

# Where is the 1893 World's Fair Today? An Analysis of The Statue of Republic

## Introduction

- The Chicago Monuments Project, an initiative created by the City of Chicago to review the city's collection of monuments and recommend solutions in response to the George Floyd protests in the summer of 2020, selected the Statue of the Republic as one of the monuments recommended for public discussion.
- The Statue of the Republic (the current Statue) is a twenty-four-foot-tall gilded bronze sculpture installed in 1918 to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World's Columbian Fair of 1893 and the centennial of Illinois Statehood in Jackson Park.
- The current Statue is a much smaller replica of the original Statue of the Republic (the original Statue), a sixty-five-foot-tall gilded plaster sculpture designed by Daniel Chester French (1850-1931) that was destroyed in fire in 1896.
- On its website, the Chicago Monuments Project addressed the role of the World Columbian's Exposition in setting the terms for the monuments for the following 50 years.
- Today, only two structures remain from the Fair in the city: the Statue of the Republic and the Palace of Fine Arts building.
- When the the Museum of Science and Industry opened in 1933, the Palace of Fine Arts building during the Century of Progress Exposition, the building's association with the World's Fair diminished.



Figure 1: MSI in 1933



Figure 2: MSI Today

## Research Question/Rationale

- Research Question: What has the Statue of the Republic represented throughout time?
- Method: We intend to answer this question by investigating the change in the meaning associated with the Statue(s) over the years from the construction of the original Statue for the Fair to today.
- Rationale: To what extent is the Statue of the Republic's inclusion in the Chicago Monuments project justified?

## Background Information

- The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition is often considered to be one of the high points in Chicago's history and at the time is what made it known as "the white city".
- Sometime before the end of the year 1894, the Statue of the Republic was painted white. The Chicago Daily Tribune reports that "seen in the moonlight, the figure has a ghostly aspect."
- Despite its beauty the attractions were never meant to be permanent and due to its temporality often has many misconceptions regarding its appearance (as seen by the post card in figure 3 which wrongly depicts other statues surrounding the Statue of Republic) and meaning of many of its attractions, including the Statue of the Republic.

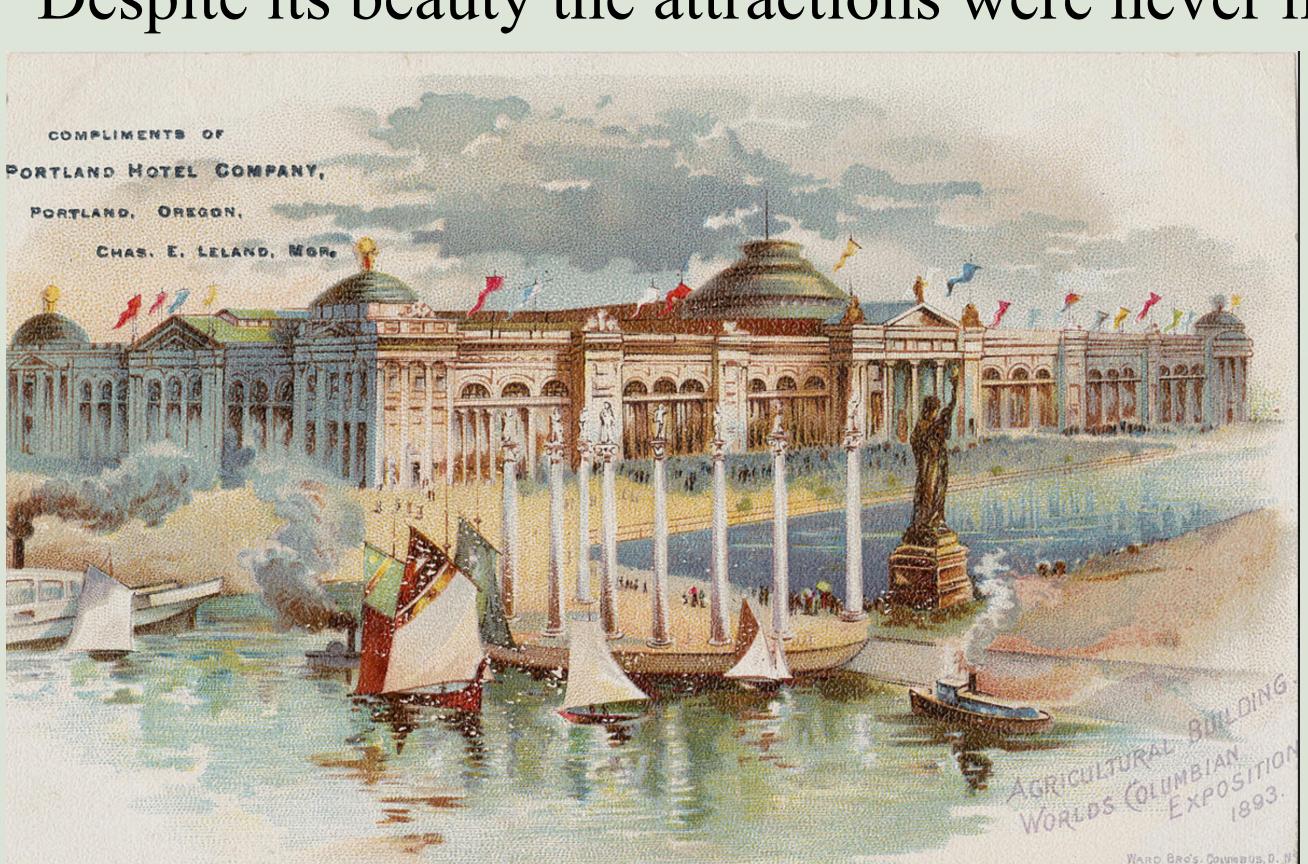


Figure 3: Postcard of the fair.

- The structures from the Fair, which—except for the Palace of Fine Art—were built as non-fireproof temporary structures, were almost completely destroyed in a series of three fires, on January 8, February 8, and July 5, 1894. The Statue of the Republic avoided destruction in all the three fires.

"Westward she looks; around her lies / A desolated scene, / Where mid a summer's palaces / She held her court as queen. // Behind her mourns the inland sea; / Before her stretches far / Her prairie—empire of the West / Beyond the horizon's bar, // ... // Ghosts of the ages that are gone, / Prophets of days to be, / Proclaim in wisdom and in might / That Love is Liberty, // Republic hail! Though beauty dies, / The peoples shall be one. / Rejoice O World, our Golden Girl / Stands shining in the sun!"  
—Chicago Daily Tribune "Statue of the Republic" July 30, 1894

- The Statue of the Republic was burnt in the morning of August 28, 1896 by the South Park Commissioners.

## Methods: 1893 and 1918 Statue Differences

### Differences in Appearance and Meaning

- The Statue of the Republic would have been the first thing that visitors saw at the Fair, as the architects designed the Court of Honor to be the architectural highlight of the Fair, concentrating the lines of transportation to the Fair in such a way that the visitors would enter the Court through the Administration Building upon arrival.
- The Consulting Sculptor of the Board of Architects Augustus St. Gaudens originally proposed that the Statue of the Republic and the east end of the Basin be enclosed by a semicircular line of thirteen Corinthian columns representing the thirteen original States of the Union.
- Although this plan of thirteen Corinthian columns was eventually replaced by the Peristyle designed by Charles Atwood, the columns remained for a long time on record in the popular illustrations of the Fair, despite their brief existence in the plan.
- "In her right hand is held a globe and eagle symbolizing the invitation of liberty to the nations of the earth. The globe is invitingly held forth under the fostering shelter of the eagle's wings. The left arm lifts the emblems high above the head, to imply that the Republic holds liberty paramount to all else." -Official Guide to the World's Columbian Exposition (p. 40-41)
- What's interesting about this quote is that the liberty symbol being held by the statue changes from a Phrygian cap to an emblem saying Liberty with a laurel wrapped around it.
- The replica statue also has two plaques (figure 8 and 9) explaining the meaning intended behind the statue and the reasoning behind its location. One plaque explains that the statue is meant to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and the other one explains that the statue is located at the site of the old Administration Building.
- These plaques attempt to explain and place the statue in its modern context.
- The inscription on the front of the Statue's base originally read "To commemorate the World's Columbian Exposition MDCCXCIII," and the back of the base "The World's Columbian Exposition / Authorized by the Act of Congress / And Generously Participated in / By the



Figure 5: Sketch for New Statue (art institute)

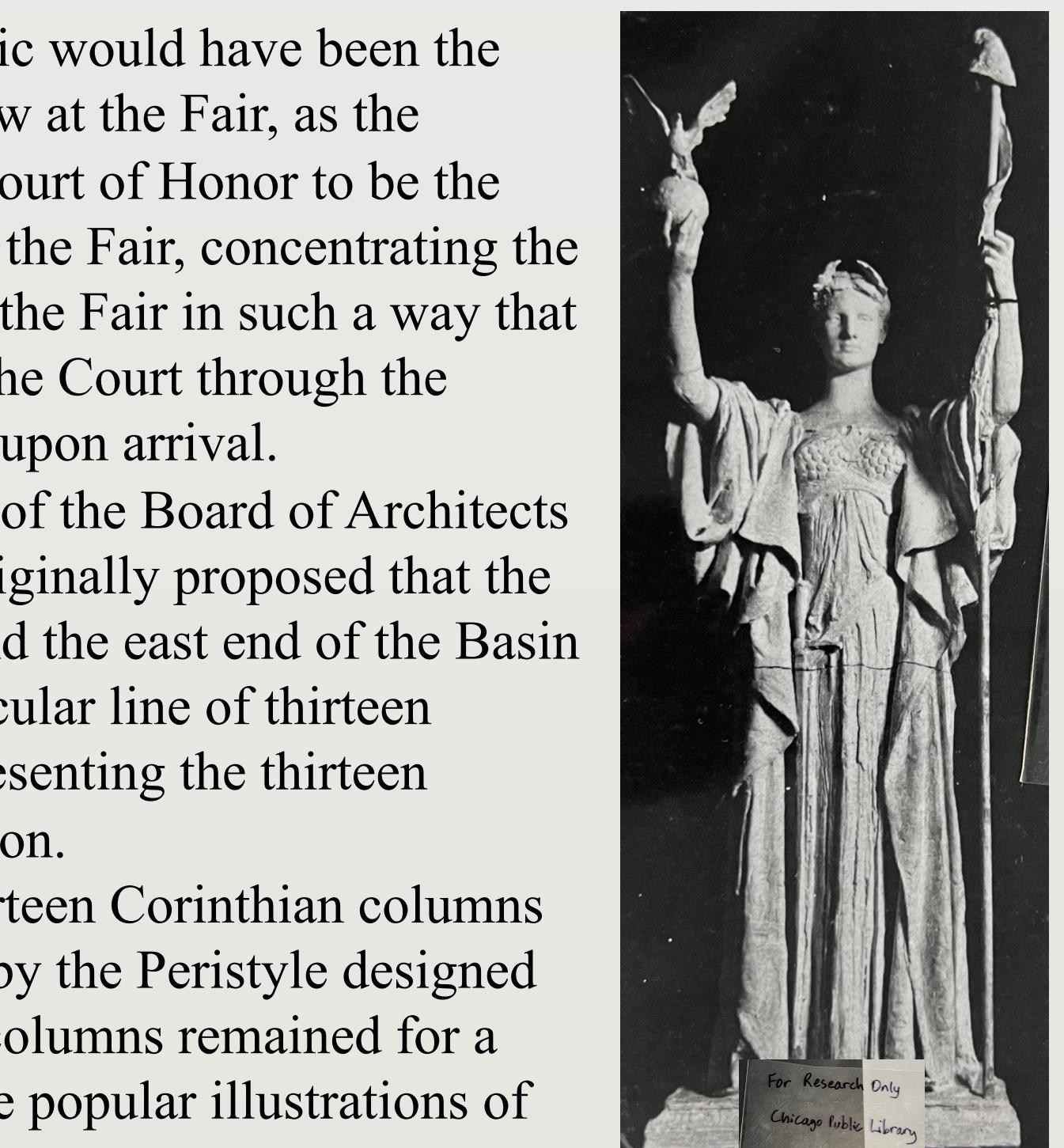
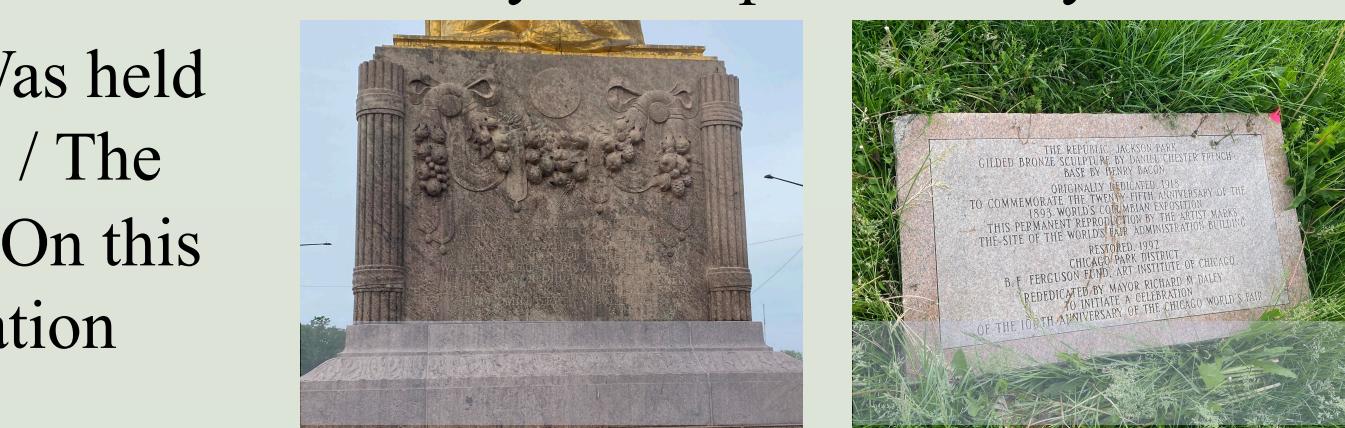


Figure 4: Model for old Statue (CPL archives)



Nations of The Earth / Was held here in 1893 to celebrate / The Discovery of America / On this site stood the Administration Building

Interestingly, the original inscription did not include the words "The Republic." This point was raised by a certain Frank R. Walton of Chicago who wrote a letter in 1919 to the President of the South Park Board protesting that the inscription did not represent the patriotism that the Statue was supposed to represent. These words "The Republic" were added onto the inscription later that year.

### Difference in Location

- The replica was built on the intersection of the Field Road and the Middle Bay Road (the present-day location of the intersection of E. Hayes Drive and S. Richards Drive).
- The location of the first Statue is now under Lake Shore Drive, between Hayes & Lake Shore Drive parking lot and the 63rd Street Beach House.
- The original Statue of the Republic stood at the east end of the Fair's Court of Honor—the highlight of its Beaux-Arts architecture, opposite the Administration Building across the Grand Basin.

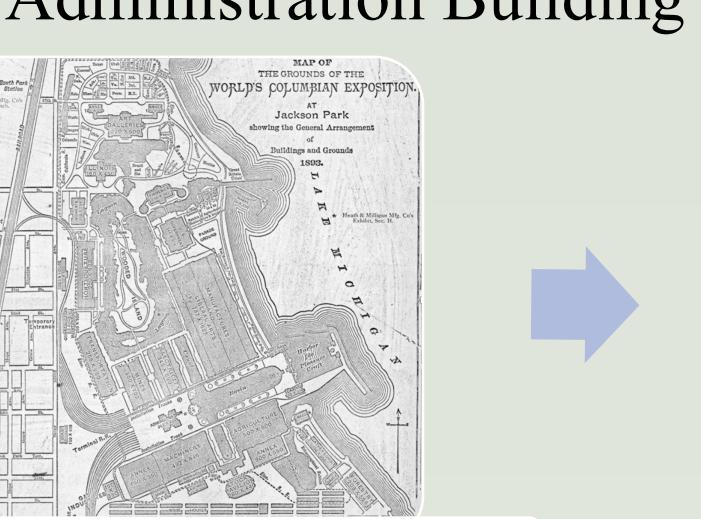


Figure 4: University of Chicago Photographic Archive, 1893 World's Columbian Exposition

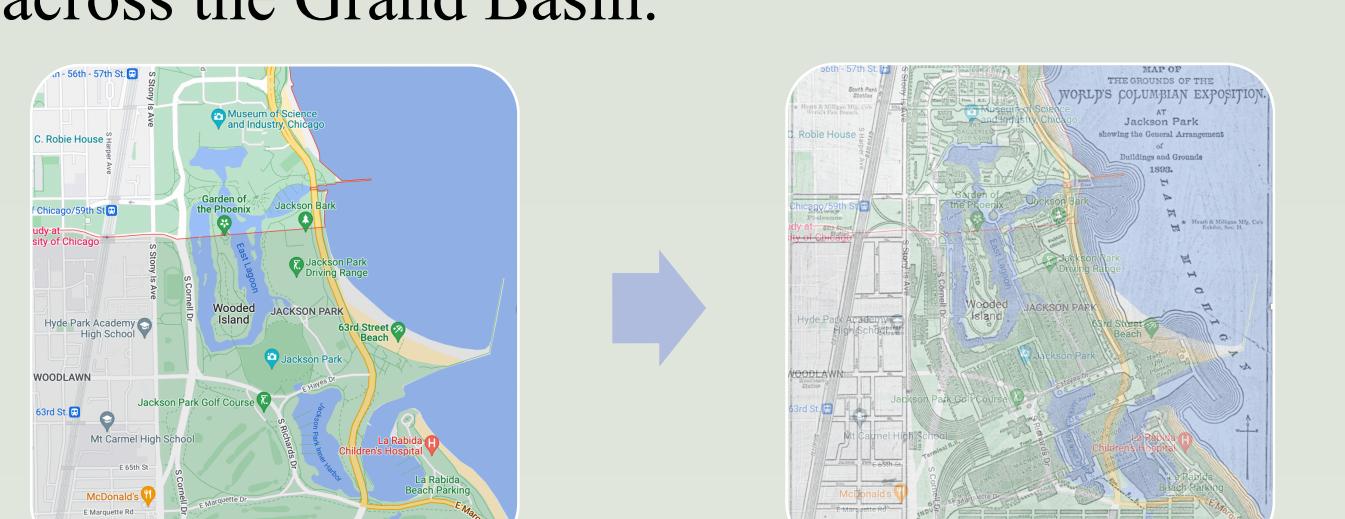


Figure 5: Google Maps, Chicago, Illinois, 29 May 2022

Figure 6: Overlay of Figures 4 and 5

## Methods: Jackson Park

### Observational/Field Study

- The new location of the Statue of the Republic is in a roundabout in the intersection of South Richards Drive and East Hayes Drive. Despite this not being the original location of the statue from the 1893 World's Fair, this statue makes sure to incorporate the original location in its design by having the replica face the direction of the original statue.
- The statue has Jackson Park on its North side and the Jackson Park Golf Course on its West side. As seen in the analysis, these two major public spaces contribute a lot to the statue's landscape and the day-to-day interactions involving it. Furthermore, it is through the archival records that reference the developments involving both spaces, that we can learn more about the role of the statue as a structure that is physically a part of an expansive public landscape but is socially absent from it.
- The planning of the site on which the Statue of the Republic is located is very unique and important to take into account when providing analysis of the statue's space in a modern context. The statue along with its base stands on top of an islanded plot of land that has no crossways, bike paths, or sidewalks leading to the monument. However, once you get to the site, there is a cement path circling the monument and four paths that break off from the circle and lead to the base of the statue. This discontinuity in accessibility to the monument is also important to note in the analysis of the statue and its landscape since it speaks to the purpose of the erecting this replica of the original statue as well as the lack of active effort to facilitate public interaction with it.
- Six liquor bottles and 2 intoxicated people were found around the statue suggesting that the Statue of Republic today is often used as a site for communal or individual drinking by the users of the Jackson Park Golf course.

### Archives: Reconstruction of Jackson Park

- The permanent park development of Jackson Park, originally designed in 1871 as part of the larger Chicago South Park (the current-day Washington and Jackson Parks and the Midway Plaisance) by Frederick Law Olmsted, had been halted between 1889 and 1894 when all efforts were concentrated on the Fair.
- The Revised General Plan created by Olmsted in 1895 resumed the park development to return the Exposition fairgrounds back into the parkland he envisioned in the 1871 plan.
  - "THE FIELDS lying between the Lagoons and the Lake and between the Lagoons and the South-west Entrance present broad and quiet landscape of the simplest pastoral sort which will be pleasingly commanded from the adjacent drives and walks. ... The LAGOONS, with their intricate and bushy shore lines, their beaches and bridges and their almost complete seclusion, offer scenery in striking contrast to that of the Lake Shore and Fields."  
— The Revised General Plan for Jackson Park
- Whether the Statue of the Republic would be preserved or not in the new 1895 plan is not immediately clear: the 1895 plan itself does not include the Statue while a Chicago Daily Tribune's illustration of what the Park would look like after the plan's implementation includes it.
- The Statue of the Republic was burnt in the morning of August 28, 1896 by the South Park Commissioners, after it decided that the maintenance of the decaying Statue was not feasible. The location of the original Statue was to become part of Shore Drive (present-day Lake Shore Drive).
- In 1899, a 9-hole public golf course opened in Jackson Park, around what used to be the center of the Exposition.

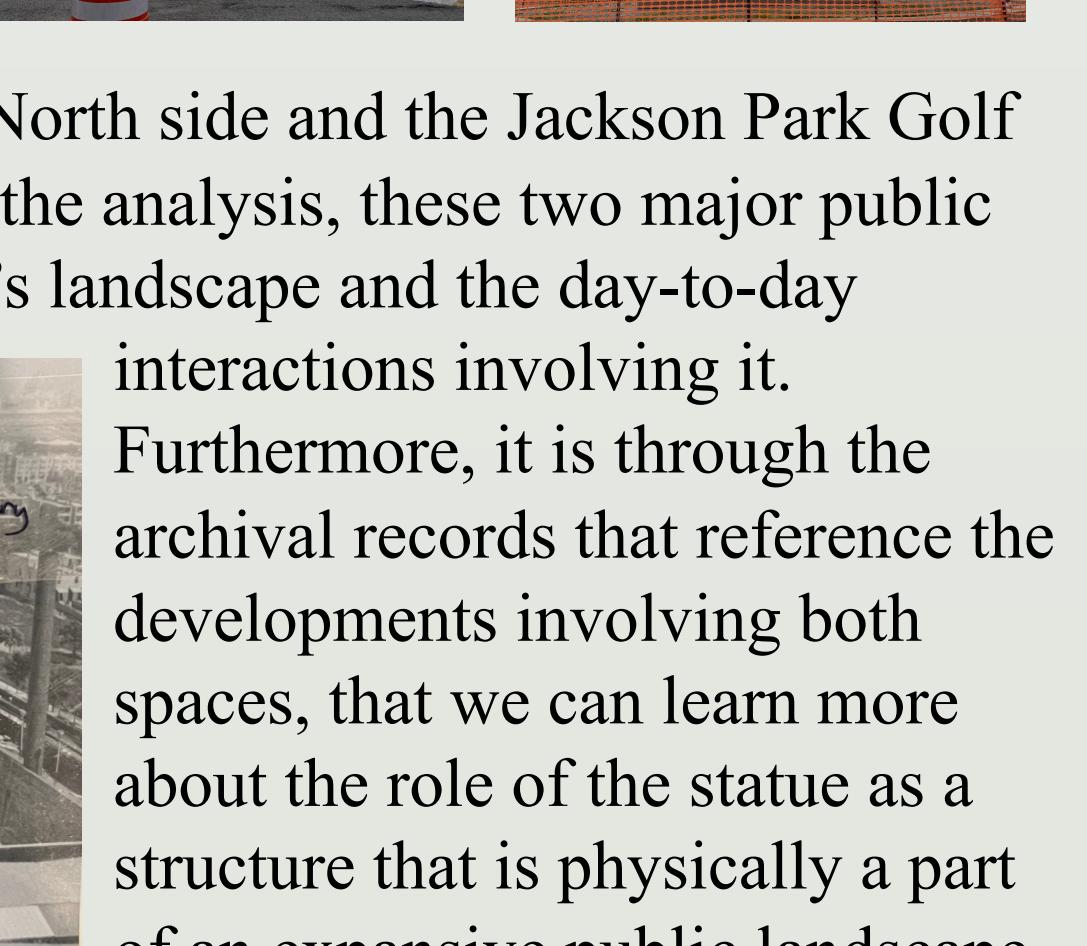
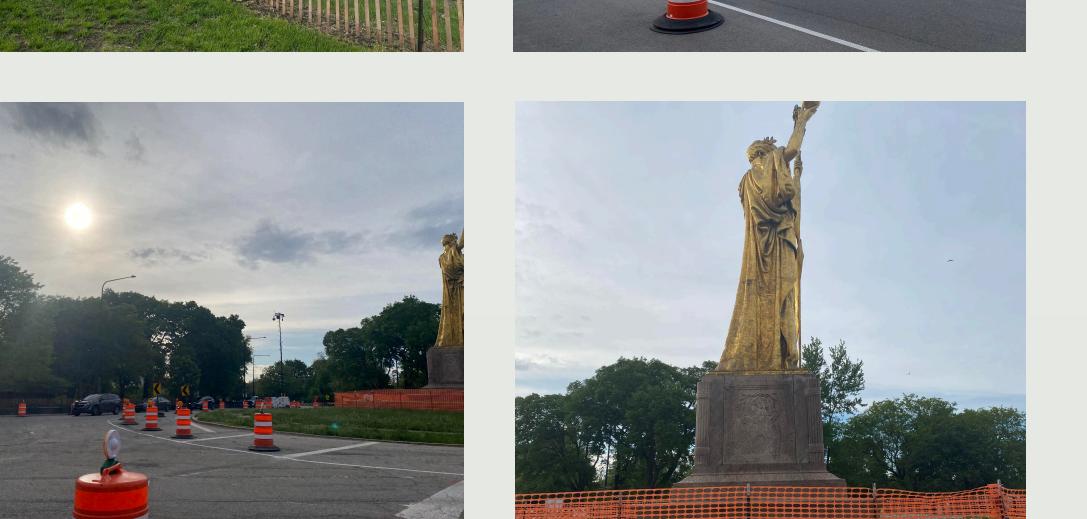
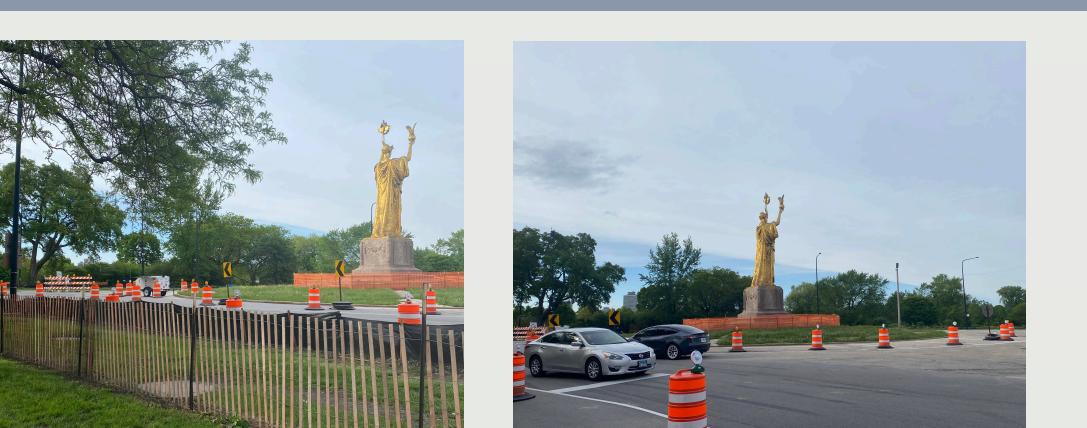


Figure 9: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 10: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 11: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 12: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 13: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 14: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 15: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 16: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 17: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 18: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 19: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 20: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 21: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 22: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

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Figure 24: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 25: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 26: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 27: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 28: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 29: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 30: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 31: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 32: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 33: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 34: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 35: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 36: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 37: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

Figure 38: Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park

## Background Information/Archival Research

### Nature Preservation and Jackson Park

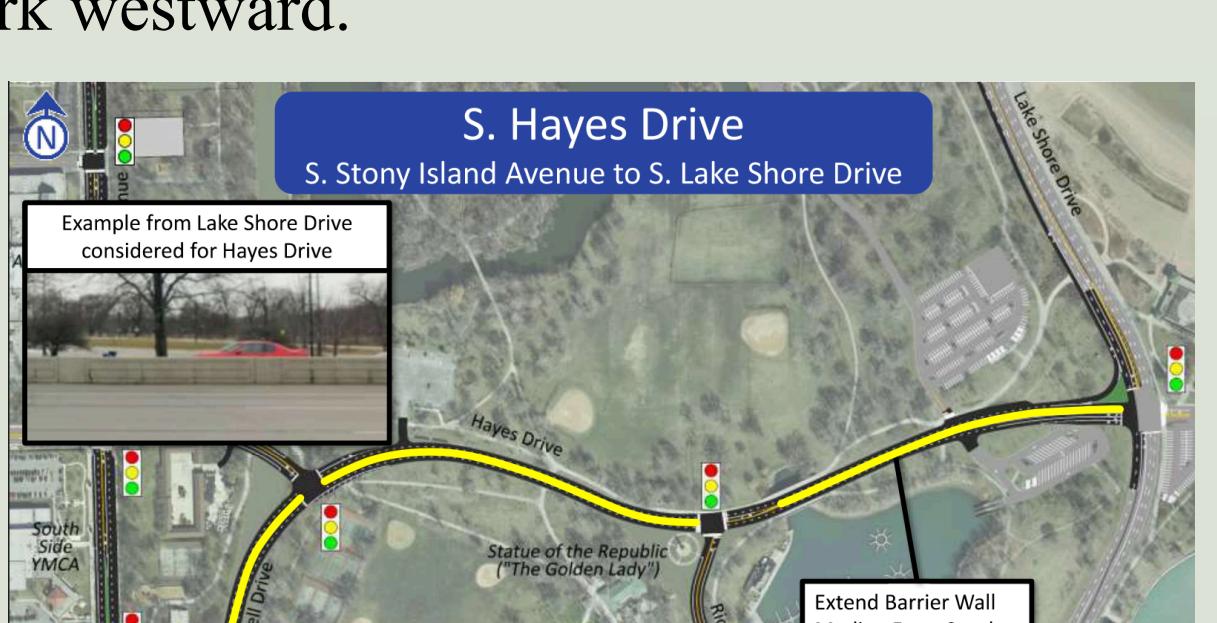
- Jackson Park's center shifted northward to where the Palace of Fine Arts is, which became the home of the Museum of Science and Industry in 1933, after the Field Museum moved out of it in 1920.
- Jackson Park's characteristics as parklands changed drastically in the 1950s when the Nike Missile Bases were built in the parklands by the Army. This eliminated many of the pre-existing facilities in the Park and significantly limited civilian access to the Park.
- After the Missiles' removal in 1972, the City's proposal to re-create a golf driving range was met with fierce opposition from community group members, such as the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference (HPKCC). The focus on community activism surrounding Jackson Park shifts to nature conservation and access of the parklands by the public, and this tendency continues to this day with community organizations such as HPKCC, the Jackson Park Advisory Council (JPAC), as well as Chicago-wide organizations such as the Friends of the Parks. The Statue of the Republic, as well as the legacy of the World's Columbian Exposition is more or less neglected.

## Findings/Conclusion

- The original Statue of the Republic was, as a part of the architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition's central Court of Honor, originally constructed as a symbol for the republic of the United States.
- During Jackson Park's transition from the Exposition's fairgrounds to parklands after the Exposition, the original Statue of the Republic which survived many fires that destroyed the rest of the landscape began to take on more meaning as the symbol of the World's Fair before being taken down in 1896.
- After most of the Fair's structures were destroyed, Jackson Park was developed as parklands as originally intended by its designer Frederick Law Olmsted. Public golf course was built in 1899 around what used to be the Court of Honor.
- In 1918, the Statue of the Republic was rebuilt to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Exposition. The plaque on the statue is dedicated to the World's Fair and its memory.
- After the building of Nike Missiles on the parklands in the 1950s and the subsequent construction of the golf course in the 1970s, community organizations began focusing on nature conservation and public access to the parklands as important agendas in Jackson Park's history, with the Statue of the Republic and the legacy of the World's Columbian Exposition more or less forgotten.

## Future Considerations

- The In 2015, the University of Chicago won the bid to build the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) on the South Side of Chicago. Jackson Park was eventually decided as the location for the Center. The Friends of the Parks sue the OPC for using public park land.
- The Center is planned to be built on the west side of the Park, which would shift the focus of the Park westward.
- OPC plans to close South Richards Dr. which would put the Statue of the Republic on the side of the E. Hayes Dr., making it more accessible to pedestrians and bikers.
- However, the Statue of the Republic would not be visible from the OPC buildings.
- Benjamin Hufbauer, art historian who wrote the 2006 book "Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory" suggests that the opening of OPC as a presidential library will change the nature of Jackson Park as a site for the commemoration of President Obama.
- The destiny of the Statue of the Republic in the future will be negotiated as different parties try to imbue different meanings into Jackson Park.



## Acknowledgments

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