

**ULI Chicago 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Vision Awards  
July 10, 2019**



**Program Finalist: Carling SRO**

**Team:**

Developer: The Michaels Organization  
Architecture Firm: Landon Bone Baker Architects  
Historic Consultant: MacRostie Historic Advisors

**Description:**

As the first SRO sold under the City of Chicago's 2014 SRO Preservation Ordinance, an initiative created to retain affordable housing units in redevelopment plans for SRO buildings, the Carling SRO serves as an innovative template for the renaissance of a much-needed but often stigmatized housing type in Chicago. Due to the desirability of the neighborhood, continued affordable development in the Old Town neighborhood is unlikely, particularly for aging individuals earning less than 30% AMI. Although the unit count of the building was reduced by nearly half, preservation of this unique and historic SRO building in Old Town maintains an affordable housing solution for residents of a changing neighborhood. Designed by Edmund Meles and built in 1927 in the attractive Old Town neighborhood, the previously dreary and unkempt substandard public and apartment spaces were reconfigured from 155 to 80 units to provide residents with larger apartments that include private bathrooms and kitchenettes. The common areas utilize expanded social spaces with updated technology and modern finishes that create inviting places for residents. Amenities include a resident computer lab and bicycle storage, as well as preserved historic interior courtyard spaces for visitor, staff, and resident visual enjoyment. Historic elements such as exterior masonry details, terrazzo flooring, plaster walls, arched doorways, and double-loaded corridors were also restored. The result is a transformation from a neglected, dark building into a bright, warm home for residents of the community. Residents of The Carling are proud to reside in such a vibrant building in an amenity-rich neighborhood near downtown Chicago. Conservation and revitalization of the Carling validates and retains the community history and pride by maintaining the neighborhood fabric and identity, which long-term residents value. At the official opening, Mayor Rahm Emanuel remarked, "The beauty of the Carling is not just the architecture, but what it represents for the people who will make their permanent homes here. Today's ribbon cutting is a milestone in an effort to help make sure that everyone who wants to be a part of the city can afford to do so."

The completion and rehabilitation of the Carling demonstrates the value of combining historic preservation, design, local policy, and private investment in creating affordable housing options for the people of Chicago. The Carling team worked to create a new category in the National Register for Historic Places that allowed Carling, and other residential hotels (SROs) to utilize a Multiple Properties Documentation Form (MPDF), Historic Tax Credits, and be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Because of this work the nearby sister building, The Marshall SRO at 1232 North LaSalle, has been also preserved and rehabilitated using the same methods of financing as part of a larger initiative to preserve SRO

units in the portfolio of affordable housing options for Chicago residents. Chicago has lost more than 30% of its SROs between 2008 and 2016 which demonstrates an alarmingly rapid decline in the availability of these property types. Moving forward, the pairing of the Residential Hotels MPDF and the SRO Preservation Ordinance will help to preserve a key component of Chicago's diverse housing stock while maintaining affordability for residents.