

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Lorado Taft Midway Studios
AND/OR COMMON
Lorado Taft Midway Studios

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
University of Chicago, 6016 Ingleside Avenue
CITY, TOWN
Chicago
STATE
Illinois
VICINITY OF
CODE
05
COUNTY
Cook
CODE
031
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
University of Chicago, (Office of Special Events, Administration Building)
STREET & NUMBER
5801 Ellis Avenue
CITY, TOWN
Chicago
STATE
Illinois
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Cook County Recorder and Registrar of Titles
STREET & NUMBER
118 North Clark
CITY, TOWN
Chicago
STATE
Illinois

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
none known

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

UNALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE

GOOD

RUINS

ALTERED

MOVED DATE _____

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Lorado Taft's wife, Ada Bartlett Taft, described the Midway Studios in her biography of her husband, Lorado Taft, Sculptor and Citizen:

In 1906 Lorado moved his main studio out of the crowded Loop into a large, deserted brick barn on the University of Chicago property on the Midway. Soon two frame barns were moved up, connected with the studio, and converted into dormitories, one for boys and one for girls. Lorado explained that he built like the chambered nautilus, cell after cell, until there were 13 studios occupied by himself and associated sculptors and many assistants--at least 20 in all. Most of these private studios opened on to a large roofed court to which in time was added a fireplace and a fountain; a marble-cutting room and a stage for plays were built later.

One end of the court was dominated by the original plaster case of Lorado's bronze group of the Great Lakes. The head of Lake Superior towered up into the painted skylight, which could be completed only after the group was moved into place. Behind and underneath the five great figures was a marvelous little kitchen.

Taft did not give lessons, but encouraged the young artists to attend the Art Institute or some other school and to learn studio techniques by watching and helping. The Midway Studios artists were a close-knit group and they would attend the university symphony together and gather for tea and entertainment in the various studios. As the reputation of the studio and the artists spread, visitors quickly became more numerous.

Below Taft's own private studio, which today contains many of his original models and studies, was what he called the "Dream Museum" room, containing an enormous table of time replicas in plaster of the great masterpieces of the world arranged according to the plan for his Dream Museum. Also in this room were eight dioramas of the studios of the great Greek and Renaissance sculptors, as well as della Quercia's Ilaria and Taft's group The Blind.

When Taft moved from the Loop in 1906, he moved the old brick barn which became the nucleus of his Midway Studio about one block to its present location. He built addition after addition to it, and also occupied part of the large Victorian house on the corner of East 60th Street, currently used by the Sociology Department. About 1929 the back section of the studio was constructed and since then parts of the complex have been remodeled using cinderblocks and fiberglass skylights, and reusing lots of old materials.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1906-1929 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Lorado Taft

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A sculptor of realistic works of monumental scale, Lorado Taft (1860-1936) executed numerous memorials, fountains, group sculptures, military monuments, and portraits. Through these works, his writings, and his many years as an art teacher and lecturer, he greatly influenced American sculpture, and in particular that produced by Midwestern artists.

Taft entered the University of Illinois in 1875, was graduated with honors in 1879, and received a Master of Arts degree in 1880. While attending the University he took what rudimentary art instruction he could along with his other studies. He then left for Paris, where he spent three years as a student at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. His record there was outstanding; he was cited as "top man" in his studio and twice exhibited at the Salon.

Taft remained in Paris until 1885. In 1886 he opened a studio in Chicago and joined the faculty of the Chicago Art Institute, where he taught until 1907. There he pioneered in new methods of sculpture instruction. Where previous teaching had been limited to work in clay and plaster, Taft introduced marble carving; and, by assigning group compositions instead of individual projects, he gave his students experience with complex organizational problems. Taft continued to lecture at the Art Institute until 1929, lectured at the University of Chicago from 1892, and after 1919 was nonresident professor of art affiliated with the University of Illinois.

Taft's earlier works, such as the "Awakening of the Flowers," commissioned for the Columbian Exposition of 1893, showed the influence of his French training. With French sculptors of the period he shared a technically solid naturalism and an enthusiasm for basically illustrational or mythical themes. However, by the turn of the century he had developed a personal style which, although still conservative, was broader and more simplified. His "Solitude of the Soul" (1901) at the Art Institute in Chicago and the monumental "Black Hawk" (1911) at Oregon, Illinois, well illustrate this change.

In the field of fountain sculpture Taft was preeminent. After executing the "Columbus Memorial Fountain" in Washington, D.C., in 1912, he received commissions for many other fountains. Among these were the "Ferguson Fountain

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After Taft left the Midway in 1929, the Associated Sculptors used the building, with several artists maintaining their residence there, until 1936. After Taft's death the university used the area for the anthropology department and for storage, and finally for the Art Department. In 1966 the complex underwent a major renovation for use by the Art Department. The old part of the studios was repaired, but little of the basic plan was changed, and a new building, the painting studio, was built in 1972.

The Midway Studios is a labyrinth of studios housed in a rambling collection of brick buildings with jutting roofs of different heights and slopes, made up of parts of different kinds of brick and stone and variously patterned shingles, although the overall colors are black trim on dark brick. Skylights cover the roof and illumine every room, including baths. There are great old-fashioned heavy doors and windows of every shape and size in an irregular arrangement. Inside there are high-ceilinged studios, exposed beams, dozens of skylights, overhanging balconies and stairs leading to them, upstairs working quarters, and lots of little private corners and nooks suited for artists' use.

New lights, new ceilings, fresh paint, new kitchen facilities and equipment have adapted the old studios for contemporary art use, while making no basic changes to the structure or character of the Taft Studios--except for the construction in 1972 of the new painting studio--to the northwest, and of lighter brick, two stories, with skylight roof.

The Court, once lined with full-size plaster models, is now a gallery for student work. Most of the studios around the court are used for classes, Taft's private studio in the brick barn is used for independent work, while the courtyard is used for summer art lectures.

Taft's studio soon grew to abut and connect with the large two and one-half story, brick, Victorian house on the corner of 60th and Ingleside, which he used as residence and storage area. Then the complex grew from this house west along 60th Street. All the various structures are connected by halls, doors or covered passages. The courtyard, which is now filled with the work of students and the sculptors-in-residence is surrounded by studios on three sides, and on the west by shrubbery and a fence.

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of the Great Lakes" (1913) in Chicago, the "Thatcher Memorial Fountain" (1917) in Denver, and the "Fountain of Time" (1922) in Chicago.

To accommodate these large fountains Taft moved an old two-story, hip-roofed barn to the Chicago Midway. This was the nucleus of the famous Midway Studios, a collection of buildings housing an ever-changing group of independent artists and students who worked and lived together.

Remaining productive until his death in 1936, Taft executed numerous works, ranging from low reliefs to very large complex groups. Among the better known are "Lincoln, the Young Lawyer" (1927), "The Pioneers" (1928), "Alma Mater" (1929), and the "Lincoln-Douglas Debate" (1936).

Although today Taft's work is considered conservative, his place in the history of American art is unquestioned. He is recognized as being among the earliest American sculptors to work with group compositions and one of the first to execute monumental fountains; and his book on The History of American Sculpture (published in 1903), the first comprehensive work on the subject, is still regarded as sound. Perhaps, however, his greatest importance was as an "art missionary." Believing beauty and art should be a part of everyday life and feeling this could best be accomplished by education of the young, he worked unceasingly to encourage art education in the public schools.

The Midway Studios, on the Midway Plaisance at 6016 South Ingleside Avenue in Chicago, are owned today by the University of Chicago and are used as classrooms and studios by the University's Art Department. The Studios appear today very much as they did when Taft worked and taught there. Of especial interest is the Court Gallery, which in Taft's day, held plaster models of classic sculpture and some of the artist's works; now it is used for continually changing student displays. The barn, which Taft moved to the Midway and used as his private studio, is used today by students pursuing individual projects.

History from original report, 1965.

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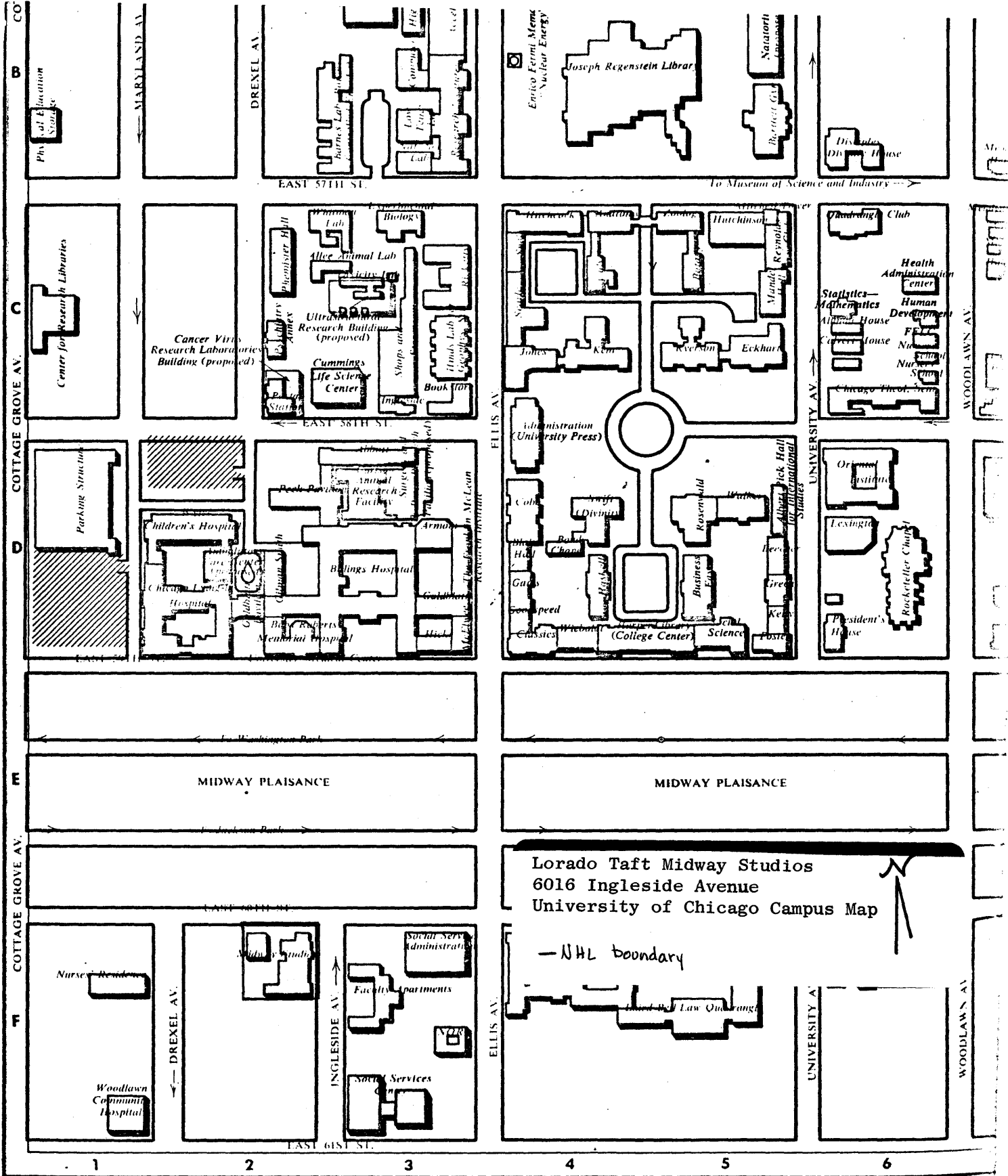
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The Midway Studios are located in lots 5, 6, and 7 in block 5 in Clarke, Martin and Layton's subdivision of the South 1/2 of the North 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of Section 14, Township 39 North, Range 14 East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.

As seen on the enclosed University of Chicago campus map, beginning at the south west corner of East 60th Street and Ingleside Avenue, the boundary follows the west curb of Ingleside Avenue in a southerly direction to the southeast corner of the old barn; thence due west along the southern wall of complex which is immediately adjacent to an alley, and then a fence which encloses the Studio's property; thence north along the fence which is screened by a row of shrubs at the west end of the court yard to East 60th Street; thence east along the southern curb of East 60th Street to the beginning point. Of the structures enclosed within this boundary, only the 1972 painting studio is non-historic and does not contribute to the national significance of the landmark.



Points of Interest

- Bond Chapel (D-4)**, open for prayer and meditation, Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone: 753-4031.
- Enrico Fermi Memorial (B-4)**, a bronze sculpture entitled "Nuclear Energy" by the British sculptor Henry Moore, marks the spot where Enrico Fermi and 41 other scientists achieved man's first controlled self-

ment plutonium was first isolated (August 18, 1942) and weighed (September 10, 1942). Visitors are welcome weekdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- Robie House (C-7)**, 5757 Woodlawn Avenue, is the internationally-known "prairie house" designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. It now houses the Adlai Stevenson Center for International Affairs.

Neighbors

American Bar Center (F-6) provides offices for the national American Bar Association (one of the nation's educational institutions) and national legal organizations. **Center for Research Libr-**