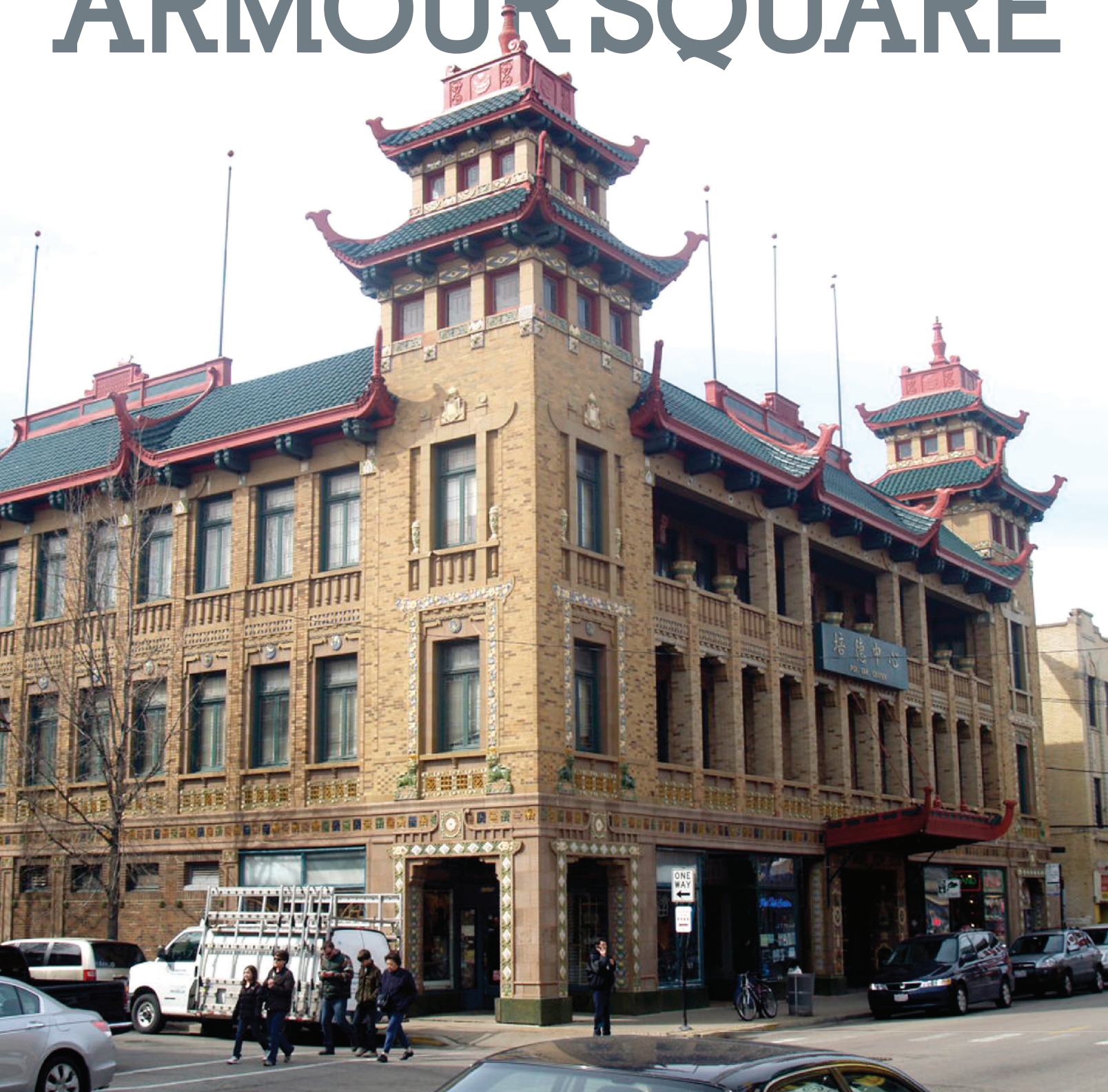


THE MANY ALLURES OF
CHINATOWN
ARMOUR SQUARE



WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Chinatown/Armour Square



Wentworth Ave. business corridor



Long-standing Chinatown restaurants



Residence in older Chinatown



Chinatown's Chicago Public Library

After the Lunar New Year Parade, the Autumn Moon Festival and the Dragon Boat Race, who remains in Chinatown/Armour Square? A wide variety of people who've invested in this vibrant, colorful community. Chinatown's central location and wealth of cultural and commercial amenities make it attractive to both long-standing residents and first-time buyers.

Area listings can sell quickly. Amy Duong, e-PRO, broker with the AAA Realty Group, Inc., has received offers on homes in the older section of Chinatown that potential buyers have never seen.

"Homes near Cermak and Wentworth rarely hit the market, so when something does hit, it goes quickly," she says. "I had a townhome listing off Wentworth that was under contract within hours. I received phone calls well beyond its closing date. So many people love the area and want to be there."

In 2000, Chicago's Chinatown was the second-largest U.S. Chinatown after San Francisco in terms of the population that lives and works there, according to the Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce.

Home to Chinese-American families and a local tourist attraction for decades, the community's heart is the dramatic Chinatown Gate at Cermak Rd. and Wentworth Ave. Boarded on the north by 18th St., west by the South Branch of the Chicago River and the Dan Ryan Expressway, and east by Clark and Federal streets, Chinatown merges at its south extreme with Armour Square, which incorporates U.S. Cellular Field and stretches to Bridgeport. This long, thin expanse of land is within an easy commute of Chicago's Loop, lakefront, Pilsen, UIC and Little Italy. A straight shot to the Dan Ryan (I-90/94), Stevenson (I-55) and Lake Shore Drive, it is also served by the CTA Red Line's Cermak-Chinatown stop and two city buses (the 62 Archer and the 24 Wentworth).

The majority of central Chinatown residents are Chinese immigrants, according to the Chinese American Service League, including both newcomers who are still adjusting to U.S. lifestyles and older people who feel secure in a Chinese cultural environment. The majority of housing stock in this part of town is single-family homes, surmises Tanya Petty, ABR, MBA, broker with @properties. Many of these homes are now two-flat condo conversions.

To expand the community's residential and commercial opportunities, a two-level retail and commercial mecca was completed north of central Chinatown in 1993, called Chinatown Square. More housing has since arisen near the square, including townhomes, condos and senior citizen residences.

"There is definitely a different vibe between the older and newer parts of the community," Duong says. "In the newer section, the community is making a real effort to expand the

variety of retail stores and restaurants and make the area an even more attractive to potential home-buyers."

The older part of Chinatown dates back to about 1910. In 1890, a quarter of the city's Chinese population lived along Clark St. between Van Buren and Harrison streets, according to the Chicago Historical Society. By 1910 these residents were transitioning to Chinatown's current location, mainly for more affordable housing. Chinatown expanded before 1980 into Armour Square. In 2000 Chicago had 32,187 Chinese residents, 33 percent of whom lived in Chinatown and adjacent areas.

What's selling in... Armour Square?

FastSTATS Year End 2010 (8034)

Attached Single Family Detached Single Family

Units: 6 Units: 2

Median Price: \$241,400 Median Price: \$342,240

Check out neighborhood stats for all 77 Chicagoland neighborhoods and select suburbs at www.ChicagoREALTOR.com.

FastSTATS consists of average sales price, median sales price, market time, units sold and percent change for Chicago and the suburbs.

Chinatown/Armour Square



Chinatown Gate at Cermak & Wentworth



Chinatown Square



Traditional Chinese foods abound



Newer housing near Chinatown Square

Today's Chinatown remains a community hub and business center for Chinese-Americans in and around Chicago, as well as a destination for restaurants, shops and services that cater to people interested in Chinese culture.

Armour Square began as a working-class community, the Chicago Historical Society notes. Situated between railways, expressways and the South Branch of the Chicago River, the area was settled by German, Irish and later Swedish immigrants. By 1999, Chinese-Americans accounted for more than half of the area's population.

Petty, who lived for six years in the Appleville Condominiums complex on 24th St., says that, like her clients, she was drawn to Chinatown/Armour Square by its real estate values and central location.

"People who come here know what they want. It's about the location. When I lived in Chinatown I could see the city's fireworks out my window. In nice weather, I could walk home from my job downtown," she says.

Petty bought her spacious, two-bedroom, two-bath condo in 2000 for \$185,000 and sold it in 2006 for \$242,000. Good values are still available, she says.

Chinatown/Armour Square is ideal for first-time buyers, says Duong, who has handled a number of recent transactions there. Her buyers typically seek townhomes or condos near the city that they can comfortably afford. They tend to look at both Chinatown/Armour Square and Bridgeport, she says.

"People who look at Chinatown are looking all over that general area because of its proximity to their jobs, the lakefront, nightlife and Sox field," she says.

Chinatown/Armour Square practically sells itself, attest both Petty and Duong. As in any neighborhood, REALTORS® may have to work around certain challenges. Here they can include limited inventory and communications issues, neither of which prohibits sales.

"Any good REALTOR® can sell in Chinatown and Armour Square, just like in any Chicago neighborhood," says Duong. "This is a really strong community. The prices are lower than on the North Side, you have great transportation and you're close to a lot of terrific neighborhoods. There's always something new popping up. It's a lot of fun."

Relatively recent community development initiatives to attract more young families and other residents have included parks, malls, recreational facilities and a larger school, according to the Chinese American Service League. Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce efforts have included new festivals, promoting greater technology use by local businesses, a partnership with its Chicago Police District, summer movies and concerts in the park, and neighborhood beautification.

Parks and Cultural Institutions

Chicago Chinese Cultural Institute, 2145B S. China Pl. *Promotes Chinese culture and U.S.-Chinese exchange of cultural products. Organizes Chinatown tours for the general public.*

Chinese American Museum of Chicago, 238 W. 23rd St. *Collection highlights Chinese immigration since the 1800s.*

Nine Dragon Wall, 170 W. Cermak Rd. *Modeled on a Beijing landmark, this mural depicts large dragons and more than 500 smaller dragons that signify good fortune.*

Ping Tom Memorial Park, along the South Branch of the Chicago River at 18th St. *Named in honor of civic leader Ping Tom, this 12-acre park's landscape is inspired by traditional Chinese walled gardens.*

Services

Chinatown Square, 2100 S. Wentworth Ave. *Framed by the iconic Chinatown Square Zodiacs, this retail/commercial center features colorful shops and restaurants.*

Ching Wei Furniture Show Room, 2349 S. Wentworth Ave. *Chinese furniture and gifts.*

Dor Fook Jewelry, 2410 S. Wentworth Ave. *For jade and other precious items. GR*