resort hotels of Southern California at the turn of the nineteenth century featured indigenous Native American and Spanish Colonial influences. Bertram Goodhue's California Building, at the 1915 San Diego Exposition, pushed these vernacular styles into vogue. Exuberant architectural styles such as Mission and Mediterranean Revival, and later, Pueblo and Spanish Colonial Revival (which combined the Mission style with Spanish influences), became closely associated with the resort architecture in Southern California.

In such resort cities as Pasadena, resort hotels including the Hotel Green, now the Castle Green, (1898, expanded in 1903); the Raymond Hotel (1901, demolished); the Vista del Arroyo, now the U.S. Court of Appeals, (1920, and expanded in 1930); and the Huntington Hotel (built 1906, reconstructed in the late-1980s) exemplify the great resort boom in Southern California and relied upon the Mediterranean Revival and its related stylistic variations in establishing what was considered to be “indigenous” regional architectural expression. In Los Angeles, the Mediterranean-style Ambassador Hotel, opened in 1921, was the catalyst for development of the entire Wilshire Boulevard corridor. One of the most notable works of famed architect Myron Hunt, the architecturally and historically significant Ambassador Hotel is currently threatened with demolition.

MARSHALL & FOX

The South Shore Cultural Center was designed by Marshall & Fox, a prominent early 20th-century architectural firm in Chicago. Practicing together between 1905 and 1926, Benjamin Marshall and Charles Fox catered primarily to the City's wealthy elite, specializing in luxury apartment buildings, hotels, theaters, and clubs.

Benjamin H. Marshall was born in 1874 in Chicago, the only son of a wealthy miller and banking company owner. Marshall received his only formal education from the Harvard School



Above: A cartoonist's view of Benjamin Marshall in 1904. The smaller figure is presumed to be his partner, Charles Fox.

Marshall & Fox was a prominent early-20th century firm in Chicago. Specializing luxury buildings, the pair designed the Blackstone Hotel, 1908-10, (left) and several buildings in the East Lake Shore Drive landmark district including the Drake Hotel, 1919, (below, seen on the far right).



in Kenwood, an elite prep school where he was a classmate of John B. Drake II, who he would later receive some of his most prestigious commissions from. At an early age he was influenced by the extravagant neo-Classical buildings of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition constructed not far from Marshall's home on the South Side.

At the age of 19 Marshall, who had been working as a clothing designer at a wholesale clothier, began working as a clerk for the architectural firm of Marble and Wilson. Two years later Oliver W. Marble died and Marshall became Wilson's junior partner. In 1902, Marshall decided to open his own practice after Wilson retired. His most notable buildings during this period were the Illinois Theatre (demolished) and the Iroquois Theatre, which suffered a tragic fire in 1903. In 1905, he went into formal partnership with Charles E. Fox.

Marshall was known as an eccentric character who enjoyed hobnobbing with Chicago's social elite. He avoided professional and civic commitments and favored entrepreneurial endeavors, parties, playing golf, the theater, and fishing. From his early training as a suit maker, Marshall designed much of his distinctive wardrobe, which was characterized by white suits and shoes and topped off by a white hat with a black band. His flamboyant style was evident in his architectural designs, such as a luxurious lakefront estate in Wilmette in a Spanish Renaissance style that featured a tropical garden and cost one million dollars to construct in 1921.

Charles E. Fox was born in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1870 and received his architectural training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he received his degree in 1891. That same year he moved to Chicago to work on the World's Columbian Exposition with Holabird & Roche. Fox specialized in the new steel frame construction that was emerging in Chicago. During this period he worked with Holabird & Roche on some of their most notable buildings such as the Old Colony, Marquette, Monadnock and Republic buildings.

Fox also enjoyed a leisurely life and was a renowned yachter, especially as the commodore of the Chicago Yacht Club and in the annual Mackinac Island race. He was more professionally and civically oriented than Marshall, and served as president of the Illinois Society of Architects and organizer of the Architects Club of Chicago. He was also a member of the Chicago Club, the Mid-Day Club, Exmoor Country Club, and the Chicago Athletic Association. Fox's role as a founding member in the newly-formed South Shore Country Club led to the firm's 1906 commission for the original clubhouse building.

Prior to receiving the commission for the club, the firm designed their first apartment building, the Marshall Apartments, located at 1100 Lake Shore Drive and financed by Benjamin Marshall's father. This was one of the first luxury apartment buildings on the Drive and would serve as a prototype for the many other luxury high-rise residences that would become a signature of the firm. Described by the *Chicago Evening Post* as an "ultra high class apartment building," the interiors featured such amenities as oak and mahogany woodwork, a large salon, "orangerie," three large bedrooms, and servants quarters. Due to the overwhelming success of the design, the firm completed several other luxury apartment buildings, similar in plan, and designed primarily in popular revival styles such as Second Empire, Beaux-Arts, Adamesque, and Georgian. These buildings are concentrated in Chicago's elite Gold Coast



Today, South Shore Cultural Center is a vibrant and active recreational facility. Restored by the Chicago Park District in the 1980s and 90s, the buildings of the Cultural Center including the gatehouse (above), stable, and clubhouse (below) are excellent intact examples of the Mediterranean Revival style. The pergola (below) was reconstructed in the 1990s in a manner reminiscent of the original configuration.



neighborhood and include 1550 North State Parkway (1912), the Breakers (1915), and the Stewart Apartments (1913).

Other prominent Chicago buildings designed by Marshall & Fox include the Blackstone Hotel and Theatre on South Michigan Avenue; the Drake Hotel in the East Lake Shore Drive Chicago Landmark District; and the original section of the Uptown National Bank Building. After Fox's death in 1926, Marshall went into practice on his own, designing notable buildings such as the Edgewater Beach Apartments in 1928 and the Drake Tower Apartments in 1929. With the onset of the depression, these commissions would mark the end of Marshall's illustrious career as an architect to Chicago's elite. In 1936 Marshall sold his studio in Wilmette to Nathan Goldblatt, cofounder of Goldblatt Brothers Department Stores, and moved into the Drake where he lived until his death in 1944.

LATER HISTORY

In 1957, the South Shore Country Club's membership topped 2,200, making it Chicago's largest private golf club. Throughout its history the club adhered, however, to a restrictive membership policy that prohibited Jewish and African-American members. In the 1960s and 70s, the club's core membership moved from the City to the suburbs and joined more conveniently located clubs. By 1973, membership had slipped to 731, and the decision was made to close the club.

In 1974, the Chicago Park District purchased the 58-acre site for \$9,775,000 and initially planned to demolish the clubhouse, stable, and pergola. The community rallied to save the buildings, and in 1975 the buildings were placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A comprehensive restoration project began in 1979 with the restoration of the gatehouse. Substantial work to the club building's exterior got underway in 1982, and the restoration of its interior spaces was completed by Norman De Haan Associates in 1989. In the years that followed, the stable was restored and the pergola was reconstructed in a manner reminiscent of the original configuration.

The ornate clubhouse was converted into a Chicago Park District building and now houses a gallery, the Paul Robeson Theater, and administrative offices. Its grand interior spaces are popular for weddings and other special events. Now known as the South Shore Cultural Center, the facility features a nine-hole public golf course, bathing beach, tennis courts, and landscaped gardens. Today the cultural center is an anchor for the South Shore community and serves as the home to major cultural events including exhibitions, plays, concerts, and the South Shore Jazz Festival.

The clubhouse, gatehouse, stable, and pergola of the South Shore Cultural Center were color-coded "orange" in the *Chicago Historic Resources Survey*. The buildings of the South Shore

Cultural Center are also discussed in Alice Sinkevitch's *AIA Guide to Chicago* and *Chicago's Famous Buildings* by Franz Schulz and Kevin Harrington.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission in determining whether to recommend that the South Shore Cultural Center be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The South Shore Cultural Center is designed in the eclectic Mediterranean Revival style, that was popular during the early decades of the twentieth century. This architectural style was rarely used for Chicago buildings, although widely popular in Florida, Southern California, and other warm-weather parts of the United States.
- The South Shore Cultural Center is an important intact example of an urban country club facility and an unusual example of resort architecture in Chicago.
- The South Shore Cultural Center has several important historic interiors, including the Classical Revival and Adamesque style interior of the ballroom (now the Robeson Theater), which was constructed in 1909 as an addition to the original clubhouse and was later incorporated into the 1916 clubhouse. Other significant interiors include the solarium, dining room, and two-story-high Passagio.

Criterion 5: Important Architect

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The South Shore Cultural Center is the work of Marshall & Fox, a prominent early 20th-century architectural firm in Chicago.
- Practicing together between 1905 and 1926, Benjamin Marshall and Charles Fox catered primarily to the City's wealthy elite, specializing in luxury apartment buildings, hotels, theaters, and clubs.

- Prominent Chicago buildings designed by Marshall & Fox include the Blackstone Hotel and Theatre on South Michigan Avenue; the Drake Hotel and several apartment buildings in the East Lake Shore Drive Chicago Landmark District; the 1550 North State Parkway apartment building overlooking Lincoln Park; and the original section of the Uptown National Bank Building.

Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

- A distinctive intact example of resort architecture in Chicago, in the exotic-for-Chicago Mediterranean Revival style, the South Shore Cultural Center has a unique character that is immediately recognizable, and is an important visual landmark in the South Shore Community.

Integrity Criterion

Its integrity is preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic, community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

The South Shore Cultural Center buildings, including the club building, gatehouse and stable have excellent integrity and have experienced relatively few changes to their exterior. The same high degree of physical integrity is found on the interior public spaces, including a ballroom, solarium, and dining room arranged around a grandly-scaled, two-story-high Passagio, or circulation foyer.

In the 1980s and 90s the building underwent a comprehensive restoration. During this time, the pergola was reconstructed in a manner reminiscent of the original configuration.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the “significant historical and architectural features” of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its evaluation of the South Shore Cultural Center, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations and rooflines of the club building, gatehouse, stable and pergola; and
- Club building interior: the main first-floor spaces of the entry vestibule, the ballroom (now the Robeson Theater), solarium, and dining room, the two-story-high Passagio, and the open mezzanine second-floor corridors encircling the Passagio, all including, but not limited to, all architectural elements and light fixtures of these spaces; and
- The small outdoor stage adjacent to the ballroom wing (southeastern-most end of the club building) and an adjacent sunken area with a terrazzo floor featuring the South Shore Country Club logo of a stylized tree.



Above: An aerial view of South Shore Cultural Center in 1975.

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