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Open House Chicago 2026 Site Photos

THE CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE CENTER ANNOUNCES NEW SITES AND FULL LINEUP FOR THE 16th OPEN HOUSE CHICAGO® FESTIVAL, FEATURING MORE THAN 200 LOCATIONS, FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, OCTOBER 17 AND 18, 2026

The Annual Public Festival, One of the Largest of its Kind in the World, Provides Free Access to Architecturally, Historically and Culturally Significant Sites Across 30 Diverse Chicago Neighborhoods, Including 20 Sites That Are All New to the Festival in 2026

CHICAGO, September 9, 2026 — The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2026, announces the 200+ sites for the 16th Open House Chicago® festival, taking place across 30 Chicago neighborhoods, Saturday and Sunday, October 17-18, 2026. Open House Chicago® (OHC), one of the largest architecture and urban exploration festivals in the world, is a free annual festival that provides behind-the-scenes access to places of architectural, historical and cultural significance. No advance registration is required to participate; visitors simply choose their sites and show up during daily Open House hours. Plan your itinerary at openhousechicago.org.

Every October, Open House Chicago® attracts more than 35,000 visitors from across the region and around the U.S., for special free access to lofty skyscraper rooftops and penthouses, historic landmarks, breweries and distilleries, houses of worship, innovative workspaces, schools and greenspaces, many that are seldom open to the public, while highlighting businesses, organizations and creative leaders making a positive impact. This year, OHC will feature more than 200 locations across 30 Chicago neighborhoods, including 20 sites that are all new to the festival, and debut the new Built on Belief initiative.

"Open House Chicago® is a chance to discover our city's historic and contemporary architecture with an unprecedented level of access," said Eleanor Esser Gorski, President &

CEO of the Chicago Architecture Center. "We hope that attendees strengthen their relationships with architectural spaces in their own neighborhoods, while also exploring diverse communities across the city and gaining confidence to participate more fully in conversations around architecture, design and civic life."

Twenty sites making their Open House Chicago® debut in 2026 include: Muddy Waters MOJO Museum inside the restored Kenwood residence of the Father of Chicago Blues; Smashed Plastic Record Pressing, a vinyl LP pressing plant located in the former Hammond Organ factory in Hermosa; the Studio Gang-designed Chinese American Service League Kam Liu Building in Chinatown; and the Revival-style Women's Athletic Club on the Near North Side, home of the first athletic club for women in the United States. New sites for 2026:

- Blackhawks Ice Center (Near West Side)
- Muddy Waters MOJO Museum (Kenwood)
- Smashed Plastic Record Pressing (Hermosa)
- Windy City Bird Lab (Near West Side)
- Sears Sunken Garden (North Lawndale)
- Oak Woods Cemetery (Woodlawn) *Built on Belief site
- Narrow Bridge Arts Club (Woodlawn) *Built on Belief site
- TimeLine Theatre (Uptown)
- Broadway in Chicago's Cadillac Palace Theatre (Downtown)
- Woman's Athletic Club (Near North Side)
- Chinese American Service League Kam Liu Building (Chinatown)
- Xchange Chicago at Gary Comer Youth Center (Woodlawn)
- St. Pauls United Church of Christ (Lincoln Park)
- Albany-Carroll Arts Building (Garfield Park)
- FarmZero (Downtown)
- Olson Kundig (Near West Side)
- Bronzeville Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Headquarters (Bronzeville)
- BandWith Chicago (Garfield Park)
- Griffin Museum of Science and Industry (Hyde Park)

Debuting this year during Open House Chicago® weekend is CAC's Built on Belief program, exploring the intersections of architecture, religion and spirituality. Three sites in the Woodlawn neighborhood — the Narrow Bridge Arts Club, First Presbyterian Church of Chicago and Oak Woods Cemetery — will co-create site-specific exhibitions and programs for the festival. Together, these three locations tell a story of how this South Side neighborhood has been shaped by different faith communities and sacred sites over generations. Built on Belief is made possible by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative.

In addition to the new sites and programs, some greatest OHC hits return this year after taking a break, including: House of Blues, part of Bertrand Goldberg's Marina City; The Plant

in Back of the Yards; Adler & Sullivan's 1889 Auditorium Theater in the Loop; Center for Native Futures in the Marquette Building; the Jazz Age Park Castle Condominiums in Rogers Park; the historic Al-Sadiq Mosque in Bronzeville; the hidden, private Birch Road Clubhouse in Lincoln Park; and Chinatown's iconic Pui Tak Center. Returning favorites for 2026 include:

- Chicago Magic Lounge (Andersonville)
- Electrical Audio (Avondale)
- Chicago Board of Trade (Downtown)
- Apollo's 2000 (Little Village)
- Avalon Regal Theater (South Shore)
- Stony Island Arts Bank (South Shore)
- Walt Disney House and Birthplace (Hermosa)
- Irish American Heritage Center (Irving Park)
- Bronzeville Forum (Bronzeville)
- Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation/Chess Records (Near South Side)
- First Presbyterian Church of Chicago (Woodlawn) *Built on Belief site

Photography Competition

Returning for its third year in 2026 is the OHC photo competition. Festival attendees of all ages and skill levels can showcase their photography skills by submitting photos taken at OHC sites with the theme of celebrating Chicago's diverse neighborhoods. Submissions can be made through the competition webpage at architecture.org. Six winners will have their photography displayed in the CAC's Chicago Gallery.

CTA Transit Plan

OHC encourages festivalgoers to utilize public transportation to access the 200+ OHC sites. The Chicago Transit Authority, which operates the City's train and bus system, is a sponsor of the event; routes between sites via bus and train can be mapped through the OHC website.

Visitors interested in attending the event can learn more details on the Chicago Architecture Center's website to plan their OHC weekend.

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About the Chicago Architecture Center

The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), a nonprofit celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2026, showcases Chicago and ideas from cities worldwide to inspire better living through design. A national leader in architecture and design education, the CAC offers tours, programs, exhibitions and more that are part of a dynamic journey of lifelong learning.

Opened to the public in 2018, its riverfront location is in the heart of the city, where Michigan Avenue meets the Chicago River, featuring nearly 10,000 square feet of exhibition space with views of a century of iconic skyscrapers.

Through partnerships with schools and youth-serving organizations, the CAC reaches approximately 5,000 K-12 students annually, while teacher workshops provide educators with tools and resources they need to advance STEM curricula in their classrooms. Committed to serving under-represented communities in construction, engineering and design professions, the CAC offers many of its education programs — and all its programs for teens — at no cost to participants. CAC programs for adults and members include talks with acclaimed authors and practicing architects, in-depth presentations on issues and trends in urbanism and classes unlocking subjects related to the built environment.

Proceeds from programs, tours and the CAC Design Store, as well as from grants, sponsorships and donations, support its educational mission. Visit architecture.org to learn more and follow @chiarchitecture and #chiarchitecture on social media.