

# 1312 North Astor Street Preservation Parameters & FAQ



Historic Image of Astor Street, 1312 at far right

## Property Facts

**Year Constructed:** 1887

**Architect:** Burnham & Root

**Historic Designations:**

Astor Street City of Chicago Landmark District  
Gold Coast National Register District

**Total Square Footage:** 4,920sf + 1071 sf below grade

**Max. FAR:** 2.0

**Built FAR:** 2.6

## Historic Home FAQs

**Does the Commission on Chicago Landmarks and the State Historic Preservation Office need to review every change I make?**

No - Landmarks staff does review permit drawings for designated properties, however unless the property is specifically designated as an interior landmark they only have purview over the exterior.

**Can I install solar panels?**

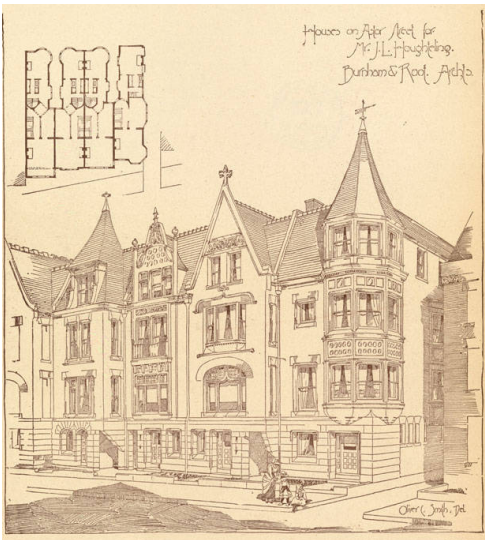
Yes - Typically Landmarks and the State Historic Preservation Office allows the installation of solar panels as long as they are not visible from the street.

**Does the Landmark designation impact the value of my property?**

Yes - Economic studies of home values in historic districts across the country have indicated a steady increase in property values each year, in some cases increasing the home's value by nearly 20% per year.

**Can I change the sizes and locations of window openings?**

Maybe - Dependant upon the location of the window, some fenestration patterns may be changed but will be reviewed by Landmarks staff to determine appropriateness. Windows visible from Astor Street likely cannot be changed, but all windows can be replaced with new so long as they match the original profiles and mullion patterns.



Historic Drawing of James L. Houghteling Row Houses

## Sustainable Design Opportunities

**Increased Insulation**

As a property built in 1887, the exterior walls do not house any insulation. Introducing insulation can improve the energy performance of the building and save on annual energy usage and costs.

**Energy Efficient Systems**

Utilizing energy efficient heating and cooling systems such as VRF (all electric) cuts down on fossil fuel use and reduces energy consumption and costs.

**LED Lighting**

Upgrading fixtures throughout the property to LED fixtures reduces electricity costs.

**Skylights & Solar Tubes**

Lower levels of the property have areas that could benefit from additional natural light, achieved through the installation of skylights or solar tubes as these solutions typically cannot be seen from the street and would be allowable by Landmarks.

**Healthy Indoor Materials**

The interior environmental quality of the property can be improved through the selection of materials and finishes that are not only beautiful but also healthy. Low-VOC and red list free materials are recommended for user health.



# 1312 North Astor Street

## Overview of Potential

## Lower Level

The lower level is a large basement space suitable for storage and property utilities. The ceiling height is too low to be considered a viable living space without excavating the floor. The existing property is above the maximum FAR for the zoning district, meaning a zoning variance would need to be sought to convert the lower level to livable space.

## Ground Floor

The ground floor of the property features an original entry hall with a handsome fireplace, however beyond this reception space the floor was historically a utilitarian space. The one-car garage is large enough for some storage space. Being on the ground level, this is the darkest living space in the property and lends itself well to continued utilitarian uses such as:

- **Mud Room**  
Adjacent to the garage or incorporated into the existing entry hall, a large mud room could house coats, shoes, and bags in a designated, conveniently located space.
- **Laundry Room**  
The primary laundry room could be advantageously located directly next to the mud room for quick clean up.
- **Private Guest Suite**  
Capturing space from the kitchenette, relocated laundry room, and storage space could create a comfortable, private guest suite.

## Second Floor

The second floor of the property holds the shared living spaces and features three fireplaces. Opportunities include:

- **Enlarged Kitchen**  
Reconfiguring the kitchen to enlarge and open it to the family room will better accommodate modern living and introduce ample natural light.
- **Historic Living & Dining**  
The existing living and dining room spaces are appropriately sized and feature two unique bay window configurations. Original pocket doors between the two spaces allow for separation.
- **Additional Terrace**  
The roof above the garage could be structurally reinforced to accommodate a terrace. Enlarged openings at the family room wall could provide access directly from the kitchen.

## Third Floor

The third floor of the property currently features three bedrooms, but better uses of the space could be explored:

- **Increased Bedroom Count**  
Bedroom, bathroom, and closet spaces could be reconfigured for more quality, usable space.
- **Dressing Rooms & Closets**  
Dependent upon owner needs, ample space can be devoted to walk-in closets or a dressing room.

## Fourth Floor

The fourth floor of the property is a partial floor with access to a rooftop terrace at the back half of the property.

- **Primary Bedroom Suite**  
The floor layout currently lends itself to use as a primary suite, with space for a large bathroom and closet
- **Roof Terrace + Wet Bar**  
With access to the roof terrace, there is also opportunity for some of this level to be committed to functions such as a wet bar for ease of entertainment on the terrace
- **Skylights**  
As the top floor, this level can take advantage of natural light through the installation of skylights.

