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November 18, 2014

McHenry City Council
333 S. Green Street
McHenry, IL 60050

RE: Agenda Item 6C – Landmark School Historical Designation

Mayor Jett and City Council Members:

On behalf of Landmarks Illinois, I ask the City Council to approve the landmark designation of Landmark School located at 3614 Waukegan Road. Since 1971, Landmarks Illinois has served as the statewide nonprofit organization helping people save the historic places that are important to their communities. We believe that Landmark School is one of those places, having served McHenry since 1894. In 1994, Landmark School received a landmark plaque to recognize its significance. Approving its local landmark designation will affirm what McHenry already recognized 30 years ago—that Landmark School is an important piece of McHenry's history deserving of local recognition and protection.

Understanding that the building is scheduled to cease operation as a school, we wish to address any concerns that landmarking will make the building incompatible with a new use. In fact, historic schools are often excellent candidates for adaptive reuse. We have seen numerous examples of successful school reuses in recent years, from [West Pullman School in Chicago](#) to the [Tiger Senior Apartments in Paris, Illinois](#), both of which transformed a vacant school into a community asset, winning them Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Awards.

Designating Landmark School is also compatible with McHenry's plans for the future of the downtown area. Page 36 of the draft Downtown Plan also before you for consideration on November 18 prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings in McHenry's downtown. By voting in favor of this agenda item, the Council can proactively protect one of those resources so that it can continue to contribute to McHenry's downtown landscape.

We encourage you to vote in favor of designating Landmark School. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Kendra Parzen
Advocacy Manager