



Chicago's Hull House Fights With Courage

By **ROGER EBERT**
Editor

CHICAGO — Hull House faces destruction with courage.

It is surrounded by a neighborhood that is making a desperate sometimes hysterical plea to "save our homes."

But settlement house officials realize that the coming of the University of Illinois is inevitable. They are not fighting it.

But they are bitter about the "hatchet-swingers" who would rip apart Chicago's most historic site.

"There is no need to bulldoze Jane Addams' home," Hull House director Russell Ballard told me. "What we're fighting for is the sparing of the original Hull mansion as a central building for a new school of social work at the University."

Ballard says that Hull House—which has been called the "cradle of American social work"—would be an invaluable asset to the University. "Students would come from all over the nation to study here," he said. "The Hull mansion would be an irreplaceable tradition for a new campus."

Ballard says the settlement house will move its work to an unserved neighborhood in Chicago. But he wants a living memorial to Jane Addams left behind—"and not a bronze tablet, either."

"We think those who want to level Hull House are without a sense of value," Ballard asserts. "They're insensitive to one of America's most famous historic shrines."

Ballard is backed up on this by Irving Dilliard, Collinsville, a member of the UI Board of Trustees. In a widely-circulated state

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ment before the board last February, Dilliard said the University will gain world-wide notoriety for "an act of vandalism that will live in infamy" if it razes Hull House.

It is the most historic site in Illinois, Dilliard says, after Abraham Lincoln's Springfield home. He proposes that the brick buildings that have been tacked on during the years be torn down, leaving only the original mansion where Jane Addams began her work.

This building, still in excellent repair, could be used as an international house, library or lounge for a Jane Addams School of Social Work at the University, Dilliard suggests.

Most of Hull House's dissatisfaction with the treatment it is getting stems from the actions of Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. "The pressure is on to level this site and get on with building a Chicago campus," Ballard charged. "Yet the only reason Daley is so anxious to build here is because the opposition has been too strong everywhere else.

"Something had to be produced, and they picked on us because we couldn't fight back."

Ballard said an urban renewal program started in 1956 came with Mayor Daley's personal promise that residents would not be forced into further relocation after it was completed.

"At that time, Daley was very cooperative," Ballard said. "Meetings were scheduled between city representatives and neighborhood residents at Hull House, and everything was above-board.

"Now, a few years later, the mayor has backed out of his promise, and he's impossible to reach. He has decided to double-cross these people, and he won't listen to their arguments."

Informed thinking in Chicago is that Hull House—the birthplace of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the NAACP, and the American Civil Liberties Union—will be saved as Ballard suggests.

But a long road still lies ahead.