



MEMORANDUM

TO: Lombard Historic Preservation Commission, Local Landmarks Committee

FROM: Tami Urish, Planner I

DATE: January 21, 2025

SUBJECT: 16 S. Park Avenue; Punky's Pub Old Style sign – request for historical sign designation

The Village has received an application for a historical sign designation of the existing Old Style sign located at 16 S. Park Avenue on the front façade of Punky's Pub.

Staff conducted an information gathering search about the sign and found the following:

- Photographs of the sign taken by Community Development Department staff in the 1990s.
- Permits for a series of beer signs spanning 1967 – 1972.
- Flashtrac Signs Company who installed the sign was contacted. Records for this time period were not maintained. However, the representative stated that the company installed thousands of Old Style beer signs in Chicago and surrounding suburbs in the 1970s.
- NPR article of Old Style beer signs

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

Staff recommends that Local Landmark Committee members and Commissioners approve the scheduling of a public hearing for the historical sign request for an Old Style sign located at 16 S. Park Avenue based on the criteria provided in Ordinance 153.103(I) of the Sign Code.

Note: A public hearing requires notification at least 15 and not more than 30 days. Possible dates are February 11 or 18.

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

— APPLICATION FOR LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION —

LANDMARK SITE SIAM LANDMARK DISTRICT

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Address of Subject Property: 16 S. Park Ave.
P.I.N. No(s): 06-07-209-014 Area of Property (in acres): 0.05
Date of Construction: 1925 Architect: NA Builder: NA

OWNER INFORMATION

Owner(s) of Property: Brendan Fitzharris Phone No.: (30) 688-4529
Mailing Address: 16 S. Park Ave. Fax No.: N/A
City: Lombard State: IL Zip Code: 60148 Email: brendanfitz72@gmail.com

APPLICANT INFORMATION (IF DIFFERENT FROM PROPERTY OWNER)

Applicant Name: _____ Phone No.: _____
Mailing Address: _____ Fax No.: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Email: _____
Relationship of applicant to property: _____

I request that the property for which this application is submitted be considered for recognition as a local landmark based upon the following criteria, as set forth in Section 32.079 of the Village Code (check all that apply):

- The character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the village.
- The identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, economic, social, or historical development of the village.
- The architectural significance of a building which is at least 50 years of age and is a good example of a specific architectural style containing distinctive elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship, or is an example of a style which had an impact on the community. Such a building must retain much of its original architectural integrity.
- The archeological importance of a site which has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS APPLICATION, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, IS TRUE AND CORRECT:

Brendan Fitzharris
name of owner (printed)
Brendan Fitzharris
signature of owner _____
date _____

name of applicant (printed)

signature of applicant _____
date _____

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

--- APPLICATION FOR LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION ---
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APPLICATION PROCESS

The Historic Preservation Commission meets on the third Tuesday of January, April, July, and October. **Applications for local landmarks (including all supporting documentation) must be submitted to the Community Development Department at least three weeks in advance of the meeting date.** In person or at cd@villageoflombard.org

After receiving an application, the Commission will make a preliminary conclusion if a site meets one or more of the criteria for designation. If one or more criteria are deemed to be met, the Commission will schedule a public hearing. This public hearing will generally be conducted within three to five weeks following the preliminary conclusion. Following the public hearing, the Commission will then have a follow-up meeting and forward its recommendation to the Village Board. The Village Board has the final authority to approve or disapprove local landmark applications. Due to the four necessary public meetings, the entire process can be expected to take approximately three to five months (depending on when the application is submitted).

SAMPLE APPROVAL TIMELINES

Application submitted:	September - December	December - March	March - June	June - September
Historic Preservation Commission meeting (for preliminary conclusion):	3rd Tuesday in January	3rd Tuesday in April	3rd Tuesday in July	3rd Tuesday in October
Public hearing:	February	May	August	November
Historic Preservation Commission meeting (for recommendation):	February	May	August	November
Village Board consideration:	March	June	September	December

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The following documentation must be completed and submitted to the Community Development Department a minimum of **three weeks prior** to the initial Historic Preservation Commission meeting:

- Completed Application for Local Landmark Designation, signed and including all requested information.
- One copy of a *PLAT OF SURVEY* and *LEGAL DESCRIPTION* for the subject property.
- Narrative information explaining the property's historical significance and architectural features, as well as specific details on how the property meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - The character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the village.
 - The identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, economic, social, or historical development of the village.
 - The architectural significance of a building which is at least 50 years of age and is a good example of a specific architectural style containing distinctive elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship, or is an example of a style which had an impact on the community. Such a building must retain much of its original architectural integrity.
 - The archeological importance of a site which has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.
- Additional documentation, plans, or photographs.

AFTER APPROVAL

Prior to undertaking any alterations to a landmark site (regardless of whether or not the alterations require a building permit), the property owner must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission. The Certificate of Appropriateness must be requested in writing at least three weeks in advance of the desired Historic Preservation Commission meeting date and must be accompanied by a detailed description and/or building plans for the proposed alterations. Maintenance is not considered an alteration.

§ 153.103 Administrative procedures.

- (A) *Application for permits.* Application for a permit for the erection, alteration or relocation of a sign shall be made on a form provided by the Community Development Department.
- (B) *Permit fees.* Every applicant before being granted a permit under this ordinance shall pay the requisite permit fee to the village for each sign. The amount of such permit fees shall be determined and set by the Board of Trustees from time to time.
- (C) *Abandoned, illegal, defective and dangerous signs.*
- (1) *Order to repair or remove:* If, upon inspection, the Director finds that a sign is abandoned or structurally, materially or electrically defective, or in any way endangers the public, the Director shall issue a written notice to the owner of the property on which the sign is located stating the nature of the violation and requiring them to repair or remove the sign, in a manner consistent with the code enforcement policies of the village.
 - (2) *Removal of signs by the Director:* In cases of emergency, the Director may cause the immediate removal and demolition of a dangerous or defective sign without notice. Signs removed in this manner must present a hazard to the public safety, as determined by the Fire Chief or the Chief of Police. The Director may cause the removal of an illegal sign for failure to comply with the written orders of removal or repair.
 - (3) *Recovery of removal cost:* After removal or demolition of the sign owner stating the nature of the work and the date on which it was performed and demanding payment of the costs as certified by the Director together with an additional ten percent for inspection and incidental costs.
 - (4) *Assessment of lien:* If the amount specified in the notice is not paid within 30 days of the notice, it shall become an assessment upon a lien against the property together with a reasonable penalty for collection in the same manner as the real estate taxes.
 - (5) *Presumption of ownership:* The owner of the property upon which the sign is located shall be presumed to be the owner of all signs thereon unless facts to the contrary are brought to the attention of the Director, as in the case of a leased sign.
- (D) *Insurance or bond requirements for private signs within the public rights-of-way.*
- (1) *Insurance required prior to permit:* Every applicant for a permit or for a sign which will extend over a public right-of-way shall file with the Director, before the permit is granted, a liability insurance policy covering all damage or injury that might be caused by each of the signs, or a certificate of insurance, issued by an insurance company authorized to do business in the state, and satisfactory to the Director.
 - (2) *Coverage required:* The policy shall be a multi-peril policy with the limits of liability not less than \$1,000,000.00. The village, its officers, agents and employees shall be named as additional parties insured.
 - (3) *Length of coverage:* Such liability insurance policy shall be maintained in force throughout the life of the permit; and if at any time it is not in full force, the permit shall be revoked by the Director.
 - (4) *Bond in lieu of insurance:* In lieu of insurances as provided for in this section, the applicant may file an indemnity bond, with a corporate surety satisfactory to the Director, in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, which will provide that the principal and surety will indemnify and hold harmless the village, its officers, agents and employees from all claims, loss or suits resulting from such sign.
- (E) *Penalties.*

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- (1) *Failure to secure permit:* If any sign is installed or placed on any property prior to receipt of a permit, the specified permit fee may be doubled if Code Enforcement action was taken as determined by the Director of Community Development. However, payment of the fee shall not relieve any person of any other requirements or penalties prescribed by this ordinance.
- (2) *Failure to comply:* Any persons who fails to comply with the provisions of this ordinance shall be subject to such penalties as may be provided for in Section 10.99 of this Code.
- (F) *Appeals.* The applicant is required to respond to any decision rendered by the Director in denying a permit or in alleging a violation of this ordinance within 30 days to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Director is required to submit the application for an appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals within 60 days. The action being appealed shall be held in abeyance pending the decision of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- (G) *Variations.* All requests for variations shall be directed to the Zoning Board of Appeals or to the Plan Commission, whichever is applicable, for a public hearing in accordance with the established rules and procedures for variations as set forth in subsection 155.103(C) of the Zoning Ordinance.
- (H) *Amendments.* In order to preserve, protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare, and advance the purposes of this Ordinance, the Village Board of Trustees may from time to time amend the provisions of this Chapter. The manner and procedures for adopting amendments to this Sign Ordinance, shall be the same as those established in subsection 155.103(E) of the Zoning Ordinance.
- (I) *Historical signs.* Signs having special, historical, aesthetic or architectural significance, and whose preservation and continued utilization are beneficial and desirable, shall be exempt from the provisions of this Chapter; provided that a resolution declaring such significance is adopted by the corporate authorities. No such sign shall be declared historically, aesthetically, or architecturally significant unless after a public hearing regarding the alleged significance of the sign, the Lombard Historic Preservation Commission determines that such sign meets the criteria and standards used by the Commission for evaluating historically significant structures. The findings and determination of the Historic Preservation Commission on such an application shall be referred to the corporate authorities, which corporate authorities shall then take such action on the recommendation of the Commission as it may deem fit, necessary and property.

(Ord. No. 8018, § 1(Exh. A), 12-16-21)



16 S Park, Punky's Pub

Sign Permit 21193 with details, dated August 3, 1972.

PARCEL No. 26-07-209-014
VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
 BUILDING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
 48 N. Park Avenue • 627-5000
 BUILDING PERMIT

Date 8/3/72

PERMIT No. 21193

Date Received 8/3/72

Application is Hereby Made For No. SIGN Street 16 S. PARK ST

Lot # _____ Block # _____ Subdivision _____

Residential _____ Commercial New Structure _____ Alteration _____ Addition _____ Sign Garage _____

Driveway _____ Electrical _____ Elevators _____ Other _____

Zoning _____ Size Of Lot _____ X _____ Total Estimated Cost \$ 2,000.00

Owner MR. C. NICHOLS 110 E. BOEHLER 639-2850

Gen. Contractor EDWARD SIGAL 3110 N. WESTERN 428-3441

Architect _____

Escalator _____

Carpenter _____

Plumber _____

Sewer _____

Electrician ELADITH SIGAL 3110 N. WESTERN 428-3441

Concrete _____

Heating _____

Brick _____

Kind Of Construction SIGN Width _____ Length 4' Height 4'

No. Of Stories _____ No. Of Bedrooms _____

No. Of Plumbing Fixtures: Lavatory _____ Bathub _____ Shower _____ Laundry Tub _____ Sink _____ Toilet _____

Type Of Heating _____ Air Conditioning Yes _____ No _____ Type _____

LIGHT/VENTILATION AND HEATING SCHEDULES, PLUS COMPLETE ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING DIAGRAMS, APPROVED BY A MECHANICAL ENGINEER ARE REQUIRED.

I hereby certify that all of the information contained herein is true and correct and that all contractors and sub-contractors to be engaged in any of the work for which this permit is issued shall comply with all pertinent local ordinances.

Applicant's Signature Edward Sigal

Address 3110 N. WESTERN AVE

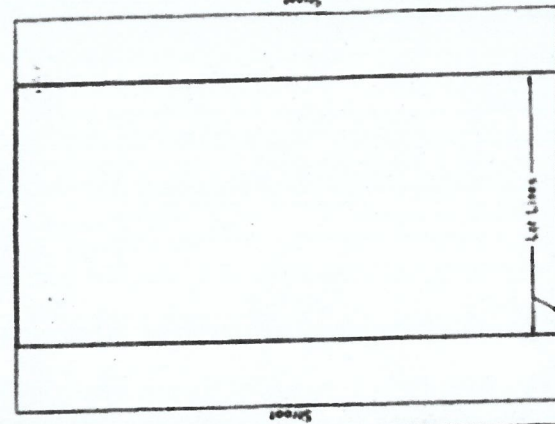
City CHICAGO Ill. _____ Phone 428-3441

APPROVED
 Plan Review [Signature] Date 8-3-72

ISSUED
[Signature] Date 8-3-72

88-3-72100 1038 00001300

PLAT OF PREMISES



Accounting Code	Mach. Code	Amount
1-2310 Building Permit	5	
1-2320 Electrical Permit	5	8.30
1-2325 Plumbing Permit	5	
1-2330 Sewer Permit	5	
1-2335 Water Permit	5	
1-2340 Driveway Permit	5	
1-2345 Occupancy Permit	5	
1-2350 Swimming Pool	5	
1-2357 Plan Review	5	
1-2368 Elevator Permit	5	
1-2369 Misc. Mech.	5	
Total Constr. Permit \$	8.30	
1-2370 Fill Permit	5	
1-2410 Sign Permit	5	5.00
1-2375 Moving Permit	5	
1-2385 Wrecking Permit	5	
1-2390 Annexation Fees	5	
Total Mach. Code 5	5	13.30
5-7120 Unmetered Water Sales	6	
5-7130 Water Meter	6	
5-7140 Water Conn.	6	
5-7145 Water Top	6	
5-7150 Sewer Conn.	6	
Total Rev. Code 6	6	0
1-4001 Const. Deposit	9	
1-4099 Cash Bond	9	
Total Mach. Code 9	9	0
Ord. # _____		
Ord. # _____		
Ord. # _____		
Ord. # _____		
Grand Total	\$	13.30

Entered By [Signature]

Previous Sign Permits

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
BUILDING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

Date 11-17-69

PERMIT No. 18395 STEP SIGNING PERMIT

Date Received 11-19-69

Application Is Hereby Made For No. 16 Street S. PARK AVE.

Lot # Block # Subdivision Sign Garage

Residential Commercial New Structure Alteration Addition Other

Driveway Electrical Elevators Other Total Estimated Cost \$ 300.00

Zoning Size Of Lot X Address Phone

Owner CHARLIE'S PARK SIDE HOUSE - 16 S. PARK

Gen. Contractor CHICAGO NEON SIGN CO. - 4222 WARREN - 547-6554

Architect HILL, DE-IT

Excavator

Carpenter

Plumber

Sewer

Electrician CHICAGO NEON SIGN CO. - 4222 WARREN - 547-6554

Concrete

Heating

Brick

Kind Of Construction Factory on steel Total Height 32'

Number Of Plumbing Fixtures: Lavatory Shower Laundry Tub Sink Toilet

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Square Feet Per Floor: 1st 2nd Basement Collar Gar.

Cubic Feet Per Floor: 1st 2nd Basement Collar Gar.

Total Square Feet Total Cubic Feet

I Hereby Certify The Above Information Is True And Correct To The Best Of My Knowledge

Applicant's Signature Charlie's Park Side House

Address 4222 Warren Ave Phone 547-6554

APPROVED

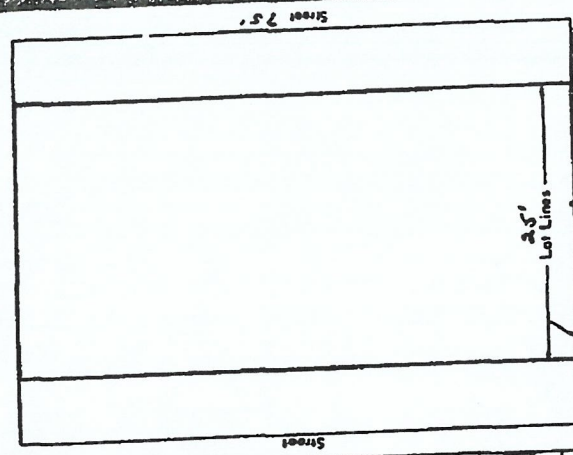
Plan Review: [Signature] Date: 11-17-69

ISSUED

By: [Signature] Date: 11-17-69

HW 1969 0735 00001820

HW 1969 0735 00001820



Accounting Code	Mach. Code	Amount
1-2316 Building Permit	5	8.00
1-2370 Electrical Permit	5	
1-2375 Plumbing Permit	5	
1-2330 Sewer Permit	5	
1-2335 Water Permit	5	
1-2340 Driveway Permit	5	
1-2345 Occupancy Permit	5	
1-2386 Swimming Pool	5	
1-2387 Plan Review	5	
1-2388 Elevator Permit	5	
Total Constr. Permit \$	8.00	
1-2370 Fill Permit	5	10.00
1-2419 Sign Permit	5	
1-2375 Moving Permit	5	
1-2385 Wrecking Permit	5	
1-2360 Annexation Fees	5	
Total Mach. Code 5 \$	18.20	
5-7120 Unmetered Water Sales	6	
5-7130 Water Meter	6	
5-7140 Water Conn.	6	
5-7145 Water Tap	6	
5-7150 Sewer Conn.	6	
5-8100 Paving Project	6	
(a) water		
(b) sewer		
Total Rev. Code 6 \$	6	
5-44011 (+1007)	6	
1-44001 Street & Const. Dep.	9	
1-44011 Subdivision Dep.	9	
1-44099 Cash Bond	9	
Total Mach. Code 9 \$	18.20	
Grand Total \$	18.20	

Entered By [Signature]

16-27-809-014
16358

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
BUILDING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
BUILDING PERMIT

Date 10-30-67

PERMIT No. _____ Date Received 10-31-67
Application is hereby Made For No. 16 Street SOUTH PARK

Lot # _____ Block # _____ Subdivision _____
Residential _____ Commercial _____ New Structure _____ Alteration _____ Addition _____ Sign Garage _____
Driveway _____ Electrical _____ Elevators _____ Other _____
Zoning _____ Size Of Lot _____ X _____ Total Estimated Cost \$ 250.00

Owner CHARLIE'S PARKS, DE LOUNGE - 16 S. PARK ST. MA. 0-9761

Gen. Contractor _____ Address _____
Architect _____
Excavator _____
Carpenter _____
Plumber _____
Sewer _____
Electrician CHICAGO NEW SIGN CO. 4333 WABEREN-HILLSIDE 547-6554
Concrete _____
Heating _____
Brick _____
Kind Of Construction _____ Width _____ Length _____ Height _____
Number Of Plumbing Fixtures: Lavatory _____ Bath _____ Shower _____ Laundry Tub _____ Sink _____ Toilet _____
ONE - DOUBLE FACE 4'x4' FALSTAFF SIGN (32 sq. ft.) 20.00 - Elec. Fee 3.50

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
Square Feet Per Floor: 1st _____ 2nd _____ Basement _____ Cellar _____ Gar. _____
Cubic Feet Per Floor: 1st _____ 2nd _____ Basement _____ Cellar _____ Gar. _____
Total Square Feet _____ Total Cubic Feet _____

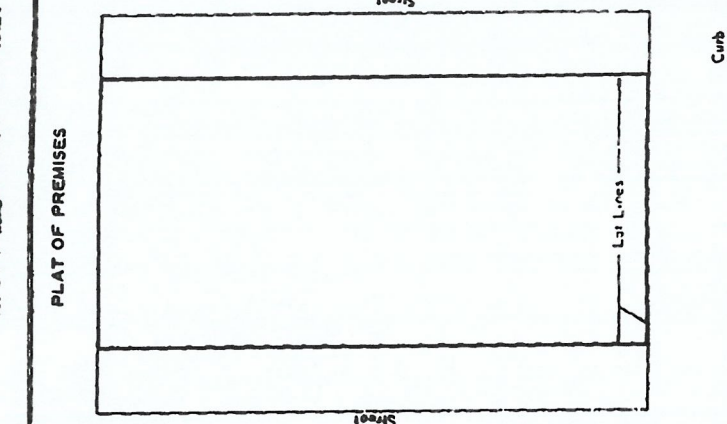
I hereby certify the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
Applicant's Signature Charles DeLounge
Address 4332 W. Warren Ave. City Hillside Phone 547-6554

Accounting Code	Mach. Code	Amount
1-2310 Building Permit	5	8.00
1-2320 Electrical Permit	5	
1-2325 Plumbing Permit	5	
1-2330 Sewer Permit	5	
1-2335 Water Permit	5	
1-2340 Driveway Permit	5	
1-2345 Occupancy Permit	5	
1-2386 Swimming Pool	5	
1-2387 Plan Review	5	
1-2388 Elevator Permit	5	
Total Constr. Permit	\$ 8.00	
1-2410 Sign Permit	5	5.00
1-2375 Moving Permit	5	
1-2385 Wrecking Permit	5	
1-2360 Amortization Fees	5	
Total Mach. Code 5	\$ 13.00	

5-7120 Unmetered Water Sales	6	
5-7130 Water Meter	6	
5-7140 Water Conn.	6	
5-7145 Water Top	6	
5-7150 Sewer Conn.	6	
5-8100 Paving Project	6	
(a) water		
(b) sewer		
Total Rev. Code 6	6	
5-44011 (a1007)		
1-44001 Street & Const. Dep.	9	
1-44011 Subdivision Dep.	9	
1-44099 Cash Bond	9	
Total Mach. Code 9		
Grand Total		\$ 13.00

Entered By [Signature]

APPROVED
Plan Review _____ Date _____
ISSUED
By [Signature] Date 10-31-67



APPROVED
 Plan Review _____ Date _____
 ISSUED 7/1 2007
 27-67

700-2678200 0178



Sheet _____
 of _____
 Cont.

1-2370 Building Permit	5	
1-2375 Electrical Permit	5	
1-2375 Plumbing Permit	5	
1-2375 Sewer Permit	5	
1-2375 Water Permit	5	
1-2375 Driveway Permit	5	
1-2375 Occupancy Permit	5	
1-2375 Swimming Pool	5	
1-2375 Plan review	5	
Total Constr. Permit \$		
1-2370 Fill Permit	5	
1-2375 Sign Permit	5	5.00
1-2375 Moving Permit	5	
1-2375 Wrecking Permit	5	
1-2375 Association Fees	5	
Total Mech. Code 5	\$	5.00
5-7120 Unmetered Water Sales	6	
5-7130 W. or Meter	6	
5-7140 Well Charge	6	
5-7145 Water Tap	6	
5-8100 Paving Project	6	
Total Rev. Code 6	\$	
5-44011 (x1007)	6	
1-4401 Street & Constr. Dep.	9	
1-44011 Subdivision Dep.	9	
Total Mech. Code 9	\$	5.00
Grand Total	\$	5.00

Entered By: *[Signature]*

PERMIT No. _____ Date Received _____

Application is hereby made for No. 16 Street S. PARK ST Subdivision _____

Lot # _____ Block # _____

Residential _____ Commercial New Structure _____ Alteration _____ Addition _____ Sign _____

Garage _____ Driveway _____ Electrical _____ Other _____ 305 KRAMERS S.W.

Zoning _____ Size of Lot _____ X _____ Total Estimated Cost \$: 500.00

Owner PARKSOME TAVERN Address 16 S. PARK Phone _____

Gen. Contractor G. BATE SUBDIVISION Address 18 W. 641 ROAD Phone 969-3700

Architect _____

Excavator _____

Carpenter _____

Plumber _____

Sewer _____

Electrician _____

Concrete _____

Heating _____

Brick _____

Kind Of Construction _____ Width _____ Length _____ Height _____

Square Feet Per Floor: 1st _____ 2nd _____ Basement _____ Celler _____ Gar _____

Cubic Feet Per Floor: 1st _____ 2nd _____ Basement _____ Celler _____ Gar _____

Total Square Feet _____ Total Cubic Feet _____

Number Of Plumbing Fixtures: Lavatory _____ Sinks _____ Showers _____ Laundry Tub _____ Sinks _____ Toilets _____

I hereby certify the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant's Signature Ed. Bate Address 18 W. 641 Road

City London Phone 969-3700

Your NPR news source

**Curious City • 9 min 25 sec**

Signs Of The Times: How Chicago Bars Got So Many Old Style Signs

We uncover the history and bask in the glow of a ubiquitous Chicago bar sign.

Our take on the late-night Chicago joint, inspired by Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks." Maggie Sivit, Katherine Nagasawa

By John Fecile

Jan 22, 2017, 9:00am CST

[SHARE](#)[COPY LINK](#)

Oswaldo Alvarez sees the white signs, now yellowed by age, hanging from neighborhood bars as he drives through Chicago. These signs feature the red-white-and-blue Old Style beer logo on the top, with a lower partition that reads "Bottles and Cans," "On Draft," "Cold Beer," "Cerveza Fria," "Zimne Piwo," or "Package Goods."

Oswaldo lives in the Irving Park neighborhood, but grew up in Logan Square in the 90s. He says the signs remind him of the corner bar where his dad and other working-class men would drink. So he asked Curious City:

Why are there so many Old Style signs in the city of Chicago?

Just on our own we counted 69 bars with Old Style signs, and there are likely more. You don't run into the same plethora of Old Style signs in New York, or Los

CHICAGO

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spot a handful of Goose Island signs.

A lot of Chicagoans love these signs. There are photos of them **all over Instagram** and an **entire blog** devoted to tracking them.

Old Style is brewed in Wisconsin and sold only in the Midwest. The beer itself is a Chicago staple; I personally think it goes well with a celery-salted hot dog or **shot of Malort**. Some Chicagoans consider it a part of their identity, and associate it with a dad or grandpa or uncle who kept a fridge full of the stuff. Old Style returns the love, even **branding itself as Chicago's beer**.

To get to the bottom of the Old Style signs mystery, I had to visit some of these neighborhood taverns, and drink a few beers in the process. When duty calls, one must answer.

How Old Style became Chicago's beer

I met up for a few drinks with Chicago beer historian Liz Garibay. She founded **History on Tap** and recently created an exhibit about beer at the Harold Washington Library. She's the perfect person to answer Oswald's question about why there are so many Old Style signs in Chicago.

We met at Frank & Mary's, a classic "Old Style bar" in the Avondale neighborhood. Like many of the bars that have these signs, it's a cozy neighborhood joint. Frank & Mary's has been a bar since the 1920s, operating as a speakeasy during Prohibition. Sibling co-owners Frank and Mary Stark pour brews for a mix of longtime regulars and people who are new to the neighborhood.

You can take a tour of the bar of Frank & Mary's in this 360 video we shot on a sleepy Tuesday afternoon, and get a feel for the type of bar where many of these signs hang.

CHICAGO

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(Click and drag your mouse to explore. If the 360 video viewer isn't functioning properly, you might need to update your browser. 360 VR production services by Scrappers Film Group.)

Garibay told me Old Style was first brewed in 1902 by the Wisconsin-based G. Heileman Brewing Company, and became available in Chicago by the 1930s. But the connection between the brand and Chicago wasn't really sealed until 1950, when Old Style started sponsoring the Cubs.

Getting into Wrigley Field was big, she said.

“Here you are, sitting in this iconic place, in this iconic city, drinking this particular beer. People started to build a little more brand loyalty to it then.”

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DONATE

13-Pryor, 14-Secory, 15-Smith, 16-Steiner, 17-Sudol, 18-Vargo, 19-Verzon, 20-Walsh

5-Hannan, 6-Kutyna, 7-Osteen, 8-Ripplemeyer, 9-Rudolph, 10-Stenhouse



The signs came about in the 1970s. That's when Old Style began giving them out for free to bars they'd done a lot of business with, even paying crews to install them. It was a win-win: Old Style got to assert its brand, while bar owners got a bright shiny light to lure in customers. Other brands also handed out signs, but not nearly as many as Old Style.

The brewery got an extra boost in 1976, when a nationwide strike by workers at Budweiser took its biggest competitor off the shelves.

"People would go into a bar, and go to grab their Budweiser, and there was none," Garibay said. "So this was a great opportunity for a brand like Old Style to say, 'Hey, what about us? We're delicious!'"

During this period, Old Style's reputation as a working class, Chicago beer continued to rise. The company installed up to 2,000 signs in the Midwest, with Chicago as the glowing epicenter.

CHICAGO

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drinks to factory workers coming off overnight shifts.

Before we left Frank & Mary's, Garibay pointed out a detail I hadn't noticed: the counter behind the bar was lined with pro-union bumper stickers. There was one for the Local 13 Carpenters, the union of Operating Engineers.

"That gives you a window into who comes here," she said.



As the city evolves, will Old Style signs remain?

As our Curious Citizen, Oswald, makes clear, you can still see Old Style signs all over the city. But as the industrial world they've come to symbolize fades, will the signs start disappear, too?

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Style. There were frequent swaps, mergers, and cutbacks. Old Style was eventually acquired by Pabst Brewing Company, and is featured as part of their “Local Legends” portfolio. Old Style lost its Cubs sponsorship to Anheuser-Busch in 2014, so when the Cubbies won the World Series in 2016, they celebrated by spraying each other with **champagne and Budweiser**.

As the brand declined, so did the signs. We can't say the exact year, but Old Style stopped producing the signs in the '80s. This means that any Old Style signs you see hanging in Chicago today are likely to be at least 30 years old.

This also means a lot of the bars they're connected to are old, and some of them haven't survived the intervening years.

I talked to Adam and Aaron Keefner, two brothers who travel around to bars with Old Style signs and write reviews for their blog The Old Style Bar Project. They sent me a list with at least 12 Old Style bars they say have closed in the past five years.

“When people see the signs, you know it's a place that's been there for a while,” Adam Keefner says. “And you know it's a neighborhood bar, which are becoming extinct.”

He rattles off the names of a few that have shuttered recently: Marie's, Carol's, the Western Tap.

Certain owners of these bars have also chosen to take their Old Style signs down. The signs are old, and some of them are rickety and constitute a safety hazard. Owners might also want to avoid fees the city charges for signs that hang over the sidewalk.

The Keefner brothers say they're not surprised when owners decide to scrap the signs.

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the time.”

There are still bar owners fighting to keep the Old Style dream alive. The EZ Inn in Ukrainian village is possibly the Old Stylin’-est Old Style bar in town. There are Old Style coasters, Old Style signs, a giant cardboard Old Style beer can. Even the tops of the bar’s coolers are made from recycled Old Style signs.

Owner Isaac Liberman, who bought the place from the old owners and reopened it in 2016, knew he had to have Old Style on tap.

“Old Style is such a Chicago beer. I’m not even from here, but I just moved here and I saw that,” he said. “I said, ‘We’ll have craft on the draft but Old Style is our cheap beer.’”

Liberman even dug out the Old Style sign, which the old owners had placed in storage. The light it cast wasn’t that perfect shade of faded Old Style sign yellow, so he coated the fluorescent bulbs in amber shellac to get the look just right. If you’re walking down Western Avenue, that warm glow might beckon you in, offering cheap beer, conversation, and a sense of connection to Chicago’s past.

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