

Charles J. Hull House
(Hull House)
800 South Halsted Street
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1110

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
98-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CHARLES J. HULL HOUSE
(Hull House)

HABS No. IL-1110

Location: The address of the Hull House is 800 South Halsted Street. Prior to 1909, when Chicago's street addressing was changed, the number was 335 South Halsted.

The Hull House is located on the west side of Halsted Street, just south of Polk Street. It is within the boundaries of the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus, with the Hull House Dining Room to the south and University buildings to the west and north.

Present Owner: The University of Illinois.

Present Occupants: A Curator, administrative head and their staff occupy the building.

Present Use: The house operates as a museum, a library and a monument to Jane Addams and the settlement movement.

Significance: The Charles J. Hull mansion, an architecturally interesting example of Italianate Victorian architecture constructed in 1856, did not actually take on significance until 1889, when Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr began using it as a settlement house. Here they established one of the earliest and certainly the best known of all social settlements. The house is a National Historic Landmark.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The date generally accepted for the construction of the Hull House is 1856. That is the year inscribed on an oil painting showing the artist's conception of the house when Hull first had it built. Today the painting hangs in the house.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners:
 - a. Legal description: The Hull House is located in the subdivision (approximately sub lot 8) of Lot 1 in Charles J. Hull's Subdivision of East 1/2 of Block 11 in Canal Trustees' Subdivision of the S.E. 1/4 of Section 17, Township 39 North, Range 14, East of the Third Principal Meridian.

- b. Chain of Title: The official abstract of the Chain of Title is from Book 474B, pp. 59-60, office of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds. It is not complete. Nevertheless, other records show that Charles J. Hull was the recorded owner (although after 1868, not the occupant) of his house until he died, in February of 1889. It was then left to Helen Culver, his cousin and business assistant. On May 1, 1906, she sold the mansion and much surrounding property to the Hull House Association for \$1.00 (Document 3855642). It had been leased by Miss Culver to Hull House since 1900.

The property remained in the hands of the Hull House until March 13, 1963. After a heated battle in the early 1960s, all Hull House property (105 acres) was acquired for \$875,000.00 pursuant to the provisions of the Urban Renewal Consolidation Act of 1961, by the City of Chicago (Document 18742122). The City turned the land over to the University of Illinois April 19, 1963, for \$1,771,698.10 to establish a four year Chicago branch of the University of Illinois.

- c. Additional information: More material on the property history of the Hull House is to be found in files at the Hull House. Included is an abstract of title dated April 25, 1898, with a copy of Charles J. Hull's will attached. From Note 67 of the abstract it appears that Hull, for \$100,000.00, conveyed the entire East 1/2 of Block 11 to Helen Culver August 2, 1875, although the transaction wasn't recorded until February 26, 1889, two weeks after Hull's death (Document 1066039). Also in Hull House files is a copy of a 50-year lease dated October 30, 1900, signed by Helen Culver, turning over most of Lot 1, (including the land under the mansion) to the Hull House Association. It is interesting to note there is a clause in the lease stating that the premises is to be used only for the carrying on of philanthropic work.
4. Original plans and construction: A 1856 painting shows a typically Italianate Victorian house in red brick, of two stories, with a veranda and a cupola. The painting is hung in the Hull House.

An early description of the house is to be found on page 158 of Janet Addams's book, Twenty Years at Hull House. She describes the house as she first saw it-- "a fine old house standing well back from the street, surrounded on three sides by a broad piazza which was supported by wooden pillars of exceptionally pure Corinthian design and proportion."

A portion of Architect Allen B. Pond's 1902 article on the house, "The Settlement House," published in The Brickbuilder, describes the house's original appearance:

"In the year 1856 there was erected at No. 335 South Halsted Street a home for one Charles J. Hull. The builder and owner was a successful man in the yet new West, and the house was spacious for that day and excellently built. In addition to the drawing room and the other usual apartments of a northern house of the period, there was an octagonal office in a one-story wing to the south, opening from the Library and on to the veranda. The material was a purplish red brick, in texture and color not unlike the common brick of Sayre and Fisher. On three sides of the house were broad verandas, a low-gabled roof covered the high attic surmounting the second story, and the wide eaves were carried by heavily molded brackets. Indeed, after the mode of the time, columns, lintels, casings and cornices were all heavily molded; the interior door and window casings being some 12 inches wide by 8 inches deep and elaborately built up of rope and other moldings."

5. Alterations and additions: Numerous alterations have taken place at the Hull House. It has been remodeled extensively over the years and, after a 4-year restoration begun in 1963, today stands as an odd replica of the building constructed in 1856. The restoration is odd because the shell of the structure dates back to its appearance in 1856, and the interior furnishings date from Jane Addams's occupancy of the house after 1889. Eleven of the twelve additions were demolished. Architects Allen B. Pond and Irving K. Pond designed all of these additions. Restoration plans were drawn up by Frazier, Raftery, Orr and Fairbank.

After 1891, the numerous additions to the Hull House were built, gradually surrounding the mansion, leaving only the east (front) facade visible within a courtyard. The original appearance of the building was almost totally obscured in 1905. Architect Irving B. Pond wrote an article about it in a periodical*: "In 1905 a third story was placed on Hull House itself to provide additional

* Name of article and periodical not known. "The Life of Architecture" in The Architectural Record published in 1905 is a possibility (see also Sources of Information).

chambers for women in residence; and both before and since that time the old mansion has been subjected to much remodeling." Indeed, from the many old photographs in the Hull House collection, one can see that doors were broken through, windows were bricked up, and a second story was added to the Octagon Room, Miss Addams's office.

B. Historical Context:

1. In his book on Jane Addams, James Linn, Miss Addams's nephew, delves at some length into the life of Charles Jerold Hull. He notes that Hull was a prosperous real estate developer, an early citizen of Chicago who built his residence in 1856, when the population of Chicago was only 85,000. Born in 1820 to a poor Manchester, Connecticut family, Hull came to Chicago in 1846, left the city to attend Harvard, then returned to enter real estate business. His wife died shortly after the house was completed. Their children died a few years later, and in 1868 Hull closed his house and moved to another part of the city. Hull died in 1889, a month after Miss Addams came to Chicago.

Further information on Hull's life and insights into his personality can be found in his book, Reflections on a Busy Life, published in 1881.

2. Helen Culver, who owned the house after Hull's death, was Hull's cousin. She was born in 1832 and came to Chicago when she was twenty. She became a social worker, and from 1854 to 1861 was connected with the Chicago Public Schools. She also served as a substitute mother for Hull's children after the death of his wife. (The children themselves died a few years later). In 1868 she joined the office of Charles J. Hull, as assistant and advisor. When Hull died, she became the sole beneficiary of his fortune and the sole head of his real estate business. Hull left her personal property valued at \$100,000 and real estate valued at \$900,000. It was Miss Culver who leased her valuable property to Miss Addams and Miss Starr for use as a settlement home.
3. Unquestionably the most important individual associated with the Hull House was its founder, Jane Addams. She is known worldwide for the role she played in starting Hull House and administering its numerous activities.

In 1889, just out of Rockford College, Miss Addams and Ellen Gates Starr set out to look for a suitable location to start settlement house activities. They decided on Chicago's near west side, right in the center of the city's 3/4 million foreign-born inhabitants. The area was ripe for help. Miss Addams notes on page 98 of Twenty Years at Hull House the situation there: schools were

inadequate; sanitary legislation was unenforced; street lighting was bad; paving was miserable, and the stables were foul. Frequently several families were crowded into the same residence.

While riding in their carriage through this neighborhood, Miss Addams and Miss Starr spotted the house, then leased it from Miss Culver. There the young women, with others like them, began aiding the area's poor immigrant families and ultimately helping all the persecuted, underprivileged inhabitants of Chicago. Jane Addams's entire life was devoted to the varied activities of the Hull House. She died May 21, 1935.

Numerous leaders in many fields were once Hull House residents. Among them were historian Charles Beard, poet Harriet Monroe, Senator Paul Douglas and Musician Benny Goodman. Others, including John Dewey, Clarence Darrow, Harold Ickes and Frank Lloyd Wright, never lived at the Hull House, but were strongly influenced by its activities.

4. Successive Directors continued Miss Addams's work at the original Hull House location until 1963, when operation as a settlement ceased and all buildings but the original house and the Dining Room (HABS No. IL-1110-A) were torn down to make way for the University of Illinois.

In February of 1961, the Hull House neighborhood was selected for a 4-year branch of the University of Illinois by Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and seven of nine University trustees without consulting residents of the area and without consent of the Settlement Board. Only Board President, James C. Downs, favored the site, and he resigned his position.

In June, as opposition to demolition became more vocal, Dr. David D. Henry, University President, announced a plan to retain the Hull mansion on its original site. At this time the Save Hull House Committee was fighting to keep all the buildings. A brave and persistent woman, Mrs. Florence Scala, led the neighborhood in organized opposition.

But all efforts to convince the University to pick another site failed. In 1963, the settlement accepted an offer of \$835,000 from the city for all thirteen Hull House buildings. This amounted to \$100,000 over an earlier offer and almost \$1,000,000 less than the Hull House Board originally asked. Only the mansion and the Dining Room were saved.

The services and activities of the Hull House were relocated to several centers around the city.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A restored Italianate Victorian house that was formerly attached to many additions.
2. Condition of fabric: Restored condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Hull House stands two stories, with a basement, an attic and a cupola. The east and west facades are 46' and the north and south, 40'. To the south is a 16' x 18' projection that, on the interior, is an octagonally shaped room. A 9' veranda extends around the entire house.
2. Foundations: The foundation walls are of brick.
3. Walls: All of the house is faced in a deep red brick. The veranda, ornamented brackets supporting the roof, and window surrounds are all of white painted wood. There is almost no applied ornament on the building's exterior.
4. Structural system, framing: The house is of traditional wood and masonry construction.
5. Porches: Around the entire house is a wood veranda, 9' wide, 12'6" high. Pillars with Corinthian capitals support its roof.
6. Chimneys: There are three chimneys, 4'6" high and 2'5" wide. Two are located on the north side of the house, one on the south.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are two doorways, at the front and back of the central hallway that runs the length of the house. Both are of wood. At back is a single door. The front entrance is the more interesting and elaborate of the two. It is a double door, approximately 11'5" high and 6" wide. Each 3' wide door has three panels, the upper two of glass.
 - b. Windows: Windows are large, double-hung and located symmetrically. Those on the ground floor are topped by segmental arches and are approximately 3' wide by 10' high. Mullions divide them into ten panes. The second-story windows are topped by round brick arches and are approximately 3' wide by 8' tall. They are divided into eight panes. There are new stone sills. Every window has recessed interior shutters.

On each side of the rebuilt cupola are two round headed windows, divided into four panes.

8. Roof: The house has a slightly pitched gable roof of metal. Ornamented white wooden brackets support cornices on the main house and on the cupola.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The first floor of the Hull House is comprised of four rooms. As you enter the 8' wide central hallway, a 16' x 34' reception-exhibition area is to your right. To your left are restored rooms, two double parlors and the octagon room, a memorial room to Jane Addams. The front parlor, with the 14' x 14' octagon room off it, is 16' x 16'. The rear parlor is 16' x 18'.
- b. Second floor: The second floor has one 16' x 18' museum room, formerly Miss Addams's office-sitting room, over the rear parlor. Over the front parlor is a 16' x 16' Curator's office. The 16' x 24' Preston Bradley Library of material on the settlement movement, the Hull House, and its residents is located at the front of the house, over the downstairs reception area. At the back is a cloak room and a bathroom.

2. Stairways: A long, curved 23-step stairway leads to the second floor and attic from the left side of the central hallway. Its balustrade is of wood. The newel post is simple and massive with detailing that picks up the octagon motif, which is also found on the balusters.
3. Flooring: Flooring throughout the house is of narrow oak strips. (Probably a modern installment).
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Except for the parlors, which are wallpapered, all the interior walls are painted white. Ornamental mouldings are found around the windows, doors and the edge of the ceilings.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Interior doors are tall and of wood.
 - b. Windows: (Not recorded).

6. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Lighting: There are handsome hanging brass fixtures with etched frosted glass globes located in the parlors and in the exhibit area.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Hull House and the Hull House Dining Room, the only two buildings preserved from the original complex, are connected by a 156' long, 9' wide pillared walkway. Both buildings are located on a small parcel of land at the eastern edge of the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus, within the school's boundaries.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: Numerous photos, from 1891 to the present, are to be found in the collection of the Hull House. There are exteriors of the house and entire complex, interior photos showing the buildings as furnished by Jane Addams, photos of the neighborhood the Hull House served and photos of those who played a role in the development of the settlement. Several of these photographs have been published.

B. Bibliography:

1. Secondary and published sources:

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- Miscellaneous newspaper clippings from files in the Library of the Chicago Historical Society, North Avenue and LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois.

2. Primary and unpublished sources:

Building permits and records pertaining to construction, restoration and demolition of the Hull House settlement buildings (where available), 9th Floor, City Hall, Chicago, Illinois.

Records of Ownership: Book 474B, Office of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds, County Building, Chicago, Illinois.

Revised Documentation on the Hull House and Hull House Dining Room,
800 South Halsted Street, Chicago, Illinois. Commission on
Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks.

Material on record at the Hull House:

Abstract and examination of title, dated April 25, 1898.

Blueprints drawn up for the restoration of the Hull House by
Frazier, Raftery, Orr and Fairbank, architects.

Legal records including leases between Jane Addams and Helen
Culver, a report for the Legal and Insurance Committee of
Hull House Association on Acquisition by the Department of
Urban Renewal, City of Chicago., and the Will of Charles
J. Hull, dated October 21, 1881.

Miscellaneous files on Jane Addams, Helen Culver, Charles J.
Hull, the Hull House Settlement, etc.

Photos of the Hull House Settlement including some of
demolition and restoration, of Hull House activities, of
the neighborhood, etc.

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