

The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain: _____)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- Public - Local
- Public - State
- Public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2722	1067	buildings
28	1	sites
35	43	structures
23	15	objects
2808	1126	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

258

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.

foundation: Brick, Concrete, Stone

walls: Brick, Stone, Wood, Stucco, Synthetics,
Terra Cotta

roof: Asphalt, tile

other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District is approximately 26 miles in length and forms a continuous arc of parks and boulevards, composed of paved travel lanes in combination with greenswards, from the southeast part of Chicago at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, west, north and back east, to the eastern end of Logan Boulevard. The system consists of 8 parks, 19 boulevards and 6 squares. The eight parks are all connected by boulevards. The boulevards are, in some areas, connected to one another by squares. Buildings of

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all types line the system. There are single and multi-family residences, commercial, industrial, religious and institutional buildings. Several sculptures are located in the parks and squares.

Narrative Description

CHICAGO PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT

Sections Previously Listed on the National Register

Parts of the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District have already been listed on the National Register. In 1990 a Multiple Property Nomination, *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District* by Julia Sniderman Bachrach was listed. Several individual parks along the system have been listed, including Garfield Park, (1993), Humboldt Park (1992), Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance (1972) Sherman Park (1990), and Washington Park (2004). None of these nominations list the buildings surrounding the parks. In 1985 the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*, consisting of W. Logan Boulevard, N. Kedzie Boulevard, N. Humboldt Boulevard, Logan Square and Palmer Square, was listed on the National Register. The *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* includes the buildings surrounding the squares and boulevards. All of the previously listed parks and the Logan Square district are included by reference in this nomination.

Detailed information on the parks, boulevards and squares already listed on the National Register is not included in this nomination, although it is referenced. There are also buildings along the system that are individually listed on the National Register, some of which are National Historic Landmarks. There are buildings in the district that are part of Chicago Historic Districts and these are also referenced.

The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District: Parks, Boulevards, Squares, Buildings

This nomination, **The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District**, consists of the three parks along the system that were not previously listed on the Register.¹ It also includes the 15 boulevards and 4 squares south of North Avenue that were not listed. Three boulevards in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* are included by reference.² All of the buildings flanking the boulevards and those surrounding all of the parks and squares along the system were evaluated and boundaries were drawn to include most of them.. The parks in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District are Jackson Park, Washington Park, Sherman Park, Garfield Park, Humboldt Park, Douglas Park, McKinley Park and Gage Park. The boulevards are the Midway Plaisance, E. Oakwood Boulevard, S. Drexel Boulevard, S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, E. Garfield Boulevard, W. Garfield Boulevard, S. Western Avenue, W. 31st Boulevard, S. California Boulevard, W. 24th Boulevard, S. Marshall Boulevard, W. Douglas Boulevard, S. Independence Boulevard, N. Hamlin Boulevard, S. Hamlin Boulevard, N. Central Park Boulevard, W. Franklin Boulevard, N. Sacramento Boulevard, N. Humboldt Boulevard, N. Kedzie Boulevard and N. Logan Boulevard. The squares are Drexel Square, Independence Square, Garfield Square, and Sacramento Square, Logan Square and Palmer Square.

¹ Julia Sniderman Bachrach. *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*. March 22, 1990. The individual parks listed are Garfield (1993), Humboldt (1992), Sherman (1990 and Washington (2004.) Jackson Park was listed in 1972.

² Daniel Bluestone. The "*Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*" consists of W. Logan Boulevard, N. Kedzie Boulevard, N. Humboldt Boulevard, Logan Square and Palmer Square. It was listed in 1985.

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Already listed parks and the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* are considered part of this nomination by reference.

Period of Significance:

Planning for Chicago's park and boulevard system began in 1869, with construction starting on the parks, boulevards, squares and the buildings along them within the following two years. Almost all major improvements were completed by 1942. Although most of the buildings in the historic district were built during this same time period, the great majority of those constructed along the system were built in the last decade of the 19th-century and in the first two decades of the 20th-century. The time period for the buildings on the south side of the Midway Plaisance extends somewhat later, reflecting the continuation of construction by the University of Chicago. The first University of Chicago buildings in this area were constructed in 1906; the last, Mies van der Rohe's School of Social Service Administration, was completed in 1964.

Contributing Buildings:

There are 1982 primary Contributing buildings in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District, not including 400 in the already-listed *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* and not including buildings within the parks. These "primary" buildings consist of every type of building (single family residences, apartments, churches, schools, etc.) facing on the parks, boulevards and squares. There are 348 Secondary Contributing Buildings not including 118 in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* and not including buildings in the parks. The secondary buildings are subsidiary buildings, consisting of garages, barns and coach houses, generally facing on alleys. There are 266 Non-contributing Primary buildings in the District not including 34 in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*. There are 348 Non-contributing Secondary buildings in the district not including 118 in the Logan Square Historic District. In the three parks being nominated there are 10 Contributing buildings and 3 Non-contributing buildings.³ In the parks already listed, there are 47 Contributing buildings and 14 Non-contributing buildings. There are 13 Contributing buildings in Jackson Park, 9 in Garfield Park, 3 in Sherman Park, 15 in Washington Park, and 7 Contributing buildings in Humboldt Park.⁴

Most of the buildings in the District are residential: single family homes (both stand-alone houses and party-wall structures), flats and apartment buildings. The buildings in the district on S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, E. Oakwood Boulevard, S. Drexel Boulevard, E. Garfield Boulevard, W. Garfield Boulevard, W. 24th Boulevard, S. Marshall Boulevard, W. Douglas Boulevard, S. Independence Boulevard, N. Hamlin Boulevard, S. Hamlin Boulevard, N. Central Park Boulevard, N. Humboldt Boulevard and N. Kedzie Boulevard are predominantly residential. This is also true of Humboldt Boulevard, the north section of N. Kedzie Boulevard and W. Logan Boulevard, all of which are listed in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*.

There are sections of the district where the majority of the buildings are industrial. These can be found along S. Western Boulevard, W. Pershing Road, W. Franklin Boulevard and N. Sacramento Boulevard.

³ There was no attempt to categorize the buildings listed in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* as Contributing or Non-contributing in the original nomination. That has been done in this nomination.

⁴ Jackson Park was listed on the National Register of Historic Places through a nomination submitted in 1972 called *Jackson Park Historic District and Midway Plaisance*. The nomination was substantially incomplete as it only listed the Fine Arts Building as a Contributing building. Chicago Park District Historian, Julia Sniderman Bachrach, created a complete list of Contributing buildings in Jackson Park as part of this nomination.

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Distinguished institutional buildings—religious, educational, medical, government and recreational—dot the entire park and boulevard system, especially along the residential segments. Commercial buildings are typically located where the boulevards intersect with historic public transportation routes or along these routes. The University of Chicago buildings in the system are located along the Midway Plaisance.

Architectural styles in the District range historically from Italianate to Modern, with many buildings featuring Queen Anne, Romanesque, Classical and Tudor features. There are some vernacular cottages, some bungalows and a substantial number of greystones, a building type seemingly unique to Chicago.

Contributing Sites:

There are 25 Contributing Sites in the District, including all the boulevard segments and the squares. This number does not include the parks. Each of the 8 parks counts as 1 Contributing Site, with the exception of Douglas Park, which features both a Contributing and Non-contributing site. Altogether there are 33 Contributing Sites included in this nomination and 1 Non-contributing site. Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and Garfield Park, Humboldt Park, Sherman Park, and Washington Park were listed as part of the multiple property nomination named *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*, created in 1990.

Contributing Structures:

There are 18 Contributing Structures, which are bridges, along the system, and 7 Non-contributing Structures. The bridges found along the boulevard system are generally utilitarian structures and primarily are used to elevate train tracks above the streets. They are mostly found towards the west side of the boulevard system where the industrial buildings are located. Additionally, isolated bridges are used to cross the Sanitary & Ship Canal, Interstate 90-94, and at the north end of S. Western Boulevard to direct traffic towards Interstate 55.

There are 17 bridges located in the original South Park section of the Park Boulevard System Historic District. The bridges cross Garfield and Western, where the boulevards skirt a major industrial area. Almost all of these bridges are historic and date from the period 1896 to 1913 when tracks were being elevated in this industrial corridor. They are generally constructed of simple steel girders with iron trestles and concrete or stone embankments.⁵ There are 10 bridges crossing Garfield Boulevard: 7 are Contributing; 3 are Non-contributing. There are 7 bridges crossing S. Western Boulevard: 5 are Contributing; 2 are Non-contributing. One of the Contributing bridges on S. Western Boulevard crosses the Sanitary & Ship Canal. It is an Art Deco style bridge constructed in 1939 by the Chicago Park District.

There are 7 bridges in the West Park section of the Park Boulevard System Historic District. Of these, 6 are Contributing: a concrete bridge on W. 31st Boulevard with Gothic detailing, an overpass on S. Marshall Boulevard with decorative braces, an ornamental concrete overpass on S. Independence Boulevard, a steel girder bridge with a rusticated concrete block base on N. Central Park Boulevard, an ornamental concrete overpass on N. Sacramento Boulevard and an ornamental concrete overpass on N. Humboldt Boulevard. There is 1 Non-contributing bridge on Marshall Boulevard.

⁵ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1902, p.5. The South Park Commission took pains to insure quality, including steel or iron construction, spans of sufficient length to permit the boulevard to pass beneath without obstructive bridge supports, designs that provided a maximum of light and air beneath the bridges at all points and bridge floors that were water-tight and nearly as noiseless as possible

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Contributing Objects:

There are 6 Contributing Objects on the boulevards and squares. These include 6 Sculptures/Monuments (*Black Soldiers Monument* at S. 35th Street and King Drive, *George Washington Monument* at 51st and King Drive, the *American Youth and Independence Day Fountain* in Independence Square, *Drexel Square Fountain*, the *Jacques Marquette Monument* at the turning point between S. Marshall Boulevard and W. 24th Boulevard, and the Illinois Centennial Monument in Logan Square that was listed in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* National Register Nomination). There are 15 Non-contributing Objects: 11 sculptures (4 on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, 1 on Douglas Boulevard, 6 on Franklin Boulevard), 2 fountains, and 2 obelisks). In the parks there are 15 Contributing Objects, including the *William McKinley Monument* in McKinley Park, and Prairie Style benches and lanterns in Douglas Park. In the previously listed parks, there are 28 Contributing Objects and 11 Non-contributing Objects.

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT: THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Chicago's park and boulevard system laces through the city and provides it with an unusual amount of open space for a large urban center. The city of Chicago, with a population of over 2.8 million people, is the largest city in Illinois and the third largest in the country. It is situated in Cook County and covers 228 square miles. Chicago is divided into 77 Community areas.⁶ Twenty-five are located along the park and boulevard system: Near South Side, Douglas, Oakland, Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, Hyde Park, Woodlawn, Fuller Park, Washington Park, New City, Englewood, West Englewood, Gage Park, Brighton Park, McKinley Park, South Lawndale, North Lawndale, West Garfield Park, East Garfield Park, Humboldt Park, West Town, Logan Square, North Center, Lake View and Lincoln Park. Many take their names from the parks and boulevards.

Chicago lies at the south end of the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, with two rivers flowing through it. The Calumet River is located on the far south side. The Chicago River flows into Chicago's central business district, then branches north and south, with the south branch connected to the Des Plaines River by the 96 mile Illinois & Michigan Canal, constructed between 1836 and 1848, and by the Sanitary & Ship Canal. This 28-mile canal was built between 1889 and 1900 as a transportation route, but primarily to redirect the flow of the Chicago River in order to divert wastes away from the Lake (Chicago's source of drinking water) to the Mississippi River system. The two canals cross the boulevard system just south of the intersection of 31st and S. Western Boulevards. Chicago is, on average, 579' above sea level and the terrain, once consisting of marsh and swampland, is emphatically flat.

There are four sections of Chicago: the Loop, the North Side, the West Side and the South Side. Chicago's early park systems, which were established in 1869, take their names from the three outlying areas in which they were located—the north, west and south sections of the city. The city is crisscrossed by a grid of streets, with the main thoroughfares running north and south following section lines platted from the original Northwest Ordinance land survey system. Diagonals transverse the system, radiating from the center of the city.

⁶ Chicago's Community Areas were established in the 1920s by sociologists at the University of Chicago. They refer to areas that represent fairly coherent social character within the urban fabric of Chicago. Although originally there were 75, two were added when O'Hare Airport was added in the 1950s and Edgewater was subdivided from Uptown in 1980. The community areas, since then have not been changed; they remain stable, not altered to reflect change. James R. Grossman., Ann Durkin Keating and Janice L. Reiff. Editors. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 190.

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Many were once Indian trails. These include Milwaukee Avenue, which intersects Logan Square, and Grand Avenue, which runs west of Western Boulevard and crosses Sacramento Boulevard. Ogden Avenue follows the route of the Southwestern Plank Road, which opened in 1848 and crossed the many swampy areas between Chicago and Naperville. Today Ogden Avenue extends from the near west side of Chicago to Aurora, Illinois, cutting through Douglas Park.

Chicago is the rail hub of the country, for both freight and passenger traffic. It is considered the most important railroad center in North America, with more lines of tracks radiating in more directions than any other city.⁷ Dating from 1848, when the Galena & Chicago Union laid tracks toward Oak Park, Illinois, the city depended on railroads to haul grains, and later livestock and manufactured goods. Railroad companies had their corporate headquarters in the city; railroad cars were manufactured in Pullman to the south (as well as in other areas) and yards and shops were located throughout the city's railroad system. Many rail yards were located to serve the factories and warehouses flanking S. Western Boulevard, Pershing Road, Sacramento Boulevard and Marshall Boulevard.

In addition to the city's historic waterways, railroads and road systems, nine interstate highways run through Chicago, three of which intersect the park and boulevard system. Interstate 94/ Dan Ryan Expressway cuts across Garfield Boulevard east of Wentworth Avenue; Interstate 55/ Stevenson Expressway crosses Western Boulevard paralleling the Sanitary & Ship Canal south of W. 31st Boulevard, and Interstate 290/Eisenhower Expressway crosses Independence Boulevard between W. Van Buren Street and W. Congress Parkway.

THE PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT: LIST OF THE PARKS, BOULEVARDS AND SQUARES:

The eight parks that make up the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District are Jackson Park, Douglas Park, Sherman Park, Gage Park, McKinley Park, Douglas Park, Garfield Park, and Humboldt Park. The nineteen boulevards are Oakwood Boulevard, Drexel Boulevard, the Midway Plaisance, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Garfield Boulevard, Western Avenue, 31st Boulevard, California Boulevard, 24th Boulevard, Marshall Boulevard, Douglas Boulevard, Independence Boulevard, Hamlin Boulevard, Central Park Boulevard, Franklin Boulevard, Sacramento Boulevard, Humboldt Boulevard, Kedzie Boulevard, and Logan Boulevard. The six squares are Drexel Square, Independence Square, Garfield Square, Sacramento Square, Palmer Square and Logan Square.

Of the five parks in Chicago's park and boulevard system that have already been listed on the National Register in *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District* Multiple Property nomination only buildings, structures and objects actually located within the parks were included in the nomination. These buildings, structures and objects are included by reference in this nomination. None of the buildings framing the parks were included. The three parks which were not listed—Douglas Park, McKinley Park and Gage Park—are included in this nomination of the Chicago Park Boulevards System Historic District.

⁷ James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating and Janice L. Reiff. Editors. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 676.

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In 1985 the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* was listed on the National Register. It includes W. Logan, N. Kedzie and N. Humboldt Boulevards and Logan and Palmer Squares and the adjacent buildings and lots. The 1985 survey of this 2.5-mile section of Chicago's Boulevard system included buildings lining the boulevards and squares, but neither "primary" nor "secondary" structures were rated as "Contributing" or "Non-contributing." These predominantly residential structures are counted in this nomination, evaluated and rated as Contributing or Non-contributing to the significance of The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District.

The following parks, boulevards and squares, from east to west and south to north, define Chicago's Park and Boulevard System: The parks range in size from 29 acres (Gage Park) to 543 acres (Jackson Park). The boulevards range in length from .25 miles (West 24th Boulevard) to 3.5 miles (Garfield Boulevard). The smallest square is Garfield Square (2 acres). The largest is Palmer Square (7 acres).⁸

S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, 3.0 miles*, extending south from E. 35th Street to E. 51st Street. The section from E. 51st to E. 60th Street is considered the west boundary of Washington Park.

E. Oakwood Boulevard, 5 miles,* extending east from S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to S. Drexel Boulevard.

S. Drexel Boulevard, 1.6 miles*, extending south from E. Oakwood Boulevard to E. 51st Street.

Drexel Square, approximately 4 acres, bounded on the north by E. 151st Street, on the east by S. Drexel Avenue, on the south by E. Drexel Square, and on the west by S. Cottage Grove Avenue (Washington Park).

Washington Park, 366 acres*, bounded on the north by E. 51st Street, on the east by S. Cottage Grove Avenue, on the south by E. 60th Street, and on the west by S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

Midway Plaisance, 1.0 miles*, extending from S. Cottage Grove Avenue (Washington Park) on the west to S. Stony Island Avenue (Jackson Park) on the east.

Jackson Park, 600 acres, bounded on the north by E. 56th Street, on the east by Lake Michigan, on the south by E. 67th Street, and on the west by S. Stony Island Avenue.

E and W. Garfield Boulevard, 3.5 miles*, from S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive on the east to S. Western Avenue in Gage Park on the west.

Sherman Park 60 acres, bounded on the north by W. 52nd Street, on the east by S. Racine Avenue, on the south by W. Garfield Boulevard and on the west by S. Loomis Boulevard.

Gage Park, 29 acres*, bounded on the east by S. Claremont Avenue, on the south by W. 56th Street, on the west by S. Maplewood Avenue (south of 55th Street) and S. Artesian Avenue (north of 55th Street) and on the north by W. 54th Street.

⁸ The length of each boulevard (noted *) is generally taken from "Life Along the Boulevards", Chicago: Department of Planning, 1989, p. 44.

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S. Western Avenue Boulevard, 3.1 miles*, from W. Garfield Boulevard (in Gage Park) on the south to W. 31st Boulevard on the north.

McKinley Park, 69 acres*, bounded on the north by W. 37th Street, on the east by S. Damen Avenue, on the south by W. Pershing Road and on the west by S. Western Boulevard.

W. 31st Boulevard, .5 mile*, extending west from S. Western Boulevard to S. California Boulevard.

S. California Avenue Boulevard, .75 mile*, extending north from W. 31st Boulevard to W. 24th Boulevard.

W. 24th Boulevard, .25 mile*, extending west from S. California Boulevard to S. Marshall Boulevard.

S. Marshall Boulevard, .5 mile*, extending north from W. 24th Boulevard to Douglas Park (W. 19th Street).

Douglas Park, 174 acres*, bounded by W. Roosevelt Road on the north, S. California Avenue on the east, W. 19th street on the south and South Albany Avenue on the west.

W. Douglas Boulevard, .75 mile*, extending west from Sacramento Drive (in Douglas Park) to Independence Square.

Independence Square, approximately 3.69 acres, bounded on the north by W. Douglas Boulevard, on the west by S. Independence Boulevard, on the south by W. 14th Street and on the east by S. Ridgeway Avenue.

S. Independence Boulevard, .90 mile*, extending north from Douglas Boulevard to W. Congress Parkway (Interstate 290/Eisenhower Expressway).

N. and S. Hamlin Boulevard, .3 mile*, an extension of Independence Boulevard, runs from W. Congress Parkway (Eisenhower Expressway/Interstate 290) on the south to W. Madison Street on the north.⁹

Garfield Park 185 acres, Approximate boundaries are Lake Street on the north, N. Homan Avenue and S. Central Park Avenue on the east, W. Madison Street and W. Fifth Avenue on the south and N. Hamlin Boulevard and S. Hamlin Boulevard on the west.

N. Central Park Boulevard, .10 mile*, extends north out of Garfield Park as an extension of N. Conservatory Drive to Garfield Square (W. Ferdinand Street).

Garfield Square, approximately 2 acres, 300' x 325', bounded on the north by Garfield Square, on the west by N. Monticello Avenue, on the south by building lots, and on the east by N. Central Park Avenue.

W. Franklin Boulevard, .75 mile*, extending east from Garfield Square (N. Central Park Avenue) and Sacramento Square (N. Whipple Street).

⁹ It should be noted that Hamlin Boulevard is called Hamlin Avenue, Hamlin Street and Hamlin Boulevard in the short distance between Independence Boulevard and Madison Street, according to the City of Chicago street signs.

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Sacramento Square, approximately 3.69 acres. It has no distinct northern boundary, merging directly into W. Sacramento Boulevard. On the east it is bounded by N. Sacramento Boulevard, on the south by W. Franklin Boulevard and on the west by N. Whipple Street.

Sacramento Boulevard, .55 mile*, extending north from Sacramento Square to W. Augusta Boulevard.

Humboldt Park, 209 acres, bounded on the north by W. North Avenue, on the east by N. California Avenue, on the south by W. Division Street and W. Augusta Avenue and on the west by N. Kedzie Avenue.

N. Humboldt Boulevard, 75 mile*, extending north from Garfield Park (W. North Avenue) to the eastern edge of Palmer Square (N. Shakespeare Avenue).

Palmer Square, approximately 7 acres, bounded on the north by W. Fullerton Avenue, by N. Milwaukee Avenue to the east, W. Armitage Avenue to the south and N. Kedzie Boulevard to the west.

N. Kedzie Boulevard, .6 mile, extending north from Palmer Square to Logan Square.

Logan Square, approximately 5.5 acres, bounded approximately by W. Logan Boulevard on the north, N. Troy Street on the east, N. Kedzie Boulevard on the west and W. Bloomingdale Avenue on the south.

West Logan Boulevard, 1 mile, extending from Logan Square east to N. Western Avenue

PARKS BEING LISTED IN THE CHICAGO PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT:

Douglas Park

Douglas Park is a 174-acre site, located on the west side of Chicago between W. Roosevelt Road and W. 19th Street, S. California Ave. and S. Albany Avenue. It was planned in 1869 as the southernmost park of the West Park system. The park reflects the contributions of several nationally important designers: William Le Baron Jenney, Oscar F. Dubuis, and Jens Jensen and locally prominent architects Michaelsen & Rognstad.

Over the decades, both the landscape and buildings in Douglas Park have undergone modifications and the loss of original fabric in response to frequently changing community needs. In spite of these alterations, essential character-defining features such as historic roads and paths, buildings, structures, landforms, water features and some historic trees are intact. The park has numerous Contributing features and continues to retain sufficient integrity to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In order to clearly describe Douglas Park, four corresponding plans are submitted [A] William Le Baron Jenney's original plan of 1871, [B] Oscar F. Dubuis' plan of 1885, [C] Jens Jensen's record drawing of 1912 and [D] a 2008 aerial photograph.

In the original plan [A], Jenney designed a circuit drive [1] that would encircle the park with a gently curving road meant to transect at the center. Although it is uncertain as to whether the curving transecting road was ever executed, the outer circuit drive remains intact. Ogden Avenue [2] predates the park by over 20 years and remains a diagonal roadway bisecting the park [B], replacing the curved transecting road that Jenney had intended. Ogden Avenue is a wide, angled drive with two parallel side roads [2].

Jenney relied on his engineering expertise in designing a large artificial lake that was meant to have two major components, one on the north side of the park and the other on the south. Despite his grand vision, only an initial portion of the lake was begun during Jenney's tenure. Dubuis revised the original plan, particularly the

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shape of the artificial lake [B]. Today, the portion of the lagoon [3] north of the carriage drive bridge closely reflects Dubuis' plan of 1885. This includes some narrow winding channel areas that edge a peninsula and small island. The carriage drive bridge [4] was constructed in 1892. It has abutments composed of cut limestone and a gently arching iron spandrel, with wood decking and a fanciful iron handrail. At the north end of the waterway, there are two footbridges. One of them, a beautiful granite boulder bridge [5], built in 1897, still crosses over water. It is composed of large granite boulders in varying colors of grey, pink, and tan. Douglas Park's other footbridge, composed of cut limestone [6], dates to the late 1890s. It previously crossed over a narrow tip of the water. In recent years, the Chicago Park District filled this small area and bricked in part of the span of the bridge. Despite this alteration, the historic footbridge remains.

The landscape that edges the lagoon has strong historic integrity, particularly in the northeastern area. This includes stretches of rolling topography, magnificent canopy trees, and aquatic vegetation such as arrowroot and native iris. South of the field house, the lagoon has a much smaller expanse of water than it had historically, during both Dubuis' [B] and Jensen's [C] tenures. The historic lagoon was first modified in the early 1970s, when the City of Chicago and Chicago Park District converted the area just south of the field house into a swimming lake. In the early 2000s the Chicago Park District made another significant alteration to this area, when the lagoon was partially filled in near the field house to provide space for a junior golf facility [7]. Although a portion of the lagoon was restored as part of the project, the swimming lake was eliminated, and some of the original water area was transformed into useable landscape. The golf facility [7] is composed of artificial greens, with wooden and rope fencing and a stone and concrete water hazard. It is edged by ornamental grasses and other native plants which make the recreational feature less obtrusive, especially because the entire landscape surrounding the south end of the lagoon has been planted as a nature area.

Norwegian-American architects Michaelsen & Rognstad designed the Douglas Park field house [8], which was built in 1928. Executed in the Georgian Revival style, the red brick building has many details composed of Bedford limestone including an upper parapet, urns, quoins, and columns. The building is u-shaped in plan, adapting well to the contour of the lagoon, and has domed turrets at each end of the center pavilion. It has many lavish interior details such as terra cotta and ornamental plaster ornamentation, as well as beautiful terrazzo floors.

Just northwest of the field house, there are two major Non-contributing features. One is a swimming pool [9] that is surrounded by a large area of concrete decking with flood lights, enclosed by black metal fencing. The swimming pool was first installed in 1955, when the historic outdoor pool and natatorium at the southwest corner of the park were demolished. Beyond the pool is Collins High School [10], an enormous structure with two large buildings that are rectangular in plan joined together by an enclosed walkway. Constructed in 1973 under the guidance of the Public Building Commission, the structure occupies what was once an expensive meadow designed by Jensen [C]. The high school campus includes two large parking lots and large expanses of black metal fencing. The compound's two adjoining structures have an institutional appearance that overwhelms the landscape and detracts from the integrity of the historic park. Fortunately, most other areas of Douglas Park's landscape retain such high levels of integrity that overall the park is worthy of designation.

South of Ogden Avenue is Jensen's 1907 Formal Garden [11] with the Prairie style Flower Hall [12] and a reflecting basin [13] facing S. Sacramento Drive. The most formal aspect of the composition is near the busy intersection of the two streets. The stately Flower Hall is fronted by a rectangular reflecting basin with two side paths at its north and south ends. The paths are flanked by pairs of distinctive Prairie style lanterns [14] composed of exposed aggregate concrete that matches three large benches lining the sidewalk adjacent to S. Sacramento Drive [15].

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Flower Hall is a garden shelter that “consists of a central pavilion with an arched opening and two end pavilions, all connected by a colonnade. There is no applied ornament and the only relief on the façade is a solid void rhythm and the play of shadows cast by string courses and thin cornices.”¹⁰ The design of this garden shelter has been attributed to Schmidt, Garden, & Martin. Although there are no existing original plans, the firm produced a large collection of Prairie style structures for the West Park Commission during the period of Jensen’s leadership.

East of Flower Hall, Jensen’s garden design is composed of a turf area in the center with some scattered understory trees helping to frame the view. Symmetrically placed beds of perennials follow the straight lines of the outer walks, which are edged with a long row of shrubs. As the garden extends to the east, the design becomes more naturalistic with a soft-edged lily pond and irregularly planted trees. At the most easterly end of the garden, a curved row of seven concrete Prairie style benches [16] completes the composition.

Although the level of landscape maintenance has varied over the years, the Chicago Park District has restored the garden several times. In order to provide storage for landscape equipment, the park district constructed a small one-story brick shed [17] on the south side of the garden in 1965. In recent years, the integrity of the garden has been improved as the Chicago Park District has carefully restored the architectural components (including the benches), repaired the lanterns, and replicated the large Prairie style light fixture that hangs from the center of Flower Hall.

Another Prairie style element built during Jensen’s tenure was a gateway composed of two curved pergolas that flanked the Marshall Boulevard entrance to the park. Originally composed of two sets of concrete posts covered by wooden rafters, the curved pergolas stood on concrete platforms bordered by curved concrete planters and reflecting pools. Sometime after the mid-1950s, the pergolas were razed. However, the concrete platforms remain and the old reflecting pools have long been used as planters. In the 1990s, the Chicago Park District built new concrete and wooden structures [18] on the original concrete platforms to convey a sense of the historic pergolas. The new structures are only one-sided however, and the wooden elements that top them are not true rafters.

Just north of the Marshall Boulevard entrance to the park is a meadow that was edged with native plants during Jensen’s time that is now a combination athletic field used for baseball, football and soccer. A recent addition to this large open area is an artificial turf soccer field at the east side. Adjacent to this is a comfort station [19]. Designed by in-house Chicago Park District architects, the brick Colonial style comfort station was built in 1936. The red brick building has been painted grey and a walled-in area extends along the west side of the building. At the north side of the athletic field, there is a tennis court structure with 3 courts [20] that were installed after Douglas Park’s period of significance.

At the outer edges of the circuit drive, the perimeter of the park provides a buffer between the park and the adjacent neighborhoods. These areas have stretches of green space with informal grouping of canopy and understory trees. North of Ogden Avenue the perimeter landscapes on the east, west, north sides each include a playground to accommodate the area’s large population of young children. South of Ogden Avenue, there are two playgrounds one on the east side and one on the west side. The playground on the west side is adjacent to a relatively new spray pool [21]. There is an adjacent small brick comfort station that was built sometime around 1970 [22]. These features are located near the historic natatorium and running track [23]. Although the natatorium was razed in the 1950s the oval-shaped running track is extant and still used today. The southeast

¹⁰ Wim de Wit and William W. Tippens, “Prairie School in the Parks,” *Prairie in the City: Naturalism in Chicago’s Parks, 1870-1940*, Chicago History Museum, 1991, p. 37.

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perimeter playground is adjacent to a basketball court [24]. Just south of that is the historic stable building [25]. Built soon after the turn of the 20th-century, this complex was originally known as the barn and service yard. Rectangular in plan, the structure has an open court yard space that was once surrounded by horse stalls, with a hay loft at the upper level. Today, the building serves as a landscape maintenance facility. Some of the original windows have been bricked in and portions of the red brick building have been painted brown in response to continual problems with graffiti. There are currently community art panels hanging on some of the exterior walls.

Throughout its history, Douglas Park has continuously provided recreational, cultural and educational programs while retaining a strong degree of historic integrity. Despite all of the modern pressures placed on this historic property the park continues to convey its historic character and is like a tapestry representing the work of many significant landscape designers and architects. It conveys much of its historic layout, spatial characteristics, grading, design, feeling, location and setting. Improvements such as the reproduction of historic light fixtures that have been placed throughout the park, as well as restoration of the Formal Garden and landscape enhancements, such as the nature area, have all helped increase the overall historic integrity of this valuable historic resource.

Gage Park

Gage Park is a 29-acre site, located on the south side of Chicago at the juncture between W. Garfield Boulevard and S. Western Avenue. It began in 1869 as the southwesterly elbow of the boulevard system. In 1873 the South Park commissioners acquired 20 acres of land adjacent to the intersection to develop the site into a park. In 1916 they added 9.75 additional acres to expand Gage Park at its southwestern side. The property served as an important experiment in providing breathing space and recreational facilities to its surrounding community and helped inspire a nationally influential neighborhood parks movement.

Over the years, Gage Park's landscape has undergone modifications and the loss of some original fabric in response to frequently changing community needs. Its buildings, however, have changed little and convey a high degree of integrity. The property retains a great deal of fabric dating from its period of significance and is primarily composed of Contributing features. In order to clearly describe Gage Park and show that it retains sufficient integrity to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, two corresponding plans are submitted as part of this nomination: [A] a South Park Commission record plan of 1905 [B] Plan of General Development by the South Park Commissioners' in-house designers ca. 1925 and [C] a 2008 aerial photograph.

Gage Park is composed of four major landscape areas straddling the intersection of S. Western Boulevard and W. Garfield Boulevard (which becomes W. 55th Street on the west side S. Western Boulevard). The northwestern landscape area, located between W. 54th Street and W. 55th Street, S. Western Ave. and S. Artesian Avenue, has been a ball field meadow [1] since the early 1900s, when the commissioners made the first substantial improvements to the park [A]. The meadow's original rectangular configuration was squared off by the widening and straightening of W. 55th Street, done to accommodate the construction of the field house in the 1920s [B]. Today, this landscape area [1] remains an actively used ball field with two backstops. A flag pole [2] is located in the middle of the southern edge of the field, on axis with the entrance to the field house. A flagpole has stood in this location since the 1920s [A, B].

Completed in 1928, the field house [3] was designed by South Park Commission architects under the direction of Chief Engineer Linn White. Inspired by the earlier field houses designed by D.H. Burnham & Co. for the South Park Commission, the building is neo-classical in style and is composed of exposed aggregate concrete. Facing north onto W. 55th Street, the one-and-a-half story structure measures 267' long by 148' wide.

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E-shaped in plan, the building has a center pavilion oriented east to west with a large auditorium space extending to the south. Two one-story extensions connect the center pavilion with two outer wings housing gymnasiums and locker rooms.

The center pavilion has a hipped roof with three engaged gables at the primary façade. The roof, originally clad in Spanish tile, is now covered in asphalt tiles. There are three arches beneath the gable ends. The center arch includes the front doorway flanked by sidelights and topped with transom lights, as well as an arched window with multiple lights. The center arch is flanked by two blind arches with a decorative motif in the concrete. There are two double hung windows with outer fixed sidelights beneath the blind arches. Between these openings and the center doorway are another pair of windows that match those beneath the blind arches. On the outer sides are two pairs of double hung windows without sidelights. Above each set of the windows is a medallion expressed in the concrete. (These mimic similar medallions within the two blind arches.) There is a scored pattern in the concrete surrounding the arches and medallions extending along the entire upper level of the center pavilion. This part of the building has a front terrace that retains its original concrete balustrade. A wide set of stairs leads from the front doorway to the sidewalk below.

The field house's two outer wings have gabled roofs on the north side that intersect with hipped roofs on the south side of the building. The gable ends face the primary W. 55th Street façade. Unlike the adjacent center pavilion, these outer facades are composed of unadorned concrete, without scoring or other ornamentation. Each of the outer wings feature a segmental arched opening housing a series of double hung windows. The east and west facades mimic some of the features of the center pavilion such as the three engaged gables, arches, and scored patterning.

The field house has many fine interior details. The lobby has elegant terrazzo floors, original marble counters and knee walls, ornamental plaster trim, and historic light sconces. The auditorium has simplified classical elements molded into the concrete such as pilasters, stringcourses and arches. Within the recessed area of one of the auditorium arches, there is a 1931 mural by Tom Lea. It is a colorful scene with many explorers and pioneer families under a muted sky with a "symbolic figure pointing the way and rendered in grisaille, a technique using various shades of gray."¹¹

A second mural is located in an office adjacent to the lobby, which once housed the library. Painted directly on the rough surface of the concrete, it is rendered in a folk style. The mural, which may have been created by a Chicago Park District art class in the 1930s, depicts an Eastern European family in traditional dress standing near a large wagon. The father is playing a violin, the daughter holds a doll, and the mother holds a pitcher while the accoutrements of a picnic lay near their feet.

Another space that includes unusual interior features is located in the basement of the field house. Used as a classroom today, this room previously served as the headquarters for a military battalion. Two sets of brown leather doors attest to this historic use of the room—one of them is labeled "Company A."

Compared with other Chicago field houses, the Gage Park building has a remarkable number of intact features, particularly within its interior. Overall, it retains a high degree of integrity. This is true even though the concrete building has had some problems with cracking and spalling; its original exterior surfaces have been painted light tan, and some inappropriate awnings have been installed along its primary façade.

¹¹ Mary Lackritz Gray, *A Guide to Chicago's Murals*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 174.

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Directly south of the field house is the locker and changing room structure [4]. Constructed in 1920, this one story facility has a center building, two small outer buildings and large open-air changing spaces. The entire structure is concrete and has been painted the same neutral color as the field house. The center building, which has a gable roof has handsome Greek Revival features—Doric columns, a simple frieze, and a pediment above. Some of these elements are mimicked on the small outer buildings. Concrete walls connect the three buildings and enclose the open air changing spaces.

The locker and changing room structure [4] faces the rectangular swimming pool [5]. Although the pool has been repaired and modernized over the years, it is in the same location and configuration as the original 1920 structure. Therefore, it has been deemed a Contributing feature. The swimming pool is surrounded by concrete decking and has metal picket fencing on its east, west, and south sides. On the west side, just south of the locker and changing room structure, chain link fencing encloses a semi-circular area with a concrete wading pool that was constructed in the 1980s. This wading pool [6] is in disrepair and cannot be used in its present form because current safety standards require the use of spray pools instead of wading pools.

The boiler house [7] is located south of the swimming pool. Rectangular in plan, the building has a flat roof. A tall cylindrical chimney-stack extends from the roof. Like the two other park buildings, the boiler house is composed of exposed aggregate concrete which has been painted. It has rectangular window openings. The utilitarian structure has a simple frieze with medallions that extends beneath the eave.

The playground [8] is just west of the boiler house. This area has been used as a children's playground since the 1920s [B], but it has been updated many times. Today, this area has colorful playground equipment installed on a rubberized surface and is surrounded by trees and lawn and enclosed by metal picket fencing.

North of the children's playground [8] is a lawn area [9] that historically served as the women's open air gymnasium [B]. A straight path extending from W. 55th Street to W. 56th Street separates the women's open air gymnasium and children's playground area from the tennis courts [10] and ball field [11]. This walkway is lined on both sides with historic canopy trees. Originally, the walkway was the western boundary of the park; however, Gage Park was extended westward to include an additional 9.75 acres in 1916.

To accommodate the extension, a street known as Gage Court [A] was greened over, and a number of homes were razed to provide space for the tennis courts [10] and ball field [11]. The four sets of tennis courts [10] and new ball field [11] were first installed in 1920, when the swimming pool was also constructed. Recently two of the four sets [10] have been resurfaced, and the other two are in need of resurfacing. The ball field is contiguous to Rachel Carson Elementary School, an historic school building.

The historic men's outdoor gymnasium [12] is located east of the swimming pool. It includes a running track [13] surfaced with limestone screenings. Within the elliptical space, there are three athletic rectangular blacktop spaces. These provide a basketball court [14], handball court [15], and a play slab [16].

On the east side of S. Western Avenue there are two landscape areas [17, 18]. One—south of W. Garfield Blvd. [17]—historically provided space for lawn tennis [A]. Although the area is still composed of lawn surrounded by trees and edged with a path, it has been underutilized for many years. To re-activate this space, the Chicago Park District is installing an artificial turf soccer and football field in the center of the lawn in 2011. The area north of W. Garfield Blvd. [18] historically featured a lily pool. The entire rectangular lawn area sloped upward from the street level, and in the center of the lawn was the rectangular sunken lily pool with

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a pergola on its north side. The Chicago Park District began removing the lily pool and filling in the entire area in 1960. Today, the topography is still higher than the street level and the area is a passive green space.

In recent years, the Chicago Park District has undertaken a number of improvements that have enhanced Gage Park's historic integrity. This included the conservation of Tom Lea's auditorium mural in 2002 by the Chicago Conservation Center. The historic running track has recently been resurfaced with limestone screenings, and two sets of tennis courts (which are Contributing features) were resurfaced in 2008. Other construction projects have improved the park's appearance and usability. These include installing a fitness center in the field house and in 2009, providing a new playground in the original location. Today, Gage Park remains an important link to its community's past while it also provides a vital recreational center for Chicago's south side.

McKinley Park

McKinley Park is a 69-acre site located on the South Side of Chicago between S. Damen and S. Western Avenues and W. 37th Street and W. Pershing Road. The site was first established by the South Park commissioners as an experimental 34-acre park in 1901. The original park, between S. Western Boulevard and S. Leavitt Street., proved to be such an immediate success that the commissioners expanded it eastward in 1906. (Although this was a 40-acre extension, several acres were later sacrificed when the S. Damen Avenue viaduct sliced through the park.) McKinley Park has strong significance in social history, as it helped inspire a nationally influential neighborhood parks movement.

Over the years, McKinley Park has undergone modifications and the loss of some original fabric in response to frequently changing community needs. Despite this, the property retains a great deal of fabric dating from its period of significance and continues to convey its historic character. In order to clearly describe McKinley Park and show that it retains sufficient integrity to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, four corresponding plans are submitted as part of this nomination: [A] South Park Commission Plan of 1905 [B] South Park Commission Plan of 1906 [C] South Park Commission Plan of 1916 and [D] a 2008 aerial photograph.

When the 34-acre park was first laid out in 1901 by in-house South Park Commission designers, the ball field [1] was the central feature of the design. (Although the plan labeled as [A] dates to 1905, it clearly illustrates the park's original features.) The ball field was composed of an open meadow encircled by a walkway and edged with trees and shrubs in naturalistic groupings. It remained unchanged when the South Park commissioners enlarged McKinley Park in 1906 [B]. Today, the ball field [1] and surrounding walkway [2] continue to retain a high degree of integrity. In fact, the walkway [2] closely follows its original configuration, as do three circular lawn beds [3] that embellish turning points southeast, southwest, and northwest sides of the loop. These appear on the 1905 plan [A] and still remain today [D].

On the west side of the ball field, an oblong area historically served as a lawn tennis meadow [A] [4]. By the late 1930s the Chicago Park District had installed a paved rectangular slab with four tennis courts [4] at the southern end of this meadow [D]. Just north of the tennis courts, there is an artificial ice-skating rink. Installed in 1996, the large structure has a rectangular footprint with chamfered corners [5]. Although deemed as a Non-contributing feature, it is not very intrusive because of its location on the far western edge of the landscape.

The *William McKinley Monument* [6] is located on the northwest corner of the park. Installed in 1905, it is composed of a bronze figurative sculpture that stands on a large classically-designed exedra. The artwork

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was produced by sculptor Charles J. Mulligan and architects Pond & Pond. Mulligan executed a life-like portrayal of President McKinley in historically appropriate garb holding the pages of a speech and leaning against a table or desk. The bronze sculpture stands on a base in the center of the rectangular exedra, designed by Pond & Pond. The base is mounted on two star-shaped granite slabs set at angles to each other, with the lower slab resting on the floor of the exedra. Greek key fretwork adorns the upper part of the base, with McKinley's name, and birth and death dates inscribed below it. Five steps lead up to the platform of the exedra, and at the other three sides, benches are tucked into the low walls. There are six urns mounted along the top of the three-sided wall. In the late 1990s the McKinley Monument underwent a full conservation treatment. Although it retains good integrity, it has suffered some damage from automobile accidents and improper graffiti removal.

Historically, the area on the northeast side of the ball field served as the children's playground and wading pool [A]. It had separate comfort stations for men and women [7] and an open shelter [8]. Designed in 1901 and constructed by June of 1903¹², the two comfort stations were both north of the shelter. Square in plan, they were composed of brick with three courses of cut stone at the foundation. The buildings had hipped roofs clad in clay tile. Currently, only the original women's comfort station remains [7]. It was converted to serve both men and women in 1949. It is likely that the original men's comfort station was razed at that time. Today, the comfort station's original stone and brick walls are painted brown. The window openings remain; however, they have been boarded in, and the roof is now clad in sheet metal. Despite these changes, the building's form remains intact and conveys its historic character.

The original shelter [8] (no longer extant) was constructed in 1903.¹³ Rectangular in plan, the structure was composed of piers of cut stone that were similar in appearance to the foundation of the comfort stations. The floor of the shelter was made of exposed aggregate concrete with a fanciful decorative motif that included the pattern of Greek key fretwork along the two ends. Although the shelter was demolished in the mid-1960s, its floor was retained as a play slab. More than a century old, this decorative feature remains today [D].

The original wading pool [9] was an irregularly shaped water feature with a sandy edge and a small wooded island in the center [A]. When McKinley Park was extended at its east side in 1906, a meandering stream connected the older wading pool area to the larger lagoon [B]. The wading pool and connecting stream [9] remained until the late 1930s.¹⁴ The Chicago Park District filled these waterways to provide modern athletic amenities—a running track and a concrete wading pool—which were removed sometime before 1961.¹⁵

In recent years, this area underwent another change to accommodate recreational needs. With the increasing popularity of soccer in this park, the Park District determined that an artificial turf field would be beneficial for park users. The Parkways Foundation raised funds for this amenity and the artificial turf field [10] was installed in 2008 [D]. The green surface blends in well with the surrounding lawn. The existing soft surface playground [11] is slightly more obtrusive because it has low walls that enclose the equipment and the loose wood chip surface [D].

¹² The comfort stations appear in numerous plans beginning with South Park Commission, Brighton Park, 1901 and they are also identifiable in *Chicago Daily News* photographs dated June 13, 1903 in the collections of the Chicago History Museum ichicdn-0000581 and ichicdn-000584.

¹³ McKinley Park Lagoon photograph shows the construction of the shelter dated June 13, 1903, Chicago History Museum ichicdn-0000580.

¹⁴ McKinley Park Rehabilitation Plan prepared by the Chicago Park District Landscape Design Section, April 7, 1939.

¹⁵ McKinley Park Location of Fixed Bleachers, Chicago Park District, 1961.

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Despite the changes in this area, the walkways that surround the historic children's playground area remain fully intact [2], as they generally are throughout the park. The original drive, that extended along the north and east sides of the park, no longer exists. Today, the entire northern perimeter from the McKinley monument to S. Damen Avenue is composed of lawn and irregular groupings of canopy trees. At the far eastern end of this perimeter there is a paved rectangular strip of six tennis courts [12]. This is deemed as a Non-contributing feature because they were installed sometime around the late 1950s, after the period of significance. Just west of the tennis courts, a remnant concrete slab is left from earlier hand ball courts that are no longer in the park [13].

One of McKinley Park's most dominant features is the lagoon [14]. The existing lagoon dates to the park's 1906 expansion [B]. It connected to the earlier naturalistic wading pool by a narrow stream. In its original configuration, the main body of the lagoon was roughly U-shaped in form, with a wider expanse of water on the west end. The lagoon originally had five small, wooded islands and four of those remain today. Historically, the lagoon had a soft edge of turf grass. The Chicago Park District began stocking the lagoon in the 1940s to offer fishing in the park. This use contributed to problems with erosion of the lagoon's banks.

Over the decades, as fishing became more popular, there was an increasing need for erosion control as well as improved access for fisherman. In the 1990s and early 2000s several different techniques were used to accomplish this. Portions of the lagoon are now edged with concrete, while some areas have cut stone walls and others have a system that includes piles of stone obscured by emergent plants. Fishing access is provided by a T-shaped pier on the southwest side of the lagoon and several platforms throughout. The east side of the lagoon was filled in 1960 to accommodate the construction of the S. Damen Avenue viaduct [D]. Despite this, the lagoon conveys its historic character and retains good integrity.

The S. Damen Avenue viaduct [15] is a major roadway that bisects the easternmost part of the landscape. Its ramp increases in elevation as it extends to the north. The remaining landscape area east of the roadway is composed of lawn and some trees and is largely underutilized. Just west of the roadway is the remaining portion of an original meadow in this area. The meadow was truncated by the viaduct project.

A small stretch of the walkway at the southeastern corner of the park is one of the few parts of the original path system that has been changed in its configuration since the implementation of the 1906 plan [B]. Despite the minor change here, it still leads to the historic plaza area [16] that is located along the southernmost edge of the lagoon [14]. The plaza is composed of a stretch of walkway that is somewhat wider than the rest of the path system. Marking each of its two ends is a circular paved area. The center of each circle originally contained a fountain.

Along the south side of the plaza is a classically-designed low concrete wall with portions that gently curve at its two ends. The center of the wall has an opening with a set of stairs leading to the lawn area to the south. A series of rectangular posts are built into the wall which support a row of urns. Backless concrete benches with wooden slat seats line the wall.

The entire area was originally used as a concert space, allowing for bands to play on the plaza with audiences sitting on the lawn to the south. The Chicago Park District rehabilitated the plaza [16] and its concrete elements in the early 1990s. This included repairs to some of the original fabric, although much of the work involved reconstruction. The lawn area [17] has been composed of turf and scattered trees since the implementation of the 1906 plan [B].

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The historic bathhouse [18] was one of McKinley Park's original features. Neo-classical in style, the one-story building was designed by in-house South Park Commission architects. Composed of brick sheathed in concrete panels, the building originally had a series of intersecting gable roofs clad in clay tile. Each of its facades included simple classical elements such as engaged Ionic columns, some of which sat on classically-designed posts, as well as pilasters, an entablature, and pediments.

The original bathhouse [18] was composed of three connected pavilions— two of which were oriented north- south and a center pavilion, oriented east-west. Its u-shaped configuration created a center courtyard space. Originally, within this space there was a u-shaped peristyle with plants set into its flat roof. The peristyle surrounded a small rectangular building that housed an office for the lifeguards. A small boiler house was located east of the bathhouse. The bathhouse facilities provided changing rooms and bathrooms for swimmers. Just north of the bathhouse, a naturalistic swimming pool extended from the courtyard space. This irregularly-shaped water feature, edged by sand, was designed to accommodate 300 bathers.

Today, only the east side of the historic bathhouse [18] remains. The Chicago Park District filled in the pool and demolished the two other sides of the building along with the boiler house, peristyle, and lifeguard building in 1951. The bathhouse's remaining portion was then renovated and used as facility for the Park District's landscape maintenance department. As part of its renovations the Park District filled in some doors and other openings with concrete blocks. In conjunction with this project, the area just to the east was converted into a maintenance yard. After serving as a maintenance building and yard for more than 50 years, the facility was recently closed down by the Park District. Today, the future of the bathhouse is uncertain. The area that was once occupied by the west pavilion of the bathhouse is now an asphalt slab, providing for three basketball courts [19]. To the north, the site of the original swimming pool is now a ball field [20].

The Chicago Park District constructed the existing swimming pool [21] in 1950. It occupies the former men's open air gymnasium area. It is a standard rectangular pool [21], surrounded by concrete decking. Just to the east, the Chicago Park District installed a parking lot by the mid-1930s in the area that had been the women's open air gymnasium. The southwestern part of this parking lot [22] was converted into an interactive water play area in 1998 [23]. It includes a shallow oval-shaped basin with colorful equipment.

The boiler house [24] is located south of the water play area. Rectangular in plan, the building has a flat roof. A tall cylindrical chimney-stack extends from the roof. The building is composed of exposed aggregate concrete, which unlike the field house, retains its original unpainted exterior surfaces.

Built in 1916, the field house [25] was designed by South Park Commission architects under the direction of Chief Engineer Linn White. Its neo-classical style was inspired by the earlier field houses that had been produced by D.H. Burnham & Co. for the South Park Commission. Composed of exposed aggregate concrete, the building's exterior is now painted pale beige. The roof, composed of a series of intersecting gables, was originally clad in green clay tiles. Today it is sheathed in green asphalt tiles. Despite this and some other relatively minor changes, such as an accessible ramp at the primary façade, and original wooden doors that have been replaced with metal, the building retains strong integrity.

Facing north towards the ball field, the one-and-a-half story field house is E-shaped in plan, with three large pavilions that are oriented north-south and two connecting pavilions extending east-west. The center pavilion houses a large auditorium space, while the two end pavilions originally featured the men's and women's gymnasiums.

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The building's front entrance is symmetrically placed in the center pavilion, within a tall elliptical arched opening. Above the front doorway is a large transom following the form of the elliptical arch. It is divided into three panels and has multiple lights with numerous muntins configured in a union-jack motif. The arched opening is flanked by two pairs of engaged Ionic pilasters, each with a long rectangular window composed of three lights oriented vertically. On both sides, the pilasters are capped by entablatures with Greek key fretwork at the architrave and an ornate swag and urn detail in bas-relief at the frieze. Above the arched opening, beneath the gable end, additional bas-relief ornamentation is larger in scale. This includes swags, bows, torches, and a shield-like medallion in the center. At the end of the gabled roof an overhanging eave with brackets and dentils follows the roof-line.

Flanking the center pavilion are the connecting pavilions which extend east-west. These have intersecting gable roofs with flat roofed extensions that project to the north. At the far east and west sides of the facades of the connecting pavilions, there are openings that provide porticoes for secondary entrances. Each opening has a set of steps leading up to an entrance plaza. Both sets of steps are flanked by Doric columns and classical balustrades. Adjacent to the openings are the flat roofed extensions which have paired pilasters flanking double-hung windows. In the 1990s the Chicago Park District created custom-designed metal security grills which cover these windows. There are small decorative medallions above the pilasters and windows. Cornices extend along the roofline of both of the connecting pavilions with balustrades above them.

The two end pavilions have identical north-facing facades. In the pediment space at the upper level of each, there is bas-relief ornamentation depicting foliage and fruit. The ornamentation surrounds a porthole window that is centered beneath the peak of the gable. A simple string course and a course of dentils separate the pediment from the lower part of the façade which is symmetrically divided by three sets of window openings. The lower windows are fixed and have two lights over two lights. Between the lower and upper windows, there is a concrete band with a simple circular architectural detail. The upper windows mimic the lower ones; however, these are hopper windows allowing for ventilation. The lower windows are covered with security screens, while the upper ones are exposed. Four bas-relief rosettes are symmetrically placed between the windows. Along the east and west exterior facades, the upper and lower two-over-two windows are repeated. The rosettes and simple circular details also appear on these facades.

North of the field house, the walkway [2] edges the south end of the ball field [1]. This walkway predates the 1916 construction of the field house and has been a constant feature in each of the park's plans [A, B, C, and D]. It has been widened slightly over the years. Edging this walkway there are a number of formally planted historic canopy trees. There are also several magnificent old ginkgo trees located closer to the field house [25]. On axis with the field house's center pavilion there is a shallow set of concrete steps [26] that lead from the walkway [2] to the sunken ball field [1]. There is a flag pole [27] located just to the north of the center point of these steps. A flag pole has been in this location at least since the construction of the field house [C, D].

In recent years, the Chicago Park District has undertaken a number of improvements that have enhanced McKinley Park's vitality in the community without jeopardizing its historic integrity. These include several projects to address the erosion of the lagoon's banks and provide improved access for fishing. The new ice-skating rink and artificial turf field sponsored by the Parkways Foundation have also served the area's recreational needs without creating a detrimental intrusion to the historic landscape. Although McKinley Park's landscape was affected by the construction of the 1960 S. Damen Avenue viaduct, it continues to strongly convey its historic character. Today, McKinley Park retains its lovely naturalistic landscape while also providing a vital recreational center for its surrounding neighborhood.

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PARKS IN THE CHICAGO PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT ALREADY LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER

The following parks, which are included in the system, have already been listed on the National Register. A detailed description can be found in the relevant individual nominations that have been listed as part of the Multiple Property Nomination, *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*. These already-listed parks are included in this nomination by reference.

Jackson Park

Jackson Park was listed on the National Register in 1972, with significance cited for history and architecture. It was part of the 1055-acre "South Park" which was created by legislation in 1869 and included the Midway Plaisance and Washington Park. Known originally as the "Eastern" or "Lower Division," 593-acre Jackson Park is bounded by E. 56th Street on the north, Lake Michigan on the east, E. 67th Street on the south and W. Stony Island Avenue on the west. This park is the only one in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District that has the distinction of being designed at three points in time by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

Jackson Park retains a high degree of integrity from Olmsted's last plan of 1895, the principle elements of which were lagoons, Lake Michigan and landscaped fields. This design was based on Olmsted and Vaux's original 1871 plan and was executed following the park's interim design as grounds for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. The fair's sole surviving major building is the Fine Arts Building located at the north end of Jackson Park, which was essentially the only area developed before the fair. Originally designed by D. H. Burnham & Company and reopened in the 1930s as the Museum of Science and Industry, the Classical Revival structure's main façade is oriented south toward a series of landscaped lagoons.

Most of Jackson Park's lakeshore is beachfront. At the south end is a large Italian Renaissance Revival-style bathing pavilion designed in-house by the South Park Commission in 1918. Two harbors also line the lakefront. Along the park's edges are landscaped fields accommodating various sports, a roadway circuit and a few buildings. These buildings include La Rabida hospital, constructed in 1932 on the south harbor's peninsula and designed by Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, the successor firm of D.H. Burham & Co.

Washington Park

Washington Park was listed on the National Register in 2004 as part of *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*. Its integrity is strong and reflects much of the original 1871 design of Frederick Law Olmsted. Comprised of 367 acres, Washington Park is the second largest park in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District. It is bounded on the north by E. 51st Street, on the south by E. 60th Street, on the east by S. Cottage Grove Avenue, and on the west by S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. It was created as part of a large 1055-acre park that was originally known as South Park but is now three sites: Jackson Park, the connecting Midway Plaisance and Washington Park.

Washington Park is rectangular, organized around a circulation system of drives, walks and bridle paths that follows a figure eight, made up of a north and a south loop. The park's north loop encircles a large meadow known as the "South Open Green." The driveway of this loop leads to major entries in the northeast and northwest corners of the park. West of the meadow is the "Public Forum," a gathering place constructed by the

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WPA in 1936. This system does not differ substantially from its original configuration except for the top of the north loop, which was removed in the 1970s to construct the existing school building. The Midway Plaisance provides a grand entrance to Washington Park near its southeast corner. On axis and just west of this entry is a colossal cast concrete sculpture, the recently-restored 1922 *Fountain of Time*, by the distinguished Chicago sculptor Loreda Taft. The park's south loop encircles this fountain and the following major features: a small lagoon call the "Pool" (at its north end), a large meandering lagoon called the "Mere" (at its south end), an undulating landscaped area called the "Seven Hills" (in the northeast), and the formally landscaped, "Mall" with its cross-axis (west of the Mere). The large island surrounded by the Mere was originally a peninsula that was reconfigured in 1904.

As Olmsted intended, most of the park's buildings are sited on the outer perimeter. South of the Garfield Boulevard entrance on the park's western border is a cluster of buildings that includes the Refectory (1891), a swimming complex (1936), and the field house (1954). The string of basketball and tennis courts south of the field house occupies the site of a road for fast driving, which was located there between 1889 and 1911.

The rolling landscape and paths along Washington Park's south perimeter are largely intact. The parks' east perimeter is lined primarily by buildings. From south to north these include the South Park system's laundry (1914), power house (1906), stable and roundhouse (1880) and administrative headquarters (1910, now the Du Sable Museum of African American History), as well as a 79,000 square foot armory (1928).

Sherman Park

Sherman Park was listed on the National Register in 2004 as part of the *Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*. Collaboratively designed in 1904 by landscape architects the Olmsted Brothers and D.H. Burnham & Company architects, it is one of the seminal and best preserved of the South Park Commission's neighborhood parks. Comprised of sixty acres, Sherman Park is bounded on the north by W. 52nd Street, on the east by S. Racine Avenue, on the south by Garfield Boulevard and on the west by S. Loomis Avenue.

The majority of this rectangular park is inscribed within a ring road that contains a meandering lagoon with a large central island. This area, like its gently rolling perimeter, is naturalistically planted. In contrast, the north edge of the park is more architectural and formal, with classically-detailed buildings symmetrically arranged around a central swimming pool. These buildings include a field house with murals executed in the early 20th-century

Garfield Park

Garfield Park was previously listed on the National Register in 1993.¹⁶ Like Humboldt Park and Douglas Park, Garfield Park was included in William LeBaron Jenney's 1871 plans for the West Park System. Garfield Park is the western-most of the three major landscaped "pleasure grounds" in the West Park System. The 185-acre park grounds lie in a long rectangle running north and south abutted by a square section in the center of the east side. The largest portion of the park lies west of N. Central Park Avenue. It is bounded on the north by the railroad embankment (just north of W. Carroll Avenue), on the west by N. and S. Hamlin Avenue and on the south by W. Fifth Avenue. An additional, abutting square section of parkland (the original location of the park's formal eastern entrance) lies east of N. Central Park Avenue. It is bounded on the north by W. Lake Street and on the south by W. Madison Street. Several major roadways and transit routes cut through the park from east to west, including (from the south) W. Jackson Boulevard, W. Madison Street, W. Washington Boulevard, W.

¹⁶ Garfield Park National Register Nomination prepared by Julia Sniderman, Bart Ryckbosch and Joan Pomaranc. Entered into the National Register on 8/31/1993. Periods of Significance: Architecture, 1874-1928; Recreation, 1871-1939; Landscape Architecture, 1870-1920; Social History, 1871-1939.

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Lake Street and the elevated CTA/Green Line tracks. The park was opened sequentially, with the western and center sections ready for public use in 1887, the area north of W. Lake Street in 1891 and south of W. Madison Avenue in the 1890s.

The central section of the park contains two large lagoons surrounded by winding vehicular and pedestrian routes. This portion of the park also includes the Gazebo designed by Joseph L. Silsbee in 1896. The northern section of the park holds the magnificent 1908 Conservatory designed by landscape architect Jens Jensen in conjunction with architects Schmidt, Garden & Martin and New York greenhouse experts Hitchings & Company. There is also a service area in this northern section of the park that contains several utility buildings, including stables by Jenney (c.1890), a power house by Silsbee (1896) and a 3-story warehouse and workshop building by Schmidt, Garden & Martin (1928). In addition to the Conservatory, Jensen was responsible for a comfort station and a golf shelter (1907) Jensen also undertook several important alterations to the park between 1905 and 1920, including improvements to the formal entrance at Washington Boulevard on the east and a water court with a formal flower garden (designed by William Carbys Zimmerman, 1906) that is bisected by W. Madison Street. In 1928, as part of a major program of improvements funded by a \$10 million bond issue, an enormous Spanish Revival Administration Building (the "Gold Dome building") designed by Michaelsen & Rognstad was built in the center of the park overlooking the west lagoon. Today this building is used as a field house.

Humboldt Park

Humboldt Park was previously listed on the National Register in 1992.¹⁷ Humboldt Park, which was included in William LeBaron Jenney's original plans for the parks and boulevards in the West Chicago Park System, is the northernmost of the three large landscaped parks in the West Park System. It is 207 acres with the main portion of the park lying west of N. California Avenue, bounded by W. North Avenue on the north, N. Kedzie Avenue on the west and W. Division Street on the south. An additional square lies south of W. Division Street bounded by N. Sacramento Avenue on the east, W. Augusta Boulevard on the south and N. Kedzie Avenue on the west. N. Humboldt Boulevard bisects the main section of the park. A winding drive circles the perimeter of the park and several large, picturesque lagoons lie in the northern section. Mature trees, pedestrian paths, open meadows, playing fields and several small specialty gardens enhance the park. The park includes the large Queen Anne style 1895 Receptory Building designed by Frommann & Jebsen, the 1907 Prairie style Boathouse/Refectory by Schmidt, Garden & Martin, the 1913-1914 Prairie style Field House by Michaelsen & Rognstad and the 1913-1914 Prairie style Natatorium by William Carbys Zimmerman. Numerous small comfort stations and service buildings can also be found in Humboldt Park. There are also many sculptures in the park, including the 1892 portrait sculpture of naturalist *Alexander von Humboldt*, for whom the park is named, the 1893 sculpture of *Fritz Reuter* by Franz Englesman and the 1901 statue of *Leif Erickson* by Sigvald Asbjornsen.

BOULEVARDS IN THE CHICAGO PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Types of Boulevards:

The 19 boulevards contained in the nomination are of six different types.¹⁸ These are:

¹⁷ Humboldt Park National Register Nomination prepared by Julia Sniderman & Ellen S. Berkelhamer. Entered into the National Register on 2/20/1992. Periods of Significance: Architecture, 1871-1936; Recreation, 1877-1936; Landscape architecture, 1870-1936; Social History, 1871-1936.

¹⁸ *Life on the Boulevards*, p 44.

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TYPE 1--divided drives with center median and parallel service roads

TYPE 2--center drive with parallel service roads

TYPE 3--divided drives with center median

TYPE 4--boulevard paired with an arterial street

TYPE 5--center drive with broad parkways

TYPE 6--simple roadway.

TYPE 1: The divided drives with center median and parallel service roads type applies solely to the Midway Plaisance. This 700-foot wide road has a broad, sunken median that is flanked by one-way roadways whose traffic flows in opposite directions. These roadways, in turn, are flanked by narrower service drives that are also one-way. A median separates the roadways from the service drives and a parkway borders the outside of the service drives.

TYPE 2: The center drive with parallel service road type characterizes S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Sacramento, Humboldt, Kedzie and Logan Boulevards. This is the second most common pattern in the system, with rights-of-way ranging from 200' to 310'. It consists of a two-way center drive separated by median strips from parallel one-way service roads.

TYPE 3: The divided drives with center median is the most common type in the system, with rights-of-way ranging from 200' to 250'. Drexel, Garfield, Douglas and Independence Boulevards and Palmer Square are characterized by this pattern which consists of a broad, tree-studded median separating two one-way drives.

TYPE 4: The boulevard paired with a major arterial type is largely found in non-residential areas along the system and includes Western, California and 31st Boulevards. This pattern, in which rights-of-way vary from 200' to 250', was designed for industrial areas in an effort to keep trucks off the boulevards. It consists of a wide central median separating flanking multi-lane roadways in which traffic flows in both directions.

TYPE 5: The center drive with broad parkways type applies only to Marshall and 24th Boulevards, both of which have 250' rights-of-way. A center drive carries two-way traffic and the broad flanking parkways give the impression of expansive front yards to the homes along these boulevards.

TYPE 6: The simple roadway type applies to Oakwood Boulevard, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive between 51st and 55th Streets, and parts of Logan Boulevard. It is comprised of a conventional center road with two-way traffic and flanking planting strips.

BOULEVARDS AND SQUARES IN CHICAGO PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT:

South Park System

S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The original 3-mile boulevard section of the street extends from E. 35th Street on the north to E. 51st Street on the south. It has a 200' wide right-of-way and was known during most of the period of significance as Grand Boulevard. Originally called Kankakee Avenue, its name was changed in 1925 to South Parkway, then in 1968 to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. It is a Type 2 boulevard. The center drive, 55' wide, is comprised of four lanes, while each of the service drives, 25' wide, has a single traffic lane.

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Separating the center drive from each of the service roads are flanking medians, approximately 30' wide. The service drives are bordered, in turn, by parkways approximately 6' wide and by concrete sidewalks. Landscaping of both the medians and parkways consists of grass and of trees planted in formal rows along the curb. Crosswalks are often found between the sidewalk and curb in front of residential and commercial properties. While crosswalks are regularly located across the medians at street intersections, they are rare elsewhere on the medians.

As on all of the boulevards, the lighting, signage, traffic signals and bus shelters are non-historic. No bridges cross Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, however an abandoned concrete embankment is located between Oakwood Boulevard and E. 40th street.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive deviates in three places from the norm described above—at E. 35th Street, E. 47th Street and E. 51st Street. In all three places there are works of art, although the art works at E. 47th Street, which commemorate the Chicago Blues District, are non-historic.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive begins at E. 35th Street with a central, elongated, triangular median island, approximately 50' wide and 250' long, which dates from 1996. Three lanes of traffic are channeled on each side of the landscaped island where the Type 3 section of this boulevard transitions into the prevailing Type 2. In the center of the median island is a sculpture known as the *Victory Monument* erected in 1927. Also commonly called the “World War I Black Soldiers Memorial,” it has a circular, white granite base decorated with four bronze panels separated by fluted pilasters. Three of the relief panels are adorned with life-size figures: an African American woman who represents motherhood, an African American soldier with a sword, shield and eagle, and Columbia displaying a tablet listing the regiment’s battles.¹⁹ The fourth panel lists the honored dead and responsible officials, as well as supervising architect John Nyden, sculptor Leonard Crunell, manufacturer AM Art Bronze Foundry, Chicago, and bronze founders Jules Berchem and Son. The “doughboy” sculpture atop the column was placed there in 1936. New landscape and new hardscape, consisting of a flagpole and concrete plaza, known as the *Bronzeville Hall of Fame*, that includes decorative bronze tablets honoring African American military heroes, were added in 1996.²⁰

As S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive nears the northwest entrance to Washington Park (531 feet north of E. 51st Street) its right-of-way broadens to approximately 350', providing sufficient space to accommodate a graceful eastward curve of the central drive. The service roads continue along the east and west sides of this square, which is landscaped with grass and trees. This enlarged section of the boulevard was part of the original design concept and was known as “Grand Boulevard Entrance to Washington Park” until it was renamed “Washington Monument Square” in 1904. The central roadway within the square has varied over time between angled and curved.

Along the west side of the central roadway, approximately 100' north of E. 51st Street is an equestrian statue of *George Washington*. Erected in 1904, the bronze statue is set atop a pink granite base raised above two broad steps and a low, flared pink granite plinth. The simple oblong base is unadorned, although “Washington” is incised on the north face of the base. The sculpture depicts General Washington, arm and sword raised, as he took charge of the American Revolutionary Army in 1775. Daniel Chester French designed the figure of

¹⁹ Ira J. Bach and Mary Lackritz Gray. *A Guide to Chicago's Public Sculpture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983, p. 216.

²⁰ The spot where this monument is located had previously been occupied by a large horse fountain in the 19th-century and an ornamental fountain in the early 20th-century.

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Washington, which incorporates a head modeled on a life bust of Washington executed by Jean-Antoine Houdon. French collaborated with Edward Clark Potter, a former assistant, who sculpted the horse. The sculpture retains a high degree of integrity although it was originally set in the center of the roadway in an open plaza.

E. Oakwood Boulevard (Formerly Oakwood Avenue). This segment of the system is only .5 miles long and historically connected S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive on the west and Drexel Boulevard on the east. It is the simplest boulevard along the system, the only one that is a Type 6. It is 100' wide with the road flanked by 6' grass parkways with a simple line of trees. Crosswalks are common, with narrow ones in front of residential properties and wide ones in front of the several institutions on this short street. Trees are a mix of new and mature with relatively few gaps. The configuration of Oakwood Boulevard retains a high degree of integrity except for its intersection with S. Cottage Grove Avenue and S. Drexel Boulevard, where it originally flared out to a width of approximately 240'. Historically, the boulevard ended here and a city street, Oakwood Avenue, continued east of Drexel Boulevard.

S. Drexel Boulevard (formerly Drexel Avenue and Grove Parkway). S. Drexel Boulevard, 1.6 miles long, angles parallel to the curve of the lakefront for the northern ¼ mile of its length before turning south and ending at E. 51st Street across from Drexel Square. Drexel is a Type 1 boulevard and is 200' wide. It is comprised of a central median, approximately 90' wide, flanked by two roadways. Each of the roadways has two lanes of traffic and is bordered by a 6' parkway edged with a concrete sidewalk.

The central median has a slightly undulating surface, park-like plantings, and winding asphalt paths that are historic. This park-like landscape has a combination of mature and young trees. Some benches, both historic and non-historic, are placed within the median near E. 43rd Street.

At the north end of S. Drexel Boulevard, the west driveway and median cul-de-sac terminate in a non-historic park whose northern border is E. Oakwood Boulevard and whose western border is a fence running along the rear property line of S. Cottage Grove Avenue. The east driveway intersects with E. Oakwood Boulevard. The park contains a non-historic, tiered, concrete fountain, new concrete benches and walks and concrete light poles with globes. The park dates from 1998.

Drexel Square, approximately 4 acres, is located immediately south of S. Drexel Boulevard and east of the northeast corner of Washington Park. It is bordered by E. 51st Street on the north, S. Drexel Avenue on the east, E. Drexel Square on the south and S. Cottage Grove Avenue on the west. The roadways of S. Drexel Boulevard cross E. 51st Street and, channeled by two traffic islands, converge to become E. Bowen Drive, which gently curves westward through Drexel Square and aligns with Payne Drive in Washington Park. E. Bowen Drive consists of four traffic lanes. The landscape of the square is park-like with grass, trees and shrubs. Concrete sidewalks border the north, east and west sides of the square. The square was originally designed with a center median that separated the roadways. The present road configuration dates from the 1930s.

Located on the north side of Bowen Drive within the square is *Drexel Fountain*, which was erected in 1882 and designed by Philadelphia sculptor Henry Manger. The fountain rests in a pool that was enlarged in 1888. This pool, which measures approximately 36' x 36', has a granite curb that is rectangular, with chamfered corners and curved sections at the center of each side. The tiered monument, one of the oldest in the city, is raised on a granite base. Four beautifully modeled, arched relief plaques adorn the sides of the base.

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Crowning the top of the elaborately decorated monument is a life-size statue of Philadelphia banker and Chicago land speculator Francis Drexel (1792-1863). Daylilies and shrubs surround the pool.

E. and W. Garfield Boulevard, Built out originally as Pavilion Boulevard, at the location of E. 55th Street), Garfield Boulevard is the longest of the original boulevards at 3.5 miles. On the east, it begins at S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive across from Washington Park, and aligns with the short segment of road inside the park that bears the same name. On the west it ends in Gage Park. Garfield Boulevard is 200' wide and is a Type 3 boulevard. The center median, which generally measures approximately 65', has a park-like landscape. Each of the side drives that flank the median has three traffic lanes and a parking lane. Parkways approximately 6' wide line the outside of the drives and are bordered by concrete walks. A single row of trees in the parkway is a mix of mature and young specimens with some gaps.

Railroad bridges span Garfield Boulevard in five areas. Generally these bridges are simple steel girders with iron trestles and concrete or stone embankments. Railroad crossings along Garfield Boulevard were elevated between 1896 and 1913.

The first of these bridges is located between S. Calumet Avenue and S. Prairie Avenue and supports the CTA/Green Line. It is a steel bridge with a pair of steel supports on cement plinths flanking both sides of the roadways. This bridge is Non-contributing. The second crossing is two bridges between S. Perry/S. Federal Street and S. LaSalle Street just east of Interstate 90-94/Dan Ryan Expressway. The new bridge is Non-contributing and the other, which is steel with steel supports and a stone embankment, is Contributing.

There are significant rail yards north of Garfield Boulevard and these yards feed the third and fourth rail crossings. The third crossing is just east of S. Stewart Avenue. This is a wide steel bridge with five pairs of concrete supports and a stone or concrete embankment at each end. The fourth crossing is between S. Normal Boulevard and S. Lowe Avenue (just east of S. Wallace Street on the north side of Garfield Boulevard). This series of three steel bridges carries five tracks. The decks are carried on steel supports set on concrete plinths positioned at each end of the median. There is a concrete embankment on each side. These bridges are all Contributing.

The fifth and final crossing is between S. Hoyne Avenue and S. Oakley Avenue and it carries tracks that lead into rail yards to the south. There are two similar bridges here: both are steel with concrete sides and supports and a concrete embankment. They are Contributing. A third bridge is broader, carrying two tracks, and is steel throughout. This third bridge is Non-contributing.

Near the east end of Garfield Boulevard, immediately west of S. Wentworth, the boulevard passes over the multiple lanes of the depressed Interstate 90-94/Dan Ryan Expressway, which was opened in 1962. At the far west end of the Garfield Boulevard central median, there is a concrete fountain, which is fronted on the east by a rectangular plaza with benches. The fountain is Non-contributing.

Roughly the center two miles of Garfield Boulevard, from S. State Street to S. Ashland Avenue, were originally built as a center drive with flanking service roads. This section was rebuilt between 1896 and 1905, so that for its entire length Garfield Boulevard's configuration was uniformly divided drives with a center median.

S. Western Boulevard, 3.1 miles long and 200' wide, is a boulevard paired with an arterial street, a Type 4. Western Boulevard was created by the original 1869 South Park legislation. It was constructed adjacent and to

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the east of the existing S. Western Avenue, which was laid out as a plank road in the 1850s. Today S. Western Avenue serves as an arterial road. S. Western Boulevard extends north from Garfield Boulevard in Gage Park to the Sanitary & Ship Canal. A broad central median, approximately 100' wide, separates two roadways, each with four lanes of traffic. Today, the eastern roadway is called S. Western Boulevard, while the western roadway is called S. Western Avenue. The central median is park-like and the flanking parkways are lined with trees, although sparse in some areas.

There are three railroad crossings. The first crossing, at W. 49th Street, has two bridges. One is all-steel and carries two tracks and is Contributing. The other carries the CTA/Orange Line elevated train and has two tracks. This bridge is steel with steel sides and has a concrete embankment and supports; it is Non-contributing. The median north of these bridges is occupied by an elongated shelter and drop-off drives; it is one of the only places along the boulevard system where the median has been removed.

The second crossing is very broad and cuts diagonally across W. 39th Street. Three side-by-side all-steel bridges carry eight tracks at this crossing. All of these bridges are Contributing.

The third crossing is at W. 36th Street, where an all-steel bridge carrying two tracks is beside a new concrete bridge with concrete supports carrying two tracks, the latter being the continuation of the CTA/Orange Line elevated train. The all-steel bridge is Contributing; the new bridge is Non-contributing.

S. Western Avenue and S. Western Boulevard are aligned along the length of the central median, from Gage Park until W. 34th Street. At W. 34th Street, shortly before they reach the Sanitary & Ship Canal, the roadways cross before passing under Interstate 55/ Stevenson Expressway (opened in 1964) and the Sanitary & Ship Canal (opened in 1900).

The Connection Between the Two Park Systems

The connection between the West Chicago Park System and the South Chicago Park System was to prove challenging for the two groups of commissioners. The boulevard would need to be carried over (or under) numerous transportation links: railroad tracks, the Illinois & Michigan Canal and the West Branch of the South Fork of the Chicago River. This complexity was multiplied in the late 1890s by the construction of the new Sanitary & Ship Canal which, in this section, used the old Illinois & Michigan Canal bed for its route.

After much negotiation with the canal managers and the railroads, the two systems were first connected in 1894 with the construction of a drawbridge over the Sanitary & Ship Canal on S. Western Boulevard. However, the intersection of W. 31st Street and S. Western Boulevard continued to be a major traffic bottleneck until it was relieved by the construction of a major new overpass and underpass system from 1939-41 as part of the Works Progress Administration's improvement program. The multi-ramped system that exists at this transportation hub today is substantially original to the 1940 design.²¹

The roadway travels under the railroad tracks on the south side of the canals in five two-lane sections and two pedestrian underpasses. The two eastern sections carry S. Western Avenue and connect directly to S. Western on the north side of the canal. The next two sections carry S. Western Boulevard and curve directly onto W. 31st Boulevard. The fifth and westernmost section leads under the tracks to a boat ramp on the south bank of the canal.

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The side walls of the ramps are cast in a rough aggregate concrete with Art Deco concrete pylons on the bridges, matching low pylons and shallow relief panels on the ramp walls and small curved platforms over each of the pedestrian tunnel entrances. The concrete bridges have beautifully detailed concrete supports, with stylized reeding and dentils throughout. The bridge over the canal has limestone pylons with the same Art Deco detailing as the concrete of the ramps, square limestone anchors at either end with prismatic tops and cast aluminum ornamental railings with floral designs in the open panels and reeded supports. The bridge has unusually heavy riveted steel plates between the traffic lanes which provide a clue to its original configuration. The bridge as originally constructed was a lift bridge but the extensive superstructure once used to raise the bridge has been removed.²² There are at least four original Art Deco street lamp bases on the ramp and bridge system with zig-zag cast ornament. A large bronze sign on the northwestern bridge pylon documents the many engineers, designers and public officials involved in the project, as well as the WPA project number. The Stevenson Expressway/Interstate 55 passes east-west over the entire ramp system on new, Non-contributing concrete supports.

West Park System Boulevards and Squares

N. Western Boulevard. The section north of the Sanitary and Ship Canal is .2 miles long, extending from the canal on the south to where it meets W. 31st Boulevard on the north. There is no greenway on N. Western Boulevard north of the canal. The route was laid out in 1881 and plans were drawn in 1886. It was not until 1914 that this section achieved its current configuration, after a land swap with the Sanitary District to improve the corner of S. Western Boulevard and W. 31st Street. The intersection with W. 31st Boulevard remains awkward. On the west side of the boulevard is a large lawn area with some trees and much shrubby growth along the canal's edge. This lawn area runs west to the huge four-track railroad crossing that spans the canal and the boulevard near S. Rockwell Street.

W. 31st Boulevard. Only .5 mile long, this section of the boulevard system runs roughly east-west from S. Western Boulevard to S. California Boulevard. Two major railroad overpasses cross the roadway near S. Rockwell Street. The west overpass has the characteristic early 20th-century concrete facing with inset panels and Gothic arches and is Contributing. The reinforced concrete substructure appears to be of more recent date. The overpass no longer carries railroad tracks. The east overpass is more classical in design inspiration and is difficult to date. It has heavy concrete anchors with shallow inset panels and prismatic tops. The anchors are painted white. Underneath is an exposed steel structure. This overpass is Non-contributing.

W. 31st Boulevard is 250' wide and has a winding path: it starts out south of the arterial, W. 31st Street, but then crosses to the north at the intersection with S. Rockwell Avenue. Only the section west of S. Rockwell Avenue has any significant accessible green space. The green space has a long, winding earthen berm in it, a very unusual feature on the western boulevards. This boulevard is a Type 4, a boulevard paired with an arterial street, and it feels relatively empty since there are no buildings on the south side and only Cook County Corrections land and a large school on the north side. The parkway has loosely-shaped mounds with trees planted in rows adjacent to the road and in informal groupings in the center of the parkway.

S. California Boulevard. This segment of the boulevard system is .75 mile long. It runs north-south from W. 31st Boulevard to W. 24th Boulevard. It is approached on the north by a sweeping curve from W. 24th Boulevard.

²² http://www.historicbridges.org/b_c_il_cook.htm, see "Western Avenue Bridge", <http://forgottenchicago.com/ffeatures/chicago-infrastructure/south-western-avenue> improvement/

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S. California Boulevard is a Type 4, 250' wide and similar in character to W. 31st Boulevard. Trees are planted in rows adjacent to the road and informally on the interiors of the broad parkway. It is crossed by W. 25th Street and W. 26th Street and by grade-level railroad tracks (no longer in use) on the south side of W. 26th Street. Like S. Western Boulevard, the west roadway is called S. California Avenue and the east is called S. California Boulevard.

W. 24th Boulevard. W. 24th Boulevard is only .25 mile long, providing a short east-west connection between Marshall Boulevard on the west and S. California Boulevard on the east. It is 250' wide and is a Type 5. The south side of the street here has a wide lawn; the north side has the large and imposing Carter H. Harrison Technical High School.

At the intersection of W. 24th Boulevard and Marshall Boulevard is a monument to *Jacques Marquette*. Designed by Hermon Atkins MacNeil in 1926, the bronze sculpture powerfully depicts Marquette holding his cross with Louis Joliet on his left and an Algonquin Indian on his right.²³ It is set on a rectangular granite base with a series of low steps leading up to it on all four sides. The front panel on the base depicts a canoe being portaged and bears the inscription:

This monument was erected by the Trustees of the Ferguson Monument Fund to commemorate the discoveries and the sacrifices of the Jesuit missionary Pere Marquette. Dedicated MCMXXVI.

The base is badly weathered and difficult to read. The monument is set on a diagonal in the broad parkway, facing across the intersection, with beautiful mature trees shading it.

S. Marshall Boulevard. Marshall Boulevard is a short segment, .5 mile long. It runs north-south, connecting the south end of Douglas Park (W. 19th Street) with W. 24th Boulevard. It is a Type 5, a center drive with broad parkways, and is crossed by two railroad overpasses between W. 19th Street and W. 21st Street. The northernmost overpass is the older of the two and is Contributing. It is a standard height viaduct with large rusticated block walls in the underpass. The southern overpass is carried on unusually high reeded concrete pillars and is Non-contributing. It has some decorative braces that give a nod to the ornament found on earlier railroad bridges on the boulevards. On the 250' wide boulevard trees are planted in rows adjacent to the road and in informal groupings in the center of the parkway.

W. Douglas Boulevard. This segment, .75 mile long, runs east-west, connecting the western edge of Douglas Park (S. Albany Avenue) to Independence Square. It is a Type 3 boulevard. This boulevard was part of the original plan for the West Chicago Park System, with land acquisition taking place immediately and plans drawn up in 1871. The boulevard was built between 1873 and 1881, making it one of the earliest West Park segments to be opened to the public. Its design clearly reflects this early date, with a winding concrete path down the center of the median. (the only such path in the entire West system) and informal groupings of both trees and shrubs. Rows of trees line the roadway and modern light fixtures carry street lights and lower pedestrian lights on a single pole. There are a considerable number of concrete benches of various types and

²³ http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM7JW7_Jacques_Marquette_Monument_Chicago_IL. This website also notes that the monument was erected after the Ferguson Fund "received a petition signed by 15,000 schoolchildren asking that a monument be created." The monument is seen every day by the elementary school children of the John Spry Public School immediately behind it on Boulevard Way and the high school students at Carter Harrison High School on the opposite side of West 24th Boulevard.

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some non-historic modern sculptures and gathering places at the ends of individual sections, such as the crossings at S. Homan Avenue and at S. Kedzie Avenue.²⁴

Independence Square lies at the intersection of W. Douglas Boulevard and S. Independence Boulevard. It is bounded on the north by W. Douglas Boulevard, on the west by S. Independence Boulevard, on the south by W. 14th Street and on the east by S. Ridgeway Avenue. Although the roadway now cuts off the northeastern corner of the square, it still remains an important visual turning point in the boulevard system. What gives it this important presence is the *American Youth and Independence Day Fountain* that rises at the center of it. This monument, designed in 1902 by Charles Mulligan, was the first and only fountain commissioned by the West Chicago Park System. The round granite pool of the fountain rests on a raised area in the square. At its center is a fifteen-foot high granite pedestal which originally had four cast bronze plaques around the base. The bronze sculpture depicts the excitement and joy of Fourth of July patriotism, with two boys and two girls waving flags, blowing horns and beating drums as they march with high knees and faces raised to the sky. Unfortunately, the plaques from the base are now missing and the fountain no longer functions. A few small pieces from the top sculpture are missing as well and the entire fountain is now encased in chain-link fencing to keep vandals out. The poor condition of the fountain is matched by that of the square. The square has little surviving landscaping, with just a few scrubby trees on the edges of the lawn area south of the fountain. There is also a Non-contributing building located in the southeast corner of the square.

S. Independence Boulevard. Approximately .90 mile long, S. Independence Boulevard runs north-south from W. Harrison Street (Interstate 290/Eisenhower Expressway) to W. Douglas Boulevard. It is a Type 3, divided drives with a center median and is crossed by a railroad overpass between W. Taylor and W. Filmore Streets.²⁵ This overpass is the ornamental concrete type introduced throughout much of the West System in the 1910s. Rows of trees line the roadway. The landscaping is typical, with trees close to the roadway in rows and more loosely planted in the parkway.

N and S. Hamlin Boulevard, .3 mile long, is the north-south extension of Independence Boulevard. It runs from W. Congress Parkway (Interstate 290/Eisenhower Expressway) on the south to W. Madison Avenue on the north, skirting the western edge of Garfield Park the entire way. Although it is a Type 3, a divided drive with a center median, throughout, the parkway widens considerably south of W. Gladys Avenue. Between W. Monroe and W. Adams Streets the parkway has been carved away to almost nothing in order to accommodate four lanes of traffic. This narrow parkway is planted with a relatively recent row of trees and clumps of ornamental grasses. In the broad section of the parkway near W. Congress Parkway, trees are planted informally and create a shady grove.²⁶

N. Central Park Boulevard, .10 mile long and 250' wide, N. Central Park Boulevard runs north out of Garfield Park as an extension of N. Conservatory Drive to Garfield Square (W. Ferdinand Street). It is a Type 2 and is crossed by a railroad overpass at the northern edge of the park. This overpass carries multiple tracks and is plain and Non-contributing, constructed of steel girders with rusticated concrete blocks on the underpass walls. Sidewalks flank the roadway through the underpass.

²⁴ For instance, there is a group of benches with a game table in the parkway at St. Louis Avenue, raised planters at Homan Avenue and a sculpture at Kedzie Avenue. A modern concrete obelisk denoting the "Historic Boulevards" stands at the entrance to Douglas Park.

²⁵ This overpass carried the Chicago & Great Western, a freight line, when originally built. It now carries the Baltimore & Ohio.

²⁶ It should be noted that the street signs on the northern section of Hamlin shift between "Street", "Avenue" and "Boulevard" throughout the distance between Washington Boulevard and Gladys Avenue.

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Although the land for this segment was acquired immediately after the West Park Commission was formed, plans were not finalized for this segment until 1903. The drives were widened in 1921 in response to the increasing amount of automobile traffic on the boulevards.

Garfield Square lies at the turning point between N. Central Park Boulevard and Franklin Boulevard. It is an irregularly-shaped rectangle, roughly 300' x 325' and is bounded on the north by Garfield Square, on the west by N. Monticello Avenue, on the south by building lots, and on the east by N. Central Park Avenue. It is bisected by Franklin Boulevard which becomes W. Ferdinand Street. The square contains a Non-contributing concrete obelisk, erected in 1996 denoting the "historic boulevards". A pedestrian pathway runs through a lawn area that is planted with numerous groupings of trees.

W. Franklin Boulevard, which is .75 mile long and 250' wide, runs west-east between Garfield Square (N. Central Park Avenue) and Sacramento Square (N. Whipple Street). It is a Type 2 boulevard, a center drive with parallel service roads separated by median strips, and was laid out in 1903, although not completed until 1911. Its drives were widened in 1921. This boulevard is landscaped with groupings of small trees and more mature single trees. There are a few elms remaining and a grouping of crabapple trees at N. Homan Avenue. Six Non-contributing modern sculptures are placed in the parkway at various points north and south of the boulevard drive.

Sacramento Square lies at the turning point of W. Franklin Boulevard and N. Sacramento Boulevard. It has no distinct northern boundary, merging directly into N. Sacramento Boulevard. On the east it is bounded by N. Sacramento Boulevard, on the south by W. Franklin Boulevard and on the west by N. Whipple Street. Although part of the original West Chicago Park system plan, the square has been altered several times over the years. Especially notable is the redesign in 1909 to accommodate the newly-acquired Sacramento Boulevard extension to the south.²⁷ Today the dominating presence of intersecting roadways leaves little green space at this important turning point for the boulevard system. It retains only one of its original corners, the southwest, and has just a few informal groupings of trees and shrubs. This square is embedded in what has always been an industrial part of the west side, with massive train yards to the east, and factories on all sides. The embankment to the south once carried railroad tracks and is now the planned location of a recreational path.

N. Sacramento Boulevard, This segment is .55 mile long and runs south-north from Sacramento Square to W. Augusta Boulevard. The Boulevard is 263' wide from Sacramento Square to W. Grand Avenue and 400' wide from W. Grand Avenue to W. Augusta Boulevard. It is crossed by a Contributing ornamental concrete railroad overpass in the Gothic style just south of W. Chicago Avenue. This overpass once carried trains into and out of the railroad yard to the east.²⁸ The boulevard is a Type 2 and has some informal groupings of trees and shrubs in the parkway. Between W. Grand Avenue and W. Chicago Avenue the east service drive has been removed along with the eastern border of trees. Some of the large trees lining the western roadway are still in place. Parking space has been carved from the parkway between W. Chicago Avenue and Sacramento Square. N. Sacramento Boulevard has relatively few crossings and, of these, only W. Grand Avenue is a major arterial.

BOULEVARDS AND SQUARES ALREADY LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER

²⁷ Sacramento Avenue was purchased from the City in 1903 in order to create Sacramento Boulevard, thereby creating a more direct connection between Garfield Park and Douglas Park for automobile traffic.

²⁸ The overpass originally carried the Chicago, Minneapolis & St. Paul Railroad.

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Midway Plaisance is approximately 1 mile long, and 700' wide. It connects the south end of Washington Park with the north end of Jackson Park. It is bounded by E. 59th Street on the north, E. 60th Street on the south, S. Cottage Grove Avenue on the west, and S. Stony Island Avenue on the east. A broad central depressed median is flanked by roadways with two lanes of one-way traffic. These roadways are then separated by a median from service drives bordered by a parkway. A row of trees borders the grass-covered parkways and medians along the length of the Midway. This simple landscape treatment is only varied between S. Woodlawn and S. Ellis, where a skating rink is located in the center of the depressed median and a garden is planted along much of the north median. Several sculptures are located on the Midway Plaisance, including the *Fountain of Time* by Loreda Taft, dedicated in 1922; the *Carl Von Linne Monument*, relocated from Lincoln Park in 1976; and the *Thomas G. Masaryk Monument*, by Albin Polasek, dedicated in 1955.

N Humboldt Boulevard is .75 mile long, extending north from Garfield Park (W. North Avenue) to the eastern edge of Palmer Square (N. Shakespeare Avenue). It is a Type 2, with formal rows of trees lining the roadway and informal groups of shrubs in the parkway. The parkway has been slightly built up to provide mounds for the plantings. It is crossed by an ornamental concrete railroad overpass at W. Bloomingdale Road.

Palmer Square is approximately 7 acres, bounded on the north by W. Fullerton Avenue, on the east by N. Milwaukee Avenue, on the south by W. Armitage Avenue and on the west by N. Kedzie Boulevard. It is roughly oblong. The square has an oval jogging path around its perimeter, a concrete sidewalk along its north and south sides and three north-south sidewalks: one in the middle and one at either end. There is a boulevard kiosk, dating from c. 1996, at the square's west end, and a modern play area featuring mounds and whimsical forest animals at the center. There are a number of old growth trees throughout the square.

N. Kedzie Boulevard. N. Kedzie Boulevard is approximately .8 mile. It runs north-south and connects Palmer Square to Logan Square. It is a Type 2 boulevard.

Logan Square is approximately 5.5 acres, bounded approximately by the service drives of W. Logan Boulevard on the north and south, N. Troy Street on the east, and N. Kedzie Avenue on the west. The *Illinois Centennial Column*, dating from 1918 and designed by Henry Bacon, stands in the center of the square.

N. Logan Boulevard. N. Logan Boulevard is approximately 1 mile long, extending from Logan Square east to N. Western Avenue, adjacent to the Metra Railway lines/Interstate 90/Kennedy Expressway. It is a Type 2 boulevard, with a center drive and parallel service drives. The .35 mile section of N. Logan Boulevard between N. Western Avenue and the Chicago River has no greenway, is largely flanked by newer buildings and was not included in the National Register *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*, which is included in this nomination by reference.

INTEGRITY

The integrity of the overall configuration of the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District is very high. Except for three squares in the West Park System (Independence, Garfield and Sacramento) the sizes of the parks, boulevards and squares have not changed markedly since 1942. Although somewhat reduced in size from their original 400' x 400' dimension, these three West Park squares still retain a strong degree of integrity.

On the boulevards, the location, width of rights-of-ways, and configuration of roadways, parkways and medians has changed relatively little since 1942, the end of the period of significance for most of The Chicago

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Park Boulevard System Historic District. The configuration of the Midway Plaisance has changed little since 1964, the end of the period of significance for the south side of the Midway. Connections between boulevards have been modified somewhat since the end of the period of significance, specifically at the juncture of Drexel and Oakwood Boulevards.

Overall, the integrity of the boulevard landscape ranges from good to fair. The flat topography has changed little; the narrow parkways bordering the streets are still mostly occupied by grass and trees planted in lines, and the medians still retain their overall impression of continuous, linear parkland. Landscaping along the boulevards generally can be described as formal (characterized by rows of shade and ornamental trees), informal (characterized by groves and masses of shade and ornamental trees) or park-like (grouped areas of shade trees interspersed with isolated specimen and ornamental trees, mostly found in squares and along wide medians).

Although some of the trees are quite old and many new trees have been planted, the number of trees along the boulevards is far fewer than during the period of significance. Disease and pollution have resulted in the eradication of several tree species once widely used, such as elm and ash. The practice of salting roads has also impacted the quality of turf and trees. Forest management practices have led to the substitution of trees now seen as invasive, such as the *Ailanthus*. Maintenance practices and labor costs have also had their effect on the boulevards' landscape, as many workers with hand mowers who were once able to maintain trees closely spaced in lines gave way to fewer workers and larger mowers. Floral displays, common on Drexel Boulevard, were also found on Western Boulevard and Garfield Boulevard, although not as consistently. They no longer exist. Still, the historic landscape style of each boulevard, based on the elements that remain—be it formal or informal—is often discernable. The ghosts of the configuration of historic walkways survive on Drexel Boulevard and in two places on Western Boulevard—near McKinley Park and near the Sanitary & Ship Canal.

There are some understory and ornamental trees as well as shrub groupings on the boulevards and in the squares. Typically these can be found next to railroad crossings and at locations where roadways cross the boulevards, such as at W. 13th Street on Independence Boulevard and at S. Homan Avenue on Douglas Boulevard. As with the large shade trees, time, lack of maintenance and environmental factors have taken their toll and there are no longer as many shrubs and ornamental trees as there were during the period of significance.

Non-historic elements in the medians are the exception. There are some pieces of sculpture and fountains that have been placed there since 1942. Kiosks and obelisks marking the route of the boulevard system were erected in 1996. Fountains were erected at the north end of Drexel Boulevard. At the intersection of E. 47th Street and S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive the "Chicago Blues District" is celebrated. There are four non-historic sculptures representing jazz musicians, installed in 2005. Lighting has also been changed along the system. Other non-historic sculptures, placed there in 1996, are located along Franklin Boulevard.

Concrete came into use for curbs, gutters and sidewalks around the turn of the century, as did asphalt for roadways. Most of the original materials have been replaced in kind. Asphalt roads have been resurfaced in asphalt, and concrete sidewalks have been replaced by concrete. Historically, crosswalks were rare on medians except at intersections, and they continue to be. They are common, however, on the parkways in front of residences, commercial and institutional buildings.

The presence of light fixtures, regularly spaced along the boulevards, was common during the period of significance. All early light fixtures have been replaced with modern fixtures that are a mixture of the cobra variety and fixtures that mimic the historic fixtures. Traffic signals along the boulevards were standardized during the period of significance, but no historic signals remain.

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Non-historic introductions along the system include bus shelters and signage, the latter being placed on light and traffic fixtures or on metal poles. In addition, electrical and phone junction boxes as well as signal control boxes can be found at intervals throughout the system.

ARCHITECTURE LINING CHICAGO'S PARKS AND BOULEVARDS

As might be expected in a historic district with hundreds of buildings, there are many different building types represented. There is also great stylistic variety. In general, the architecture along the park and boulevard system is distinguished. In addition, it generally is site specific. All of the buildings, no matter what their type, were consciously designed to accommodate their setting, to take advantage of nearby transportation systems and to specifically relate to the landscaped parks and the boulevards they faced. Although the buildings differ in type, size and style, they frequently tend to be of higher architectural quality than the buildings along the side streets, which did not carry the prestige of living or working on the parks or boulevards. Design quality, in general, characterizes the buildings in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District.

Building Types

Residential Buildings

Of the approximately 1982 primary Contributing structures in the historic District, 85% are residential.²⁹ There are 304 single family homes, 34 bungalows, 15 four squares, 2 split levels, 597 two-flats, 276 three-flats, 49 four-flats, 108 six-flats, 16 eight-flats, 178 multi-unit buildings, 61 courtyard apartment buildings and 40 townhouses that were built as a grouping of similar dwellings. Although most of the buildings fronting on the parks are residential, there are exceptions. The exceptions include the east boundary of Washington Park, the north boundary of Douglas Park, and the north boundary of Humboldt Park (W. North Avenue); all of which are largely commercial. The east side of Douglas Park is lined by several institutions. The south boundary of McKinley Park is made up of industrial buildings that are part of the Central Manufacturing District. The boulevards that are not predominantly residential are: the south end of S. Western Boulevard, W. 31st Boulevard (which serves as a connector and has no structures facing it, S. California Boulevard between W. 26th Street and W. 31st Street, and N. Sacramento Boulevard between W. Chicago Avenue and W. Franklin Boulevard. The buildings facing these boulevards are largely industrial, with only a handful of residential buildings.

Party wall and smaller detached single-family houses, two-flats and three-flats were built on narrow lots and tend to have small front lawns with uniform setbacks. The exception to this configuration is found along Marshall Boulevard, on the south side of W. 24th Boulevard, and on the east side of S. California Boulevard between W. 24th Boulevard and W. 26th Street, where the houses have deep front lawns. Most of the smaller residential buildings were constructed between the late 1880s and 1920. There are some areas, as along S. Drexel Boulevard, where there are larger houses on more spacious lots.

²⁹ This number does not count the 404 primary Contributing structures already listed on the National Register in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*. It does count structures in other National Register Historic Districts with buildings on the boulevards that are part of those districts, and it counts individual structures listed on the National Register as well as three National Historic Landmarks. Structures that are designated Chicago landmarks or listed in Chicago landmark historic districts are also counted.

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Most of the buildings facing the boulevards are masonry, especially in the more middle to upper class sections along S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and S. Drexel Boulevards on the south and along the segments north of W. 24th Boulevard.

There are 452 buildings containing four or more individual residential units—4-flats to tall apartment buildings. All are brick structures, many with stone trim. One prolific type is characterized by tiers of sun porches facing onto the boulevards and parks. Only a small number of the apartment buildings along the boulevards and parks are taller than four stories. Courtyard buildings, which are typically 3-1/2 stories with apartments facing a front courtyard, range from large-scale structures along Drexel Boulevard to ½ courtyards facing Franklin Boulevard and Douglas Boulevard. Courtyard buildings are scattered throughout the system. The largest concentrations of apartment buildings containing more than six units may be found along S. Drexel Boulevard, W. 51st Street, W. Douglas Boulevard, W. Franklin Boulevard, and along N. Kedzie boulevard, N. Humboldt Boulevard and W. Logan Boulevard in the already-listed Logan Boulevard National Register District.

There are a variety of vernacular residential building types along the park and boulevard system. They range from gable and gambrel front cottages to bungalows and four squares to greystones of varying sizes. The bungalows, four squares and greystones have features that enable them to be categorized by style.

The vast majority of the vernacular residential building types in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District—466—are rough-faced or smooth-faced Bedford limestone greystones. Beginning in the late 1880s the builders of this building type, seemingly unique to Chicago, embraced a variety of architectural styles from Queen Anne and Romanesque early on to Classical Revival. Some greystones, with turrets and crenellations, columns and pilasters, brackets and towers, and a variety of unusual details are difficult to categorize. Although many are eclectic, each tends to be dominated by a particular style with the less dominant secondary styles used as applied detailing. Greystones are located throughout the entire system. Some, because of demolition, are scattered; others, as along S. Drexel Boulevard, are found in concentrations. There is a particularly dense concentration along S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and along W. Douglas Boulevard. There are also many along W. Logan Boulevard in the already-listed *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*.

Those residences of all sizes along the parks and boulevards that are not greystones were designed in a variety of styles—ranging from Italianate in the 1870s to Art Deco and Moderne in the 1930s, with the vast majority of buildings designed in a variety of styles bearing historic references from Queen Anne and Romanesque to Classical and Tudor Revival. The largest concentration of Italianate houses is found on Oakwood Boulevard. There are only a few Art Deco residences, and these are found on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Those referencing historical styles are located throughout the system. Numerous residential buildings of all sizes were inspired by Craftsman architecture, characterized by geometric massing with stone trim. Craftsman dominates the streetscape along the south side of Jackson Park, some stretches of S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, W. Garfield Boulevard, and S. Western Boulevard. Some of the larger brick apartment buildings, typically those built in the 1920s, incorporated Tudor, Classical or Craftsman detailing. There is considerable diversity of building types and styles in the residential buildings along the park and boulevard system, yet there is a consistency of scale and materials and a general commitment to design quality..

Some of the residential buildings in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District were designed by architects who have an established reputation for design quality. There are residences, for example, designed by Burnham & Root (442 E. Oakwood Boulevard, 4545 and 4941 S. Drexel Boulevard), Henry Ives Cobb

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(4920-48 S. Drexel Boulevard, 1130 E. 59th Street and 1144-46 E. 59th Street), Frost and Granger (4801, 4935 S. Drexel Boulevard), Holabird & Roche (3614 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and 2240 W. 37th Street) Ernest A. Mayo (4321 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive), Pond & Pond (923-937 E. 60th Street, Midway Plaisance), Rapp & Rapp (1642 E. 56th Street), Treat & Foltz (4851 S. Drexel Boulevard). Most of the houses by architects known to be distinguished were built along S. Drexel Boulevard and S. King Drive, areas that attracted a wealthier clientele.

Many residential buildings in the district were designed by competent lesser-known architects. There are residences, for instance, designed by Edbrook & Burnham (3961, 3963 and 3965 S. Drexel Boulevard), Henry L. Newhouse (4310-12 and 4724-28 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive), William H. Pruyn (4314-16 and 4318-20 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive), Andrew Sandegren (415 E. 60th St.) and Horatio Wilson (4512, 4518, 4628-30 and 4805 S. Drexel Boulevard). Throughout the system there are distinguished single family houses and apartments of varying sizes by architects who are virtually unknown.

There are excellent representative examples of residential architectural styles along the park and boulevard system. These include a fine Italianate six-flat at 620-622 Oakwood Boulevard, the Richardsonian Romanesque mansion Treat & Foltz designed for Martin Ryerson at 4851 S. Drexel Boulevard, the Chateausque style house Henry Ives Cobb designed for John A. McGill at 4920-48 S. Drexel Boulevard, 4626-4628 S. Drexel Boulevard designed in the Classical Revival style by Horatio R. Wilson in 1893, the Tudor Revival style residence at 1722 W. Garfield Boulevard designed by N.K. Pruyn in 1916, and a Craftsman style residence at 2510 S. California Boulevard. In addition there are many in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*, included by reference in this nomination.

The already-listed *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* is also predominantly residential, consisting mainly of brick and stone masonry single family houses and detached 2- and 3-flats. It also has some low-rise apartment buildings, courtyard buildings and Craftsman apartments with tiered sun porches. There are a number of greystones in the district with Romanesque and Classical detailing. The buildings were generally designed between the mid-1880s and late 1920s, most by architects who are not well-known. There are only a small number by architects recognized for their significance: these include George Maher (2701-03 W. Logan Boulevard, 1907) and Horatio Wilson (2302 and 2308 N. Kedzie Boulevard)..

Mixed-Use/Commercial Buildings

Although the majority of buildings along the boulevards are residential, there are some mixed-use commercial buildings, with stores or restaurants on the first floor and apartment units above. These buildings are located along the arterial streets facing the parks and where major arterial streets cross the boulevards at public transportation intersections. There are excellent examples of mixed-use buildings located at the transportation nodes of Garfield Boulevard near the Garfield CTA/Green Line stop: (315-317 E. Garfield Boulevard) and at the southwest corner of W. North Avenue and N. Kedzie Avenue (1550 N. Kedzie Avenue/3201 W. North Avenue). There are 78 of these buildings that contribute to the significance of the district located along the park and boulevard system. These buildings were constructed from the early 1890s through the 1920s.

Mixed-use buildings tend to stand two to four stories and are built right at the front lot line. They are rectangular buildings, with glazed storefronts. Windows above the first story, where apartments are located, are often double hung. Some of these buildings are large with several stores on the first floor. Others are smaller

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and contain a single business. The buildings are all masonry: some entirely brick, some faced in stone and some sheathed in terra cotta. The Humboldt Building, at 2747-53 W. North Avenue, at the southeast corner of W. North Avenue and N. California, is an excellent example of a large terra cotta building that marks a transportation crossing. One particularly interesting example of a small commercial building with apartments above is the Schlitz Tavern building located at 3456 S. Western Boulevard. This building, which has a corner tower, stands two stories, is built of brick with stone trim and is unique in the district.

The design of these mixed-use commercial buildings is usually dominated by a particular style. Examples include buildings at 3458 W. Lake Street (Queen Anne), 735 W. Garfield Boulevard (Tudor Revival), 305 E. Garfield (Craftsman by Horatio R. Wilson in 1912), and 317 E. Garfield (Craftsman). The Humboldt Building is Renaissance Revival.

There are 41 Contributing commercial buildings in the district dedicated to a specific enterprise. One is the Liberty Life Supreme Life Insurance Company Building at 3501-11 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. It was designed in 1921 by architect Albert Anis. The only bank constructed along the boulevards is the Classical Revival Kenwood National Bank, located at 4636 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, designed in 1921. The only hotel is the eight-story Sutherland Hotel, which stands at the corner of E. 47th Street and S. Drexel Boulevard at 4657-59 S. Drexel Boulevard. It was designed by Henry L. Newhouse in 1917.

In the already-listed *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*, there are several mixed-use buildings. One such example is a 3-story store and auditorium building designed by Worthman & Steinbach at 2535-47 N. Kedzie Boulevard in 1911.

Churches and Synagogues

Of the many prominent religious, institutional, educational, and municipal buildings located in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District there are 25 churches and synagogues. All of them were imbedded in residential segments of the boulevards, close to the homes of their congregants. All of them are Contributing buildings.

Churches and synagogues often occupy prominent corner sites. Some, such as the church designed in 1897 by S.S. Beman for the First Church of Christ, Scientist at 4017-23 S. Drexel Boulevard, are relatively small. Others such as Corpus Christi Church at 4910 -20 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, are large complexes. Although the buildings have not been substantially altered, in most cases denominations have changed. There are a number of buildings constructed as synagogues along Independence and Douglas boulevards that today serve Christian denominations.

All of the churches and synagogues tend to be high style, many designed by prominent architects. Built between the 1880s and the 1930s, they reference a variety of architectural styles. Most of the synagogues were built in the 1910s and 1920s and were inspired by Classical architecture. Examples include Congregation Anshe Sholom at 754 S. Independence Boulevard designed in 1926. by Henry L. Newhouse & Bernham and Sinai Congregation at 4600-4622 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive designed in 1909 by Alfred Alschuler. Corpus Christi, a Catholic church, is also Classical Revival. It was designed by Joseph McCarthy in 1916. Handsome examples of Romanesque Revival structures include two churches on Oakwood Boulevard. One is at 649 E. Oakwood (Oakland Missionary Baptist Church, 1903); the other is at 729 E. Oakwood (Memorial Baptist

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Church, designed in 1899 by Patton, Fisher & Miller). An excellent example of a Gothic Revival church is found at 843 W. Garfield Boulevard (Visitation Church, 1898-99).

The already-listed *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* has several religious buildings. They include churches located at 2523-25 W. Logan Boulevard (Catholic, Worthmann & Steinbach, 1906), 2836-40 W. Logan Boulevard (Eleventh Church of the Christ Scientist, Leon Stanhope, 1916), 2608-12 N. Kedzie Boulevard (Christ English Lutheran, now Norwegian Memorial Lutheran Church, Charles Sorenson, 1908), 3058-70 W. Palmer Square (First English Evangelical, Lowe & Bollenbacher, 1923); and, 2163-69 N. Humboldt Boulevard (St. Sylvester, Egan & Prindiville, 1905). There is one synagogue building, located at 1908-10 N. Humboldt Boulevard (B'nai David Ohave Zedek, David Saul Klafter, 1919).

Hospitals

There are six hospitals facing the park and boulevard system, not including the hospital buildings on the University of Chicago campus. They are large complexes, with buildings that have been added to over time. Two face Douglas Park: St Anthony Hospital, at 2851-67 W. 19th Street, and Mt. Sinai Hospital, at 1501 S. California Boulevard. The Municipal Contagious Diseases Hospital is located at 3026 S. California Avenue, adjacent to the Cook County Court Building. Norwegian-American Hospital is located at 1044 N. Francisco Avenue, on the east side of Humboldt Park. The Illinois Central Community Hospital (now Hyde Park Hospital) is located at 5744-5800 S. Stony Island Avenue, facing east on Jackson Park; and the Franklin Boulevard Hospital, now Heart Hospital, is at 3234-40 W. Franklin Boulevard. In addition to these six hospitals, the Sinai Schwab Rehabilitation Center is located next door, to the north, of Sinai Hospital. There are several hospital buildings that are part of the University of Chicago on the north side of the Midway Plaisance.

The first structure built for St. Anthony Hospital was designed in 1897 by Henry Schlacks. Featuring Flemish gables, the building does not easily fit into any specific architectural category. Mt. Sinai is a complex of buildings that features a Beaux Arts section designed in 1919, and an Art Deco section built in 1945. The Municipal Contagious Diseases Hospital was designed in the Classical Revival style in 1914 by Charles W. Kallal. The five-story Norwegian American Hospital is a brick building in the Classical Revival style with stone trim and detailing. The Hyde Park Hospital, located at 5744-5800 S. Stony Island Avenue, faces east on Jackson Park. It was designed by Schmidt, Garden and Martin in 1914 and is a four-story brick Classical Revival building. The Franklin Boulevard Hospital is a four-story Classical Revival building of light colored brick with minimal ornamentation, much of it in the bay containing the main entrance.

Community Centers

There are two important community centers located in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District.. Both occupy prominent sites. One is Lincoln Center, located at 700 E. Oakwood Boulevard. This rectangular brick building stands six stories tall. Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and Dwight Perkins in 1898-1903, it has the pared down simplicity associated with the Prairie Style although it doesn't strictly reference the style. By contrast, the Jewish Peoples Institute at 3500 W. Douglas Boulevard, designed in 1926 by Klaber & Grunsfeld at the intersection of W. Douglas Boulevard and S. St. Louis Avenue, is an elaborate (and unusual) Moorish Revival building.

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Lodge Buildings

There is one historic lodge buildings in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District, the Logan Square Masonic Temple at 2516-28 N. Kedzie Boulevard designed in 1921 by Clarence Hatzfield. It is in the already-listed *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*.

Educational Buildings

There are 70 educational buildings located all along the park and boulevard system. Some were built as public schools. A small number were built as private schools associated with religious institutions. All are large, prominently sited and located in residential neighborhoods. In addition, there are the many educational buildings associated with the University of Chicago along the Midway Plaisance.

The two styles favored for the design of school buildings were Classical Revival and Tudor Revival. Four, all designed by Arthur Hussander in the 1910s, (Carter H. Harrison Technical High School, Hyde Park High School, Theodore Herzl Elementary School and Nathaniel Pope Elementary School) are Classical Revival. Tudor Revival was popular somewhat later. Providence St. Mel at 115-119 S. Central Park Avenue, designed in 1929 by Morrison & Wallas and the Bret Hart Elementary School at 1556-1558 E. 56th Street designed in 1930 by Paul Gerhardt, are two examples of Tudor-inspired school buildings.

Gothic Revival, because of its association with collegiate accomplishment, dominated the architecture of the University of Chicago from 1893, when the first buildings along the north side of the Midway Plaisance were constructed. These include Nancy Foster Hall designed by Henry Ives Cobb in 1893 at 1130 E. 59th Street and the University President's House, also by Cobb, in 1895 at 1144-1146 E. 59th Street. Following the pattern, James Gamble Rogers designed the University of Chicago Laboratory School for primary and secondary students at 1362 E. 59th Street in 1903. Later buildings at the University were equal in quality to these and respected the Collegiate Gothic idiom. Eero Saarinen's Laird Bell Quadrangle Law School at 1111-1121 E. 60th Street, built in 1959, referenced the earlier architecture using Modern materials. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's School of Social Service Administration at 969 E. 60th Street, 1965, is strictly Modern but the work of a master architect who is equal in stature to Henry Ives Cobb.

Government buildings

Although Cook County has a strong presence along S. California Boulevard because of the jail buildings, all of which are recent and Non-contributing, there is one significant historic building, the Cook County Criminal Courthouse, 2600 S. California Boulevard. It is a stately Classical Revival building designed in 1927 by Eric E. Hall. Other government buildings that contribute to the significance of the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District include a fire station at 5218 S. Western Boulevard, and the Western Avenue Pumping Station at 4919-4959 S. Western Boulevard, designed in 1927 by Charles W. Kallal.

Industrial Buildings

There are 47 industrial buildings (factories and warehouses) along Chicago's park and boulevard system. They range in size from small buildings to large complexes. Most are concentrated along the south end of Western Boulevard, on W. Pershing Road facing McKinley Park and on Franklin and Sacramento boulevards. These factory and warehouse buildings are all located adjacent to railroad lines and along Chicago's river and canal system.

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The industrial buildings in the district are typically brick, timber frame, steel frame or concrete frame construction, with their interior frame expressed on the building's exterior. Some of them, such as those along Western, Franklin and Sacramento boulevards stand two to four stories tall. They tend to be small buildings, but some, like the Cribben and Sexton Company Building, 620-722 N. Sacramento Boulevard, and the Sprague Warner Company building, 405-61 N. Sacramento Boulevard, are low- rise but large, sprawling complexes. The industrial buildings making up the Central Manufacturing District (CMD) along W. Pershing Road are considerably taller; they are large block-like buildings, standing six to seven stories tall. The vast majority of all the industrial buildings are red brick loft structures with stone or terra cotta trim. They are built up to the front lot line with embellishment concentrated around doorways and rooflines. Some, such as the building for GAW O'Hara Envelope at 500 N. Sacramento Boulevard, have towers. The Central Manufacturing District tower stands alone, with an ornamental clock, marking the location of the complex.

The industrial buildings in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District represent a range of styles. Many of them, especially those that were built as part of the CMD, are architecturally distinguished and particularly noteworthy for their stylistic detailing. Styles represented include Craftsman (2211 W. Pershing Road, Samuel Scott Joy, 1922; 500 N. Sacramento Boulevard, 1910's), Classical Revival (2225 W. Pershing Road, Alfred S. Alschuler, 1923; 700 N. Sacramento Boulevard, 1920s), Gothic Revival (2139 W. Pershing Road, A. Epstein, 1927), and Art Deco (501 N. Sacramento Boulevard, A. Epstein, 1941).

Several important architects designed the industrial buildings along the boulevard system, especially those in the CMD. They include Alfred Alschuler, who designed the Westinghouse Building at 2225 W. Pershing Road and the L. Fish Furniture Company building at 2225-2235 W. Pershing Road in 1923 (both in the CMD), the Parisian Novelty Company at 3510-3524 S. Western Boulevard in 1927, and the Schulze Baking Company building at 20-40 E. Garfield Boulevard in 1914; Samuel Scott Joy, who designed several buildings in the CMD (2139 W. Pershing Road for Standard Brands in 1927 and 2159 W. Pershing Road for Albert Pick Co. in 1936), as well as a factory/warehouse at 4401 S. Western Boulevard in 1914; and A. Epstein, who designed the Art Deco Sprague Warner complex at 501 N. Sacramento Boulevard.

Architectural Styles³⁰

Italianate

The earliest houses in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District were built in the Italianate style. The Italianate, along with Gothic Revival, developed as a reaction to the formal, Classical ideals that had dominated architecture for over 150 years, the Georgian, then Federal and Greek Revival architecture that had set the tone for residential construction from the early 1700s until the mid-1850s. By comparison, Italianate architecture was a more Romantic style inspired by informal Italian farmhouses. Most Italianate houses, especially the simpler versions, were not architect designed.

Andrew Jackson Downing popularized the Italianate style through pattern books he published in the 1840s and 1850s. With examples of plans and elevation drawings taken from these books, local carpenters and craftsmen could easily build these homes. The style was most commonly used between 1855 and 1880. Those in the Chicago area tend to have been built in the late 1860s or 1870s.

³⁰ The buildings in all of the parks in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District have not been categorized by style or type. The building counts along the boulevards reflect the styles and types of all the rest of the buildings in the historic district except for those in the Logan Square Boulevards Historic District. The number of buildings of each style or type are all Contributing.

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Typical Italianate houses stand two to three stories tall. They are characterized by low-pitched roofs with deep, bracketed cornices, tall narrow windows topped by segmental or curved arches and projecting bays.. Double doors with arched detailing are characteristic, and in city houses open off a raised front porch. .

There are only 22 Italianate houses in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District, a relatively small number compared to other style buildings, constructed later. The largest concentration is along Oakwood Boulevard. The six-flat at 620-622 E. Oakwood Boulevard is a representative example of the style. Built of brick, it stands three stories with a raised front entrance. Windows are double hung, tall and narrow and topped by ornamental stone hoodmolds with curving corners and a raised keystone. The three units to the west have a projecting polygonal bay; the three to the east have a rectangular bay. The building has a deep cornice supported by prominent brackets. A less elaborate example of the style can be found at 608-610 E. Oakwood Boulevard. It is red brick with corner bays and a shallow bracketed cornice. Like the other Italianate houses on the block, it has tall narrow double hung windows. There are a small number of cottages with Italianate detailing that feature paired ornamental brackets and limestone hoodmolds. These are scattered throughout the more working class areas of the District. One example is located at 1629 S. California Boulevard.

Second Empire

The Second Empire Style takes its name from the reign of Napoleon III, who established the Second Empire in France, transforming much of the city of Paris to feature grand boulevards and stately buildings topped by mansard roofs. It was at this time, beginning in the 1850s, that the Louvre, built for Louis XIV in the 17th-century by Francois Mansart, was expanded. The Second Empire style is also called the Mansard Style after the architect of the Louvre.

Second Empire buildings are generally topped by a steep double-pitched roof, known as a “Mansard roof,” which typically encloses an entire floor of livable space. Sometimes they are topped by steeply pitched hipped roofs. Many Second Empire buildings have projecting dormers that break through the cornice line, shutters, French doors and prominent chimneys. These buildings tend to be stately and imposing.

There are only 7 houses and flats along the boulevards designed in the French Second Empire style which was popular from the 1880s through the turn of the Twentieth century. Modeled after the townhouses of mid-19th-century Paris, the sophisticated design of these houses appealed to boulevard residents. Examples include housing at 1819 S. California Boulevard and 1636 W. Garfield Boulevard. There is a concentration of Second Empire buildings on E. Oakwood Boulevard, including three single-family residences at 517, 637 and 639 E. Oakwood and a three-flat at 624 E. Oakwood Boulevard.

Gothic Revival

Gothic Revival architecture was, like Italianate, a popular style during the 19th-century. For housing, there were cottages that were built in a romantic interpretation of Gothic architecture inspired by pattern books published by Andrew Jackson Downing in the 1840s; for churches, a more literal interpretation of the style was adopted.

Gothic Revival architecture was reminiscent of the Middle Ages, when the church ruled supreme. Verticality, pointed arches, cross gables, stained glass windows and towers characterized Gothic churches.

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These elements were adopted selectively for residential designs. They were combined in a manner that resembled their European precedents for ecclesiastical buildings.

There are 27 Gothic Revival structures in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District that are not affiliated with the University of Chicago: of these, three are churches. The largest concentration of Gothic Revival residential architecture is along S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. These include high style greystone single family residences at 3616 S. 3936 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Dr., and 4510 and 4512 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive There is one Gothic Revival frame cottage, located at 2906 W. North Avenue, that stands two stories and is two-bays wide. It is unusual in the district because it is at the rear of the lot, behind a street-front building. There are also multiple-unit apartment buildings on the boulevards built in the Gothic Revival style. One is located at 3652 W. Douglas Boulevard. Examples of Gothic Revival churches include Rockefeller Chapel, designed by Bertram Goodhue at 1156-1180 W. 59th Street, and Visitation Church at 843 W. Garfield Boulevard.

Collegiate Gothic

Collegiate Gothic is a sub-category of Gothic Revival architecture. They are similar in that both are inspired by Medieval Gothic architecture. Because of its association with the architecture of the prestigious Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England, the style came to symbolize knowledge, strength and respectability.

The quadrangle organization and Gothic detailing, particularly the incorporation of square towers associated with English Gothic architecture, characterize Collegiate Gothic buildings. Universities, like the University of Chicago, that were built in the late 19th- and early 20th-century, respected the highly organized planning of Oxford and Cambridge. In Chicago, the influence of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, with its tightly ordered buildings and boulevards representing a "stately system of organization," also had a particularly profound influence on campus planning.³¹ This influence is highly visible at the University of Chicago in Henry Ives Cobb's master plan for the school. Cobb organized the campus around quadrangles. The quadrangles, which added a sense of intimacy to the overall scheme, resemble those of English universities as well as of older American campuses, such as Yale and Harvard. The, architecture, with limestone buildings and Gothic detailing, is stylistically associated with these older buildings.

Collegiate Gothic buildings were constructed on the north side of the Midway between 1893 and 1932. Following the precedent Cobb set in his design for Foster Hall, subsequent architects, including James Gamble Rogers, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue Associates and Coolidge & Hodgdon, continued designing buildings in the Collegiate Gothic tradition. There are 47 buildings in the Collegiate Gothic style in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District: all are located on the University of Chicago campus.

Queen Anne

Queen Anne architecture was named and popularized by a group of 19th-century English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912), whose sprawling manor houses were well known to American

³¹ Stephen Sennett, Editor. *Encyclopedia of 20th Century Architecture*. New York: Fitzroy, Dearborn Publishers, 2004. "Campus Planning."

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architects.³² Ironically, the historic precedents Shaw and his followers drew from had little to do with Queen Anne or the formal Renaissance architecture that was dominant during her reign (1702-1914). Instead Queen Anne architecture borrowed most heavily from the models of the preceding Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.

By the 1880s the Queen Anne style spread throughout the country via pattern books and *The American Architect and Building News*.³³ Precut parts, including a variety of shaped shingles (made possible by the perfection of the band saw after the Civil War) and spindles, were readily available and distributed easily by the country's expanding railroad network. These wood parts provided decorative detailing that gave a house individual character, even when the house was masonry.

The Queen Anne style is characterized by the variety of surface materials, window configurations and roof types, as well as irregular massing. The overall effect is asymmetrical and picturesque, with an emphasis on richly decorative textures and multiple colors. Many Queen Anne houses were built with a variety of molded or specially-shaped bricks and saw-tooth, fish scale, square, or rounded shingles. Windows, frequently filled with leaded or stained glass, were incorporated into bays and towers with polygonal or conical roofs. Groupings of casements were typical as were upper panes outlined with squares of colored glass. Tall brick chimneys were common. Almost every Queen Anne house featured some kind of porch and/or balcony.

The Queen Anne style is prevalent in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District; there are 124 Queen Anne style buildings. Some stand alone; others are party wall structures. Many greystones feature Queen Anne detailing. Queen Anne houses are of all sizes. Those found at corners, can be quite exuberant, although most midblock townhouses tend to be simpler and more disciplined.

Excellent examples of Queen Anne houses are located at 1408 and 1656 W. Garfield Boulevard and 3135 W. Douglas Boulevard. A Queen Anne cottage is located at 1649 W. California Avenue and several are found between 3011 and 3035 W. 19th Street. There is a large, flamboyant red brick Queen Anne house at 3656 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, designed in 1885 by architect William W. Clay. It is a surviving remnant of the large single family homes that occupied the corners on this boulevard in the 1890s. Commercial Queen Anne structures may be found at 3458 W. Lake Street and 3456 S. Western Boulevard.

Richardsonian Romanesque

The Richardsonian Romanesque style, named for the architecture of Henry Hobson Richardson, grew out of an interest in the rugged Romanesque forms utilized by Richardson, a Boston architect who designed three buildings in Chicago including, in 1886, the John J. Glessner House at 1800 S. Prairie Avenue.

The style is characterized by rough, rock-faced masonry, round-headed arches, a picturesque footprint and a bold geometric simplicity. It was a highly original style that was immensely popular in Chicago during the late 1880s and 1890s, influencing the work of John Wellborn Root, Henry Ives Cobb, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and many other Chicago architects.

There are 214 Richardsonian Romanesque structures in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District. Numerous rough-faced stone party-wall Richardsonian Romanesque houses line Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. Drexel Boulevard, W. Garfield Boulevard, and Independence Boulevard. A high percentage

³² John S. Poppeliers, Allen Chambers and Nancy B. Schwartz, *What Style Is It?*, p. 24.

³³ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American House*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, p. 268.

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of these are greystones. There is a Richardsonian Romanesque mansion, the Martin Ryerson House at 4851 S. Drexel Boulevard, designed by Treat and Foltz in 1887. Richardsonian Romanesque was also a popular style for churches, reminiscent of their Medieval precedents and similar to the several Richardson had designed in Boston. Four of the buildings in the district are churches. These include the Metropolitan Apostolic Church at 4100 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and the Monumental Baptist Church at 729 E. Oakwood Boulevard.

Classical Revival

The Classical Revival style gained in popularity following the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago's Jackson Park. Dominated by monumental Classical buildings, the fair was widely photographed and attended by thousands of people. Even several smaller state pavilions, built on a more domestic scale, were Classical Revival. As a result of the fair, Classical Revival commercial and institutional buildings dominated architecture for several decades.

Classical Revival was a style particularly well suited to buildings such as banks and art museums, institutions that wanted to project an image of stability, monumentality and timelessness. The style was sometimes favored for churches and frequently for synagogues. Because of its monumental scale, appropriate for large structures, the full-blown Classical Revival style, typified by two-story columns, was less commonly applied to residences. Classical detailing, however, was attractive to Chicago builders and homeowners, many of whom had visited the fair. The enduring popularity of Classical architecture, with its familiarity, simple beauty and stately image had substantial appeal.

Classical Revival residences feature porches with roofs supported by classical columns that have Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian capitals. Sometimes pilasters are used instead of actual columns. Frequently the entry porch is capped by a pediment and embellished with Classical details. A classical cornice with dentils is common.

There are numerous Classical Revival townhouses and flats stretching along the system. It is, in fact, the most dominant style in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District There are 565 Classical Revival buildings, of which the majority are residential structures.

The Classical Revival style was particularly favored for greystones. Whereas the Columbian Exposition was called "The White City" because the major buildings simulated white marble, smaller scale houses and flats built along the boulevards could actually have stone fronts. Architects and builders constructed elegant greystone single family houses and flats of various sizes for their clients. The multiple-unit apartment building at 3323-3325 W. Douglas Boulevard is a fine example of a Classical Revival greystone flat building. A row of stately single family residences was constructed in 1901 from plans by the architectural team of Peabody & Bealey. They are located at 4941, 4943, 4949, 4955, and 4959 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

Classical Revival was a style favored for Christian Science churches and for synagogues. Abandoning the then-popular Gothic or Romanesque Revival style, Solon S. Beman embraced classicism and established the architectural style for the Christian Science denomination in his design for the First Church of Christian Science at 4021 S. Drexel Boulevard. His churches were simple, impressive and dignified, featuring tall colonnades.

Designs for synagogues tended to follow the style that was popular during the year they were built. Classicism was frequently adopted in the 1910s and 1920s. Alfred Aschuler designed the building housing Sinai Congregation at 4600-4622 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive in the Classical Revival style in 1912.

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Anshe Kanesses Israel Congregation erected a large synagogue at 3411-3419 W. Douglas Boulevard in 1912. It incorporated Classical Revival elements. Kehilath Anshe Mayriv Synagogue, at 4953 S. Drexel Boulevard, was designed in the Classical Revival style by Henry L. Newhouse in 1923-24. Today it houses Operation Push.

The Classical Revival style was also popular for school buildings. Hyde Park High School at 6220 S. Stony Island Avenue and Carter Harrison Technical High School at 2832-2850 W. 24th Boulevard are both stately buildings designed by Arthur F. Hussander in the Classical Revival style.

Colonial Revival/Georgian Revival

The Colonial Revival style became popular after the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and became to many a national style. The interest in Colonial architecture was reinforced by the Classical architecture of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Colonial Revival architecture, with its Classical detailing, order and symmetry offered an alternative to the picturesque Queen Anne style

Features of Colonial Revival architecture include rectangular form, symmetry, gable or hip roofs (frequently with dormers), double-hung windows with multi-pane glazing, shutters, bay windows, paneled doors topped by transoms, fanlights or pediments and front doors (sometimes) flanked by sidelights.

Georgian Revival architecture is a popular subtype of the Colonial Revival style. Georgian Revival buildings often share these features with Colonial Revival structures but are typically red brick masonry and almost always have a front portico—either one or two stories. Roofs are usually hipped, and symmetrical chimneys are often prominent. Georgian Revival buildings tend to be grand and fairly close to their Georgian precedents. The more stately examples have several classical elements including cornices with modillions and dentils. Balustrades, columns, and pilasters are also common and found their way into the style just after the fair.

There are five Colonial Revival buildings in the district. Examples may be found at 1442-1450 E. 59th Street, 1509 W. Garfield Boulevard and 3801 W. Madison Street. One handsome example of a Georgian Revival building may be found 1365-1375 E. 60th Street along the Midway Plaisance. Built in 1918 by Coolidge & Hodgdon as St. Paul's on the Midway Church, the building now houses the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School. Also, the red brick Chicago Orphan Asylum at 5114-5120 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive (now the Chicago Baptist Institute) was designed by Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge in the Georgian Revival style.

Beaux Arts

The Beaux Arts was an elaborate style favored for grand homes and public buildings including train stations, clubs and hotels. Stately Beaux Arts buildings were constructed in prosperous urban centers from the late 19th-century through the 1920s. Although often adapted to large elegant buildings, the style percolated down to smaller townhouses and flats, and there are some, although not many, examples along the boulevard system.

The Beaux Arts style takes its name from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, the world's premier architectural school where many of America's earliest important architects studied. Beaux Arts is a style based on Classical precedents, symmetry and order, yet embellished by lavish decorative detailing including swags, escutcheons, decorative brackets, canopies, paired columns, arched openings, pilasters and ornamental panels with floral or foliate carving. These lavish treatments were adopted on smaller buildings to express the

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significance of the building's architecture and its association with grander examples. Beaux Arts planning principles, based on symmetry and order, found expression in Henry Ives Cobb's quadrangle plans for the University of Chicago.

There are 13 examples of Beaux Arts housing in the Chicago Park Boulevards Historic District. . Because of their sophisticated designs they tend to be architect-designed. Among the examples is a single-family residence at 4321 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, constructed in the 1910s from a design by architect Ernest A. Mayo. Another is a 6-flat located at 622-624 S. Independence Boulevard designed by the architectural team of Marquandt & Brunte in 1900.

Tudor Revival

The Tudor Revival style was popular in America between approximately 1893 and 1940, although the great surge in popularity occurred in the 1910s and the 1920s, Tudor Revival architecture evoked an image of English country living, a way of life that came to symbolize a homeowner's elevated economic status and implied respectability. Tudor Revival houses of various types were constructed by builders but often designed by experienced architects.

Features of Tudor Revival style buildings include picturesque massing; steeply-pitched, front-facing gable roofs; tall narrow windows, often configured as groups of multi-pane casements; decorative (not structural) half-timbering; and doorways topped with Tudor (flat pointed) arches or flat arches with shoulder ends. Some entrances have a projecting vestibule covered with a gable or a steeply-pitched asymmetrical "catslide" gable roof. Unlike the greystones along the boulevards, Tudor Revival residences have walls of brick, sometimes with stone or stucco trim.

There are 271 buildings in the district designed in the Tudor Revival style. Although some are single-family houses, such as that at 4732 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive or those designed by Frost & Granger in 1901 at 4801 and 4935 S. Drexel Boulevard, most are multi-family, including courtyard buildings and flats. Examples of Tudor Revival courtyard apartment buildings are found at 1524-34 E. 59th Street on the Midway Plaisance and at 1418 W. Garfield Boulevard. There is a heavy concentration of Tudor Revival courtyard buildings on the south perimeter of Jackson Park. These include an apartment located at 1801-1809 E. 79th Street that was designed by architect Z. Erol Smith in 1924. A Tudor Revival 3-flat can be found at 511 E. Oakwood Boulevard. Additionally, there is a 6-flat designed by Henry L. Newhouse in 1905 located at 4310-4312 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and an 8-flat at 4314-4316 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive by William H. Pruyn Jr. in 1913. There are also industrial buildings, such as the factory located at 2001 W. Pershing Road, that were inspired by Tudor architecture.

Chateausque

Compared to other examples of revival style architecture, the incidence of buildings influenced by stately French chateaux is comparatively rare. The style became somewhat popular after World War I in the late teens. Americans who had served in World War I came home with first-hand knowledge of the French prototypes and the publication of books and articles on French architecture helped to popularize French architecture.

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Principal identifying features of Chateausque architecture include steeply pitched roofs, prominent cylindrical towers topped by conical roofs and stone facades. The majority of buildings constructed in this style are formal and imposing despite their generally picturesque massing.

There are only three buildings along the boulevards that were clearly influenced by French chateaux, one two-flat and two single family houses. They all date from around the turn of the century, and they are all architect-designed. Examples include the stately house designed in 1891 by Henry Ives Cobb at 4920-48 S. Drexel Boulevard (today multifamily) and flats at 4724-4728 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive designed by Henry L. Newhouse in 1903. The Chateausque building located at 1306 S. Albany Avenue is a 2-flat designed by W. Schneider in 1897.

Spanish Revival

The Spanish Revival style became popular after the Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego in 1915, reaching its peak of popularity during the 1920s. With buildings imitating elaborate Spanish prototypes, it received worldwide attention. Spanish architecture is most common in the southwestern states (especially California) and in Florida, areas that were settled by the Spanish and where Spanish Colonial building actually occurred. Yet Hollywood, and the romance of movies, influenced the development of Spanish Colonial and the style was frequently adopted for movie houses and apartment buildings

Features of Spanish Revival architecture include yellow-cream brick wall surfaces, low-pitched red tile roofs, usually with narrow or no eaves, arches and twisted columns. Sometimes there is a suggestion of a bell tower.

There are thirteen examples of the Spanish Revival style in the District including several courtyard buildings constructed in the 1920s. One courtyard apartment building located at 214-222 S. Hamlin Boulevard was designed by Dubin & Eisenberg in 1925. There is a multiple unit building at 4619 S. Drexel Boulevard and one at 1934 W. Garfield Boulevard designed by E.J. Males in 1926. The Midwest Athletic Club at 3800 W. Madison Avenue is also Spanish Revival. It stands twelve-stories tall and was designed by Michaelsen & Rognstad in 1926. This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Italian Renaissance Revival

Italian Renaissance Revival architecture was never as popular as Classical or Tudor Revival styles, but it was attractive to the designers of some stately houses. Beginning in the late 19th-century, many American architects and their clients visited Italy giving them first-hand familiarity with Italian villas and palazzos. Italian Renaissance Revival structures designed by these architects mimicked their Italian predecessors quite closely. This authenticity distinguishes Italian Renaissance Revival buildings from the Italianate buildings that preceded them. Italianate buildings were based on pattern book drawings by builders who had no first-hand visual experience with Italian buildings.

The typical Italian Renaissance Revival house has a low-pitched hipped or flat roof. The hipped roofs are covered in red or green ceramic tile; the flat-roofed type sometimes has a prominent cornice and roofline balustrade. The houses are often, but not always, symmetrical. Classical detailing, including columns and Palladian windows, is common. Trim is generally of stone. Some examples of Italian Renaissance Revival houses are long and low, others tall and stately. All of them are formal and quite elegant. Very often Italian Renaissance Revival buildings are architect-designed.

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There are nine examples of Renaissance Revival buildings in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District. These include a 3-flat greystone constructed in 1897 located at 1216 S. Albany Avenue, a 2-flat built in 1903 at 1653 W. Garfield Boulevard, and a 6-flat designed by C. Frank Jobson in 1910 at 5036-5038 S. Drexel Boulevard. There are two architect-designed single-family residences, one designed by Zachary T. Davis in 1901 and located at 726 W. Garfield Boulevard and one at 4805 S. Drexel Boulevard, designed by Horatio R. Wilson in 1910. A fine example of Renaissance Revival architecture is the multi-use terra cotta building located at 2747-2753 W. North Avenue, opposite the northeast corner of Humboldt Park. This building features a commercial space on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors.

French Renaissance Revival

French Renaissance Revival is a style that is loosely based on French architecture of the 16th and 17th Centuries. It was among the variety of styles that were popular in the first three decades of the Twentieth Century. Americans who had been abroad gained first had familiarity with French architecture. Others acquired knowledge from photographs of French houses that were published in periodicals and journals. Architects who had studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts had considerable knowledge of the style.

Many examples of French Renaissance Revival architecture evolved from Gothic architecture and display Gothic arches and elaborated detailing. Roofs are often Mansard or hipped. Towers, through-the-roof dormers and classical elements are also characteristic. There are nine examples of the style in the historic district. Examples of the style are located at 1216 S. Albany Avenue, 3135 W. Douglas Boulevard, 726 W. Garfield Boulevard, and 2747-2753 W. North Avenue.

Moorish Revival

Moorish Revival architecture is derived from the Islamic architecture of North Africa and parts of Spain and Portugal. Although it is associated with exotic, romantic places and frequently adopted for theaters, hotels and garden pavilions, it was also popular for synagogues. This is because Medieval Spain, where Moorish architecture was prevalent, enjoyed a tolerant climate and had been a welcoming country during the golden age of Jewish culture. So the Moorish association was attractive for Jews seeking a style for their buildings

There are three Moorish Revival structures in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District. The Jewish People's Institute at 3500-3516 W. Douglas Boulevard incorporates Moorish arches and the style's colorful mosaics into the design of the building. The JPI was designed by Klaber & Grunsfeld in 1926. Additionally, the style was applied to a synagogue located at 3620-3624 W. Douglas Boulevard designed by J.W. Cohn & Co. in 1926. There is also a Moorish Revival multi-unit apartment building located at 5001-5007 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

Arts and Crafts/Craftsman

The Arts and Crafts or Craftsman style, as it is sometimes called, originated in the United States around 1900. It developed as a reaction against the complicated massing and elaborate detailing of Victorian period styles (Italianate, Gothic Revival, Second Empire and Queen Anne) and as well as the formalism of Classical Revival architecture. The style grew out of the Arts and Crafts movement in England, which originated in the late 19th-century as a reaction to the negative effects of industrialization. It stressed simple designs, natural materials and fine craftsmanship. The style flourished into the 1920s.

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Arts and Crafts residences received extensive publicity. Publications such as the *Western Architect*, *The Architect*, *House Beautiful*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Architectural Record*, *Country Life in America* and *Ladies' Home Journal* familiarized the nation with the style. As a result, pattern books offering plans for Arts and Crafts/Craftsman homes flooded the market; some even offering pre-cut packages of lumber and detailing to be assembled by local craftsmen.³⁴ Craftsman bungalows were very popular as were two- and three-story craftsman flats.

Craftsman style houses were uncomplicated, efficient, and neat with straightforward profiles and clean lines. They were neither ornate nor cluttered; there was no attempt to express social status or present an ornate display. Using machine technology in the initial construction stages lowered labor costs, but finish work was often done by hand. The Arts and Crafts/Craftsman house or flat building seldom referenced historical styles. It became a distinctly American style that was comparable in its approach, through the use of natural materials and geometric detailing, to the more artistically-developed Prairie Style architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and his followers.

An important feature of the style relates to the expression of a building's construction. The Arts and Crafts/Craftsman house typically has exposed rafter ends and roof beams or triangular knee braces, set under gables. Almost all of the houses or flats have some type of bay or porch, either open or glazed. In flats, the porches are typically stacked. Windows are usually double-hung, often three over one or four over one. The inherent natural color of the materials used--whether wood, brick, stucco or stone--is respected.

There are 447 Craftsman flats, single-family homes, townhouses and bungalows in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District. The buildings are predominantly red or cream-colored brick with sparsely-applied stone trim for window sills, string courses and lintels. Geometry dominates, both in terms of massing and detailing. Some buildings, like 3055 W. 19th Street, have polygonal bays; some, like 3616-3618 W. Douglas Boulevard, have tiers of rectangular bays.

Arts and Crafts features are typically found on four squares and bungalows. There are high style craftsman bungalows at 1735 W. Garfield Boulevard (1926) and 1908 W. Garfield Boulevard (1925) and at 5339 S. Racine Avenue. There is a characteristic 2-flat at 2435 S. California Avenue and one at 3550 W. Douglas Boulevard.

Industrial buildings also employed the Craftsman style due to its basic simplicity and cost effectiveness as well as its association with fine workmanship. The Westinghouse factory building at 2211 W. Pershing Road, designed in 1922 by Samuel Scott Joy, is an excellent example of the style.

Sullivan-esque

Sullivan-esque architecture reflects the influence of architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924). The style, which became popular in Chicago and other parts of the country between the 1890s and 1920, is characterized by wall surfaces displaying an intricate weaving of stylized foliate and geometric forms executed in terra cotta or plaster. The patterns are typically symmetrical, sometimes set in panels. Sullivan's ornamentation was integral to the building, not applied to it and bears no resemblance to historical precedent. Sullivan typically applied this kind of ornamentation to his designs for steel frame commercial buildings. There are four examples

³⁴ McAlester, p. 454.

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of Sullivanesque architecture, including examples at 20-40 E. Garfield Boulevard and 1146 S. Independence Boulevard.

Prairie School/Prairie Style

The Prairie School of architecture or Prairie Style, as it is sometimes called, developed in the Midwest and is considered a uniquely American style of architecture. Although influenced strongly by the Arts and Crafts movement, the style was developed by Frank Lloyd Wright and was practiced by many of his followers, hence the name “Prairie School.. It was popular from 1890 to around 1915, although some practitioners designed Prairie School buildings into the 1930s. The style is primarily residential, although it was also employed in the design of other types of buildings as well.

Prairie School buildings are simple and express the horizontality of the Midwest’s prairie setting. Most Prairie Style residences stand two stories, have low pitched (usually hipped) or flat roofs, wide cornices, and details that emphasize the horizontal. Detailing includes thin Roman brick, horizontal banding, ribbons of windows (usually casements), and projecting wings. There is little, if any, applied ornament, except that windows frequently contain leaded or stained glass in geometric patterns. Geometry, not historicism, governs the design.

Sometimes Prairie detailing is grafted onto building types like the American four square and the bungalow. While both the Prairie Style house and the Arts and Crafts house are simple and incorporate natural materials, Prairie houses are usually larger, more sophisticated in their designs, and often architect-designed, although builders also adopted the style.

There are only five buildings along the Boulevards that are Prairie Style. Two are flats, one is a single-family house and one is a pool house designed in 1914 by William Carbys Zimmerman. It is located at 3041 W. Augusta Boulevard. There is a Prairie Style apartment building at 755-757 S. Independence Boulevard (1902), a 6-flat at 138-140 S. Hamlin Avenue, and a single-family house at 1122-1124 W. Garfield Boulevard .In addition, the Rath House, at 2703 W. Logan Boulevard, in the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*, is included by reference in this nomination.

Art Deco

Art Deco is an elegant style that takes its name from the world’s fair held in Paris in 1925, known as Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes. The style was generally popular during the late 1920s and 1930s. The 1925 Paris exposition introduced forms to the world that, when taken collectively, characterized a whole new view of design.

Art Deco, characterized by linear, hard-edged, angular geometric shapes, was often embellished with stylized decoration, generally in low relief. Ornament was sometimes executed in the same material as the building, frequently cut stone, or it was applied in various metals, tile or glazed brick. Often round or polygonal windows were introduced. Metal casements are typical. Geometry dominates, especially in a building’s decorative trim. Human figures are sometimes integrated into the designs, especially figures of people working.

The Art Deco style is not particularly prevalent along Chicago’s parks and boulevards because most of the building construction occurred before this style became popular. However, there are very distinguished

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examples of Art Deco design elements applied to railroad viaducts, street overpasses and bridge lampposts where S. Western Boulevard crosses the Sanitary & Ship Canal.

There are thirteen commercial, residential and industrial buildings with Art Deco styling in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District. Examples include two courtyard apartment buildings located at 901-909 and 911-923 S. Independence Boulevard, both designed by A.I. Lurya in 1928. There is a multi-use building at 1618 W. Garfield Boulevard and one at 5501 S. Prairie Avenue. The Sprague Warner factory building at 461-505 N. Sacramento Boulevard is a stunning example of the style, one that features a stone tower at the intersection of W. Franklin Boulevard and S. Sacramento Boulevard. The complex was designed by A. Epstein in 1941. The same architect designed an Art Deco factory building in the Central Manufacturing District at 2151-2159 W. Pershing Road in 1936.

Moderne

The Moderne style developed in the late 1930s and is much like the simple, geometric Art Deco architecture that preceded it—with one major difference: it is characterized by streamlining. A fascination with speed influenced all aspects of design. Even static objects, including buildings, adopted smooth rounded forms, parallel horizontal stripes--dynamic elements that expressed the efficiency and speed of automobile, train and airplane travel. Round windows and glass blocks were used.

Hollywood popularized the Moderne style by showing the public the association between streamlined architecture and luxury liners, glamorous movie theater interiors and fancy hotels. The Moderne style was particularly adaptable to small commercial buildings, shops and factories as well as buildings associated with travel, such as gas and bus stations. Chicago's 1933-34 Century of Progress Exhibition offered designers the opportunity to put new materials, construction techniques and forward-looking designs before the public, and many embraced it. World War II and its resulting devastation subsequently ended the country's romance with speed.

There are twelve examples of the style in the District. Examples can be found at 3001-3017 W. Franklin Boulevard (1937), 4043-47 (1939), and 2015 S. Marshall Boulevard (1930s). Streamlined Moderne features are integrated into the office section of the Sprague Warner factory building at 461-505 N. Sacramento Boulevard.

Modern/International Style

Modern architecture is characterized by simple form and the use of 20th-century materials such as steel and glass. There are no overt historical references. International Style architecture is a more specific type of Modernism. The International Style is characterized by geometric shapes, flat wall surfaces, broad expanses of glass, lack of applied ornamentation, simple materials, open floor plans and a clarity of expression related to function and structure. This approach to architecture grew out of the teachings of the Bauhaus, an industrial art school that developed in Germany during the years of the Weimar Republic, 1919-1933. Most Modern and International Style buildings were architect-designed, frequently executed by distinguished practitioners.

There are nine Modern buildings and one International Style building in The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District. There is one example of a pure International Style building. It is the Social Services Building at the University of Chicago, located at 969 E. 60th Street along the Midway Plaisance, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in 1964. Eero Saarinen's Laird Bell Law Quadrangle, built in 1959, because of its decorative steel and glass wall surfaces is best defined as Modern.

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No Style

When a building has no features that clearly reflect a particular architectural style, it can really only be described as “No Style.” There are 61 buildings in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District that are No Style. They date from 1890 through the 1930s. Some of them are architect-designed; most are not. They tend to be very simple. Some No Style buildings conform to the typical size and materials along the parks and boulevards but have had non-historic alterations made. These changes include the removal of identifying ornamental features, the replacement of front porches or the application of siding, which may cover identifying features of a style. If these non-historic additions were removed, perhaps a style could be identified. Because the materials, massing, original openings and roof shapes have been maintained, these No Style buildings are considered Contributing to the significance of the district.

An example of a No Style building may be found at 5231 S. Racine Avenue: a bungalow clad in siding. Another example is a simple stripped down two-flat at 3406 W. Franklin Boulevard. There is a similar simple commercial building at 548 N. Sacramento Boulevard that is also “No Style.” The six-story building located at 700 E. Oakwood Boulevard, originally known as the Abraham Lincoln Center, was designed by Frank L. Wright and Dwight H. Perkins and constructed between 1898 and 1903. The building is described as No Style not because of alterations but because it breaks from established architectural precedent, creating a very simple building that cannot be categorized.

VERNACULAR BUILDING TYPES

Vernacular architecture refers to buildings that are not high style and have little to define them stylistically. Instead, they are described by form (upright and wing houses, for example), roof shape (houses with gambrel- or gable-front roofs), placement of rooms, or building materials (like many cottages). Although some vernacular buildings cannot easily be categorized, other building types, including four squares, bungalows and ranch houses (subtypes of single family houses), were built in large numbers and are easily described by common characteristics. These are typically identified with particular time periods. Four squares were popular between 1900 and 1930. Bungalows were built roughly between 1900 and the mid-1920s. Ranch houses were generally built from the 1940s through the 1960s. Duplexes, townhouses, flats, and apartment buildings are categorized by function. Vernacular houses were most often built without the assistance of a trained architect. They may have been put up by a builder or by the homeowner.

After the 1880s mass-produced, standardized building materials became more widely available.³⁵ By the turn-of-the-century, four squares and bungalows were mass-produced and widely advertised in periodicals and catalogues featuring pre-cut houses. They were more likely to be built by a local contractors or carpenters than by the owner. Some four squares and bungalows were architect-designed and contained ornamental features identified with current architectural styles such as Craftsman or Colonial Revival.³⁶ The more high style a vernacular building is the more likely it was designed by an architect.

³⁵ Alice Edwards Novak and Karen Lang Kummer, “The Architectural/Historic Resources of Quincy’s Northeast Neighborhood, Survey Report, Phase Two.”

³⁶ A considerable amount of this discussion on defining vernacular architecture is drawn from the draft of “National Register Bulletin: surveying and Evaluating Vernacular Architecture” prepared by the Midwest Vernacular Architecture Committee, Edited by Barbara Wyatt, Madison, Wisconsin, April 1987.

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Brick Chicago bungalows and greystones represent building subtypes believed not to be found elsewhere. There are a relatively small number of Chicago bungalows out of the 34 bungalows in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District, but a huge number of greystones of all sizes (466). Greystones have an architectural style applied to their façade with the greystone type assigned because of material usage—a smooth or rough-finished Bedford limestone.

Most of the vernacular residential buildings are located near the industrial areas along the boulevards. It is here where bungalows and four squares, as well as gable front and gambrel front houses and small cottages tend to be located. There are 61 vernacular houses along the boulevards. Of these, 56 are gable front, 11 are gambrel front and 2 have hipped roofs. Several of these residences are located at the west end of the north side of Garfield Boulevard, near the industries on S. Western Boulevard. They are located at 2106, 2112, 2122, 2124, 2128, 2134, 2141 and 2142 W. Garfield Boulevard. Of these, both 2134 and 2141 W. Garfield Boulevard are gable front, while the remaining addresses are gambrel front.

Residential Vernacular Building Types

The Cottage

Some of the earliest modest single-family houses in Chicago were cottages, and there are several sprinkled throughout the park and boulevard system. They are sometimes referred to as “workers’ cottages.” The oldest ones in the District date from the 1870s and are brick, constructed as a reaction to the destruction of the city’s frame building stock by the 1871 Fire.

There are many brick cottages in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District. For survey purposes, those without any characteristic stylistic elements were classified as “cottages” A number of them were built before the city’s streets were raised to accommodate sewers; as a consequence they stand two stories tall but have one story beneath ground level. The cottages located at 1241 and at 2419 S. California Boulevard exhibit the gable-front cottage massing and are brick, the typical primary material. There are 41 cottages in the historic district.

The Four Square

Although the four square is a house type, it is frequently associated with a particular academic style of architecture because of its detailing. Four squares may be very simple or they may have elaborate decorative detail associated with Craftsman, Prairie, Classical or Colonial Revival architecture

The standard four square is balanced and symmetrical, stands two stories and has a large attic, sometimes finished. Large dormers that commonly extend from each side of the hipped roof make the attic livable. A porch is an important hallmark of the four square, but it does not resemble a Victorian verandah. It is rectangular, lacks decorative detailing, and extends across the front of the house. Often the porch on a four square has a solid wall rather than a balustrade enclosing its lower half. If there are posts and balusters they tend to be square rather than turned. Sometimes, however, a bay or turret breaks the box, linking the house

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stylistically to the Queen Anne style. Colonial Revival four squares have Classical detailing, including Palladian windows. Craftsman and Prairie Style four squares are recognizable by their horizontal banding, broad eaves and stucco walls.

Preference for the square shape can also be seen as a matter of economy. (The cube yields the most interior space for the money spent on foundation, framing and roof.) Although the four square was built in rural areas as well as in cities and suburbs, it was well suited to small lots, prefabricated parts, and the growing housing needs of middle class families. Variants on American four squares appeared in virtually every pattern book, including both the Sears and Radford catalogues, published between 1900 and 1925. Different models offered options in window styles, porch parts, siding, and interior elements.³⁷

There are 15 four squares along the park and boulevard system, with a concentration at the west end of Garfield Boulevard. Simple examples of four squares may be found at 1102 (1907), 1106 (1909), and 2311 W. Garfield Boulevard, as well as 2442 W. 54th Street, all of which feature Craftsman detailing. There is a four square with Classical Revival detailing located at 2315 W. Garfield Boulevard. The four squares at 432 and 434 N. Central Park Boulevard have no decorative detailing and are defined as No Style.

The Bungalow

The bungalow, as we have come to know it, refers to relatively modest one-story houses. The term “bungalow” actually is derived from a kind of travelers’ shelter that was popular in 18th-century British-ruled India. Located along India’s roads, these “bungalos” or “bangalloas” were low-roofed cottages built of unbaked brick, surrounded by a wide porch or verandah. Carried to England, the word was first used to describe small resort cottages and symbolized a “Bohemian” life style.

By the first decade of the 20th-century the term bungalow began to replace the word “cottage” to define a small, single-story (or at most 1 ½-story) American dwelling. Because costs of labor, construction, and heating systems were soaring, the middle class homeowner sought to build a house that was economical and efficient. Social historian Gwendolyn Wright notes, “The ideal middle class dwelling underwent a major transformation: from an exuberant, highly personalized display of irregular shapes, picturesque contrasts, and varieties of ornament, supposedly symbolizing the uniqueness of the family, to a restrained and simple dwelling.”³⁸

The typical bungalow is a 1- or 1 ½-story structure with a low profile and a horizontal orientation and is usually built on a raised basement. It has a broad (frequently tiled) roof with a low pitch, wide projecting eaves that often are supported by exposed brackets, a large front porch or projecting front bay, a prominent chimney, and many windows. Dormers are common. Unlike the four square, which was meant to be contained, the bungalow blended indoor and outdoor spaces as much as possible through the use of natural materials like clapboards, split shakes, or brick. Bungalows often embodied many features associated with the Craftsman style; the differences relate primarily to scale.

³⁷ “National Register Bulletin: Surveying and Evaluating Vernacular Architecture” prepared by the Midwest Vernacular Architecture Committee, Edited by Barbara Wyatt, Madison, Wisconsin, April 1987, 29.

³⁸ This background material is largely taken from Jakle, pp. 170-173; he quotes Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980, p. 3.

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There are 34 bungalows in the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District: several are on the north side of Garfield Boulevard, some quite large. Examples of bungalows may be found at 1700 (architect Ralph Oliver, 1916), 1720 (1914) and 1735 W. Garfield Boulevard (1926). There are many more in the 2100 and 2200 blocks of W. Garfield Boulevard. Bungalows can also be found at 5339 S. Racine Avenue, at 2250 W. 37th Street and at 2425 S. California Boulevard.

Indigenous Chicago Residential Building Types

The Chicago Bungalow

The Chicago bungalow is a local building type commonly found in large numbers in a crescent shaped area between the industrial neighborhoods and Chicago's suburbs.³⁹ This crescent is commonly referred to as the "bungalow belt." Some were constructed along Chicago's boulevards and parks. Two-flats and three-flats, which resemble tall bungalows, were especially popular.

Typical Chicago bungalows are built of solid brick construction, rest on a lot that is 25' to 37' wide and 125' deep, are surrounded by landscaping and have a garage at the rear of the lot. They are set back 10' to 25' from the street and often use common brick on the side and rear elevations. Chicago bungalows are rectangular and stand 1 ½ stories with dormer windows. The entrance is generally off-center, set under a small open porch. Next to the entrance is a rectangular or polygonal bay filled with windows, an extension of the living room. The windows in the more elaborate examples contain art glass. Other textures and additional color are provided by patterned face brick. Limestone inserts and banding are used for trim. Often there are window boxes and trellises.

The design of Chicago bungalows and the flats resembling tall bungalows were influenced by the simple, clean lines of the Arts and Crafts movement.. This simplicity is also found on the interior, which generally consists of six rooms—a living room, dining room, bath, two bedrooms and a kitchen, with an unfinished basement and an attic. Bungalows could be ordered through periodicals such as the *American Builder* magazine or through organizations like The American Face Brick Association.⁴⁰ Often, more elaborate bungalows can be found on street corners.

There are two large, handsome Chicago bungalows located at 1700 (built in 1916) and 1735 (built in 1926) W. Garfield Boulevard. Smaller, more typical, examples are located around Gage Park, towards the west end of W. Garfield Boulevard (between the 1700 and the 2200 blocks, near the factories on S. Western Boulevard. Examples of these bungalows include 5339 S. Racine Avenue and 2130 W. Garfield Boulevard.

The Greystone

The greatest number of any one type of building along the boulevard system are the greystones, a type seemingly unique to the city of Chicago. Chicago greystones are buildings sheathed in grey limestone. They are found in a variety of building types and sizes. There are 466 greystones within the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District and another 97 within the already listed *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*. Greystones are found in a variety of residential building types, including single family (one-flats), two- and

³⁹ *The Chicago Bungalow*. The Chicago Architecture Foundation. Edited by Dominick A. Pacyga & Charles Shanabruch. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2001, p. 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, page 42, 50.

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three-flats, six-flats, eight-flats and large apartment buildings. Sometimes the greystone is free-standing, sometimes it is a party-wall residence. There are often several in a row. Typically limestone was reserved for the front facades only; side and rear elevations were either face brick or common brick.

Greystones were generally constructed between 1890 and 1920 and reflect the styles most popular during the last decade of the 19th-century and the first two decades of the 20th-century. There are many Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival and Classical Revival greystones as well as examples of the type that combine styles. One style generally dominates each building.

Although greystones are found throughout Chicago, large numbers may be found in the neighborhoods of Logan Square, North Lawndale, West Garfield Park, Lakeview, Englewood and Washington Park. At the time the greystones were built these were middle class neighborhoods. Because limestone was relatively more expensive than brick and probably the most expensive building material of the time, it was one that only middle-upper-middle or upper-class families could afford.⁴¹ Stone was only used on the front to save money and to reflect the owners' stature. It is quite common in Chicago for a building to put its finest front to the street, with lesser grade materials (like common brick) and Spartan detailing relegated to the sides and rear.

The most desirable sections of the various community areas, because of their attractive park-like setting, were along the boulevards. Brent D. Ryan, in his essay on "What is a Chicago Greystone" in Roberta Feldman's book on greystones notes that "Chicago's Greystone Era neighborhoods ring the city in a coherent geographical pattern along the paths of the city's boulevard system...These boulevards can be thought of as the core of Chicago's 'Greystone Belt'."⁴² Greystones were built on the most prestigious streets, those with the highest visibility, the most amenities and the easiest accessibility—i.e. the residential boulevards.⁴³

Greystones are located throughout the park and boulevard system. There is a particularly dense concentration (110) along S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Some are architect-designed. Architects who built greystones include Andrew Sandegren, Charles M. Palmer, Henry L. Newhouse, John Ahlschlager, Edbrooke & Burnham and Wilson, Marbel & Lamsen (Horatio Wilson).

The most popular style for greystones was Classical Revival. Single family residences in the Classical Revival style can be seen at 4941, 4943, and 4949 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, designed by Peabody & Bealey and built in 1901. Peabody & Bealey also designed two Gothic Revival residences in 1901 at 4947 and at 4953 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

The second most popular style for greystones was Richardsonian Romanesque. Examples of this style can be found at 3961, 3963 and 3965 S. Drexel Boulevard. These three-flats were designed by the team of Edbrook & Burnham in 1887. A Queen Anne- inspired two flat is located at 3551 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and an Italianate greystone was built at 3551 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. There are also historical revival greystone two-flats and three-flats. A two-flat Tudor Revival residence can be found at 3341 W. Douglas Boulevard (1907). There are many fine greystones located in the already-listed *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*. Examples include those at 2050 N. Humboldt Boulevard, 2228-2230, 2337, and 2410 N. Kedzie Boulevard, and 2801-2803 and 3024 W. Logan Boulevard.

⁴¹ Roberta M. Feldman and Jim Wheaton, Editors. *The Chicago Greystone in Historic North Lawndale*. Chicago: City Design Center in the College of Architecture and the Arts at the University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006, p. 86.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

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Multifamily Building Types

Flats

There are numerous multiple-family dwellings along the parks and boulevards. They range in size from 2- and 3-flats to 8-flats to buildings taller than three stories. They typically feature replicated floor plans for each floor. Sometimes the 2-,3-, 6- and 8-flat buildings were constructed on raised basements to accommodate ground floor apartment units. Main entrances are up a half-story and there is sometimes an entrance under the staircase. Multiple-family buildings along the parks and boulevards were first constructed in the 1890s. These buildings have rounded front bays and are a variation on the Queen Anne house, but simplified. Examples include “The Carolyn” and “The Pearl,” located at 3830-3832 and 3836-3838 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Some 2-flats have two entrance doors; some are accessed through an interior hall and have a single entrance.

There are many rows of greystone flat buildings lining the park boulevard system. These were constructed from the late 1880s through the 1910s. There are also large concentrations of red brick flat buildings, with stacked, glazed front porches and stone trim. These are mainly Craftsman style buildings, sometimes described as tall bungalows. Many may be found on S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Garfield Boulevard. There are also apartment buildings that have unusual detailing and were designed in a variety of styles. The Belmonte Flats, designed by Patton & Fisher in 1893 at 4257-59 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive resembles many apartment hotels that were constructed for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition. It is already listed on the National Register.

Numerous examples of multifamily buildings, executed in a variety of styles, may be found along the park boulevard system. They include the following: Gothic Revival: 2231 E. 67th Street (designed by Henry K. Holsman, built 1926) and 3652 W. Douglas Boulevard; Craftsman: 1935 W. Garfield Boulevard (built in 1915) and 4313-15 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive; Classical Revival: 515-517 E. 60th Street and 4700-4712 S. Drexel; Tudor Revival: 2536 S. California Avenue and 1118 W. Garfield Boulevard, and Spanish Revival: 1934-1936 W. Garfield Boulevard (designed by E.J. Males, built in 1926) and 4625-4637 S. Drexel Boulevard.

Courtyard Buildings

There are 61 brick courtyard buildings lining the boulevards. This is a specific building type that proliferated throughout suburban areas that were incorporated into the City of Chicago in the 1889 annexation. They are typically “U”-shaped, surrounding a grassy interior courtyard. They are brick, with face brick on the elevations visible from the public way. Trim is either stone or terra cotta. It may be lavish or spartan and may reference Tudor or Classical styles. Some have Craftsman trim. Entrances are located on the interior court, with each entrance accessing a block of six apartments. The interiors tend to feature homey elements that include fireplaces, hardwood floors and built-in bookcases.

Courtyard apartment buildings were popular during the 1910s and 1920s and sometimes replaced large single-family homes with accompanying coach houses. This is the case in some sections of S. Drexel Boulevard and S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Examples of the courtyard type are located at 1801-1809 E. 67th Street (Tudor Revival; designed by Z. Erol Smith and built in 1924), 3600 W. Franklin Boulevard (Gothic Revival),

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5611-5625 S. Cottage Grove (Craftsman), 4901 S. Drexel Boulevard (Spanish Revival; built in 1926), 3410-3418 W. Douglas Boulevard (Classical Revival), and 911-923 S. Independence Boulevard (Art Deco).

INTEGRITY OF THE ARCHITECTURAL STREET SCAPE

The integrity of the architectural streetscape of the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District as a whole is very good. There are some areas with dense concentrations of buildings. This is true of all the streets lining the parks and squares and the following boulevards: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, the south section of Drexel Boulevard, Oakwood Boulevard, W. 24th Boulevard, Marshall Boulevard, Douglas Boulevard, the south section of Independence Boulevard, S. Hamlin Boulevard and around Franklin Square. It is also the case along the already-listed Logan Boulevard, Kedzie Boulevard and Humboldt Boulevard. The Midway Plaisance, framed by buildings owned by the University of Chicago, displays excellent integrity.

The boundaries of the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District were carefully drawn to exclude areas of vacant land and urban decay. These reflect neighborhood deterioration and, in some cases, wholesale demolition that occurred during the 1960s and later. In areas of the District there are broad expanses of open land interspersed with historic flats, townhouses and commercial buildings. This is the case along parts of Independence Boulevard and some sections toward the east end of Garfield Boulevard.

Buildings in the District that are rated Non-contributing (NC) were built after 1942, except for along the south side of the Midway Plaisance, or have severely compromised integrity. There are no Non-contributing buildings on the south side of the Midway.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1869-1942

1906-1964

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS.

Period of Significance (justification)

The first period of significance begins in 1869, which is the year legislation was passed establishing the Chicago Park and Boulevard system. The first period of significance ends in 1942 when federal funding ran out and little construction followed. The second period of significance begins in 1906, which is when the first building was constructed on the south side of the Midway Plaisance by the University of Chicago. This building is Midway Studios. It ended in 1964 when the last significant historic building on the south side of the Midway

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was constructed by the University of Chicago. This building is Mies van der Rohe’s School of Social Service Administration.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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Narrative Description

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

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The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A for listing on National Register of Historic Places for its importance in the planning and development of the city of Chicago. It is nationally significant under Criterion C for its landscape architecture and locally significant for its architecture.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION A

Community Planning and Development

This ambitious 26-mile system was created in response to the belief that it would not only help create healthful, accessible and livable neighborhoods, but would also spur residential real estate development in what was then the outskirts of the city. As anticipated, the park and boulevard system attracted real estate development and in the process created one of the city's most recognizable and lasting urban features. The system is locally significant because, for the first time in Chicago, urban growth was thoughtfully planned and executed on a city-wide scale. The park and boulevard system not only provided a structure for orderly real estate development, it also provided an amenity that elevated the sophistication of the city by enriching both its visible character and its quality of life.

CRITERION C

Landscape Architecture

The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District, enabled by legislation passed in 1869, is nationally significant. It was early and nationally influential. The system was designed and executed by some of the nation's greatest luminaries in the field of landscape architecture. Among them were Frederick Law Olmsted, William LeBaron Jenney, Horace William Shaler Cleveland and Jens Jensen. Not only was the Chicago Park and Boulevard system associated with important early landscape architects, it was the first major comprehensive system in the country. Because of Chicago's prominence, the design of the system was seminal in the creation of park and boulevard systems in cities nation-wide.

Ted Turak, (author of a biography of William LeBaron Jenney, early designer of Chicago's West Park System), stated that the city's park proponents:

...intended to give Chicago what no American city yet had—a planned park system integrated into the urban fabric. Even Olmsted's great Central Park in New York remained aesthetically apart. It was inserted into the grid pattern of streets and stands in splendid rectangular isolation to its

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environment...Chicago's planners, on the other hand, saw parks in series forming a green belt around the city.⁴⁴

Architecture

The architecture along the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District is locally significant and represents the distinctive characteristics of the multitude of building types and styles that were popular during the time that Chicago's parks and boulevards were developed. They reflect, in microcosm, the stylistic progression of Chicago's architectural styles from 1869 through 1942. The architecture represents work by some of Chicago's most talented practitioners: some recognized, others proficient but not well-known. These architects and builders all designed structures in the then-fashionable styles. Among Chicago's most noteworthy architects who designed buildings on the system were Henry Ives Cobb, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, Holabird & Roche, Frank Lloyd Wright, Alfred Alschuler and Solon S. Beman. Many of the buildings, whether or not they were designed by significant architects, are of a very high caliber.

The buildings on the south side of the Midway Plaisance continue the stylistic approach and caliber of design characteristic of the earlier University of Chicago buildings on the north side of the Midway. Eero Saarinen's 1959 Laird Bell Law Quadrangle mimics the concept of quadrangles as they were first introduced in the early 1890s by Henry Ives Cobb, but in modern materials. Architecturally the buildings of Cobb and Mies are equal in quality. Mies van der Rohe's 1964 School of Social Service Administration building is an iconic example of this master's architecture. The architects who designed buildings on both sides of the Midway are widely recognized for their importance.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

Legislation was passed in 1869 creating three park commissions, each of which independently initiated the work that created the park and boulevard system. The period of significance, therefore, begins in 1869. For most of the district the period of significance ends in 1942, when major spending on the development of the system drew to a close. This ends the nomination's primary period of significance. For the segment of the district located along the south side of Chicago's Midway Plaisance, where the University of Chicago expanded across from where the university was established in 1892, the period of significance for architecture extends to 1964. This year ends the nomination's secondary period of significance. Post-1942 buildings elsewhere in the District are scattered throughout the system, don't continue a construction pattern that was established earlier and were not designed by architects who are nationally significant as are those who worked on the University of Chicago's later buildings.

INTEGRITY

⁴⁴Theodore Turak, *William Le Baron Jenney: a Pioneer of Modern Architecture*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1986. p. 78

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The integrity of the Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District is very high. The parks retain their original size and the boulevards their original configurations. Although lighting, signage and landscape treatments in the parks and boulevards have changed and evolved, many alterations have been guided by significant practitioners, sensitive to the designs of the original landscape architects. The Chicago Park District retains a historian on staff and serves as a responsible steward to its holdings, continually undertaking restoration.

The integrity of the architecture along the boulevards is generally high and in some areas, where there are dense concentrations of buildings, excellent. Although there are many buildings that are deteriorated, there are no sections that contain buildings that have undergone significant stylistic changes. The buildings along the parks and boulevards continue to reflect the stylistic development of architecture in Chicago, with stretches of vacant land left out of the historic district.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

THE NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHICAGO PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District, composed of designed parks linked by a series of landscaped boulevards, is nationally significant in the area of landscape architecture. Not only was the Chicago park and boulevard system associated with the country's most important early landscape architects, it was the first such system designed on a major scale. The design was seminal in the creation of park and boulevard systems nation-wide.⁴⁵

Association with Important Landscape Architects

Several important early landscape architects designed or implemented the Chicago Park and Boulevard System. An authoritative perspective on the national significance of their achievement comes from respected author and educator Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR, founder and president of The Cultural Landscape Foundation:

Designed by America's most talented and influential early landscape architects, Chicago's park and boulevard system set the standard nationally for many subsequent endeavors. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., as well as H. W. S. Cleveland, William Le Baron Jenney and Jens Jensen all contributed to the design of this unrivaled system of parks linked by a ribbon of greenways. Boston, Minneapolis and

⁴⁵ The manuscript for the statement of national significance was reviewed by Charles Birnbaum, founder and president of The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF).

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numerous other cities were to follow suit, but Chicago was the progenitor of this type of design and historically it had a wide-reaching and lasting impact.⁴⁶

The most significant of these early practitioners was Frederick Law Olmsted, who defined and dominated the profession of landscape architecture in the second half of the 19th-century. According to Olmsted scholar Victoria Post Ranney:

Virtually all landscape architects of the nineteenth century were influenced by Olmsted [Sr.]. By 1893 and the opening of the Columbian Exposition, many significant...landscape architects had known or collaborated with him. Some had received their training in his firm; others had read his reports and articles or studied his landscapes firsthand.⁴⁷

Even before 1870, when Olmsted's firm, Olmsted, Vaux & Co., designed Chicago's South Park System, he played an important inspirational role in the creation of the city's park and boulevard system. The complex social, economic and aesthetic philosophy Olmsted developed for New York's Central Park gave Chicago boosters such as Paul Cornell and J.Y. Scammon a visionary framework for their city. His interaction during the Civil War years with key movers and shakers, such as Ezra McCagg and William Bross, inspired them to take legislative action to create the Chicago system. The design Olmsted subsequently created with Calvert Vaux for South Park and its connecting boulevards was a masterful application of his mature philosophy.

Although historically overshadowed by Olmsted, Vaux too was important. In addition to being Olmsted's co-designer of Central and Prospect parks, he brought to the Chicago project his prior experience as the partner of Andrew Jackson Downing, one of America's earliest landscape theorists and champion of public parks. In fact, because of his field experience under Downing, Vaux "was likely the best-trained landscape designer then in North America" when he collaborated with Olmsted to produce their winning 1857 entry in the Central Park competition.⁴⁸ Chicago's South Park System was the last such project Vaux designed with Olmsted. By mutual consent, they dissolved their partnership a year after submitting their 1871 report and plan for Chicago.

Horace William Shaler Cleveland was a contemporary of Olmsted and a talented pioneer landscape architect in his own right. To his position as landscape architect for the South Park Commission Cleveland brought experience as a surveyor in Illinois, a scientific farmer in New Jersey⁴⁹ and a partner with Robert Morris Copeland in their successful Boston landscape architecture firm. He also spent a brief period of time working for Olmsted supervising plantings for Prospect Park. In 1869 Cleveland moved to Chicago where his work included an extension to Chicago's landscaped Graceland Cemetery. Cleveland served as "Landscape Architect of the South Park and connecting Boulevards" until 1874 when, because of the national financial panic of 1873, his salary was stopped. Cleveland was largely responsible for executing Olmsted & Vaux's plan for Washington

⁴⁶ Charles Birnbaum. E-mail to Susan Benjamin, Benjamin Historic Certifications; Andrew Heckenkamp, National Register Coordinator, State of Illinois' Terry Tatum, Director of Research, Historic Preservation Division, Dept. of Housing and Economic Development, City of Chicago. May 7, 2011

⁴⁷ William Tishler, "Horace Cleveland: The Chicago years". *Midwest Landscape Architecture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000. p. 41.

⁴⁸ Pregill, Philip and Nancy Volkman. *Landscapes in History: Design and Planning in the Western Tradition*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993. p.426.

⁴⁹ Cleveland became associated with Andrew Jackson Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted during this time through his involvement in the National Pomological Congress. Cleveland was one of the founders of this organization.

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Park, Drexel Boulevard and Grand Boulevard. He went on to become one of the most well-known Midwestern landscape designers, laying out suburbs, estates and campus plans. His most famous park system work was a “skillfully conceived plan” for the St Paul and Minneapolis regional park system.⁵⁰

William Le Baron Jenney, the initial designer of the West Park System, was influenced by Olmsted as well as by the great parks and boulevards of Paris constructed while he was a student at the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures. Jenney had no previous experience with park design when he was hired to design the West Park System. Even so, he was considered by landscape architecture professor Reuben M. Rainey, PhD to be “one of the more gifted American park designers of the nineteenth century, worth of inclusion in the ranks of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., Calvert Vaux, Horace Cleveland, William Hammond Hall and Jacob Weidenmann.”⁵¹

Jens Jensen, the acclaimed dean of the Prairie Style of landscape architecture in America, made his contributions to the design of the West Park System in the early 20th-century. Jensen’s knowledge of plant material and his design skills were honed as he worked his way up from West Parks laborer to superintendent of Humboldt Park. Designing private estates for wealthy clients and work on the Special Parks Commission in the early 20th-century also provided invaluable experience. Jensen scholar Robert E. Grese, in his biography, *Jens Jensen: Maker of Natural Parks and Gardens*, summarizes Jensen’s significance by quoting landscape architecture scholar Darrel Morrison: “...scholars are rightfully placing Jensen ‘alongside the other landscape greats---Andrew Jackson Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted, H.W.S. Cleveland, John Nolen, and the like.’”⁵²

Early and Seminal Park System

Chicago’s park and boulevard system and the designers who created it were in the forefront of two closely-related developments in the second half of the 19th- century—the parks movement and the rise of the profession of landscape architecture. Thus, in addition to its masterful designers, the Chicago park and boulevard system is nationally significant as an early and seminal development in what would become a national movement to establish urban park systems.

The Parks Movement

The parks movement is well explained by Pregill and Volkman in their *Landscapes in History: Design and Planning in the Western Tradition*:

Throughout the English-speaking portions of North America, pastoral parks became the civic norm and an expected part of the infrastructure for any progressive city. These parks and park systems also became a mainstay of landscape architectural practice.⁵³

⁵⁰ Tishler, “Horace Cleveland: The Chicago years,” p. 35.

⁵¹ Reuben M. Rainey. “William Le Baron Jenney and Chicago’s West Parks: From Prairies to Pleasure-Grounds”. *Midwest Landscape Architecture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000, p.57.

⁵² Robert E. Grese, *Jens Jensen: Maker of Natural Parks and Gardens*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. p. 187.

⁵³ Pregill and Volkman, *Landscapes in History: Design and Planning in the Western Tradition*, p. 441.

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The Central Park competition in 1857 inaugurated an era of park building that would begin in earnest after the Civil War. Parks and park systems would continue to be created throughout America until World War II and would endow the nation with some of the most lasting and beneficial of its urban amenities.

Addressing social, environmental, and aesthetic concerns for the livability of cities, the parks movement was dominated by the man whose writings and designs brilliantly articulated it—Frederick Law Olmsted. Through these writings Olmsted built an enormously successful national practice for himself. In doing so he enlarged the scope and influence of the then-limited practice of landscape gardening, which quickly matured to become the profession of landscape architecture. The name “landscape architect” was chosen by Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux for their profession.⁵⁴ Olmsted’s success and his writings created a national demand for the services of professional landscape architects.⁵⁵

Central Park proved that properly-designed landscapes were not merely civic amenities but critical to both the physical and economic development of cities. Because of the nationally-acclaimed success of Central Park, Olmsted and Vaux were subsequently hired for scenic landscape park projects by rival cities seeking to similarly elevate their status. In these early designs the partners refined and developed the park and park system concept, enriching it with the addition of parkways and boulevards, creating not just a single amenity but one fully integrated into the urban fabric. Elizabeth Barlow Rogers explains:

Olmsted and Vaux felt that a single park’s role as a civilizing influence, ameliorating the noise and hectic pace of the metropolis, was still somewhat limited. They envisioned the carriage drives within parks being extended to become parkways, tree-canopied transportation corridors connected to other parks, the whole forming a new framework superimposed over the grid, a green skeleton guiding the city’s expansion.⁵⁶

Based on a review of the characteristics of America’s park and boulevard systems, their defining elements appear to be:

- At least one park, often including a large sheltering structure or pavilion and a variety of landscape amenities such as a water feature, winding paths, and meadows providing scenic vistas and places for relaxation, repose and recreation. If topography and acreage permitted, these parks included separation of pedestrian, horse, and vehicular traffic.
- Boulevards or parkways creating a network of greenways that connected the parks to one another, their surrounding neighborhoods, and often creating a continuous greenway encircling or arcing around the city.
- Squares or circles, sometimes containing monuments or fountains, at the turning points in the boulevard system.

Early Park and Boulevard Systems

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Barlow Rogers. *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001, p.344.

⁵⁵ Pregill and Volkman. *Landscapes in History*, p. 431.

⁵⁶ Rogers. *Landscape Design*, p.346.

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The early Olmsted-associated parks that included boulevards were located (in chronological order) in Brooklyn, Chicago, Buffalo and Boston. The Chicago and Buffalo park and boulevard systems were designed at approximately the same time and were the first ones in which several parks are connected by boulevards. Because of its greater scale and sophistication, however, Chicago can justly be considered the first comprehensive system of parks and inter-linking pleasure drives.

Brooklyn

Brooklyn, the first city to hire Olmsted and Vaux after their work on Central Park, also gave the partners their first opportunity to advocate for a broader approach to parks, one that included parkways. Although authorization from the state legislature to create Prospect Park was secured in 1859 and land for it obtained in the early 1860s, Olmsted and Vaux were not hired to design the park until 1865, following the Civil War.

In the first report which Olmsted and Vaux submitted to Brooklyn's park commissioners in 1866 they proposed a series of "special roads that would make travel to the park through the city romantic and fun."⁵⁷ They suggested a drive leading to the Atlantic Ocean beaches to the south that would be bordered by trees and shrubs. They also suggested a lengthy inter-city eastern pleasure drive that linked Brooklyn's Prospect Park with New York's Central Park and the Hudson River beyond. The portion within Brooklyn was proposed to traverse undeveloped country and take in scenic natural views along waterways.⁵⁸

Olmsted and Vaux elaborated on the value of such landscaped pleasure drives in their second report of 1867, urging the commissioners to consider early adoption of this concept.⁵⁹ Emphasizing Brooklyn's destiny as essentially a pleasant residential suburb of New York City, Olmsted and Vaux saw these streets as a method for encouraging middle class housing development that would increase real estate tax revenues to the city of Brooklyn. It would also bring fresh air to the neighborhoods and provide a means of moving traffic through the congested city. Unfortunately, the commissioners were reluctant and Olmsted and Vaux's parkway plans were never fully implemented.

In Olmsted's plan only Brooklyn's 6,600 foot long Eastern Parkway (built 1870-74, stretching east from Prospect Park to Atlantic Avenue) and Ocean Parkway (built 1874-80, stretching south from Prospect Park to Coney Island) were completed. When they were first built, these parkways provided an excellent example of the broad pleasure drive with a landscaped median that Olmsted felt was an essential component of the best city plans. He describes this type of drive in his 1871 proposal for the South Park Commission: "[this drive is] planned more especially with reference to the rapid movement of a great number of persons driving, riding or walking, being planted openly with straight rows of clean trunked trees."⁶⁰ Olmsted and Vaux's concept for a

⁵⁷ Francis R. Kowsky, *Country Park and City: The Architecture and Life of Calvert Vaux*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. p. 180.

⁵⁸ Rogers. *Landscape Design*, p.346.

⁵⁹ Rogers. *Landscape Design*, p. 181.

⁶⁰ Olmsted, Vaux & Co. *Report Accompanying Plan for Laying Out the South Park*. Chicago: Evening Journal, 1871, p.28.

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third Brooklyn parkway was never carried out; still, the success of Eastern and Ocean Parkways was so great that the city built another 38 miles of parkways over the next 50 years.⁶¹

Although Olmsted and Vaux's plan for Brooklyn held the germ of the fully-blown park and boulevard systems that Olmsted would create for Chicago and Buffalo, it did not yet have the essential element of large, landscaped neighborhood-based parks linked by a series of boulevards. In Brooklyn, Olmsted and Vaux were only successful in establishing boulevards that connected important geographic points to Prospect Park, rather than connecting the park to other large, landscaped pleasure grounds.

Only a portion of the Brooklyn system is on the National Register: Prospect Park was placed on the National Register in 1980 and Ocean Parkway in 1983.

Buffalo

Olmsted and Vaux's advice was subsequently sought by many cities (including Newark, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Newburgh and Albany, New York) regarding the benefits of acquiring land for future pleasure drives as well as parks. However, in Buffalo, New York, the partners were afforded the opportunity to both plan and carry out a park and boulevard system. Olmsted had been consulted in 1868 by a group of Buffalo citizens who were considering three sites for a park. Instead of choosing one, he advised them to use all three and linked them together with parkways that followed the existing street pattern.

Although built out a decade later, Buffalo's park and boulevard system was conceived at about the same time as the Chicago system. This is the plan that most closely resembles Chicago's. It is much smaller in scope, however. Initially planned with three parks, three parkways (now called boulevards), three linking circles (as opposed to Chicago's squares) and one "place," Buffalo's design was exhibited at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 and at the 1868 Paris Exhibition, where it had won an honorable mention for Olmsted.⁶² Of the plan's three parks, only one was large and contained the characteristic Olmsted design features, including a large meadow, a lake and a circuit drive. This park was 376-acre Delaware Park, located at the north edge of the city. "The Front," a park located on a bluff overlooking the Niagara River and Lake Erie, encompassed just 32 acres but provided a spectacular setting right in the heart of the city's commercial district. "The Parade" (later Humboldt Park and now Martin Luther King, Jr. Park), at 56 acres, was due west of the downtown in an area of the city that had not yet developed. The size of the parks, compared to those in Chicago, was small.

Buffalo's parkways were to be "broad thoroughfares planted with trees and designed with special reference to recreation as well as for common traffic."⁶³ Like Olmsted's plan for Chicago's South Park system, Buffalo's parkways primarily followed existing streets. This was the case with Delaware Street, which was widened into a parkway. In Buffalo, Olmsted and Vaux were able to create some new parkways as well; two examples are Humboldt Parkway and Bidwell Parkway. Some of these parkways had the straight, traffic-focused character of Olmsted's Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn and Chicago's Grand Boulevard. Others were more like Chicago's Southgrove Parkway (today's Drexel Boulevard): "designed with a view to more quiet and

⁶¹ Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance*. (New York: Scribner, 1999). p.283.

⁶² In their initial plans for the comprehensive systems in Brooklyn and Buffalo, Olmsted and Vaux called these new roadways "parkways". In Chicago, however, Olmsted called them "boulevards," after the Parisian models they were based on.

⁶³ Kowsky, "The Parkway System."

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leisurely movement...its principal feature is a walk or series of walks passing somewhat indirectly through a grove with frequent interludes of shrubbery, fountains and arbors to invite rest and contemplation.”⁶⁴

Buffalo’s system, like Chicago’s, was designed to provide “breathing spaces” for residents of a city where industrial and residential areas were closely knit. It also provided residential areas access to a greater number of parks. In addition, it was expected to provide a structure to the city’s outward growth and a spur to orderly real estate development that would increase property values. For Buffalo, Olmsted and Vaux proposed a series of parks and linking boulevards rather than “a single large recreation area like New York City’s Central Park.”⁶⁵ The parks were to be connected “in a wide arc...so that one could travel the six-mile distance from The Front to The Parade under a canopy of green.”⁶⁶ While both the Buffalo and Chicago park and boulevard systems do share the basic concept of an arc-shaped series of parks and linking boulevards, the Buffalo plan was far smaller and less sophisticated than that for Chicago.

Most of the Buffalo system was placed on the National Register in 1982. A thematic nomination for the entire system was accompanied by nominations for Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Delaware Park & Front Park, Cazenovia Park and Riverside Park. Parkside East and Parkside West, two related residential developments, were placed on the National Register in 1986

Chicago

Following the early park developments in the East, Chicago became the first western city to design and implement a city-wide park system; this was done through its three park commissions.⁶⁷ Only one other city, Buffalo, had previously initiated a park system and, in comparison, Chicago’s was a colossus.

The contiguous, arc-shaped system around Chicago that ultimately resulted from the original 1869 legislation was comprised of five large designed parks (Jackson, Washington, Douglas, Garfield and Humboldt) and six small squares. The entire system was approximately 26 miles in length including boulevards. Although the West and South park systems hired separate designers (William Le Baron Jenney and Olmsted & Vaux, respectively) aesthetic unity was achieved system-wide because of Olmsted and Jenney’s collaboration and because of the pervasiveness of Olmsted’s park philosophy.

Substantial portions of Chicago’s park and boulevard system were laid out in freshly-annexed and almost entirely undeveloped portions of the city. The undeveloped nature of the land meant that the Chicago park commissioners were able to acquire much of the land soon after the legislation was passed. But the Chicago park and boulevard plan was an ambitious project and was complicated by administration being divided among separate park systems. As a result, construction of the system continued into the early 20th-century.

Boston

⁶⁴ Olmsted, Vaux & Co., p.28.

⁶⁵ Frank Kowsky, <http://preserve.bfn.org/bam/kowsky/kowold>, “Olmsted and Vaux’s Park Plans.”

⁶⁶ Frank Kowsky, <http://preserve.bfn.org/bam/kowsky/kowold>, “Olmsted and Vaux’s Park Plans.”

⁶⁷ Pregill and Volkman, . *Landscapes in History*, p. 441

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In Boston legislation was passed in 1869 authorizing one large or several small parks. Five years of heated public debate ensued, with both Cleveland and Olmsted adding their comments in favor of a park system approach. They were joined by Cleveland's former partner, landscape architecture pioneer Robert Morris Copeland, who also championed the idea of a Boston park system in his 1872 publication "The Most Beautiful City in America: Essay and Plan for the Improvement of the City of Boston."⁶⁸

As in New York and Chicago however, Olmsted, not Cleveland, was chosen as the designer, in 1875. A system approach was adopted and Boston's famed "Emerald Necklace" was strung together by Olmsted in a series of commissions that lasted the rest of his professional life.⁶⁹ The necklace was comprised of five major parks--- the "jewels" of the Back Bay Fens, Leverett Park (now Olmsted Park and the Riverway), Jamaica Park, Arnold Arboretum and Franklin Park--that were linked by "the strands" of parkways consisting of Charlesgate, Fenway, the Riverway, Jamaicaway, and the Arborway. The parks and parkways surrounded much of the city's northern and western edges. Unlike Buffalo, the system in Boston also linked to the pre-existing historic public parks--the Boston Common (created 1634) and the Public Garden (created 1837).

The plan for Boston's park and boulevard system is both similar to and different from Buffalo's and Chicago's. All three systems have a series of parks linked by greenways but the systems in both Buffalo and Boston connected directly to the city's old commercial core. In Boston the system was conceived as linking not only parks but also open spaces with a didactic purpose, including the zoo in Franklin Park, the Arnold Arboretum and historic sites such as Charlestown Heights and Castle Island on Boston Harbor.

Although Olmsted's plan for Boston included a large country park it was his first large park without a substantial lagoon. Designed in 1884 and named Franklin Park it is considered one of Olmsted's masterworks. Although Franklin Park did not have a lagoon, the system included many natural water features, including Boston Harbor, the Back Bay and the many wetlands and rivers throughout the system.

Boston's rugged topography also played a role in defining the system. Boston's system has a much more picturesque quality to it than Olmsted's designs for Chicago and Buffalo. As in Buffalo, Olmsted was largely constrained by the city's existing street system—a system that was an amalgamation of winding Colonial-era roads and various 19th-century grids. He was able to create some new parkways in the more distant areas around Franklin Park, but for the most part his plan enhanced or worked within the pre-existing roadways. The Boston system, as in both Buffalo and Chicago, had numerous simple tree-lined traffic-moving arteries (for example, Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Street). It also had broad linear parks like the Back Bay Fens and the Jamaicaway.

The Boston system does not appear to have been driven by the impulse for real estate development, as the systems in Brooklyn, Buffalo and Chicago, to a large extent were. In Boston Olmsted and his clients sought "the desired tranquilizing and restorative effect on city dwellers."⁷⁰ There was also, from the beginning, a desire to protect both water quality and unusual natural features and to provide educational components (like the Arnold Arboretum and Franklin Park Zoo). The Boston park system reflects the strong moral commitment and reform motive to be found in that city at the end of the 19th-century.

⁶⁸ "Robert Morris Copeland," Cultural Landscape Foundation website <http://tclf.org/content/robert-copeland>

⁶⁹ Rogers. *Landscape Design*, p. 350.

⁷⁰ Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982, p. 75.

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Boston was one of the first cities to build small parks and playgrounds, including active play areas for both adults and children of the working classes.⁷¹ First conceived of in 1887, these small parks were added to the system starting in 1891. Chicago was soon to follow in the small parks and recreation movement. Chicago's neighborhood park concept began with two experimental parks along the boulevard system, McKinley and Gage Parks. After the success of these, the Olmsted Brothers and D.H. Burnham & Co. designed a series of additional neighborhood parks in Chicago, including Sherman Park which connects with the park and boulevard system. These parks provided national models in terms of both design and programming.

The Boston system has been declared eligible for the National Register, but only some of it has been listed. It is interesting that a large number of its boulevards appear on the National Register. The features of the system that are currently listed are: Arnold Arboretum, Boston Common and Public Garden, Charlestown Heights, Chestnut Hill Reservoir Historic District, Neponset Valley Parkway, Old Harbor Reservation Parkways, Stony Brook Reservation Parkways, Truman Parkway, VFW Parkway, Winthrop Parkway and Winthrop Shore Drive.

Later Park Systems Similar to Chicago's

Chicago's early park and boulevard system inspired many other American cities to plan their own systems. The city was influential in this national movement for several reasons. Olmsted himself went on to design other systems, with the experience of Chicago behind him. He worked on systems in Boston and Rochester, New York in the late 1880s and Louisville, Kentucky in the early 1890s. Chicago's park and boulevard system was early and sophisticated and became well-known because of the city's prominence. Chicago was wealthy and powerful by virtue of key industries located in the city. In addition, Chicago held a strategic location with transportation networks connecting to both coasts. Chicago ranked among America's top cities, particularly in the last quarter of the 19th-century. Termed "Nature's Metropolis" by historian William Cronon,⁷² it culturally influenced smaller cities in the vast hinterland of its economic orbit. Examples of Midwest cities whose park systems resembled Chicago's and which are now justifiably well-known are Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Kansas City, and Indianapolis.

Minneapolis

Minneapolis has a park and boulevard system designed by Horace William Shaler Cleveland, the man who initially executed Olmsted's plan for Chicago's South Park. In 1883 Cleveland began work on the Minneapolis Park System, a project that was considered to be "the crowning achievement of his career."⁷³ Inheriting already-existing beautiful water features—lakes connected by Minnehaha Creek, he laid out a system of interconnected lakes, parks and parkways that encircled the city. Although called parkways not boulevards, the plan was conceptually similar to Chicago's system, consisting of parks linked by greenways. Water, because of the city's many lakes and Minnehaha Creek, was an important feature of the Minneapolis system. The parkways mix curvilinear and rectilinear segments, whereas Chicago's boulevards are all straight. The system continued to expand during the 20th-century.

⁷¹ Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System*, pp. 96-7.

⁷² William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991, pp. 278-295.

⁷³ Birnbaum, *Pioneers of Landscape Design*, p. 63

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In 1906 Theodore Wirth was hired by the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners to build upon Cleveland's master plan. He acquired more land, built additional parks and parkways, and beautified the park land. In addition, he oversaw the design and construction of the city's first golf course. Just before his retirement in 1935 he worked on a plan, in collaboration with the State Department of Highways, to develop a metropolitan park system. Today a park is named in Wirth's honor. The park system of Minneapolis, as established by Cleveland and continued by Wirth, remains one of the most outstanding in the country.

Milwaukee

Frederick Law Olmsted, along with numerous other landscape architects, was involved in the gradual growth of the Milwaukee parks and boulevard system. When first designed in the 1890s, Milwaukee's plan had six parks connected by boulevards. Frederick Law Olmsted & Company was hired to design Lake, West (Washington) and River (Riverside) parks in 1892. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s son John Charles implemented the parks' design but Warren H. Manning was responsible for the planting designs. The Olmsted firm's plans included Newberry Boulevard, which connected Lake Park to River (Riverside) and West (Washington) parks. A lakefront drive adjacent to Lake Park was also proposed by the firm. It was not developed by the city until 1929, however, and was based on a later plan by architect Alfred C. Clas.⁷⁴

Today the Milwaukee parks and boulevard system has dozens of parks and 84 miles of boulevards throughout the metropolitan area. Although extensive, the Milwaukee system is fragmentary; the boulevards do not connect continuously to the parks or to one another. It bears the hallmarks of a plan that grew incrementally rather than being conceived as a whole and executed in stages. The system was listed on the National Register in a Multiple Property Documentation Form entitled "Milwaukee County Park System" in 2008.

Kansas City

Kansas City has an extraordinarily intact park and boulevard system designed largely by George Edward Kessler (1862-1923).⁷⁵ Kessler arrived in Kansas City in 1887 to work on the picturesque Hyde Park subdivision. Following the formation of a park board in 1892, Kessler designed a comprehensive system with three large parks, three smaller community parks and four boulevards. By 1920, the system would grow to include 67 parks and boulevards. The system effectively ties together the many quadrants of the metropolitan area through a series of loops and parallel boulevards. As in the Chicago plan, Kansas City incorporated some existing streets into its many segments and used the city's grid as its underlying geometry. Also like Chicago, the boulevards were conceived of as pleasure drives and commercial traffic was excluded for many years. Unlike Chicago, however, Kansas City's boulevards were mostly 100' wide right-of-ways that only allowed for a single broad roadway bordered by deep tree-lined parkways. The boulevards are not as varied in configuration as Chicago's.

Indianapolis

⁷⁴ Long, Christine, Emily Pettis and Christina Slattery. "Milwaukee County Parkway System". National Park Service Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2008.

⁷⁵ This and the following information on Kansas City's system comes from Janice Lee et al, eds. *A Legacy of Design: An Historical Survey of the Kansas City, Missouri, Parks and Boulevards System, 1893-1940*. Kansas City Center for Design Education and Research, Kansas City, 1995.

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Although many parks were built in Indianapolis in the late 19th- and early 20th-century, it took the 1908-1909 master plan of George Kessler to tie them together with a network of boulevards.

Created during the height of the City Beautiful movement, the Indianapolis plan reflects this movement's impulse for health, beauty and order. Kessler's plan, one of eighteen he designed for American cities, closely follows the tenets laid out by Olmsted in his plan for Chicago's South Park system.⁷⁶ It stresses the importance of fresh air, the value of a plan for growth and the need for easy travel between one part of the city and another. It also makes use of the city's natural river features and "beautiful possibilities" to give it a local character.⁷⁷ Kessler's special skill was in being able to quell local political disputes and get his plans executed.⁷⁸ His Indianapolis plan included a major regional park in every quadrant of the city, each with its own character. Unlike Chicago's, Kessler's plan had meandering parkways to connect the parks rather than the straight and angular parkway system of Chicago.⁷⁹ In addition to the character of the parkways themselves, Kessler's plan showed a City Beautiful concern for flood control and protection of water resources. Although its roots are in the 19th-century, the Indianapolis system is a park and boulevard plan for the 20th-century.

Kessler died in Indianapolis while supervising construction of a new belt road in 1923. He was succeeded by Lawrence Sheridan, a past Park Commissioner and Harvard School of Landscape Architecture-trained professional, who implemented and augmented Kessler's plan over several decades. The legacy of Kessler and Sheridan's work was the establishment of the planning foundation for much of Indianapolis' park system well into the 20th-century.

"Indianapolis Parks & Boulevards" were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. It is the largest Multiple Property Nomination in the state. The contribution of George Kessler to the urban park system heritage of Indiana was recognized again in January 2011 with the listing on the National Register of the "Fort Wayne Park and Boulevard System Historic District" as an example of a comprehensive public space and transportation system developed from 1909 to 1955.

Conclusion

To quote Daniel Bluestone, Director, Historic Preservation Program and Professor of Architectural History, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, "What Chicago achieved in its park and boulevard development provided a model and a standard to which other growing cities aspired to but rarely accomplished. The talented designers, who shaped the Chicago system, ranging from Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux to Horace William Shaler Cleveland, William Le Baron Jenney and Jens Jensen, were all pioneers in landscape architecture. They took the lessons and experience of Chicago and applied them to other urban park systems around the country."⁸⁰

The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District is of national stature. It was one of the earliest projects undertaken as part of the nationally-significant parks movement. More importantly, the Chicago Park

⁷⁶ National Park Service, "Indianapolis Park and Boulevard System," (2002), Section 7, p. 2. John Olmsted had created a limited park plan for Indianapolis in 1895.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* Section 8, p.28.

⁷⁸ <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/indianapolis/kessleressay.htm>

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Daniel Bluestone. Letter to Susan Benjamin dated May 17, 2011.

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and Boulevard system was a significant milestone in the development of that movement because of its plan and sophistication as an integrated system of parks and boulevards. Chicago was the first “western” city to conceive and carry out such a system, and because of the city’s national status and economic reach, it was a role model for the development of other such systems. Finally, in addition to being an early and innovative park and boulevard system, located in a city that was on center stage nationally, its design quality was outstanding by virtue of the many nationally-acclaimed landscape architects who conceived and implemented it.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHICAGO PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT

Summary of the Development of Chicago’s Park Boulevard System

The desire to create a continuous arc of parks and boulevards encircling the city came close to reality after the Civil War when, in 1869, the Illinois Legislature created three independent park commissions—the South, West and Lincoln Park. Circumstances resulted in only the West and South systems being contiguous. The catastrophic Chicago fire and a national financial panic presented hardships for both commissions in the early 1870s, however the South Park system was largely completed by the time the World’s Columbian Exposition was hosted there in 1893. The West Chicago Park system continued to labor under many difficulties and was only partially completed in time for the fair. The South and West systems each hired their own designers, initially, who were influenced by landscape trends in Europe and cemetery design in the United States. As time went on other designers had a hand in the design process. The development of the system occurred incrementally. In 1934, all of the then 22 park systems consolidated to form the Chicago Park District. Substantial work was completed by 1942, when Federal funding, which had been used since the mid 1930s to maintain and enhance the system, ended. Due to the Depression, little construction occurred along the parks and boulevards from the late 1920s until World War II, except at the University of Chicago, which continued construction along the Midway Plaisance.

Chicago’s park and boulevard system began with three independent park commissions chartered by the state of Illinois under separate acts of legislation passed in 1869. These three were: the South Park Commission, the West Chicago Park Commission and the Lincoln Park Commission. The legislation mandated the creation of a park and boulevard system. In 1934 the three individual park districts, along with 19 smaller park districts subsequently created, were consolidated into a single agency, the Chicago Park District. .

The South Park Commission initially created the 1055-acre South Park, now Jackson and Washington Parks, and the Midway Plaisance. Its early boulevards were: Grand Boulevard (S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive), E. Garfield Boulevard, W. Garfield Boulevard, S. Drexel Boulevard, E. Oakwood Boulevard and S. Western Boulevard. Drexel Square connects S. Drexel Boulevard and Washington Park. Gage Park, McKinley Park, and Sherman Park were later added adjacent to the original boulevards.

The West Chicago Park Commission created Humboldt, Central (Garfield) and Douglas Parks. The boulevards that connected the parks were: S. California, S. Marshall, W. 24th, W. 31st, W. Douglas, S. Independence, N. Hamlin, S. Hamlin, N. Central Park, W. Franklin, N. Sacramento, N. Humboldt, N. Kedzie, and W. Logan. Independence Square connected W. Douglas Boulevard and S. Independence Boulevard. Sacramento Square connected N. Sacramento Boulevard to N. Humboldt Park. Palmer Square connected N. Kedzie Boulevard to Humboldt Park. Logan Square connected N. Kedzie and W. Logan Boulevards.

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The original intention of the three park systems was to connect the West Chicago Park System with the Lincoln Park System via Diversey Parkway. Diversey Parkway, which was under the jurisdiction of the Lincoln Park System, was never built out as a boulevard with a landscaped median. Thus only the South and West Park Systems became contiguous.⁸¹

Each of the three Commissions hired their own designers to lay out the original parks and boulevards. Although most of the plans were quickly established, implementation occurred more incrementally. After the consolidation of the Chicago Park District in 1934, substantial improvements were funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). These federal funds dwindled as America entered World War II. The Chicago Park District benefitted from this New Deal program until December of 1942, which marks the end of this nomination's primary period of significance. Most of the buildings lining Chicago's parks and boulevards fall within this time frame.

The secondary period of significance, for the buildings owned by the University of Chicago along the south side of the Midway Plaisance, extends to 1964. The secondary period of significance is important because after 1942 the University of Chicago developed a new series of buildings along the south side of the Midway. In 1959 the Laird Bell Law Quadrangle was designed by Eero Saarinen. Saarinen was an architect of equal stature to Henry Ives Cobb, who in the 19th-century laid out the quadrangles that established the planning concept for the university's subsequent development. In 1964 the School of Social Service Administration, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, was built. Saarinen and Mies are nationally recognized for their significance as were the earlier architects who designed buildings along the Midway Plaisance.

The Chicago Park District served as the steward for Chicago's Park and Boulevard System from 1934 until the Second Consolidation Act of 1959. Under this agreement the City of Chicago assumed control of the boulevards and transferred a number of municipal parks to the Chicago Park District. At that time a large collection of records and plans relating specifically to the boulevards were transferred from the Chicago Park District to the City of Chicago. These records, unfortunately, have been lost.⁸² The Chicago Park District discovered a cache of plans and drawings relating to the history of the parks, however, in 1987.

After the discovery of the historical plans and drawings, the Park District developed an historic preservation initiative that included generating a Multiple Property Documentation National Register Form entitled "*The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*," approved in 1990. This document established a context for all of the historic parks. Subsequent to its adoption, the Chicago Park District created individual National Register historic district nominations that fit within this context. Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance were listed in 1972. The parks that were listed as part of the Multiple Property nomination include: Sherman Park (1990), Humboldt Park (1992), Garfield Park (1993), Lincoln Park (1994) and Washington Park (2004).

In 1985 the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*, comprised of W. Logan Boulevard, N. Kedzie Boulevard, N. Humboldt Boulevard, Logan Square and Palmer Square, was listed on the National Register. The

⁸¹ The Lincoln Park Commission enhanced Lincoln Park and a stretch of Lake Shore Drive.

⁸² Telephone interview June 4, 2010 by Gwen Sommers Yant with Bob Benjamin, former Chief Forester, City of Chicago Bureau of Forestry.

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Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District nomination includes by reference all of the already-listed parks and the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District*.

Douglas, McKinley and Gage Parks, although covered under the umbrella of the Multiple Property nomination, were not listed on the National Register by the Chicago Park District. The Chicago Park Boulevard System Historic District lists these three parks. It also includes the buildings surrounding all of the parks, including those that have already been listed in the Multiple Property nomination, and all of the boulevards and squares. This nomination goes beyond the story of the parks alone and beyond the narrative of a single segment of Chicago's contiguous park and boulevard system. It completes the story of that system by including all of its essential elements.

Early Parks Movement: The 1850s

As early as the mid-1850s Chicagoans began pressing for park development as they looked toward the future growth of the city. Although the city was only twenty years old, with a population in 1850 of just under 30,000, there was already a need for a comprehensive park system. By this time, the city had relatively small parks, some of which had been created by real estate interests to boost property values. Among them were Washington Square (1842), Union Park (1853), Jefferson Park (now Skinner Park, 1850), and Vernon Park (now Arrigo Park, 1857). There were also two lakefront parks owned by the City of Chicago: Dearborn Park (1839) and Lake Park (1836), marking the beginning of what would become Grant Park. The early parks were developed in a piecemeal fashion and the city had no formal policies, nor a plan to create a more cohesive system.

Advocates warned that if provisions weren't soon implemented for the development of parks throughout Chicago there could be serious public health consequences. In 1853 an early citizen wrote several letters to the editor of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, each entitled "A Plea for Public Parks." The writer presented strong arguments that there was still ample land available for parks to be built throughout the entire city. He suggested "...that there is need of relief to the interior sections of the city from the malaria which in the abundance of vegetation is wafted from the prairie...--from the unhealthy air which necessarily rises from the river with its growing commerce—and from the noxious exhalations of the decaying pavement...the city demands as a means of drainage a source of pure air and a preservative of health the establishment of Parks."⁸³

Landscape Influences: Parisian Parks and Boulevards and the Rural Cemetery Movement

At the same time as citizens were advocating for parks in Chicago, local newspapers published articles about the parks and boulevards of Paris. The French model served as an inspiration to Chicago's civic leaders. In 1853 Napoleon III appointed George-Eugene Haussmann to develop an innovative new plan for Paris that included the creation of broad tree-lined boulevards radiating through the city and connecting parks and other important locations. Baron von Haussmann dramatically reconfigured Paris to improve efficiency, provide better drainage and public lighting and to make the city more desirable for the burgeoning middle class. Haussmann's new boulevards captured the imagination of the world. Chicago papers reported glowingly of their civilizing influence and overall beauty. A Chicago newspaper of 1859 described the boulevards of Paris as

⁸³ "A Plea for Public Parks" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 8, 1853, p. 2

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"grand beyond description."⁸⁴ The *Chicago Tribune* of 1867 reported that the garden of the Tuileries with the Champs-Elysees was "the finest urban promenade in the world."⁸⁵

Many of Chicago's early park proponents were well-traveled, had visited Paris, and were familiar with European parks and boulevards. William Butler Ogden (1805-1877), a savvy and cultured resident of the north side of Chicago and Chicago's first Mayor (1837-38), was a prime example. He was inspired by his travels to Europe in the early 1850s and sent letters to Chicago newspapers urging the creation of major institutions and amenities including public libraries, museums, parks and boulevards.⁸⁶ Such amenities, he argued, would not only promote quality of life and elevate real estate values, they would give Chicago a competitive edge over rival cities. Parks and boulevards created elegant natural settings for costly private dwellings in the affluent neighborhoods of European cities. In Chicago, where the geography of its flat plain afforded virtually no natural sites to attract high-end development, parks and boulevards would provide the distinguishing characteristics and be magnetic. Despite Ogden's vision for Chicago, the city did not yet have any formal policies or legislation that would enable the development of a comprehensive park system.

With the deficit of parkland, people in Chicago often visited local cemeteries to commune with nature. There was a trend, particularly in eastern cities, known as the rural cemetery movement, in which burial grounds were designed as beautiful green spaces to provide solace and refuge for the living. Mount Auburn, the first rural cemetery, was begun in 1831 outside Boston.

Chicago's oldest rural cemetery, Oak Woods, was incorporated in 1853 and designed by "arguably the foremost cemetery designer in the United States in the 19th-century," Adolph Strauch (1822-1883).⁸⁷ Strauch was the designer of the seminal Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati. His revolutionary "lawn plan" aesthetic, with its emphasis on a unified landscape treatment and well-designed outbuildings, was admired and studied by his contemporary Frederick Law Olmsted as well as by the succeeding generation of landscape masters, including Ossian Simonds.⁸⁸ Simonds would recall that "Olmsted used to say that when he needed inspiration he visited Spring Grove."⁸⁹ Picturesque landscaped cemeteries were developed on the outskirts of Chicago in the late 1850s and early 1860s by many of the elite gardeners and civic leaders, including Paul Cornell, who would also play major roles in first advocating for, and then carry out the creation of the parks and boulevard system.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ "The Boulevards of Paris," *Chicago Times*, May 14, 1859.

⁸⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, 1867

⁸⁶ Ogden's letters appear in the *Daily Democratic Press*, 26 January, 20 February, 23 March and 26 June, 1854. Daniel F. Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991. p. 22, 212.

⁸⁷ Noel Dorsey Vernon. "Adolph Strauch: Cincinnati and the Legacy of Spring Grove Cemetery." *Midwestern Landscape Architecture*: Edited by William H. Tishler. Chicago: University of Illinois Press in cooperation with Library of American Landscape History/ Amherst, Massachusetts, 2000, p. 5.

⁸⁸ Noel Dorsey Vernon, "Adolph Strauch: Cincinnati and the Legacy of Spring Grove Cemetery" in William H. Tishler ed., *Midwestern Landscape Architecture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000, p.5.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

⁹⁰ The treasurer of Oak Woods Cemetery, located south of the city, was Hyde Park real estate developer Paul Cornell, who would go on to help establish Chicago's south park system. A similarly civic-minded real estate speculator, Thomas Barbour Bryan, purchased 80 acres on the city's north side in 1861 to create a beautiful burial ground so he could properly inter his son. It was named Graceland Cemetery. It evolved over a period of years, benefitting from a host of talented landscape professionals, including future west parks designer William Le Baron Jenney and Ossian Cole Simonds. Known for Contributing to the development of the Prairie Style in landscape architecture, Simonds created an environment at Graceland Cemetery that gave it national significance. He also served as the consulting landscape gardener for Lincoln Park for a series of years between 1903 and 1921.

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The rural cemetery movement was important to the development of Chicago's park and boulevard system. These cemeteries exposed to the upper and middle classes the new naturalistic style of landscape and predated the parks as a place for pastoral strolls. In addition, the visitors and the cemetery developers, including Cornell, would form a constituency for development of parks in Chicago. The cemeteries also set a standard for design excellence in public landscapes because of the talent of their designers, who included future west parks designer, William Le Baron Jenney.

Importance of Real Estate Interests

Chicago real estate speculators and developers, such as Paul Cornell on the south side and Isaac Hitt of Hitt, Harden and Hitt on the West side, played a pivotal role in the development of the city's park and boulevard System.⁹¹ Writing in 1884, historian A.T. Andreas underscored the role of these real-estate men, "This class of our citizens, by their energy and foresight have been among the most earnest promoters of the park system, and to their indefatigable perseverance the success of the movement may be largely ascribed...."⁹²

The father of the south park system is generally identified as Paul Cornell, the founder of Hyde Park. In 1853 Cornell had purchased the initial 300 acres for his community seven miles south of the city center. The coming of the railroad to Chicago in the early 1850s spurred the creation of many suburbs radiating from the city. Cornell sought competitive advantage among these for his vision of a cultured, sylvan, industry-free community, accessible to Chicago, for middle and upper class business and professional men and their families. Thus, he adopted as one of his principle development strategies the creation of parks connected to the city by landscaped boulevards. The very name of the community was derived from Hyde Park, London, an urban locale of pleasure grounds and boulevards.⁹³

Hitt, a West Chicago Park commissioner, owned many blocks of land in the Humboldt Park and Humboldt Boulevard area. William Ogden owned a substantial amount of land around Sacramento Square. These men, along with Cornell, were among the most earnest early promoters, recognizing the integral relationship between the establishment of beautiful parks and boulevards and the opportunity to make huge profits. This positive relationship between parkland and the desirability of real estate was of utmost importance to the creation of a system of parks and boulevards in a city historically obsessed by speculation and in which real estate underlay the largest fortunes. The creation of New York's Central Park in the 1850s had demonstrated the principle of adjacent real estate appreciation on a grand scale. Boulevards, later referred to as "parks strung out," would improve the scenic value, but they would also spread the financial benefit of living along a park to a greater number of property owners.⁹⁴

Arguing that land should be acquired both in the city and beyond the city limits where it was less expensive, park advocates also created a constituency favoring the creation of a park system by tapping into a new generation of mid-19th-century middle and upper class residents. These residents were hungry for the physical, moral and mental separation of work and home—but within a comfortable distance of city

⁹¹ Everett Chamberlin. *Chicago and its Suburbs*. Chicago: T. A. Hungerford & Co. 1874. pp. 313-336. Chamberlin lists many names of developers along the South and the West park systems.

⁹² A. T. Andreas. *History of Chicago from the Earliest Times to the Present in Three Volumes*. Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1884, p 172.

⁹³ Jean Block, *Hyde Park Houses* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 6.

⁹⁴ *Chicago Tribune*, June 16, 1872. cited in Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago*, p. 54.

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conveniences. Migration away from city centers was already a pattern of the “more fortunate classes” in Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, New York, Boston and Philadelphia.⁹⁵

Escalation in real estate values along parks and boulevards in Chicago did indeed come to pass. Writing in 1874, historian Everett Chamberlin noted that “...the south and west parks have been for five years the principal stimulus to land speculation and investment and the key to the situation of the Chicago real estate market.”⁹⁶

But, the boulevards offered the public more than just scenic improvements and real estate appreciation. They also resulted in comfortable, well-constructed paved roadways for a city used to coping with ruts in the dry season and mud in the wet season. The boulevards also created systematically planted, tree-lined streets that gave a modern, cosmopolitan air of sophistication to the city. If imitation can be equated with financial approbation, it is interesting to note that some of Chicago’s large developers, such as Samuel E. Gross and Samuel J. Walker, would ultimately follow the park commissioners’ example of coordinated tree plantings along the boulevards by offering the same in their developments along prestigious Michigan and Ashland Avenues.⁹⁷

Social Betterment

Many of Chicago’s early civic leaders, like William Ogden, were concerned about the corrosive effects of business pursuits on the social character of the city.. They felt that the antidote was close contact with the natural landscape, the effect of which was to ennoble the individual character and foster a more tranquil and virtuous state of mind.⁹⁸ They were also serious gardeners themselves, with landscaped grounds around their homes. An organizer of the Chicago Horticultural Society who would play an important role in the parks movement was Jonathan Y. Scammon (1812-1890): pioneer Chicagoan, wealthy lawyer, connoisseur of art and literature, railroad promoter and friend of Abraham Lincoln. Scammon was also owner of one of the city’s most renowned private gardens, located to the south of the city in Hyde Park.⁹⁹ Naturalistic landscapes like that belonging to Scammon, were removed from the city but located near enough for their owners to enjoy the city’s benefits. The park and boulevard system would offer the general public these same attractions.

In addition to cultivating good character, parks and boulevards were hailed as a vehicle for social harmony. They afforded the opportunity for classes to mix in a shared urban space through promenading and other leisure activities. Chicago’s lakefront park (today Grant Park) and Michigan Avenue had, by the 1840s, become a small stage on which residents practiced the custom of promenading. In both European and major eastern cities, this custom had been performed since the beginning of the 19th-century in grand urban settings such as Battery Park in New York, Charleston’s Battery and Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park. In reality, promenading was an upper and middle class pastime of see-and-be-seen. Promenading as a concept, however, with its attendant associations of intermingling and class harmony, gave parks and boulevards broad intellectual

⁹⁵ Victoria Post Ranney, *Olmsted in Chicago*. Chicago: R. R. Donnelly & sons, 1972, p 11.

⁹⁶ Chamberlin. *Chicago and Its Suburbs*, p.313

⁹⁷ Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago*, p. 52

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p.9

⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

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and social appeal in Chicago, a fast-growing city of native-born and immigrant newcomers. As the city grew, promenading was to become a favored activity in the new parks and boulevards system.¹⁰⁰

Concern for Public Health

By 1860 Chicago's population had escalated to over 110,000, more than tripling since 1850. As the pace of population growth and real estate development accelerated in the 1850s, so did awareness of the associated psychological, social and health problems they brought. Population growth also brought an expanded awareness of the idea that parks served as a healthy antidote to these problems.

Dr. John Henry Rauch (1828-1894), played an important role in spurring the parks movement. Rauch was an articulate spokesman for the positive role parks could play in the health of the city. He linked public health and parks through his study of the public health threats created by the city's lakefront cemetery, which was partially incorporated into what became Lincoln Park. The public health controversy surrounding the creation of Lincoln Park led to broadened awareness of the need for a more systematic approach to the creation of parks in all three divisions of the city.¹⁰¹

Creating Legislation for the Park and Boulevard System

The Civil War put direct advancement of the parks issue on the back burner, but it provided an indirect benefit. During the Civil War the national and local organizing efforts of the United States Sanitary Commission, the forerunner of the American Red Cross, brought together a group of capable and civic-minded men who saw the importance of parks to the health of city dwellers.¹⁰² Most notably, the group included Ezra Butler McCagg (1825-1908) whose wife was William Butler Ogden's sister and whose law partner was south side park proponent Jonathan Scammon.¹⁰³ Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), the famous landscape architect who designed Central Park, was chosen to head the national organization.¹⁰⁴ A Chicago branch of the Sanitary Commission was soon formed with McCagg, serving as president. He and Olmsted formed a close friendship and McCagg soon became a leader in the parks movement.¹⁰⁵ Olmsted enjoyed the hospitality of McCagg's north side home, including its handsomely-landscaped grounds and extensive hothouses.

In 1867 Scammon entrusted McCagg to draft the first bill submitted to the Illinois legislature attempting to establish a park south of the city.¹⁰⁶ According to historian Daniel Bluestone, Scammon suggested that the "bill be based on New York's Central Park Statute."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago*, p.18.

¹⁰¹ In the 1850s Rauch's detailed studies and activism had aroused not only influential organizations and people, but the general public. Rauch impressed on north side citizens the public health threat caused by decaying bodies in shallow sandy graves on the lakefront, threatening the spread of cholera and small pox through the city's water supply. An unused portion of the lakefront City Cemetery was designated as Lake Park in 1860. In 1865, after the assassination of president Abraham Lincoln, the park was renamed Lincoln Park, with Swedish landscape gardener Swain Nelson creating the original plan for the park.

¹⁰² The Sanitary Commission was formed during the Civil War with the mission of coordinating relief for wounded soldiers.

¹⁰³ Victoria Post Ranney, ed. *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) pp 427-433

¹⁰⁴ Olmsted was chosen to head the United States Sanitary Commission as general secretary. This was because of the extraordinary skill he demonstrated in the organization of work and personnel involved with the construction of Central Park.

¹⁰⁵ Victoria Post Ranney, ed. *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁶ Bluestone. *Constructing Chicago*, p. 26

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 26.

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As south side proponents were crafting their first attempt at park legislation, there was a broader awareness of the need for a citywide system of parks and boulevards. In 1866 the *Chicago Times* had published an illustration of a 14-mile system of “Drives and parks for Chicago.” The article stated that this project would give Chicago “the finest drives, parks and building sites on the continent.” The plan, which is simple and rectilinear, shows building lots lined with a drive and parkland that form a squared-off arc extending along the north, west and south sides of the city. Roads lead out from the center city and link to the proposed system of lots and parkland. This early vision foreshadows the development of a park and boulevard system that would surround the city.¹⁰⁸

Although the first park bill was defeated, the park movement was gaining momentum.¹⁰⁹ Immediately after the Civil War the persuasive Frederick Law Olmsted sparked the interest of yet another pivotal Chicagoan during an 1865 meeting in Yosemite Valley: Chicago’s William Bross. Bross was the owner of the *Chicago Tribune*, a city council member and Lieutenant Governor (1865-1869) at the time that the parks legislation was finally passed. Bross later described the conversation he had with Olmsted:

...we discussed nothing so much...as the Central Park of New York. And both Colfax [Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives] and Olmsted agreed with me that nothing was needed to make Chicago the principal city of the Union but a great public improvement of a similarly gigantic character. My return being hastened by my ardent desire to have the thing attended to, I at once consulted the principal citizens of Chicago.¹¹⁰

By 1868, the south side leaders were revising their bill and citizens on the north and west sides were drafting legislation for new parks in their areas. Concerted efforts to unify the three systems were under way. An article titled “Parks and Boulevards” was published in the *Chicago Tribune*, January 24, 1869, supporting a plan for a connected system. It states: “this grand highway, when planted, will form a handsome connection between the several parks and the several divisions of the city. It will, in fact, so connect all the public grounds as to make them practically but parts of a continuous park extending around the entire limits of Chicago.”¹¹¹

For many decades, historians have credited civic booster John S. Wright with the original idea for Chicago’s interlinking park and boulevard system. In 1914, the *Chicago City Manual* published a lengthy essay entitled “The Public Parks of Chicago: Their Origin, Former Control, and Present Government,” which includes an opening statement under the heading: “The Prophet John S. Wright.” This essay suggests that in 1849 a local newspaper printed a letter from Wright in which he presented a grand vision to “surround the city with a magnificent chain of parks and parkways that have not had their equals in the world.”¹¹² Although this quote has been published many times, Julia Sniderman Bachrach, Chicago Park District historian, believes it is doubtful that the ambitious scheme had been proposed by a single individual or at such an early date. And even if Wright

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ Voters defeated the 1867 park legislation for several reasons. These included disagreement over the specific location of the park by south side interests and working class resistance to paying higher taxes for a park, especially one far removed from their neighborhoods.

¹¹⁰ Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago*, p. 26.

¹¹¹ “Parks and Boulevards,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 24, 1869,

¹¹² *Chicago City Manual*, 1914, p. 7.

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did present this visionary scheme, credit for the inception of the city's seminal park and boulevard system clearly goes to a larger group of park advocates including Cornell, Rauch, Scammon and McCagg.¹¹³

The three separate park bills were passed by the Illinois legislature in 1869, creating the South, West Chicago and Lincoln Park Commissions. The three commissions would act independently, but with the goal of creating a continuous park and boulevard system to encircle the city. Unfortunately this goal was never totally realized. The combined effect of early funding constraints and litigation affecting the Lincoln Park Commission hindered the opportunity to develop Diversey Parkway as a boulevard that would join Lincoln Park and a section of Lake Shore Drive to the West Chicago Park System.¹¹⁴

Within six months of the passage of the park legislation, the editor of *The Land Owner*, a local real estate newspaper wrote excitedly, "Our grand system of parks will be the finest in the world before the next quarter of a century..."¹¹⁵ In March 1871 he wrote:

When the citizens of Chicago, with a clearness of vision and foresight scarcely ever equaled, voted upon themselves heavy taxes for the purpose of purchasing ground, laying out and improving a system of parks and boulevards, they had in their minds eye a future for the city that events are corroborating even faster than the most sanguine believer in our greatness anticipated.¹¹⁶

THE GROWTH OF CHICAGO AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PARK BOULEVARD SYSTEM HISTORIC DISTRICT: 1869-1893

By 1869 Chicago was already a city of accomplishment. As a major trading port and railroad hub Chicago prospered and had grown tremendously during the Civil War. In the years immediately following the war the city's leaders foresaw that Chicago would continue to play a preeminent role in the nation's commerce. The city's cultural life began to expand as well, with museums, libraries and theaters all beginning to take shape in the 1860s.¹¹⁷

At the same time as the state legislature created the park systems they also enabled Chicago to annex a vast area of land. This annexation, to the west, was to contain all three of the parks—future Humboldt, Garfield and Douglas—and all the boulevards for the West Park System. While the city was annexing land to accommodate growth, residential development continued to move westward.

On October 8, 1871, Chicago suffered a disastrous fire that destroyed an area 3-1/2 miles square including the city's business district and leveled 18,000 buildings. Following the fire, the city's expansion began to boom, with the city's population jumping from 300,000 in 1870 to 500,000 in 1880. By January of 1872 *The*

¹¹³ This recent scholarship is attributed to Julia Sniderman Bachrach, historian for the Chicago Park District and author of *The City in a Garden: A Photographic History of Chicago's Parks* (Revised edition) (Chicago: Center for American Places at Columbia College, in press 2011).

¹¹⁴ Lake Shore Drive was listed as part of the Lincoln Park Historic District National Register nomination.

¹¹⁵ *The Land Owner*, v. I, no. 3 (9/1869), p.60.

¹¹⁶ *The Land Owner*, v. III, no. 3 (3/1871), p.75.

¹¹⁷ For example, the Chicago Academy of Sciences was founded in 1857 and chartered in 1865, the Art Institute grew out of the Chicago Academy of Design that was founded in 1866, and theatres had long been a presence here, notably the McVickers' Theatre that burned in the fire of 1871.

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Land Owner, which hadn't been published since August 1871, was back in print and resumed its promotion of real estate development throughout the city, including news about the parks and boulevards in each monthly issue. In April 1872 the editor predicted a 33% population growth in the coming year and urged the park commissioners to push ahead with the work on the parks so "that the public may have a place to take themselves and families for recreation, out of the turmoil and dust of the city, to breathe a little pure air, and give a pleasant relaxation to overtaxed brains and muscles."¹¹⁸ It was also hoped that the fresh air would encourage the public to purchase house lots and houses, since real estate promotion was an important part of the park and boulevard scheme from the very beginning. During this time, the West Chicago Park Commission was being formed.

The South Park district, also being formed, was contained within three separate towns, South Chicago, Lake and Hyde Park. These would not be annexed until 1889, when the city incorporated vast land areas on all three sides totaling 125 square miles and adding nearly a quarter of a million residents to Chicago.¹¹⁹ By 1890, Chicago's population topped 1 million.

With the topography so flat and empty, the grid made the siting of the parks and boulevards relatively straightforward. By the 1860s Chicago's grid was already in place, with major roadways following the section lines of the Northwest Ordinance Survey. Some of these roads would be widened to become boulevards along the city's park and boulevard system. The only diagonals in this framework were the waterways, the old plank roads of the original settlers (including Ogden Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue) and the radiating spokes of the railroads. From their start in 1848 the railroads had expanded rapidly, with Chicago quickly becoming the hub for all mid-continent freight and passenger operations. By 1869 ten railroad lines ran out of the city and two additional lines ran north and south through the near west side. Several of these lines were already providing commuter rail service to the suburbs.¹²⁰ In addition, there were horse-drawn streetcar lines which would continue to expand their range throughout the early years of the park and boulevard development. The parks and boulevards had to fit within this existing and expanding transportation framework as much as possible.

The railroads and streetcars were to have enormous impact on both the character and the pace of development in and around the parks and boulevards. The railroads were used to bring raw materials to the parks to improve the soils, build fences and lay drainage pipes, construct waterways and bridges and build buildings. But the railroads also crossed the west boulevards in nine places and the south boulevards in two, creating hazardous conditions for these planned pleasure drives. The story of the parks and boulevards is one of frequent negotiation with Chicago's railroad operators, streetcar lines and, eventually, elevated railroads. Railroad viaducts are still a defining feature of many boulevards and in almost every instance the last boulevard sections to be developed were ones that either had intractable disagreements over right-of-way with a railroad or that did not have adequate streetcar service to encourage residential development.

In addition to the street grid and the railroads, the other important defining feature for Chicago's parks and boulevards was water. Throughout both the south and west systems the land was flat and swampy and the soil was poor. Drilling wells to provide water for the newly-planted landscapes and trees, draining water from the flat, hard soils, and creating new bodies of water where none had existed were all projects that were part of the earliest planning and development efforts in the park and boulevard system.

¹¹⁸ *The Land Owner*, v. IV, no. 4 (4/1872), p. 50.

¹¹⁹ *Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, pp. 22-23.

¹²⁰ West Chicago Park Commission, *Second Annual Report*, 2/28/1871, p.53.

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THE SOUTH PARK SYSTEM: 1869-1893

Legislation in 1869 created the South Park Commission, which immediately set out acquiring lands legally specified for a large park and connecting boulevards. They hired the nation's leading landscape architectural firm, Olmsted, Vaux and Co., to design the system. Despite early financial challenges, it began to be built out from the most populated areas to the least, with construction on the boulevards taking place first. Horace William Shaler Cleveland was hired in 1872, after some work had begun, to implement the plans for the South Park System. Work progressed on Drexel, Grand (now Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive), Oakwood, Garfield and Western Boulevards. A fountain was constructed in Drexel Square. Landscaping, drainage, roadways, sidewalks and utilities were given continued attention. The system was completed in time for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, which was held in the then largely undeveloped Jackson Park and Midway Plaisance.

Legislation Creating the South Park System

The initial acts creating the South Park Commission were approved by the Illinois legislature on February 24 and April 16, 1869. These acts were subsequently approved by a vote of the people of the towns that the Commission would serve—i.e. South Chicago, Hyde Park and Lake, a geographic region spanning from the Chicago River south to 138th Street and from Lake Michigan west to Cicero Avenue.

As chartered by the State of Illinois, the South Park Commission was an independent agency and responsible for the largest of the three park districts created in Chicago in 1869. The lands under its jurisdiction were specified in the legislation. They were comprised of a 1,055-acre park, initially referred to as “South Park” (but subsequently called Jackson Park, Washington Park and the Midway Plaisance), and boulevards that would become Grand, Drexel, Garfield and Western. The boundaries would be amended in 1872 to include Drexel Square and Oakwood Boulevard.

The act also provided for a board of five members, the South Park Commission, which was empowered to acquire, administer and maintain the system. The first South Park Commissioners were appointed by the Governor on April 16, 1869. They were Judge John M. Wilson, Leverett B. Sidway, Paul Cornell, Chauncey T. Bowen and George W. Gage. The Commissioners were wary of this method of appointment. They preferred “to secure as far as possible the selection of good men and to keep the administration out of politics.”¹²¹ Thus, legislation the next year provided that the appointment of future board members would be made by the judges of the Cook County Circuit Court. The logic was that more than one party was represented and the judges, “rank[ing] considerably above average men,” would ascertain the qualifications of potential appointees. According to Sidway in 1908:

It would, I imagine, be difficult, even if possible, to find another great city corporation controlling the employment of so many men and expenditure of so much money, which had for about forty consecutive

¹²¹ South Park Commissioners, *Report of the South Park Commissioners for a Period of Fifteen Months from December 1, 1906 to February 29, 1908, inclusive*, Chicago, 1908, p.66.

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years kept as free from all political influences as had the South Park Commission, or whose administration has met with so little criticism by the people.¹²²

The South Park commissioners of this period, and well into the 20th century, were generally civic-minded, capable and dedicated, many serving for long periods of time. Many were well known and respected leaders of their day in the areas of banking, law, industry and real estate. The commissioners included: John M. Wilson one of the original members, who, when appointed, was the former Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Chicago (served 1869-1872); Paul Cornell, (served 1869-1883) real estate magnate Potter Palmer (served 1871-1874); the powerful president of the Union Stock Yards, John B. Sherman (served 1877-1902); philanthropist and civic leader Charles Hutchinson (served 1906-1924) and Judge John Barton Payne (served 1910-1924) whose leadership in the National Parks movement led to his serving as Secretary of the Interior in the cabinet of President Woodrow Wilson.

The Designer: Olmsted, Vaux & Co.

Soon after passage of the parks legislation Dr. John Rauch wrote Frederick Law Olmsted that he was working to have Olmsted make a comprehensive study of all of the Chicago parks, a possibility Olmsted relished. But it was not to be.¹²³ Instead Olmsted, Vaux & Co., the nation's most experienced and prestigious landscape architecture firm, was hired in 1869 by the South Park commissioners to prepare plans for the parks and boulevards in their system. While the legislation creating the South Park System specified the location of parkland and boulevards, the design was left to the commissioners.

Frederick Law Olmsted and his English partner Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) had received wide-spread acclaim for their design of Central Park. The naturalistic style they developed put them in great demand. Olmsted, like sophisticated early Chicagoans, had traveled to Paris in the 1850s and was enamored with what Baron von Haussmann had achieved there. In articles he sent home documenting his European travels, Olmsted described the city's new boulevards, particularly noting the beautiful new avenue de l'Imperatrice (now avenue Foch). Olmsted carried the idea and the image of Haussmann's boulevards back to America and ultimately to Chicago.

Olmsted first came to Chicago in 1863 to examine the wooded area on the banks of the Des Plaines River, ten miles west of the city, that was the proposed site for the new suburb of Riverside. His plan of curving picturesque streets around a central park and train station included a proposal to build a parkway connecting the suburb to the city. He hoped to provide a transportation alternative to the train as well as a pleasure drive for those traveling over the bare, flat prairie between Chicago and his garden-like suburb.¹²⁴ Although the streets were in place, the boulevard Olmsted envisioned connecting Chicago to his garden suburb was not to be fully realized.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Victoria Post Ranney, *Olmsted in Chicago*, p. 16.

¹²⁴ The original Northwest Ordinance Survey Map of Chicago shows the grove of trees at Riverside as the first shady spot west of the Chicago River.

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The Plan

Calvert Vaux consulted with the South Park commissioners in October 1869 while he was in Chicago working on the design of Riverside. The South Park commissioners were occupied with acquiring park land and so set the first priority for the landscape firm to be surveys, plans and specifications for the two boulevards that would provide the link between the 1055-acre park and the city to the north. These two boulevards would later be called Drexel and Grand boulevards.¹²⁵ Six months later, in April 1870, the partners were hired to design South Park (now Jackson Park, Washington Park and the Midway Plaisance). Within the month the firm ceased working on Riverside and focused their attention on the South Park project.

Following a careful topographic survey, Olmsted and Vaux submitted a 53-page report and detailed plan in 1871. The report was compelling not only philosophically, in its well-written advocacy of the need for parks, but also in the quality, complexity and clarity of its planning and design vision. Emphasizing many of the purposes that inspired the creation of Chicago's park system, Olmsted and Vaux nurtured a vision of Chicago as one of the future great cities of the world and the south side as the most prosperous section of it. The partners urged the commissioners to seize the opportunity afforded by their blank slate of undeveloped land to design and build a system that would meet the needs of a city that would eventually encompass the entire South Park system. Furthermore, they urged the commissioners to envision their project as one part of a system essential to the improved health, attractiveness and prosperity of the whole city of Chicago. With wisdom born of experience, Olmsted and Vaux advocated honesty and commitment to quality so that the south park system would be commensurate with the future greatness of the city and would not be compromised in the short-term by corruption or public stinginess.

Throughout the document, Olmsted and Vaux repeatedly state that a well-executed plan would promote economic gain. They cite as examples both New York's and Brooklyn's experience with the "great increase in the value of real estate" once Central Park and Prospect Park were opened. They noted that the "character of the improvements...really advance(d) the rank of the city in the public estimation and suddenly caused a new class of expectations to be formed of its future..."¹²⁶ Their report contrasted this result with the experiences of Baltimore and Philadelphia, whose "more superficial and commonplace" improvements produced "no very extraordinary increase of value in neighboring real estate."¹²⁷ The South Park commissioners would follow the successful development path of New York's Central Park and Brooklyn's Prospect Park,

The Olmsted & Vaux report further urged the South Park commissioners to recognize and capitalize on new urban trends. They write in the report that the new park, though located outside the city, would ultimately serve as more of an urban park, and explained why with insights from their experience. Olmsted and Vaux had designed Central Park to be at the center of a city of "two millions," but when it was built it seemed remote to most New Yorkers.¹²⁸ Citing the new trend of suburban expansion outside the city, Olmsted and Vaux put the development of the South Park system in a broader urban planning context. They explained that people who were to move to lots along the parks and boulevards would expect a more desirable place to live. These

¹²⁵ Victoria Post Ranney, *Olmsted in Chicago*, p. 27.

¹²⁶ Olmsted, Vaux & Co., Landscape Architects, *Chicago South Park Commission Report Accompanying Plan for Laying Out The South Park*. (Chicago: Evening Journal, Book and Job Printing House, 1871) pp. 19-43.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 44.

¹²⁸ Charles E. Beverage & Carolyn R. Hoffman, eds. *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted: The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company, 1865-1974*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. p.551.

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expectations included improved healthfulness, larger lots, single-family homes distinctly separate from “commercial quarters,” wide streets and public spaces. Parks, by improving drainage and visual quality, would also improve the value of surrounding residential property.

The plan Olmsted and Vaux unveiled for South Park was one that did not preserve nature as they found it. The site was not a promising one. In the words of South Park commissioner Leverett Sidway, it was “flat, sterile and uninteresting.”¹²⁹ Olmsted, Vaux & Co.’s design, however, brilliantly played off the unpromising site’s flat topography with meadows, its shallow water table with lagoons and its lakeside location with amenities that included a pier and promenade. Foremost of all was the concept that “the park of any great city, is [the]...antithesis to its bustling, paved, rectangular, walled-in streets.”¹³⁰

Within the park, Olmsted and Vaux provided for the simultaneous but mutually- exclusive pursuits of solitary contemplation of natural scenery and group activities.. While the majority of spaces were designed naturalistically, there were a small number of formal settings, including promenade grounds and carriage drives. Olmsted and Vaux advocated against novelty features and urged the commissioners to hold fast to the main concepts of the plan: “simple visual unity and a subordination of detail to general effect.”¹³¹ Olmsted and Vaux also stressed that the fundamentals of drainage and turf and foliage health should always remain top priorities. The South Park commissioners would heed this wisdom over the succeeding twenty years as they created both the parks and boulevards.

The drawing that accompanies the 1871 plan is very detailed for the two parks and the Midway Plaisance but it shows only stubs of the three boulevards emanating from Washington Park. The written report did, however, supply details pertaining to the design of these three boulevards. Two principal approaches from the city led to the north corners of Washington Park. The western approach, named Southopen Parkway in the report (later Grand Boulevard), ”is described as being “planned more especially with reference to the rapid movement of a great number of persons driving, riding or walking, being planted openly with straight rows of clean trunked trees.”¹³²

The eastern boulevard described in the report was named “Southgrove Parkway” (later Drexel Boulevard). It was designed “with a view to more quiet and leisurely movements, and its principal feature is a walk or series of walks passing somewhat indirectly through a grove with frequent interludes of shrubbery, fountains and arbors to invite rest and contemplation.”¹³³ Olmsted & Vaux were dissatisfied, however with the way that the street was “at present laid down on the maps,” turning “abruptly at right angles a few hundred feet away from the Park”. They were equally critical of the “wholly inadequate” entrance where the boulevard met the park, concluding that “some considerable improvement will inevitably be required.”¹³⁴ The report recommended this situation be remedied “before any houses are erected in the neighborhood.” Citing as a model, the street in London between fashionable Pall Mall and Regent Street, Olmsted & Vaux recommended

¹²⁹ *Report of the South Park Commissioners*, 1908, p.61

¹³⁰ Olmsted, Vaux and Co., Landscape Architects, *Chicago South Park Commission Report Accompanying Plan for Laying Out The South Park*. p. 18.

¹³¹ Olmsted, Vaux and Co., Landscape Architects, *Chicago South Park Commission Report Accompanying Plan for Laying Out The South Park*, p.XXX

¹³² Olmsted, Vaux and Co., Landscape Architects, *Chicago South Park Commission Report Accompanying Plan for Laying Out The South Park*, p.28.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 51-52.

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“an extension of the parkway on a scale commensurate with the importance of its position and having a marked artistic character of its own.”¹³⁵ Dubbed the “Parkway Quadrant,” this extension was a square cut diagonally by a curved road. “[T]he curved line of the approach,” opined the firm, will “have a sufficiently bold sweep to be easy and agreeable in connection with the long straight line of Southgrove Parkway, and the main Park entrance to which it leads will be relieved of any appearance of awkwardness.”¹³⁶ This advice would later be heeded and Drexel Square was created to serve as an elegant transition to Washington Park.

The third “grand approach” was located on the west side of the park (later Washington Park) where congregating spaces—such as a concourse for carriages, a music stand, grandstand and refectory—were planned. This congregating area was called “The Pavilion” in the report. Thus, “the grand approach from the west entering the park in front of the Pavilion was named “Pavilion Parkway” (later Garfield Boulevard) by Olmsted and Vaux.¹³⁷

The report wisely concluded that, because improvements would be carried out over a long period of time, it was “not to be expected that a plan will be made at the outset so complete, that no additions to it or modifications of it in detail will be admissible....” The conclusion emphasized, however, that “it is of the utmost consequence that the essential ends should be clearly seen before the work is organized and that...these great ruling ends should be pursued with absolute consistency.”¹³⁸ The South Park commissioners would heed this counsel as they proceeded to execute the plan.

Development and Construction of the Boulevards of the South Park System

The process of acquiring the lands designated in the 1869 legislation began almost immediately after the South Park commissioners were appointed; so too did the difficulties obtaining them. Original commissioner L.B. Sidway reminisced many years later that

...hard times made the labor and responsibilities of the commissioners so great during the first six or eight years that I doubt if any one of us would have accepted the position if we had anticipated what had to be gone through with for the public good. I certainly would not.¹³⁹

The main problems were insufficient funding, litigation, and financial setbacks associated with catastrophic local and national events.

From the beginning the commissioners were handicapped because of insufficient funding. Speculation caused the land to cost much more than was anticipated and the monies provided for purchase, improvement and maintenance were simply not adequate. In the early years the graduated assessment system (by which property contiguous to parkland bore the greatest tax burden) failed to bring in enough revenue because so much land was unimproved.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* p.51.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* p.52

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* p.29

¹³⁸ Olmsted, Vaux and Co., Landscape Architects, *Chicago South Park Commission Report Accompanying Plan for Laying Out The South Park*, p.54.

¹³⁹ South Park Commissioners, *Report of the South Park Commissioners for a Period of Twelve Months from March 1, 1908 to February, 28, 1909, inclusive*. Chicago: 1909, pp. 58-71.

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Just two years into the project came a multi-year stretch of hard times as a result of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, followed by the national financial panic of 1873. The fire destroyed all the Commission's records, including the tax assessment roles, so no money was available until 1873. Immediately following the fire, operations were suspended for several months and Commissioners Sidway and Bowen used their personal savings and professional banking connections in Chicago and New York to help the commission meet its obligations.¹⁴⁰

Litigation was also a source of delay, with challenges on a variety of fronts, including the validity of the south park legislation and the Commission's ability to levy taxes and assessments. Litigation over land purchase was also a source of expense and delay. Nonetheless, the Commissioners had acquired the majority of the lands by 1875 and work had actually begun on some sections of the boulevards of the South park System earlier.

Development of the south park system began with construction of boulevards. The major focus of the early Commissioners was on the boulevards, especially the two leading to the north end of Washington Park that would bring people from the city. Olmsted had strongly advised earlier clients of the wisdom of creating a direct approach into the park. Writing in 1867 to the chairman of the Committee on Plans of the Park Commission of Philadelphia, he explained:

A Park may...be well considered...and may yet incompletely fulfill its proper function in the general municipal economy of a great City, if...the approaches to it are of an indirect, meager and unattractive character, and liable to be so crowded by common commercial traffic, as to cause general inconvenience or even apprehension to the feeble, the timid or the weary...it is therefore very desirable that in connection with the general scheme in its earlier stages, a clear leading idea should be formed of an ultimate plan to be adopted in regard to the Streets that connect the Park entrances with the heart of the City....¹⁴¹

The overall strategy of the South Park Commissioners was "to begin at a point nearest the largest population and make all improvements continuous to the farthest point." Furthermore, "they ... made no improvement at any point that could not be reached from the city over park roads."¹⁴²

In order to implement their strategy the South Park commissioners hired Horace William Shaler Cleveland. In 1872, the commission was again functional following the devastation of the October 1871 Chicago Fire. Upon the recommendation of Frederick Law Olmsted, the Commissioners hired Cleveland as "Landscape Architect of the South Park and connecting Boulevards."¹⁴³ Olmsted's work and design philosophy were well known to Cleveland, who had worked for Olmsted on Prospect Park. As reported by Cleveland, he was hired with the understanding

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁴¹ *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, p. 232.

¹⁴² *South Park: Acts of the General Assembly Relating to the same, and the collection of Assessments. Decisions of the Supreme Court Relating Thereto. Ordinances Synopsis of Improvements*. Chicago: Beach, Barnard and Co., Legal Printers, 1875, p.82

¹⁴³ *Report of the South Park Commissioner to the Board of the County Commissioners of Cook County* (1908), p.68

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...that the plans furnished by Messrs. Olmsted and Vaux were to be carried out in their general features and that the work of designing and generally directing the details of ornamental arrangements and planting, was entrusted to me. The necessity of rigid economy was strictly enjoined upon me. I was instructed to confine myself exclusively to such works as were immediately and essentially necessary...¹⁴⁴

By the time of Cleveland's arrival, the west boulevard leading to the park, later named Grand Boulevard,¹⁴⁵ had been created by widening existing Kankakee Avenue 132' to the west in accordance with the South Park act.¹⁴⁶ Then called South Park Boulevard, it extended two miles from 35th Street south to 51st Street. In 1873 its name would be changed again to Grand Boulevard, which it would be called until it was dedicated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive in the mid-20th-century. Following precedents in Europe and Riverside, and as described by Olmsted in the 1871 report, Grand Boulevard was designed to move people expediently from existing neighborhoods north of the system into Washington Park. The design provided for formal plantings separating foot, equestrian, carriage and commercial traffic. Specifically, the 200' wide boulevard included a central 55' wide pleasure drive for carriages flanked by medians lined with rows of trees. These medians separated the main drive from the narrower side roads, which were intended for commercial traffic and which had adjacent parkways and sidewalks. Grand Boulevard opened to 345' wide where it entered Washington Park at its northwest corner.

Grand Boulevard was the boulevard most frequented traveled by carriages, not only "because of the length and width of the drive," but also "because of the display it afforded for fast driving."¹⁴⁷ Beginning in 1873, the eight mile per hour speed limit was suspended at appointed times to allow for "fast driving" on the side drive. In 1874, the east side drive was only open two days a week; by 1877 it was in constant use. In 1882 the east side drive from 47th to 51st, the distance of one half mile, was made into a speeding track.

In 1878 an enormous hexagonal stone drinking fountain was erected at Grand Boulevard and 35th Street, where the boulevard was entered from the city to the north. The fountain was so large that 12 teams of horses could drink from it at once.

The construction of the east boulevard, named Drexel Boulevard by 1873,¹⁴⁸ was also underway by the time of Cleveland's arrival. Land for the thoroughfare's right-of-way had been purchased 100' on each side of a center line of the existing Drexel Avenue from 51st to 43rd Street. It continued northward and then diagonally 200' wide along the existing Elm Street (what is today the diagonal portion at the north end of Drexel Boulevard) until terminating at Oakwood Avenue.¹⁴⁹ In his report to the South Park commissioners at the end of the year, Cleveland explained that the original plan for the 1.5 mile-long boulevard envisioned a central, naturalistically ornamented space of 100 feet wide, arranged with paths, grass, trees and shrubbery. A portion of this space had been laid out but poorly graded and seeded. During construction of the flanking driveways it became necessary to take off 5' from each side of the central planting space, which in turn necessitated the ,

¹⁴⁴ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of the County Commissioners of Cook County*. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, 1873, p 15

¹⁴⁵ This west boulevard had been named Southopen Parkway in the Olmsted and Vaux report.

¹⁴⁶ Chamberlin *Chicago and its Suburbs*, p.321.

¹⁴⁷ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of the County Commissioners of Cook County*. 1882, p.8.

¹⁴⁸ This east boulevard had been named Southgrove Parkway in the Olmsted and Vaux report, Before being called Drexel Boulevard, it was known as Grove Parkway.

¹⁴⁹ *South Park Commissioners: Statutes and Special Ordinances*. Chicago: The Gunthorp-Warren Printing Co. 1908. p. 402.

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“making such changes of interior arrangement, that... it was deemed necessary to rearrange the whole design which was one of the first duties I was called upon to perform.”¹⁵⁰ By summer 1873 the entire median had been properly graded and a lush lawn had been developed, along with winding gravel paths and irregularly planted trees and shrubs. Thousands of visitors were drawn to Drexel Boulevard that summer.

The greatest excitement, however, was created by the “tasteful display of brilliant masses of flowers on the sections between 45th and 47th,” with Cleveland recommending that such ornamental flower gardens be expanded at various points along this boulevard “as extensively as may be done, consistently with the necessary condition of constant care and supervision.” In his year-end report to the Commissioners, Cleveland noted that “the sudden transformation of these grounds from a sandy waste..., was as great a surprise to the public as it must have been gratifying to you.”¹⁵¹ By the following year (1874), historian Everett Chamberlin described the construction of the street as essentially complete, with the 90’ median flanking 40’ carriage roads bordered by 15’ sidewalks.¹⁵² Through most of its history this street would be called Drexel Boulevard, but in the 1870s it was called Grove Parkway.

From 1873 until early in the 20th-century, Drexel Boulevard’s extensive floral displays were renowned for their beauty and intricacy. The 1877 *Annual Report* called them the most popular feature of the south park system. By 1883 the *Annual Report* noted that the display had a national reputation—little wonder when, for example “new and unique designs” in the 1885 flower beds included the American flag, a sun dial and a portrait of General Grant. These designs ran contrary to Olmsted’s idea of a naturalistic landscape for the boulevard, but the commissioners desired a showpiece and the South Park system’s landscape gardener Frederick Kanst produced spectacular displays year after year. According to early Chicago historian Everett Chamberlain, the Avenue l’Imperatrice in Paris, considered the finest street in the world, was the model for Drexel Boulevard.¹⁵³ Winding walkways curved around flowers and shrubbery and were occasionally accented with trellises, rustic seats, fountains or vases. The South Park commissioners took care to control the cost and quality of bedding plants as well as of the large trees and shrubs. By 1875 enough greenhouses had been built by the commissioners to supply the plant material needed for the South Park system’s walks and drives.¹⁵⁴ Also by this time, a uniform building line of 40’ had been established for the entire length of Drexel Boulevard, while on each side of the street property holders had planted large elm trees.¹⁵⁵

Olmsted & Vaux’s recommendation to improve Drexel Boulevard’s entry into the northeast corner of Washington Park was realized in 1872. The segment of existing 51st Street, that originally connected the south end of this boulevard with the park, was widened. First known as the “Drexel Entrance to Washington Park”, it was described by Chamberlin as being 450’ wide and extending an entire block from its east to its west side. Through most of its history however, the entrance has been known as Drexel Square.

As early as 1873 plans were being made for a large fountain at the south end of Drexel Boulevard in what came to be known as Drexel Square. A spectacular fountain was erected, but not until 1881, when the

¹⁵⁰ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of the County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1873, p.17.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁵² Chamberlin, *Chicago and Its Suburbs*, p. 321.

¹⁵³ Chamberlin. *Chicago and its Suburbs*, p 323.

¹⁵⁴ *South Park: Acts of the General Assembly Relating to the same, and the collection of Assessments. Decisions of the Supreme Court Relating Thereto. Ordinances. Synopsis of Improvements*. Chicago: Beach, Barnard and Co., Legal Printers, 1875, p.82.

¹⁵⁵ Chamberlin. *Chicago and its Suburbs*, p 323

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South Park Commissioners reported that those “public spirited gentlemen of Philadelphia,” brothers Francis A. and Anthony J. Drexel, offered

“...a costly and superb bronze fountain in memory of their father, after whom the beautiful Boulevard is named. The design has been submitted to the commissioners and accepted by them. The location, in accordance with the wish of the donors is to be at the turn of the Boulevard at 51st St. The granite basin will be paced this winter and the fountain itself, now being cast at Berlin, will be in place, probably by mid-Summer.”¹⁵⁶

The year before, the commissioners had renamed Grove Parkway to honor Francis M. Drexel (1792-1863), a Philadelphia banker and early Chicago real estate speculator. Drexel had partnered in the subdivision of land along Drexel Avenue and had donated land for the street to help foster development of nearby property he owned.¹⁵⁷ By 1883 the life-size statue of Francis Drexel, which completed the \$40,000 bronze fountain structure, was installed, as were the water connections. The sculptor of the piece was Philadelphia resident Henry Manger (1833-?), a German immigrant about whom relatively little is known. In 1888, the Drexel brothers paid an additional \$5,000 for the granite basin of the Drexel Fountain to be enlarged 10’ on all sides.

Following the successful examples set by Olmsted and Vaux’s Central Park and Prospect Park projects, a small area at the north end of Washington Park, which was the end closest to the city, was also improved at the same time as the construction of the first boulevards. Consequently, by 1873 visitors could enjoy a pleasure drive of four miles along the two substantially-completed boulevards and through the north end of Washington Park. Horace Cleveland reported that Grand and Drexel Boulevards now presented “the appearance of well-kept grounds” so appreciated by the citizenry that they “throng there.”¹⁵⁸ On Grand Boulevard an average of 3,000 carriages per hour were counted in 1873: in subsequent years these numbers would continue to rise.¹⁵⁹

There was still a “much needed and beautiful connecting pleasure way from Grand Boulevard to Grove Parkway [Drexel Boulevard].”¹⁶⁰ It was to be Oakwood Boulevard, completed in 1877. The existing Oakwood Avenue was widened to 100’ in accordance with legislation passed in 1871, two years after the original 1869 act.¹⁶¹ The boulevard’s “fine, smooth and clean driveway” was one-half mile long and 100’ wide, with cobblestone gutters and 7.5’ parkways on each side that were lined with a “large number” of elm and maple trees.¹⁶² Sidewalks that were 10’ wide flanked the parkways. Oakwood Boulevard was further embellished in 1878 when an ornamental cast iron fountain was erected in the wide, grassy, triangular space at its intersection with Drexel Boulevard.¹⁶³

With the completion of Oakwood Boulevard, a circuit could be completed by citizens out to enjoy a continuous pleasure drive down Grand Boulevard, across the north side of Washington Park, up Drexel Boulevard and across Oakwood Boulevard. People could take their own carriages or rent them from the South Park system. A broad range of social classes took part in this outing, frequenting the boulevards and the parks

¹⁵⁶ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of the County Commissioners of Cook County*. 1881, p. 15.

¹⁵⁷ Dan Rottenberg, *The Man Who Made Wall Street: Anthony J. Drexel and the Rise of Modern Finance*, p.47.

¹⁵⁸ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of the County Commissioners of Cook County*. 1872, p.19.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15

¹⁶⁰ *Annual Report*, 1877

¹⁶¹ Daniel F. Breen ed. *Historical Register of the Twenty-Two Superseded Park Districts*. Compiled under the supervision of the Division of the Secretary, Chicago Park District, by the Works Progress Administration. Project 30160. 1941, p.405.

¹⁶² A. T. Andreas, *History of Chicago from the Earliest Times to the Present in Three Volumes*. Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1884, p. 170.

¹⁶³ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of the County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1878—p. 9

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and fulfilling the vision of Olmsted and Chicago's civic leaders. In 1876, responding to the desire of those who did not own a carriage, the South Park commissioners began offering phaeton rides over the boulevard circuit at "a very moderate expense."¹⁶⁴ The response was overwhelming: "in the first 117 days of operation, 24,733 passengers paid ten cents each."¹⁶⁵ The rides became not only self-sustaining, but a source of income for until 1897.

Attention was also focused, in the early 1870s, on the improvement of Garfield Boulevard (55th Street), which was initially named Pavilion Boulevard, as suggested in the original 1871 Olmsted and Vaux report.¹⁶⁶ By the 1870s, most of the land had been acquired.¹⁶⁷ As specified in the original 1869 South Park legislation, 55th Street was widened an additional 134' to the south, making for a 200' wide boulevard, 3.5 miles long, from Washington Park west to Western Avenue. The boulevard was originally planned by the South Park commissioners to combine two different roadway configurations. Along the half-mile from Washington Park to State Street, it was to have a configuration like Drexel Boulevard, with a central median 90' wide flanking driveways 40' wide and, at the outer edge of each driveway, a 15' sidewalk. From State Street west to Reuben Street (later Ashland Avenue), a distance of 2 miles, the boulevard was planned in a configuration like Grand Boulevard, with a 75' central driveway flanked by 36' medians, a 24' road and an outer 15' sidewalk, with enough parkway for rows of trees. The last mile, from Reuben Street west to Western Avenue, was to be improved the same as the first half-mile.¹⁶⁸ By 1874 the entire length of the boulevard had been graded with the 40' roadways as planned and with a 75' roadway connecting them. By 1877 it was decided that the 75' central roadway would be reduced to 50'.¹⁶⁹ Through the 1880s and early 1890s the medians and parkways would continue to be graded and planted out, sidewalks would be built and roadways would be surfaced as the build-out proceeded westward.

Western Avenue dates from the 1850s, when it was a plank road known as Blue Island Avenue. Western Boulevard, 200' wide, was constructed on land specified in the original 1869 South Parks ordinance as adjacent to and east of existing Western Avenue. By 1874 1.25 miles of the 3.1 miles of land selected for the boulevard by the South Park commissioners was left to be acquired. An idea of the relative isolation of its location at this time is obtained from the South Park commissioners' 1878 *Annual Report*. This report records that although "Western Avenue Boulevard's" central planting space was filled with trees almost its entire length, at the request of numerous owners the space was enclosed by a fence to protect the new trees from injury by roving cattle.¹⁷⁰ In 1875 it was part of a 15-mile driving circuit along the south park system boulevards that stretched from Western Avenue, through both Washington and Jackson parks to the lakeshore and along the Midway.¹⁷¹ It was in keeping with the advice Olmsted had penned just two years before to the chairman of the Committee on Plans of the Park Commission of Philadelphia:

Experience has also shown that the distance which can be passed over easily in the course of a pleasure drive is much greater than can be furnished in a City Park, ...and it becomes desirable therefore, to

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1877, p 8.

¹⁶⁵ Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago*, p.57.

¹⁶⁶ In 1881 the name was changed to Garfield Boulevard upon petition of a large number of property owners. *Report of the South Park Commissioners*, 1881, p. 15.

¹⁶⁷ Daniel F. Breen, ed. "Historical Register of the Twenty-Two Superseded Park Districts." p. 88.

¹⁶⁸ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1874, p. 9.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1877, p. 30.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1878, p. 7.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1875, p.16.

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prepare at the outset for an ultimate extension of the rural drive far beyond the boundaries of the Park itself.¹⁷²

Chicago's South Park system would provide this experience. By 1882, Western's 40' wide east (boulevard) drive was open for travel from the Illinois & Michigan Canal to Garfield Boulevard. The boulevard continued to be improved through the remainder of the 1880s and the early 1890s with a crushed stone surface, gutters, catch basins, hydrants and trees.

In their execution of the South Park system's infrastructure, the Commissioners heeded Olmsted and Vaux's advice that proper drainage was as essential to success as well-constructed roadways. Thus from the outset, road beds were not only constructed "in the most substantial and durable manner" they were built with sewers. 129 The drainage system of Drexel Boulevard, for example, was completed by 1873, with a cement sewer pipe carrying off water from the road and planting surfaces and connecting with the Hyde Park sewer system.¹⁷³ In their 1874 *Annual Report*, the commissioners ask for the public's understanding of the expense and slow progress of creating "boulevards and drives" from "scarcely broken country roads" by echoing Olmsted and Vaux's conviction that sewers were "a most real, practical benefit to adjacent property owners."¹⁷⁴

In the mid-1870s cement pipe gave way to improved brick sewers and catch basins. On Oakwood Boulevard this cost was borne jointly by the South Park commissioners and the Village of Hyde Park, with the system being connected to the village drainage system. Drainage in the less affluent Town of Lake was less sophisticated and arrangements for a permanent outlet for the drainage of Garfield Boulevard into the Illinois & Michigan Canal were not made until 1882.

Excellent road surfaces were as important as drainage. The boulevards were heavily used and over time, the South Park commissioners adopted road construction and surfacing methods to maximize their performance. Experiments with different materials were made prior to constructing Grand Boulevard, the first boulevard. There, they initially graded the surface then added cobble stone and applied a top dressing of screenings (marble chips) or Joliet limestone gravel. Gutters were covered by asphalt, cobblestone or blast furnace slag.¹⁷⁵ Crushed limestone macadam appears to have been the most common surfacing material for the boulevards in the 1880s and early 1890s. The ubiquitous cobblestone gutters of the 1870s and 1880s gave way in the 1890s to combined curbs and gutters made of granite concrete. The carriage-riding public eagerly took advantage of the new, improved roads.

Landscaping of the boulevards, as well as drainage, was given significant attention. Again heeding Olmsted and Vaux's advice, the South Park commissioners invested much time and effort into establishing new plantings and developing effective growth and management practices for them. In this regard, the employment of landscape professional Horace William Shaler Cleveland was a milestone. When he arrived in 1872 the only planting that had been done was on Grand Boulevard. The need for professional services at this point was critical, as Cleveland's report that year attested:

¹⁷² Beverage et al, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*. p.232.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁴ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1874, p.7.

¹⁷⁵ Beverage et al, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*. p.322.

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The central drive-way had been made and a row of elms planted on each side in the center of the spaces reserved for the ornamental borders. The trees had been brought from the forest, and presented the gaunt and ill-proportioned appearance usual with such trees before they have had time to develop new foliage to conceal their spindling trunks and limbs. The borders in which they were planted had not been graded to a rounded surface, but presented the appearance of flat beds rising abruptly several inches above the level of the roadway. The attempt had been made to secure a growth of grass on these beds, but it had proved a failure, and their only covering was a growth of weeds and oat stubble.¹⁷⁶

By the end of the year Cleveland had remedied the situation on Grand Boulevard, with the ornamental borders on each side of the main drive graded to a “gracefully curved surface” and the whole covered “with a rich sward” of grass.¹⁷⁷ In the early 1870s both Grand and Drexel boulevards were planted with large forest trees—principally elm, maple, ash and linden because they were known to be hardy.

As soon as possible, the South Park commissioners gained control of cost, quantity and quality by establishing their own nursery “in which such young trees and shrubs as were considered desirable for park purposes, were planted.”¹⁷⁸ The able Frederick Kanst was hired for the job and by 1875 the commissioners could report: “This nursery has been a complete and perfect success, and now furnishes several thousand first class trees each season....”¹⁷⁹ Established in Washington Park in 1870, the nursery moved to increasingly outlying sites in the south park system. In 1882 it moved from the south end of Washington Park to the Midway Plaisance, and in 1892 it moved to Gage Park.

Trees were planted in formal “lines” in the parkway between the outer roadbed and the sidewalk and also, in some places, in the medians. Elms were very popular for this purpose and in the 1870s were planted along all the South Park system boulevards. By 1878 Grand Boulevard, the most formal, was finished along its entire length with six lines of elms in the medians on each side of the main roadway, a feat requiring 1,524 trees.¹⁸⁰ Hard maples, linden and ash also continued to be planted in association with the landscaping of the boulevards.

A great deal of energy went into developing effective establishment, growth and management practices for the soil and grasses of the boulevards and parks. Olmsted and Vaux had strongly driven home the point that healthy soil was one of the essential elements that must be achieved if the park system was to be a success. In his report of 1873 Cleveland described the method resulting in attaining a “rich velvet sward, as thick and firm as if the whole ground had been sodded.” This required repeatedly plowing the soil, heavy dressings of stable manure, seeding, close cutting and watering from hydrants during drought.¹⁸¹ For much of the period, manure was supplied to the South Park system from the nearby Union Stock Yards. On Drexel Boulevard lawn sprinklers were set out when necessary to keep new grass, shrubs and flowers fresh. Once established, the lawns of the boulevards were regularly mowed and kept in good condition.

¹⁷⁶ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1873, p.13.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *South Park: Acts of the General Assembly Relating to the same, and the collection of Assessments. Decisions of the Supreme Court Relating Thereto. Ordinances. Synopsis of Improvements*. Chicago: Beach, Barnard and Co., Legal Printers, 1875, p. 82.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Annual Report of the South Park Commissioners* 1878, p. 9.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* 1873, p.23.

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Although Drexel was the boulevard most abundantly planted with flowers, others were as well. By 1875 the South Park commission had enough greenhouses to substantially increase the amount of flowers on the boulevards and in the parks. The following year the central median at the north end of Western near the Illinois & Michigan Canal was planted from 35th to 39th streets “in the same manner as on Grove Parkway [Drexel Boulevard], with trees, shrubs and flowers. The walks throughout the planting spaces were finished and graveled.¹⁸²

Sidewalks laid along the boulevards during the period were generally between 8’ and 10’ wide. Until the 1890s, when concrete-based material began to be used for sidewalks on all the boulevards, Drexel and Grand Boulevards’ sidewalks were stone, with bluestone and Euclid (Ohio) sandstone being specifically mentioned in the South Park Commissioners’ *Annual Reports*. On Oakwood and Garfield Boulevards, clay and lake-shore gravel walks that had been laid in the 1870s were improved with asphalt or stone sidewalks in the 1880s.¹⁸³ Walks winding through plantings on the medians ran the length of Drexel Boulevard, but were only in isolated areas on some of the other boulevards. These walks were generally crushed stone, but on Drexel, which received heavy use, they were improved in the early 1880s with asphalt. Granite crosswalks at intersections became common beginning in the late 1880s.

Utilities were incorporated in initial construction of the boulevards or they were integrated later into existing rights-of-way. Water pipes were being installed along Oakwood Boulevard by the town of Hyde Park in 1874. The South Park Commission was laying its own pipe for sprinklers the same year. In the mid-1870s no water main existed on Garfield Boulevard, but water was obtained from hydrants owned by the Town of Lake. Water pipe was still being laid on Garfield and Western boulevards in the early 1890s. Pipe was being laid by several gas companies in the mid-1880s in sections of Grand, Drexel, Oakwood and Garfield boulevards, and lamp posts were erected by village and town authorities along these pipelines at intervals from 75’ to 100’. The installation of these improvements made living along the boulevards all the more desirable.

Development of the Parks of the South Park System: Washington Park, Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance

Washington Park, Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance were developed as part of the 1869 legislation. They are listed on the National Register although none of the buildings surrounding these parks were included. These parks and the Midway are included in this nomination by reference.

Washington Park

Washington Park was listed on the National Register in 2004 as part of *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*, with significance cited for both history and architecture. It was the Western or Upper Division of the 1055-acre “South Park” that was planned by Olmsted & Vaux in 1871. The South Park commissioners hired the highly-regarded landscape architect Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1872-1874), and by the late-1880s this park had been landscaped substantially as planned.

¹⁸²*Ibid.* 1876, p 8.

¹⁸³ These sidewalks also attest to the quality of the boulevards in a city-wide context, given that in 1889 stone sidewalks only accounted for 156 miles of Chicago’s 2,000 miles of sidewalk, 1800 miles being of wood and only 27 of concrete. Bessie L Pierce, *A History of Chicago*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937-1957. Vol. 3, p 313

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Named Washington Park in 1881, the 367-acre site was generally developed from north to south. The pastoral emphasis of the original design was conveyed most strongly by the iconic great meadow of the South Open Green. Two lagoons were also included in this design that succeeded in accomplishing Olmsted's goal of providing urban dwellers a place of refuge and relaxation among nature. As the South Park commission acquired increasing responsibilities around the turn of the century, Washington Park became the headquarters for several of its centralized functions. These functions were housed in buildings respectfully sited, as intended, at the park's perimeter. While Washington Park has adapted over time to changing needs, it retains the genius of its original design, as well as buildings by significant architects including Burnham and Root (stables and roundhouse, 1880), D.H. Burnham and Co. (administration building, 1910) and Perkins, Chatten and Hammond (armory, 1928).

Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance

Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance were listed together on the National Register in 1972, with significance cited for history and architecture. They were part of the 1055-acre "South Park," created by legislation in 1869 and designed by Olmsted, Vaux and Co. in 1871. Originally, Jackson Park was known as the "Eastern" or "Lower Division;" the "Midway Plaisance," a mile-long boulevard, connected it to the "Western" or "Upper Division." The Eastern and Western Divisions were respectively named Jackson and Washington Parks in 1881. Jackson Park has the distinction of being designed at three points in time by the firm of famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

Relatively little of the 1871 plan submitted by Olmsted and Vaux had been executed by the time the park was designated in 1890 as the site for the World's Columbian Exposition. Olmsted and his then-partner Henry Codman were chosen to be the landscape designers of the fair's spectacular grounds, whose centerpiece was a formal aquatic basin lined with classically-inspired buildings. After the fair, Olmsted's original 1871 concept, which was characterized by an imaginative interconnected lagoon system, was largely executed by his firm Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot and, after Olmsted's retirement, by its successor firm, Olmsted Brothers headed by his sons. The only major building remaining from the fair is the Fine Arts Building, originally designed by D. H. Burnham and Company's chief designer, Charles Atwood. It was reopened in the 1930s as the Museum of Science and Industry.

The Midway Plaisance was also part of the World's Columbian Exposition. It served as the area where amusements were concentrated, including the 264-foot-high Ferris wheel. Like Jackson Park, the Midway Plaisance was largely completed after the fair. Although both Olmsted's 1871 and 1895 plans called for a canal through the center of the Midway linking the lagoon systems in Jackson and Washington Parks, this feature continually proved cost prohibitive and was never realized. As built out, however, the Midway's central lawn was depressed and its flanking roadways were formally planted with lines of trees. In the later 20th-century a small number of sculptures were placed on the Midway, while in the early 21st-century new gardens were planted on its north side and a skating rink was constructed on the exact location of the historic Ferris wheel.

The South Park System Readies for the World's Columbian Exposition

When Chicago was selected by the United States Congress in 1890 to host the World's Columbian Exposition,¹⁸⁴ the South Park commissioners agreed to lease the open Midway Plaisance and largely-unfinished

¹⁸⁴ The fair was eagerly sought by America's cities as a sign of their own status and as a way to stimulate their economies and local real estate values. The choice came down to New York City vs. Chicago, with Chicago emerging the victor.

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Jackson Park as the site for the fair. Although pressured for permission to include Washington Park as part of the fairgrounds, they refused, concerned that the delicate ecosystem so patiently and expensively created there would be ruined.

Management of the fair was quickly decided upon, with Chicago architect Daniel H. Burnham as director of works and George R. Davis as director-general.¹⁸⁵ The country's leading architects competed for the honor of designing one of the fair's many buildings and Frederick Law Olmsted, in a return to Chicago, was engaged to lay out the extensive grounds.

While the fairgrounds were leased to the fair managers, the responsibility for readying the boulevards so that people could access the fairgrounds fell to the South Park commissioners. Portions of Grand, Drexel, Garfield and Western Boulevards were resurfaced and concrete gutters and curbing were installed. The west end of Garfield's south drive (Ashland to Western), and a portion of Drexel Boulevard (from the Union Stock Yard Railroad to 47th) were reconstructed. New granite concrete walks were built along portions of Grand Boulevard including its medians. Granite crosswalks were laid spanning its drives. Drexel Square was improved with a new 30' wide, macadam-surfaced driveway constructed along the south edge of the square. New granolithic concrete gutters, curbs and a sidewalk were constructed and a line of elm trees was planted.¹⁸⁶ Considerable planting was done on Garfield Boulevard nearest to Washington Park, and stretches were improved farther west with lines of trees, sidewalks, and finished or reconstructed roadways. The Western Boulevard roadway was completed all the way south to its end, at Garfield Boulevard; walks and gutters were laid, and trees were planted.

Chicago underwent an electrical revolution between the 1880s and the 1910s, with important consequences for the parks and boulevards. The first electric arc lamp was demonstrated on the north side of the city on the evening of April 25, 1878.¹⁸⁷ Its intensely bright light, "turned the darkness back into day,"¹⁸⁸ and changed the nature of urban streets and street life forever. Just two arc lamps generated more illumination than 650 of the standard gas streetlamps generally in use.¹⁸⁹

Characteristically, the South Park commissioners chose to control this new technology in-house by constructing their own electrical plant, which was to be in continuous operation. Located at 58th Street in Washington Park, it opened in November, 1892. That year, arc lamps powered by the plant were placed on the boulevards nearest the fair site—throughout Grand, Drexel and Oakwood Boulevards and on Garfield Boulevard from Washington Park to State Street and along the sides of the drives in Washington Park. The 261 lamps installed were "supported from ornamental cast-iron post placed on the edge of the drives at intervals averaging about 300'."¹⁹⁰ The upcoming 1893 Columbian Exposition promised to astound visitors by daylight. Its revolutionary and dramatic use of electric lighting, however, would astonish and dazzle them by night. The surrounding parks and boulevards would both complement and enhance the fair.

¹⁸⁵ Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, p.899.

¹⁸⁶ Granolithic is concrete with granite aggregate mixed in.

¹⁸⁷ The demonstration was held at the City's Water Tower, one of the few buildings to survive the great Chicago Fire of 1871. Harold L. Platt. *The Electric City: Energy and the Growth of the Chicago Area, 1880-1930*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 3.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* The brightness of the standard gas fixture was twelve to sixteen candlepower, while that of the arc lamp approached 2000 candlepower.

¹⁹⁰ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1892, p. 11.

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WEST CHICAGO PARK SYSTEM: 1869-1893

The West Chicago Park Commission, created by legislation in 1869, hired William Le Baron Jenney to design the system of three parks and connecting boulevards established under the law. Implementation of Jenney's 1871 plan was hampered during this period by financial challenges and political corruption, as well as land conditions that included poor soil and drainage. Oscar Dubuis succeeded William Le Baron Jenney as chief engineer and superintendent, beginning in 1874. Garfield and Humboldt Parks were substantially completed by the 1880s and considerable work was completed on Douglas Park. Construction on the boulevards was sporadic and was not completed during this period.

Legislation Creating the West Park System

The act to authorize the West Chicago Park system was passed in February 1869.¹⁹¹ At the same time as the state legislature created the park commissions, they also allowed Chicago to annex a vast area of land lying between Western Avenue and Crawford Avenue (40th Street, now Pulaski Road) extending from the Illinois & Michigan Canal to North Avenue. This western annexation was to contain all of the West Park System's parks and boulevards. The West system's parks were laid out in areas that in 1869 were largely rural and it was only the rapid population growth of the third quarter of the 19th-century that proved the wisdom and foresight of the original legislative act. As Jens Jensen was to note, "When these improvements were advocated it was stated that they were too large and so remote that they would never be used by Chicago citizens."¹⁹²

In the West Park System the Governor would be responsible for appointing the commissioners, which he promptly did following approval of the legislation by public vote in March, 1869. As soon as the legislation was passed, the governor appointed a park commission that began its work in May of that year. The Commission had seven members with staggered terms plus a President and a Treasurer.¹⁹³ The fact that the commissioners were appointed by the governor, rather than elected by popular vote, as they were in the Lincoln Park system, or appointed by the Judges of the Cook County Circuit Court, as they were in the South Park system, meant that throughout the history of the West Park System the commissioners would be politically beholden to whoever was in the state house. The south Park commissioners were more savvy and civic-minded professionals; the west sideers were real estate developers, property owners and attorneys. They were generally not people with a long-term stake in the neighborhood nor were they men (and later, women) who went on to make other civic contributions.¹⁹⁴ Throughout the history of the West Park System, the challenge for the commission would be the dearth of civic-minded residents. Unlike Hyde Park, the west side did not have a

¹⁹¹ The West Chicago Park System boundaries are as follows: From N. Western Avenue at Belmont south to the North Branch of the Chicago River. Running south on the river to the South Branch and along the Illinois & Michigan Canal to S.46th Avenue [which no longer meets the canal]. North on 46th to W. 12th Street [now Roosevelt Rd.] then west on 12th to S. Austin Avenue [now Boulevard]. North on Austin to W. North Avenue then east on North Avenue to N. Kedzie Avenue. North on Kedzie to W. Belmont Avenue. East on Belmont to N. Western Avenue.

¹⁹² City of Chicago, *Report of the Special Park Commission to the City Council of Chicago on the subject of a Metropolitan Park System*. (compiled by Dwight Heald Perkins) Chicago: W.J. Hartman Co., 1905, p. 24.

¹⁹³ Daniel F. Breen, ed. *Historical Register of the Twenty-two Superseded Park Districts*, Works Progress Administration Project 30260, 1941, pp.423-424.

¹⁹⁴ Extensive biographical material on West Park commissioners has not been found. Of the initial group, Henry Greenbaum was later incriminated for dealing fraudulently with Park Commission funds and Isaac Hitt moved to Evanston by 1871, but not before making a great deal of money by investing in land around the proposed parks and boulevards. Eben Runyan, a lawyer, was also President of the Board of Education while serving as a park commissioner.

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strong group of professional-class residents who could serve as advisors. With few commissioner choices and a political appointment system, the West Park System would quickly face charges of corruption, financial waste and, eventually, rampant patronage. These problems plagued the West Park System throughout its history.

The West Chicago Park Commission was officially seated on May 5, 1869, and it seems clear from the speed at which they proceeded to get down to business that a great deal of discussion and planning had already taken place while the legislation was making its way through the voting process. By July the commission already had ten plans in place to show to the public. They were exhibited for ten days and the public was invited to donate the land upon which the parks and boulevards were to be built. Not surprisingly, there was little interest in donating land so the Commission pared down the proposals to three and once again submitted them to the public for perusal. During this second round enough land was offered to the commissioners that they felt they could safely choose a plan with which to proceed. Thus, the locations of the three parks and the routes of all but one of the boulevards (Southwest/Marshall) were determined by November 1869.¹⁹⁵

The initial hope that land could be acquired through generous donations or simple acquisition proved completely unrealistic. It quickly became clear that land prices were going to be driven up by speculation, rapidly pushing up the cost of acquisition. Once the park bills were confirmed, “The prairie around the site of the proposed parks and boulevards... was covered with people looking over the ground.”¹⁹⁶ “Prices immediately advanced to an exorbitant figure on all the lands selected.”¹⁹⁷ Land prices in some areas increased tenfold in just a few months.¹⁹⁸ Never-the-less, by the end of 1869 the commissioners had purchased 450 of the 761 acres needed and by the end of 1870 they had in hand most of the acreage they would need to build the parks and boulevards.

The three commissioners charged with locating the parks “made an effort to locate the parks where they would be accessible from public means of travel, and, at the same time, not so far from business and residence centers as to make them inaccessible to pedestrians and carriages.”¹⁹⁹

According to the terms of the legislation, the northernmost park was to be north of Kinzie Street, a minimum of 200 acres and cost \$250,000 to develop. The central park was to be between Kinzie and Harrison streets, a minimum of 100 acres and cost \$400,000 to develop. The southernmost park was to be between Harrison Street and the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy tracks (now the Burlington, Northern & Santa Fe), a minimum of 100 acres and cost \$250,000 to develop. Originally the legislation specified that the boulevards were not to be developed until the parks were complete, but the commissioners soon realized that the boulevards were too important—as links, both actual and visual—to develop them at a later date. The commissioners hoped to develop a system where each piece would have its own character, but a character that was harmonious with the whole.²⁰⁰ The parks would be naturalistic and the boulevards would be “formal and stately,” like “elongated parks.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, For the route of Southwest Boulevard see *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1/9/1881, p.10.

¹⁹⁶ *The Land Owner*, v. I, no. 4 (10/1869), p.86

¹⁹⁷ Chamberlin, p. 326.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 332-336.

¹⁹⁹ Chamberlin, p. 326.

²⁰⁰ West Chicago Park Commission, *Second Annual Report*, 2/28/1871, p. 53.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 53 and p. 71.

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The Designer: William LeBaron Jenney

William LeBaron Jenney (1832-1907) was the first Chief Engineer for the West Chicago Park system. Hired in 1870, Jenney would create plans for the system of three large parks and connecting boulevards—the system that today encompasses Douglas Park, Garfield Park, Humboldt Park and the west side boulevards. An engineer, architect and planner, trained at Harvard University and in Paris at l'Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures, Jenney is best known for his contributions to the development of the skyscraper. He served at Vicksburg during the Civil War where he met Frederick Law Olmsted. The two became lifelong friends. In 1868, when Olmsted designed the planned community of Riverside, Illinois, with architect Calvert Vaux, they hired Jenney as architect as well as supervisor for the implementation of the landscape.

The Plan

William Le Baron Jenney's plan created an arc of parks and boulevards running through the far west side of the city. The north and south parks lay between California and Kedzie Avenues. The central park was ½ mile further west, between Central Park Avenue and Hamlin Boulevard at W. Madison Street, with a square segment projecting east to Homan Avenue. The system began on the North Branch of the Chicago River with W. Logan Boulevard running west to N. Kedzie then south on N. Kedzie to Palmer Square. From Palmer Square N. Humboldt Boulevard was to run south to the northernmost park, Humboldt Park. From the park N. Sacramento Boulevard (originally Central Boulevard) ran south to Sacramento Square, the first of the formal squares that were designed to mark turning points in the system. From Sacramento Square, W. Franklin Boulevard (originally part of Central Boulevard) ran west into Garfield Square (originally Central Square). A short segment of boulevard, now called N. Central Park Avenue, connected Garfield Square to Garfield Park (originally Central Park). Within the park, North Conservatory Drive had park land on the west and private buildings on the east. S. Hamlin Boulevard ran south from Madison Avenue on the western edge of Garfield Park to Gladys Avenue. S. Independence Boulevard (originally Douglas Boulevard) ran south out of Garfield Park from its southwest corner, turning at Independence Square to connect to W. Douglas Boulevard and then into Douglas Park on its northwest edge. S. Hamlin and S. Independence boulevards met at the southwest corner of Garfield Park. From Douglas Park the boulevard system took a series of jogs to reach the Illinois & Michigan Canal. This entire southern section of the system, first laid out in 1881, was originally called Southwest Boulevard but now consists of S. Marshall Boulevard, S. California Boulevard, W. 24th Boulevard, W. 31st Boulevard and a small section of S. Western Boulevard.

None of Jenney's original plans for the boulevards survive so what little information we have about the form of the boulevards comes from the *Annual Reports* of the West Park Commission. In addition to the lack of plans for the boulevards, there are virtually no known photographs of the west side boulevards in their original form. As a result, our knowledge of the west side boulevards is much less complete than it is for the south side. Finally, money problems that plagued the west side system throughout its history seem to have limited the plantings on the boulevards. Initially, rows of trees predominated. Much later, shrubs would be added. But elaborate floral displays and winding paths never seem to have been part of the execution on the west side boulevards. Without a finished loop of roadway and beautiful mansions and gardens to attract Sunday pleasure drivers, the west side was never as popular a spot as the south side for the weekly "promenade."

The boulevards initially were planned to be 250' wide with varying layouts. Central Boulevard and Humboldt Boulevard were to have a central 50' drive flanked by 51' lawns, 25' service roads and 24' sidewalk

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and parkway areas. Douglas Boulevard was to have a 100' central lawn flanked by 50' drives and 25' of sidewalk and parkway. The three primary segments of the system, where land acquisition, planning and construction took place during the first round of construction, maintained this 250' width. Later segments were more variable, with the railroad viaduct on W. 31st Boulevard narrowing the roadway to just 70'. The boulevards were "to furnish traffic roads as well as pleasure drives."²⁰² The central drive or drives were for pleasure and the side drives were for deliveries and other local traffic. It was anticipated that the boulevards would be planted with straight rows of trees along the roadways. The squares were to relieve the monotony of the straight and formal boulevards and be more "in keeping with our style of parks."²⁰³

Development and Construction of the Boulevards of the West Park System

The West Park commissioners faced numerous challenges early on. Unfortunately, the initial legislation for the parks and boulevards had grossly underestimated the cost of land acquisition and development and overestimated the potential real estate tax increases. Thus work on the parks during the initial decades happened more slowly than anticipated.

In the West Park System the commissioners attempted to get nearly the entire plan underway at once so people throughout the west side would feel as if progress was being made, but were unsuccessful. Despite frequent pleas from both commissioners and the public to focus their efforts in order to complete one area, the commissioners were unable to finish any of the boulevards until more than twenty years had passed.²⁰⁴ Garfield Park and Humboldt Park were both substantially complete by the early 1880s, but Douglas Park remained a work in progress for several more decades. Both commissioners and the press publicly expressed a desire to see one park or one boulevard segment that was complete as planned but the management style, cash flow and neighborhood demands prevented it.

Raising money to develop the park and boulevard system develop was challenging from the beginning and took many years. Since it became clear almost immediately that the proposed funding structure of the original legislation was inadequate, a special bond issue to fund more park and boulevard work was approved in 1879. A second \$1 million bond issue was passed in 1891 in order to bring the system to completion in time for the Columbian Exposition. Although not yet fully landscaped, the majority of the system north of Douglas Park was in use by 1893

The West Park Commissioners placed their park and boulevard system on land west of the Chicago River that was open prairie "without appreciable undulation of surface or a single specimen of forest growth worthy of preserving."²⁰⁵ The lack of topographical features would be the first challenge that Jenney faced. The soils and the drainage were to be equally, if not more, challenging.

The soils were clay and required the addition of enormous quantities of organic material in order to be readied for planting of trees and grass. In dry seasons the soil turned rock hard and in wet seasons it was slippery and heavy. One of the first jobs of the park commissioners was arranging to have trains on their way to the stockyards drop loads of manure at the south end of what was to become Douglas Park. For several decades this

²⁰² West Chicago Park Commission, *Fifth Annual Report*, 2/28/1874, p. 7.

²⁰³ West Chicago Park Commission, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, 2/28/1882, p. 18.

²⁰⁴ West Chicago Park Commission, *Second Annual Report*, 2/28/1871, p.81.

²⁰⁵ West Chicago Park Commission, *Second Annual Report*, (2/28/1871), p. 53.

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compost pile was a major feature of the landscape just north of the Illinois & Michigan Canal. The commissioners also grew corn in the parks in the early years in order to break up the soil and to provide a cash crop.²⁰⁶ Grading, digging, planting and growing were all activities that were essential, but difficult in the tough prairie soils.

The flatness of the terrain meant that there was little natural drainage. Early photographs of the parks show water sitting in pools. It would be necessary to create adequate drainage for both the parks and the boulevards since there were no city drains in this area for many years. The West Park commissioners were challenged by water problems during the early years. In the first year of its existence the West Park commission had three wells drilled: one in each park and one near present-day Sacramento Square (the lowest point in the system). With the city's own sewage system at capacity, drainage also proved to be an enormous headache for the commissioners. It was suggested that the west side would need to build its own sewers (at that point, open ditches) by digging a ditch that would run north and south into the branches of the Chicago River.²⁰⁷ Eventually, however, with the growing awareness of the health hazards of open ditches, drainage would be placed underground in pipes.²⁰⁸

Finally, the distance of the West Park System lands from the core of the city meant that large areas were still in use by farmers. The commissioners had to purchase and install miles of fencing in order to protect their trees, crops and grass from roaming, grazing cattle. Fencing the border of each of the three parks was the first job that was undertaken by the West Park Commission.²⁰⁹

Jenney was responsible for the first park and boulevard plans and it was under his direction that construction got underway. The commissioners themselves were also responsible for much of the day-to-day supervision during these early years.²¹⁰

Construction of the parks and boulevards on the west side seemed to start all at once in the 1870s: wooden curbs were placed, roadways were graded, lawn areas were manured and trees were planted. This work occurred on Humboldt, Sacramento and Douglas Boulevards as well as in Sacramento Square. But none of the boulevards were officially opened in the 1870s. There was still much work to be done, including providing safe crossings for the trains throughout the system.

One of the enduring challenges in the West Park System was the charges of corruption and waste that would plague the commission throughout its 65 year history. In 1877 the Governor would remove and replace the sitting board as a result of both internal and external problems. His actions were challenged in court by some of the commissioners, but the state Supreme Court upheld his authority and the new commission was confirmed in July of 1878. Only three of the members of the previous commission were reappointed. This would happen six more times over the course of the West Park commission's history, sometimes with dramatic reorganization accompanying it. Inevitably the new commissioners would inherit debt and labor problems and, often, neglected parks and boulevards. In 1878 the new commission inherited \$425,000 in debt, leading them to request money

²⁰⁶ West Chicago Park Commission, *Twelfth Annual Report*, 2/28/1881, p.25.

²⁰⁷ West Chicago Park Commission, *Second Annual Report*, (2/28/1871), p.53.

²⁰⁸ West Chicago Park Commission, *Fourth Annual Report*, 2/2/1873, p.52.

²⁰⁹ West Chicago Park Commission, *Second Annual Report*, 2/28/1871, p.77.

²¹⁰ In 1882, the commissioners were asking to hire "a man familiar with surveying, road building and landscape gardening" to relieve them of personal responsibility. West Chicago Park Commission, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, 2/28/1882, p. 8.

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from a new bond issue, the first of many such bail outs that the legislature would need to authorize. Given the turmoil in the West Park Commission it's remarkable that work on the system continued to move forward.

Jenney must have envisioned potential problems; he resigned from his job as superintendent in 1874 to go into private practice once more. His place was taken by his employee Oscar F. Dubuis who was able to survive the political turmoil and remained in charge until 1893. During Dubuis' long tenure the parks and boulevards were substantially developed, often with modifications suggested by him.²¹¹ His work is especially evident in Douglas Park and on all the segments of Southwest Boulevard (Marshall, 24th, California, 31st and S. Western).

The 1880s saw a similar pattern to the '70s: a strong start with little work done after 1883. In 1881 the commissioners were able to reach agreement with four railroads about the location of their crossings on Humboldt, Sacramento, Douglas and Marshall boulevards. This smoothed the way for work to continue on the latter three segments. On Humboldt additional trees were planted and preparation work for the side lawns was complete by the time it was opened to the public in 1882. On Sacramento Boulevard trees were planted but only 11,000' of drive were complete when the railroad crossing at Taylor Street opened in 1885. Similarly, Douglas Boulevard was only partially complete in 1890. On Southwest Boulevard Dubuis created a fresh set of plans in 1886 and work was begun in 1888.²¹² By 1886 Sacramento, Franklin and Independence Squares had been planted and cultivated.

From the beginning the west system seems to have understood that different parts of the boulevards would carry different types of traffic and, therefore, would need different surfacing materials. They expected the main drives on the boulevards to be used primarily by carriages and other horse-drawn passenger vehicles. It was expected that the side drives would receive less traffic but the traffic would include wagons and delivery vehicles. It was understood that providing decent driving surfaces would be key to encouraging real estate development in the area.²¹³ In 1884 the *Chicago Daily Tribune* complained, "Why the West Park Board has such a hard time finding a dressing for its boulevards, while the South and North side people seem to be so successful, I don't understand."²¹⁴

The commissioners had several choices of materials. Packed earth or cinders was the cheapest and easiest road surface, but it did not hold up well to heavy traffic or to rains. Chicago had long favored wooden block paving, or Nicolson pavers, thanks to the ready availability of lumber.²¹⁵ By the time the parks were formed, the blocks were commonly made of cedar to increase their longevity. It is possible that Nicolson pavers were used in numerous places during the West Park System's early years, although the only record we have of them is on the railroad crossing and side drives on Humboldt Boulevard.²¹⁶

As early as 1873, macadam was being used for the central drive on Humboldt Boulevard.²¹⁷ Macadam was an 18th-century invention of Scotsman John Loudon McAdam. Its hard surface was created by laying

²¹¹ Sniderman, Julia Bachrach. *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1990), FII, p.6.

²¹² Today's Marshall, W. 24th, S. California and W. 31st Boulevards.

²¹³ *The Land Owner*, Vol. I, no. 1 (7/1869), p.6.

²¹⁴ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10/5/1884, p.24.

²¹⁵ <http://forgottenchicago.com/features/chicago-infrastructure/wood-block-alleys/>

²¹⁶ West Chicago Park Commission, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, p.80.

²¹⁷ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 5/4/1873, p.2.

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broken stones in “symmetrical, tight patterns” and covering them with smaller stones.²¹⁸ It would remain the greatest advancement in road building well into the 19th century. Macadam was to be the surface most used on the boulevards until the advent of asphalt in the 1890s. In fact, macadam is still in recorded use in the West Park System as late as 1907.²¹⁹ In 1879 the West Park commissioners used a cinder bed with a 7” layer of “rolled cement gravel” surface on Central Boulevard.²²⁰

In 1891, the legislature approved a \$1 million bond issue in order to accelerate construction and prepare the park and boulevard system for the Columbian Exposition.²²¹ Every park and boulevard saw work under this bond issue. Electric lights were added to Humboldt, Sacramento and Douglas Boulevards and roads were improved. It was during this period that the West Park Commission first experimented with cement for roads and sidewalks. As traffic increased earlier surface materials were not holding up well and smoother and sturdier surfaces were needed.

During the feverish activity of the 1890s both macadam and the newer asphalt were used.²²² Asphalt blocks were first used in Paris in 1824, but the modern asphalt road—gravel mixed with hot tar to bind it—did not appear in the United States until 1868.²²³ Much experimentation with various formulations ensued. In 1876 President Ulysses S. Grant urged its use on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., thereby proving its longevity under heavy traffic conditions. By 1910 asphalt was in widespread use throughout the United States. The West Park commission, with heavy road use throughout its system by the 1890s, was quick to adopt this new, durable road surface.²²⁴

In 1910 the West Park commissioners purchased the equipment needed to do its own asphalt paving.²²⁵ This was such a momentous event that for several years photos of the paving crews with this new equipment were featured in the *Annual Reports*.

In 1925 several commissioners went to Kentucky to look at a new type of asphalt that was being used there. With the exponential increase in automobile traffic over the preceding decade, they were in search of a more durable surface. That year they experimented with rock asphalt over the existing macadam surfaces.²²⁶ The nature of this surface is not known, nor do we know whether the commissioners authorized its further use. However, there was a great deal of resurfacing done to the boulevards in 1927 and 1928 and it certainly was some type of asphalt.

Development of the Parks of the West Park System: Douglas Park, Garfield Park, Humboldt Park

Although Douglas Park was one of the three parks originally envisioned in the 1869 legislation that established the West Park System, it was not listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the

²¹⁸ <http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blasphalt.htm?p=1>

²¹⁹ West Chicago Park Commission, *1907 Annual Report*, p.24.

²²⁰ West Chicago Park Commission, *Tenth Annual Report*, 1880, p.8.

²²¹ West Chicago Park Commission, *Twenty-Third Annual Report*, 1892, p.7.

²²² West Chicago Park Commission, *Twenty-fifth Annual Report*, p.79.

²²³ <http://web.archive.org/web/20010124023700/http://rockbinders.com/asphalt.html>

²²⁴ Concrete was never adopted by the West Park Commission for road surfaces, although it began to appear in the 1890s as sidewalk material throughout the system.

²²⁵ West Chicago Park Commission, *1910 Annual Report*, p. 20.

²²⁶ West Chicago Park Commission, *Fifth-Sixth Annual Report*, 2/28/1925, p. 17.

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multiple property nomination form “*The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District.*” It is included in this nomination. Garfield Park and Humboldt Park are being included by reference.

Douglas Park

Early Conception: The Role of William LeBaron Jenney

The chief engineers and superintendents of the West Park System—William Le Baron Jenney, Oscar F. Dubuis, and Jens Jensen—all made major contributions to Douglas Park’s development between the 1870s and 1910s. Douglas Park was conceived as the southernmost of the three original parks of the West Park System. The commissioners named Douglas Park in honor of Stephen A. Douglas (1813-1861), a United States senator who served from 1847 to 1861 and helped bring the Illinois Central Railroad to Chicago. He is well remembered for his pre-Civil War presidential defeat by Abraham Lincoln, despite his superb oratorical skills during the famous Lincoln/ Douglas debates

Jenney drew inspiration from the work of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and from the French parks and boulevards of Jean-Charles Adolphe Alphand and Baron von Haussmann that were under construction when Jenney was a student in Paris in the 1850s. Although Jenney’s original 1871 plan for Douglas Park was only minimally implemented, it clearly conveyed his sources of inspiration. Jenney referenced French design in his use of monumental entrances, formal esplanades and elliptical drives marked with sculptures or fountains, and grand terraces and plazas. Olmsted’s influence was conveyed through a large natural-looking lagoon with a Picnic Island, small grassy meadows, and trees and shrubs used to shape scenic views.

As on the boulevards, Jenney believed that transforming the three natural sites into usable parkland would be challenging. “The unimproved west park sites were flat, swampy, and dreary.”²²⁷ They had poor soil conditions, few trees worth saving, and the most pressing issue—poor drainage. Relying on his engineering expertise, Jenney created artificial lakes “in each park with banks sufficiently raised above the water level to form a reservoir and receive the natural drainage. The earth removed for the formation of these lakes furnished a portion of the material needed to secure graceful undulations of surface.”²²⁸ In Douglas Park, Jenney focused on the northern area, excavating a large portion of the lake and adding wagonloads of sand and manure along its edges. Approximately 66 acres of finished parkland opened to the public in 1879 with formal ceremonies a few years later.

The Role of Oscar F. Dubuis

Oscar F. Dubuis, a Swiss-born engineer who took over from Jenney in 1874, carried on Jenney’s West Park work. Although little is known about Dubuis, some of his work indicates that he considered the natural attributes of the Midwest landscape in his designs. In writing about improving Garfield Park, he asserted: “We must bear in mind that it is obviously impossible to produce in the vicinity of Chicago such scenery as will affect the mind as it is affected by mountain scenery.”²²⁹ He suggested less dramatic topography, and planted masses of wild shrubbery along the edges of the lagoon in Garfield Park.

¹⁹³ Julia S. Bachrach and Jo Ann Nathan, *Inspired by Nature: The Garfield Park Conservatory and Chicago’s West Side*, 2008, p.8.

²²⁸ A.T. Andreas, *History of Chicago From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, v. III, p. 179, 1886.

²²⁹ *Fourth Annual Report of the West Chicago Park Commissioners*, (1883) p.16.

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Dubuis began the next major stage of development for Douglas Park in the mid-1880s. His plan of March 1, 1885, indicates the improvements that had been completed by this date. In this plan Ogden Avenue—which had already existed as a wide, angled thoroughfare outside of the park—now cuts through the park. Running diagonally, the wide road, accommodating a street car line, replaced an earlier winding drive. North of Ogden Avenue, Dubuis' lake occupied a smaller area than had been shown on Jenney's earlier plan. The revised water feature had an undulating shape, with a small bird island and a narrow stream adjacent to a peninsula with winding paths. During this period, improvements to the park also included a barn, greenhouses, a fountain, and a casino building.

By the late 1880s, Dubuis began improving the area south of Ogden Avenue. At this time a portion of the lake represented in his 1885 plan was constructed. In 1888, a formal garden and conservatory were added just to the west of the lake area. Jenney had designed a winter garden/conservatory structure which, unlike the earlier propagating greenhouses, included public display houses.

Activities in the Park

In 1895, members of several German turners' clubs petitioned for an outdoor gymnasium in Douglas Park. This resulted in the construction of one of Chicago's first public facilities with an outdoor gymnasium, swimming pool, and natatorium. It was located on the southwest side of Douglas Park. Rectangular in form, a building designed by architect Frank Randak, surrounded the outdoor swimming pool area. The building (which is no longer extant) provided locker and dressing rooms as well as bathrooms for men and women. The water was heated, and the pool was drained each night to provide fresh water every day. Bathing suits and towels were furnished to the public for free. The adjacent open air gym included an oval cinder running track. Built at the cost of \$46,700.00, this facility was dedicated on August 22, 1896 with ceremonies that attracted a crowd of 15,000.

In addition to gymnastics and swimming, there were a number of other popular activities in Douglas Park in the 1890s. The lagoon was used for boating in the summer and ice skating during wintertime. To cross various portions of the lagoon north of Ogden Avenue, three handsome bridges were constructed. In 1892, a stone and iron carriage drive bridge was constructed as part of the drive that crosses the lagoon. Two footbridges were built later in the decade. One is a granite boulder arched bridge, completed in 1897. The other is a cut stone bridge dating from the same period. A *Chicago Daily Tribune* article stated that "...Douglas Park is rapidly coming to the front as one of the most attractive and popular amusement places in the city."²³⁰

The Role of Jens Jensen

Unfortunately, by the turn of the century, the West Park Commission was riddled with political graft, and the three parks had become dilapidated. Although this derailed progress for a few years, it spurred the next major period of development in Douglas Park, directed by Jens Jensen (1860 – 1951) who eventually became known as "dean of American landscape architecture."²³¹

²³⁰ "Music in the Parks," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 6, 1897, p. 41.

²³¹ Need footnote – either *New York Times* or *Siftings*

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A Danish immigrant, Jensen had settled in Chicago in the mid-1880s and found employment as a laborer for the West Park Commission. This low level job proved to be the beginning of an illustrious career. In 1888, observing that exotic flowers did not thrive in Chicago's climate, Jensen took a team and wagon into the countryside, carting in wildflowers, and transplanting them in Union Park, then headquarters of the West Park System. Although native plants were generally considered weeds, his innovative "American Garden" became quite popular.

Because Jensen adamantly refused to take part in the political corruption of the period he was fired in 1900. To support his growing family, he began designing estates for a few influential clients. Five years later a reform-minded governor, Charles S. Deneen, swept the West Park System clean by appointing an honest and progressive board. The new board selected Jensen as general superintendent and chief landscape architect of the entire West Park System, approved a two million dollar bond issue to fund improvements. Thus began a major period of improvements.

Douglas Park needed a great deal of planting when Jensen took over. Jensen later explained that part of the reason the Douglas Park's landscape needed so much attention was that it suffered from smoke damage caused by factories in the area.²³² In his report of 1918 Jens Jensen noted that it was difficult for him to take photographs to accompany the report since on many days the "heavy clouds of smoke" were "like a dense fog."²³³

Jensen asserted that the need to replant gave him the "opportunity of trying out on a large scale this idea of employing indigenous stock, and all the new shrubbery and trees that we planted were native, and wherever replacements were needed in the older areas these were largely made with indigenous material."²³⁴

In addition to replanting the landscape, Jensen made a major improvement to the deteriorated southern end of the park. He filled in the existing lake and demolished the conservatory, which had fallen into disrepair. This site, with its busy intersection of Ogden Avenue and Sacramento Drive presented a design challenge. Here, in 1907, he placed a long seven-acre formal garden, providing a buffer between the street and a new naturalistic meadow to the south. A concrete Prairie-style pavilion with a grand archway, Flower Hall, marked the entrance to the garden. Although, the designer of this structure is unknown, it was likely Schmidt, Garden and Martin, a firm that designed a number of other Prairie style features in the West Parks during Jensen's tenure. Jensen and Hugh MG Garden were friends and known to work closely together.

In addition to Flower Hall, the Formal Garden had a number of elements composed of concrete such as custom-designed benches and lanterns. Jensen believed that concrete was an excellent material for this garden. In a paper that he presented to a convention of park superintendents he said:

"May we not call this the beginning of the concrete age, and say who can determine the possibilities of the future in this wonderful composition? No other building material has such a broad scope as usefulness as concrete. Its usefulness is almost unlimited..."²³⁵

²³² Ragna Bergliot Eskil, ed. "Natural Parks and Gardens, by Jens Jensen, as Told to Ragna B. Eskil." *The Saturday Evening Post*. Vol. 202, March 8, 1930.

²³³ West Chicago Park Commission, "Special Report," in *1918 Annual Report*, p. 13.

²³⁴ West Chicago Park Commission, "Special Report," in *1918 Annual Report*, p. 13.

²³⁵ Jens Jensen, "Beauty and Fitness in Park Concrete Work," *Park and Cemetery Magazine*, vol. XVIII, Nov. 1908, no. 9, page 435.

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Jensen's paper was published in a magazine article that included photographs of Douglas Park's new benches and Flower Hall pavilion.

One building that was dilapidated beyond repair when Jensen took over was the old Casino. This structure had included a party room and boat house. In 1907, Jensen replaced the building with a Refectory Building, Boat Landing, and Pavilion designed by William Carbys Zimmerman who then served as the Illinois State Architect. "Generally known for his eclectic Revival-style mansions, under Jens Jensen's influence" he created several buildings "in the Prairie style" for the West Park System.²³⁶ Similar to a new Zimmerman-designed building in Garfield Park, the Douglas Park structure had strong horizontal lines with a low hipped roof and arched openings along the edge of the water from which the boats were launched. An adjacent music court was bordered by pergolas and small octagonal pavilions.

Jensen's work during this period included a new Marshall Boulevard entrance into the park. This "distinctive entrance" had an "ornamental gateway, constructed in semi-circular pergola style, with a water basin in front of the pergolas and with heavy concrete posts."²³⁷ A more utilitarian structure built at this time was a brick barn and service yard tucked into the southeast corner of the park. This red brick stables building had an interior area with stalls for horses, with a hay loft above.

Douglas Park after 1910

By the 1910s the neighborhood surrounding Douglas Park was largely composed of Eastern European immigrants. A group of Bohemian Americans formed a committee and raised money for a *Karel Havlicek Monument*, to honor the revered Czech poet, journalist and political martyr. One of three original castings of a memorial by Josef Strachovsky (1850 – 1913), a sculptor from Prague, the *Havlicek Monument* was dedicated just west of the formal garden in 1911.

Douglas Park supported an increasing number and variety of recreational activities. Boating and skating continued to be popular and the lagoon was stocked for fishing as well. The natatorium was a hub for swimming, gymnastics, track and field, and the meadow south of the formal garden had fields for baseball and football.

By 1920 the political winds had shifted once again and Governor Lowden removed all seven members of the West Park Board of Commissioners from office. Aware that he would soon be ousted, Jensen severed his ties with the West Park System for the final time. Over the next few years, only minor updates were made to Douglas Park and by the mid-1920s a new West Park Commission Board believed it necessary to undertake a system-wide program of improvements. They passed a \$10 million bond issue in 1928 and hired Michaelsen & Rognstad, local architects of Norwegian descent, to design twelve buildings throughout the west parks. For Douglas Park, the commissioners allocated just under a half million dollars for a new field house. The architects designed an eclectic Georgian Revival style red brick building with fanciful details. This structure was similar to the new Humboldt Park field house that Michaelsen & Rognstad were designing at the same time. Although the two buildings were not exactly alike, the architects created one set of identical floor plans for both field houses.

²³⁶ Julia S. Bachrach and Jo Ann Nathan, *Inspired by Nature: The Garfield Park Conservatory and Chicago's West Side*, 2008, p. 21.

²³⁷ *Forth-Fourth Annual Report of West Chicago Park Commissioners for the Year Ending December 31, 1912*, p. 38.

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By the early 1930s the West Park Commission was one of twenty-two separate park districts operating simultaneously in Chicago. Along with the problems caused by such an unwieldy number of agencies, there were compelling financial reasons for consolidation. The Great Depression had rendered most, if not all, of these independent districts insolvent. In 1934, all of these agencies were legally consolidated into the Chicago Park District. "Between 1935 and 1941, the Chicago Park District received more than \$82 million in federal funding through Projects Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Projects Administration (WPA). State and City funds increased this total to more than \$100 million. Using these funds, the park district made numerous improvements throughout the system."²³⁸ In Douglas Park, improvements included planting thousands of new trees and shrubs, laying new sidewalks, re-grading the ball fields, rebuilding the running track, and constructing a new Colonial style brick comfort station on the southeast side of the park.

Few alterations or improvements were made to Douglas Park during the WWII period, however; the park was subjected to new pressures in the Post War era. The surrounding neighborhood had a growing population of children as a result of the Baby Boom and other demographic changes. In response to the need for additional and improved recreational facilities, new tennis courts and playgrounds were constructed and the old outdoor swimming pool in the natatorium was replaced with a new modern pool adjacent to the field house. Due to overcrowding in the area schools, community groups lobbied for a new high school, and because there were few large vacant properties available for such a structure, they advocated for its construction in Douglas Park. After years of public conflict for and against this proposal, the Illinois Supreme Court made the final decision approving the use of parkland for the new school in 1970.²³⁹ Occupying a two-acre site, just west of the field house, Collins High School was built in 1973 as a project of the Chicago Building Commission.

In addition to the visual impact of the large high school complex, the Chicago Park District made a few small changes in the 1960s and 1970s that somewhat detracted from the park's historic integrity. These include removing the Havlicek Monument; constructing a utilitarian landscape shed near the formal garden, building a modern comfort station on the west side of the park, and converting a portion of the lagoon into a swimming lake. The purpose of that project was to accommodate west side residents who often had little access to Lake Michigan beaches.

Since the mid-1990s, the Chicago Park District has made several improvements to the park including the restoration of Flower Hall, along with its lighting fixtures and benches; the recreation of historic street lights; new playgrounds; establishment of a junior golf facility adjacent to a "natural no-mow" landscape area; and a new pergola designed in the spirit of the original. In spite of the intrusion of the school building and some loss of historic fabric, Douglas Park remains an extremely important historic resource. It is a rich tapestry representing the work of Jenney, Dubuis, Jensen and other designers as well as reflecting the needs and desires of generations that have used the park over the decades. Douglas Park provides Chicagoans with a link to the past and continues to enrich the lives of neighborhood residents.

Garfield Park

Although Garfield Park was listed on the National Register in 1993 with significance given to both its architecture and its history, it is included by reference in this nomination. Garfield Park is one of the three original parks called for in the 1869 legislation authorizing creation of the West Chicago Park System. The first

²³⁸ Julia S. Bachrach and Jo Ann Nathan, *Inspired by Nature the Garfield Park Conservatory and Chicago's West Side*, 2008, p. 32.

²³⁹ "The Park Lands Fall," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 3, 1970, p. 8.

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plans for it were drawn up by architect and engineer William LeBaron Jenney. Jenney was greatly influenced by 19th-century ideas of naturalistic landscaping and the work of his friend, pioneering landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted. Although Jenney left soon after his original plans were drawn up, they were ably executed, with some later modifications, by his successor, Oscar F. Dubuis. In 1905 Jens Jensen took over as superintendent of the West Park System. Jensen used Garfield Park and Humboldt Park as places to experiment with his ideas of incorporating native plants and stylistically sympathetic structures into the landscape. Today Jensen is well-known as the father of the Prairie style of landscape architecture. In 1908 Jensen replaced the three West Park System conservatories with a single, large conservatory in Garfield Park. Although Garfield Park, like Douglas Park, was impacted greatly by increased traffic and new roads to accommodate the increased number of cars, it continues to be a major urban oasis.

Humboldt Park

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Architecturally and historically significant, Humboldt Park was listed on the National Register in 1992. It is, like Garfield Park, included by reference in this nomination. Humboldt Park was the first park in the West Park System to be completed. Originally designed by Jenney in 1871, it opened to the public in 1877. Like all three of the original landscaped “pleasure grounds” included in Jenney’s plans, Humboldt was meant to be a place of refuge from the city, providing passive recreation among picturesque trees and meandering lagoons. Oscar F. Dubuis, Jenney’s successor as park superintendent, continued Jenney’s work and made several important modifications during the late 1870s and early 1890s. From 1905-1920 Jens Jensen, the creator of the Prairie style of landscape architecture, undertook significant modifications to the park, including a native garden and the addition of Prairie style buildings by Schmidt, Garden & Martin and William Carby Zimmerman. Jensen also added a formal rose garden on the site of a demolished conservatory. Like all of the parks in Jenney’s original plan, Humboldt Park was able to adapt over time to its changing neighborhood, new, more active recreational uses and new styles of landscape architecture.

THE SOUTH PARK SYSTEM: 1893-1934

The South Park system’s Jackson Park was redesigned as the site of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition and the Midway Plaisance was developed as the fair’s amusement area. Following this, both areas were redesigned and completed in the spirit of Olmsted and Vaux’s original 1871 plan. The boulevards were maintained and upgraded with concrete curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Overall, the boulevards changed relatively little, except for Garfield Boulevard. Garfield was reconstructed as a single roadway type within its original boundaries. Railroad crossings were elevated on both Western and Garfield boulevards. Grand Boulevard was beautified at each end with sculpture. The new concept of small parks was realized along the system with the development of McKinley, Gage and Sherman Parks. Substantial effort was invested in adapting the South Park system to the automobile and electricity.

The World’s Columbian Exposition

The World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 was to prove a watershed moment for both Chicago and the nation. The design for the fair was momentous. Its impact was widespread.

The site chosen for the fair was the unfinished location of the South Chicago Park Commission’s Jackson Park and Midway Plaisance. On the large area nearest the lake arose what became known as “the white

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city” or Court of Honor. It was a formal arrangement of the major exhibition buildings, most of which were designed in the Classical style, around a large lagoon that was surrounded by broad terraces and magnificent sculptures. On the Midway the fair’s organizers created a series of ethnic displays and amusements, including an enormous Ferris wheel. These were intended both to entertain and to educate visitors. In the six months that the fair was open, 20 million people from around the world walked through the gates and took away with them a vision of both the “ideal” world of the Court of Honor as well as the “real” world of the Midway Plaisance.²⁴⁰

The success of the fair was a phenomenon, particularly in light of the worldwide financial depression that struck in 1893. The Columbian Exposition was to set the standard for the numerous worlds’ fairs that were to follow. The Beaux Arts plan of the Court of Honor was also to provide the impetus for cities to undertake more professional, formal plans for their civic centers during the early years of the 20th-century.²⁴¹ The neoclassicism of the Court of Honor would lead architects away from the eclecticism of the Victorian era. The fair’s electric lights were an inspiration, showing both homeowners and cities just what the possibilities were for this new, “clean” light. Automobiles, which were to have lasting impacts on the boulevards in Chicago, were first shown as novelties at the fair and it was here that Henry Ford saw the internal combustion engine demonstrated. Lectures, postcards, newspaper coverage and the exhibits themselves were all to spread the influence of the Columbian Exposition far and wide. The fair catapulted Chicago into the top tier of America’s cities, not just because of its burgeoning population or its railroads or its trading volume, but now for its cultural aspirations.

As Burnham and his crews worked feverishly to prepare the fair for its opening on May 1, 1893, the city was experiencing an equally explosive drive to ready itself for this world-class event. Particularly noticeable was the push to improve the city’s streetcar and commuter rail system. Horse cars and omnibuses had been in place in Chicago since 1852, with lines running west from the city center as well as north and south on major arteries like State, Halsted, Ashland and Western.²⁴² On the south side the Chicago City Railway by the 1880s was running the nation’s most extensive cable car system.²⁴³ Traffic congestion on the city’s streets and the cost and sanitation issues of employing horses for streetcar locomotion pushed several entrepreneurs to try to obtain right-of-way and the technology for elevated (“El”) steam-powered railroads. The first passenger El, the “Alley El”, was built in 1888 from downtown Chicago to the south side,²⁴⁴ with electrification following soon after in 1894. Burnham’s plan for the fair included a large rail terminal at the southwest corner of the Court of Honor as well as the two existing stops on the Illinois Central line that ran through the eastern end of the Midway.

The years following the World’s Columbian Exposition saw Chicago continue its upward trajectory: more trade, continued expansion of its rail connections throughout the nation, expansion of its streetcar and el lines, more industry and of course more people to fuel all this economic activity. There was also frenetic real estate activity in the city. From worker housing to mansions, boarding houses to hotels, warehouses to

²⁴⁰ There are dozens of sources for information on the Columbian Exposition, but an excellent summary can be found in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, pp.898-902.

²⁴¹ Rogers, *Landscape Design*, p.368-9.

²⁴² Grossman et al, *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, p.791.

²⁴³ Bruce G. Moffatt, *The “L”: The Development of Chicago’s Rapid Transit System, 188-1932*, Chicago: Bulletin 131 of the Central Electric Railfans’ Association, 1995, pp. 21-26.

²⁴⁴ Known as the Alley L, the line carried its first passenger in May of 1892. It was joined by the line to Logan Square on the northwest side (1890), the Lake Street line to the west (1892), and the Humboldt Park, Garfield Park and Douglas Park lines (1895). Although they struggled to make money throughout their existence, the els continued to extend their lines to reach new residential development into the 1910s.

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skyscrapers, Chicago's building stock grew exponentially throughout the 1890s. This growth would continue right up until World War II to accommodate the many new residents who continued to stream into the city. The population would increase by 500,000 to 600,000 every decade between 1880 and 1930. This would be the period of the most significant building activity along the boulevards and around the parks.

Continued Development of the South Park System:

In the decades between the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and the consolidation of the park districts in 1934, the original boulevards, including the Midway Plaisance, which is already listed on the National Register, retained their basic configuration, established in the 19th-century. The exception was Garfield Boulevard. Modifications were made on a few boulevards, including Grand Boulevard, generally in conjunction with the incorporation of sculpture or traffic control. Some of these modifications involved beautification.

Attention in the first decade of the 20th-century focused on the south end of Grand Boulevard where it widened into the area previously called the "Entrance to Washington Park." The ideals of the City Beautiful Movement which grew out of the 1893 fair inspired civic beautification nation-wide at this time. The experience of the fair for creating an idealized city, one that was more beautiful, functional, orderly and efficient, could be applied to cities throughout the country. In Chicago this urge for beautification and public monuments provided the impetus for numerous sculptures to be placed on the boulevards and in the formal squares that marked the turning points for the boulevard system.

In 1902, organized by civic leader Charles Hutchinson, a group of public-spirited citizens interested in the beautification of the south park system agreed to fund a significant portion of the cost of erecting an equestrian statue of George Washington. The donors were some of Chicago's wealthiest art patrons and powerful civic leaders.²⁴⁵ Designed by nationally renowned sculptor Daniel Chester French, the bronze statue of Washington was a duplicate of one recently erected in Paris. Hutchinson had seen the original in French's Paris studio and decided the same would be appropriate to herald the main entry to Chicago's Washington Park.²⁴⁶ The South Park commissioners committed to funding the remaining cost of the statue and providing the necessary base and site.

Before the statue was erected, however, the South Park commissioners prepared immediate surroundings for it that were suitably "formal, dignified and imposing."

A plan... [was] adopted which provides for a large formal plaza surrounded with close plantation and stone seats with ornamental lamps, and posts at the driveway and walk entrances. The monument will stand in the center of the plaza, on axis of the central driveway of Grand Boulevard, and a new straight driveway leading from the plaza to the park, a distance of 600 feet there connecting with the present park drives. This new drive will be 60' wide with planting spaces and walks 15' wide on either side. Lines of large elm trees will be placed in the planting spaces, and dense plantations will be made back of the

²⁴⁵ The donors included Clarence Buckingham, E.B. Butler, R.T. Crane, B.F. Ferguson, Daniel C. French, William A. Fuller, H.N. Higinbotham, C.L. Hutchinson, Thos. Murdock, Byron L. Smith and Otto Young. .Annual Report of the South Park Commission for the Fiscal Year 1904, Chicago: 1905.

²⁴⁶ Bach and Gray. *A Guide to Chicago's Public Sculpture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983, p. 284.

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walks. These improvements will add greatly to the appearance of this, the main driveway entrance to the park, as well as provide more room for carriages, which was badly need.²⁴⁷

The monument and its new environs, renamed Washington Monument Square, were quietly completed in 1904. Uncharacteristic of the times, the donors requested that no dedicatory or unveiling exercises be held.

In the beginning of the second decade of the 20th-century, at 35th Street, the north end of Grand Boulevard, the oversized fountain installed in the late 1870s was removed. Work began on replacing it with an ornamental fountain that sent a spray of water 20' into the air. This fountain was enclosed by a 4.5' low concrete wall measuring 60' x 80' that was landscaped with trees and shrubs.²⁴⁸

Grand Boulevard's name was changed to South Park Way in 1925, in order to make it uniform with the names of the streets that continued north and south of it²⁴⁹ That same year the area of the boulevard immediately south of the fountain was widened to relieve traffic congestion.

By this time, Grand Boulevard near 35th Street had become home to the elite of the African-American middle class. The growing African-American community lived in the surrounding area. In 1925, their representatives began requesting a site just south of 35th Street on the boulevard to locate a monument commemorating the "Negro" soldiers of the 370th Infantry who had lost their lives in World War I. The monument had been approved by the Illinois General Assembly. Racial tension underlay a controversy over locating the proposed monument on this. The measure finally passed in September 1926 and the monument was erected in 1927. The sculptor was French-born Leonard Crunelle, and the supervising architect was John A. Nyden, then State Architect.

Considerable work took place on Garfield Boulevard. Between 1893 and 1901, the double roadway at the west end of Garfield, from Ashland Avenue to Western Boulevard, was being finished with catch basins, a crushed limestone surface, granite concrete sidewalks and curbs. The median was also being completed.

In 1896 the railroad tracks crossing Garfield were elevated. At the same time, the central portion of the boulevard, between State Street and Princeton Avenue, was reconfigured. The center drive was taken out; the two side drives were widened from 25' to 40', and a median of 90' was established.²⁵⁰ Originally it had a center drive with parallel service roads from State Street west to Ashland Avenue. It was rebuilt to be the same type as both end segments, which had divided drives with a center median. The center median was slightly wider (120') on the reconstructed segment from Halsted Street to Ashland.²⁵¹ The process of achieving a unified roadway was completed in 1905. As the reconstruction progressed, existing utilities were relocated as necessary and electricity was installed.

²⁴⁷ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1903. p. 26.

²⁴⁸ *South Park Commissioners Report for a Period of Twelve Months, from March 1, 1909 to February 28, 1910, inclusive*. Chicago, 1910, pp. 16-17.

²⁴⁹ *South Park Commissioners Report for a Period of Twelve Months, from March 1, 1924 to February 28, 1925, inclusive*. Chicago, 1925, p. 269.

²⁵⁰ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioner of Cook County*, 1895, pp. 12-13.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1901 pp. 10-11..

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By the mid-1920's extensive building construction south of Garfield—much of it attracting workers in industries located north of the boulevard—combined with the long, uninterrupted medians in the western portion of Garfield Boulevard, prompted requests for the cutting of street crossings across the median. Only one, for Hoyne Avenue, was granted. That one took place in 1925. One median crossing had been approved in 1909 to access the entrance to Sherman Park, located on the north side of Garfield Boulevard, at Racine Avenue. Another had been granted further east, in 1904, for Prairie Avenue.

By this same time, the intersection of Garfield Boulevard and Western Avenue had become sufficiently hazardous that the city Alderman ordered the installation of a cautionary traffic signal. After some consideration by the South Park Commission, the intersection was reconfigured in the late 1920s.²⁵² The central median of Western Boulevard was opened to allow direct access for both Garfield Boulevard's roadways to Western Avenue and Western Boulevard. Garfield Boulevard was extended west into Gage Park and slightly west of Western Avenue. Its south drive was widened. At the same time, Western Avenue was widened through Gage Park.

The majority of Garfield Boulevard was in very poor condition by the beginning of the Depression. After this was brought to the Commissioners' attention by County Commissioner Emmet Whalen, the board approved a comprehensive improvement of the south drive of Garfield, from S. Princeton Avenue west to S. Damen Avenue in 1930.²⁵³

Landscape, Hardscape and Utilities

Much of the landscape work along the original boulevards in the years between the Columbian Exposition and the Great Depression was related to maintenance. Dead trees "in the lines" along the boulevards were continually being replaced. The South Park Commission's *Annual Reports* between 1893 and 1909 reveal that elms, poplars, ash and linden remained popular choices.

The South Park Commission continued to operate its own nursery.. In addition to replacement trees, the nursery supplied most of the new trees and shrubs for the medians and parkways along Western and Garfield boulevards as they were completed. Sod for planting spaces on the boulevards where grass seed could not be established was acquired from farms located outside the city.

Plans detailing the plantings on the original boulevards of the South Park system are virtually nonexistent. A rare exception is a 1909 set of Engineering Department drawings of the boulevards which includes a general depiction of their landscape. Grand, Drexel and Oakwood boulevards are shown consistent with their earliest character—formal lines of trees in the parkways along Grand and Oakwood boulevards, and winding paths through informally-placed plantings on Drexel Boulevard. The center median of Garfield Boulevard is shown as having both formal and informal segments. Winding paths, like those through the Drexel Boulevard median, are shown on the Garfield Boulevard median from Princeton to Normal avenues. These were laid down in 1898 when this section of the boulevard was reconfigured.²⁵⁴

²⁵² *South Park Commission Official Proceedings* Vol. 34, Sept 16, 1925 to August 5, 1926, p. 39.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, Vol 38, July 16, 1930, p. 276

²⁵⁴ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1898, pp. 8-9.

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The 1909 annual report noted that floral decoration continued on Drexel Boulevard.²⁵⁵ Flowers were planted on Western Boulevard as well. The northern one-third of its median (approximately from McKinley Park to the Illinois & Michigan Canal) was landscaped informally incorporating winding paths. The *Annual Report* of 1909 commented that "This little park, well supplied with benches and the flowers, is enjoyed by a large number of laboring people from the stock yards and nearby railroad yards."²⁵⁶ By the 1920's, however, most of the outdoor floral display was concentrated on Drexel Boulevard.

As a result of labor shortages during World War I and funding shortages in the early 1920s the maintenance of landscaping suffered. Pollution only exacerbated the situation. The *Annual Report* of 1922 noted that

Maintaining trees, shrubs and flowers is becoming more difficult every year, owing to the atmospheric conditions of Chicago. The number of varieties that do well is getting smaller every year. Some of the most attractive shrubs, the Berberi Thunbergii, Spiraea van Houttei, Indian Currant, etc., will not thrive. Trees such as the Norway Maple, Sugar Maple, Horse Chestnut Birches in variety, cannot be grown successfully any more.²⁵⁷

In 1923 the economic picture for the South Park system improved enough to plant 24,107 shrubs and 749 trees along almost the entire length of Grand Boulevard.²⁵⁸

In the years following the fair the use of concrete for the construction of sidewalks and combined curb and gutter systems was continued and expanded. Cobblestone gutters and stone sidewalks were gradually replaced with the new material. In the 1890s crosswalks of granite concrete were laid across the boulevard medians at the intersections of the various streets. During the financial austerity necessitated during and after World War I, stone sidewalks were maintained by leveling sunken flagstones. By the early 1920s maintenance shifted back to replacing stone sidewalks with concrete

As roadways were constructed or reconstructed in the period between the Columbian Exposition and the Great Depression, utilities such as water and sewer were added or improved. Sixty-five lawn hydrants were added along Grand Boulevard, for example, in 1893.²⁵⁹ Aging segments of these systems were an ongoing issue. In 1910, for instance, 4,000' of cast iron pipe was laid on Garfield Boulevard to replace the old wrought iron pipe and in 1922 "driveway catch basins that had become defective through age" were replaced.²⁶⁰ As new types of utilities, including electricity and telephones, became available during the period, these too were incorporated along or across the boulevards.

Adaptation to New Technology: Electricity, the Automobile

²⁵⁵ *South Park Commissioners Report for a Period of Twelve Months, from March 1, 1908 to February 18, 1909, inclusive*. Chicago: 1909, p.59. In 1909, planted beds on this boulevard totaled 45,000 square feet.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*,

²⁵⁷ *South Park Commissioners Report for a Period of Twelve Months, March 1, 1921 to February 28, 1922*, p.61.

²⁵⁸ *South Park Commissioners Report for a Period of Twenty-four Month, March 1, 1922 to February 28, 1924*, p. 115.

²⁵⁹ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1893, pp.9-10.

²⁶⁰ *South Park Commissioners Report for a Period of Twelve Months, March 1, 1921 to February 28, 1922*, p. 29.

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The Columbian Exposition created hope in the promise of technology for comfort and prosperity in the coming century. Between 1893 and 1934, the South Park System would meet the challenge. Much of its activity on the original boulevards would move past construction to adapting to various aspects of the 20th-century's expanding technologies, electricity and especially the automobile.

This period of time witnessed the transition in the lighting of the parks and along the boulevards to electricity. In 1893 a new electric plant that had opened just the year before was upgraded and a lighting policy was defined. Lamps were to be lit in the parks and on the Midway Plaisance when there was no moon and only until 11 p.m., while the lamps on the boulevards burned from dusk to daylight.²⁶¹ By 1895 387 lights powered from the Washington Park plant were in continual use on Grand, Drexel, Oakwood and the easternmost quarter of Garfield Boulevard as well as along the Midway. Three years later electric lighting service was extended the remaining three-quarters of Garfield Boulevard, but the power for this area was purchased from the Commonwealth Edison Company, whose powerhouse was located at Garfield Boulevard and Wallace Street.

In the first dozen years of the 20th-century the Washington Park power plant continued to be updated and enlarged, permitting the South Park system to extend electric lighting to McKinley Park and along most of the length of Western Avenue. A new powerhouse opened in Washington Park in 1906. In an effort to decide the best type of lighting for permanent use, a variety of lighting methods and materials were temporarily tried out, and gas-filled tungsten lamps were chosen in 1915 to replace all the arc lamps in the system.²⁶² In 1913, the South Park Commission began to buy all its electrical power from the Sanitary District of Chicago.

By the mid-1920s the South Park commissioners began undertaking an extensive rehabilitation of the lighting system in most of the "old parks and boulevards," which involved both retrofitting existing light fixtures and installing new fixtures. Repair work is described in this excerpt from the Commission's 1924 *Annual Report*.

In the old parks and boulevards where the gooseneck type of post is used there is now used an old arc lamp housing... on which a 12" Alba globe is used. We have designed a pendant type fixture to replace these which will be more efficient and with which there will be less possibility of electrical trouble.²⁶³

The pendant fixtures replacing the old arc light hangers were placed on the existing iron lamp posts of the old World's Fair and Brush type.²⁶⁴ Electric fixtures were continually being upgraded.

Existing iron lamp posts and heads were not uniform along the system. Several different types were in use. However, an effort was made for a consistent look along an individual boulevard. Concrete posts, for both street lighting fixtures and traffic safety island were becoming widespread in the 1920s although both pacing and type were selected in response to site needs. Wherever possible, fixtures that were removed from one location were reused in another location.

²⁶¹ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1893, p. 13.

²⁶² *South Park Commissioners Report for a Period of Twelve Months, March 1, 1914 to February 28, 1915*, p. 55. This experiment took place on a short stretch of Michigan Avenue. Flaming arc lamps, tungsten lamps, gas lamps, wooden posts, iron posts, placement at different intervals, and different watts, as well as different globes were tried out before the tungsten lamps were selected and installed throughout the system.

²⁶³ *Report of the South Park Commissioners for a Period of Twenty-four Month, from March 1, 1922 to February 28, 1924*, p. 262.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

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With the 1914 start-up of Henry Ford's production line for automobiles, car ownership was within reach of a much broader group of Americans and sales took off.. Adapting the boulevards to the ever-increasing number of automobiles would be a major issue facing the South Park commissioners during this period. By the middle of the first decade of the 20th-century it was abundantly clear to the staff of the South Park System that the rapidly increasing number of motorized vehicles required a very different road surface than horse-drawn vehicles.

Heretofore the macadam road has been a satisfactory substitute for the ideal good weather pleasure drive, a dirt road. The automobile is so destructive of macadam roads that it is impossible to maintain the surface of such driveways in good condition on any thoroughfare where motor vehicles are extensively used.²⁶⁵

The South Park commissioners undertook a study of surfacing techniques in numerous American cities. After having also conducted tests of a variety of surfaces on different boulevards, by 1907 the South Park commissioners had chosen "bitulithic pavement" which "consist[ed] of crushed stone cemented together with a bituminous concrete largely consisting of tar and covered with a thin coating of fine crushed granite."²⁶⁶

In 1908 the commission's investigation took General Superintendent, J. Frank Foster to Paris for the first International Meeting on Roads. For this event, the government of France invited the leading road builders of the world. Not only was Foster afforded the opportunity to exchange information and ideas with the world's leading government officials and engineers, he was charged by the commissioners with visiting and studying the most important cities of Europe. Accompanied by Daniel Burnham in London and Paris and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., in England, Germany, Austria and France, Foster carried out his assignment to study road construction and maintenance as well as "allied subjects" relevant to the improvement of the South Park system. These included the "construction and usefulness of parks and playgrounds, lighting systems, buildings and various forms of equipment and items of cost."²⁶⁷

Upon Foster's return, experimentation with various kinds of road surfacing continued on the boulevards in an effort to identify a substance that was both long-lasting and affordable. The decision was made in 1910 to choose a 2" surface of asphaltic concrete, the "latest improvement in the development of auto-proof pavement" which

...consist[ed] of crushed limestone and torpedo gravel, mixed and heated in a revolving cylinder and , while hot, combined with liquid asphalt. When thoroughly mixed it is spread over the driveway, rolled and surfaced with a thin topping of asphalt, over which is spread fine crushed granite. Only enough asphalt is used to cement the particles of stone together. The result is a pavement having the appearance of macadam, yet one that so far has been proof against disintegration by the friction and suction of auto tires.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ *Report of the South Park Commissioners for a Period of Fifteen Months from December 1, 1906 to February 29, 1907*, p.37.

²⁶⁶ *Report of the South Park Commissioners for a Period of Fifteen Months from December 1, 1906 to February 29, 1907.*, p.16.

²⁶⁷ *Report of the South Park Commissioners for a Period of Twelve Months from March 1, 1908 to February 28, 1909*, p. 9.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1915, p. 55

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Thereafter, the South Park commissioners carried out a policy of surfacing as much of the main drives each year as the budget permitted. The new asphaltic concrete surface was made in the South Park system's own mixing plant and placed on the original macadam foundation, with all work initially being done by the Commission's work force.²⁶⁹ Because of financial and labor shortages after World War I, however, by the early 1920s the majority of this work was being contracted out. By the mid-1920s some sections of the original boulevards were being reconstructed with 2" of asphaltic concrete on a new concrete base.

The proliferation of the automobile and the improvement of road surfaces that enabled higher speeds necessitated the development of specialized traffic controls. In the first decade of the 20th-century "safety islands" were constructed in the center of boulevard roadways at intersections "for the purpose of compelling vehicles to keep on the right side of the driveway when turning these corners, and requiring them to lessen their speed."²⁷⁰ The islands consisted of concrete platforms equipped with "electric lights in red globes on 10' posts." The original boulevards were some of the first streets where they were installed. The early cast iron posts were generally replaced with concrete posts in the 1920s.

The need for traffic signs, in addition to safety islands, can be understood in light of this 1914 vignette:

The remarkable increase in the number of automobiles using the park and boulevard driveways had not only congested the traffic greatly, but has added very considerably to the danger to those having to pass over the drives either on foot or in vehicles. The policing of the drives requires many more officers than heretofore and despite their best efforts many car drivers are constantly violating the law as to speed, noise and smoke, making the drives dangerous, almost intolerably noisy and exceedingly malodorous to users as well as the residents²⁷¹

By the early 1920s stop signs were being installed, as were automatic "stop and go" signals. The South Park commissioners investigated two different types of "stop and go" lights, and chose the more visible but expensive "lens" type that displayed red and green lights, over the "shield type" that displayed the words "stop" and "go." A few manufacturers erected demonstration models of the lens type. General Superintendent Foster counseled the desirability of uniformity in the signals throughout the boulevards, so a single style was chosen for the system. Other signs installed during this decade included "one way," illuminated directional signs and other traffic-related signs with special wording. Signs unrelated to traffic generally were not permitted. Railroads, for instance, were not allowed to advertise their line on the elevated track bridges. The South Park Commission cooperated with the Illinois Division of Highways, placing signs locating the routes of the fledging state highways where they traversed boulevards, but these were kept to a minimum

Rail Crossing Safety and Grade Separation

From the mid-1890s until the mid-1920s, the elevation of railroad crossings constituted major projects along the original boulevards of the South Park system. Most of this work was executed between 1896 and 1913. The issue of railroad crossings as a traffic bottleneck and especially as a cause of pedestrian and motor vehicle accidents was a major source of city-wide concern during the period²⁷²

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1911, pp. 18-19.

²⁷⁰ *Annual Report of The South Park Commission for the Fiscal Year 1906*, p. 27.

²⁷¹ *Report of the South Park Commissioners for a Period of Twelve Months from March 1, 1913 to February 28, 1914*, p.50.

²⁷² This fact was underscored by its being addressed in Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago. .

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The majority of railroad crossings in the south park district were located on Garfield and Western boulevards. On Garfield Boulevard, there were five crossings for seven railroads. On Western there were three crossings for six railroads. One railroad line also crossed both Grand and Drexel boulevards. The earliest elevations, in 1896 and 1898, were executed in conjunction with the reconfiguration of Garfield Boulevard from a center drive to parallel drives. These elevations involved three railroads located on the eastern end of Garfield.²⁷³ Multiple tracks, necessary to accommodate the factories being constructed along Western Boulevard and in the Central Manufacturing District south of 39th Street, made for especially problematic intersections. Reporting in 1904 on the near-completion of the elevation of multiple adjacent sets of tracks across Western Boulevard near 39th Street the South Park commissioners noted that “This will be a very great improvement, as the crossing was one of the most dangerous in the South Park System.”²⁷⁴ The elevation of the single rail line (Chicago Junction Railroad) across Grand and Drexel boulevards was completed in 1907. These changes were enormously complex, involving negotiations with several railroads. The solution was construction of multiple viaducts.

The railroad bridges constructed between the 1893 Columbian Exposition and World War I were completed during a decade-and-a-half of concentrated activity. Their physical appearance is similar to the requirements of the ordinance passed by the South Park commissioners in 1902 pertaining to the elevation of the Panhandle Railroad across Western Avenue. The ordinance provided for

...the erection of ornamental steel or iron structures with spans of sufficient length to permit the park driveway to pass beneath the structures without obstructing supports therein. All supports for the structures within the boulevard are to be iron or steel columns, thus providing for the maximum of light and air beneath the bridges at all points. The floors are to be water-tight and as nearly noiseless as possible. The structure is to be similar to the Pittsburg, Ft Wayne and Chicago RR Co structure at its crossing of Garfield Blvd.²⁷⁵

Additional Parks in the South Park System: Gage Park and McKinley Park, Sherman Park

Although the South Park System created by the 1869 legislation was conceived to include only South Park (renamed Washington Park, Jackson Park and the Midway Plaisance) and its adjoining boulevards, within a short period of time efforts were underway to create additional parks. Both Gage Park, which dates to the mid-1870s, and McKinley Park, begun in 1901, resulted from these efforts. Gage and McKinley parks are significant historic properties created by Chicago’s South Park System, however, they were not listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the multiple property nomination form *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*. Sherman Park, which dates from 1904, was listed as part of the multiple property nomination.

Gage Park

²⁷³ The paired track were the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad, & the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne and Chicago tracks near Stewart Avenue.

²⁷⁴ *Report of the South Park Commission to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1904, p. 32.

²⁷⁵ *Report of the South Park Commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners of Cook County*, 1902, p. 6.

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Gage Park began in the 1870s as a small green square at the intersection of S. Western Avenue and Garfield Boulevard. It sat precisely at that turning-point of the southwesterly end of the South Park Commission's portion of Chicago's boulevard system. In 1873, the commissioners decided to acquire land adjacent to this intersection to create a 20-acre park. Two years later, as land acquisition was underway, one of the board members, George W. Gage died in office, and the remaining commissioners adopted a resolution naming the unfinished 20-acre park in his honor.²⁷⁶

Born in Massachusetts, George W. Gage (1812- 1875) came to Chicago with his brother David in 1853. They became the proprietors of the Tremont House, making it one of the area's most successful hotels, and George W. Gage went on to own a second hotel. A public-spirited citizen, Gage served as a member of the South Park Board of Commissioners from its inception in 1869 to his death in 1875. Described as "an energetic, thorough, and intelligent member of the commission," he served as board's auditor for three years during this period.²⁷⁷

Although the commissioners had acquired the 20-acre site by the time of Gage's death, it remained largely unimproved for the following two decades. Frustrated by the parks unfinished condition, surrounding residents made repeated requests for improvements. In 1899, the commissioners agreed to devote \$14,000 to Gage Park. When construction hadn't materialized by the following year, a large group attended a meeting of the commissioners "to protest against the delay of the South Park board in making promised improvements."²⁷⁸

As a result of the community's complaints, the commissioners adopted an improvement plan for the Gage Park in early 1901. Because the relatively small site was "bisected on the north and south by Western Avenue," the commissioners believed it "impossible to create a park with much, if any, landscape effect."²⁷⁹ South Park Commission in-house designers produced the improvement plan. Although modest in its scope, the design included a sunken garden with a formal reflecting pool and colonnade, as well as several features that were innovative for the time—"suitable playground" areas for baseball and lawn tennis, a wading pool and a sand court.²⁸⁰

McKinley Park and the Small Parks Movement

During this period, the South Park Commissioners were concerned that the existing parkland could no longer satisfy the needs of all of the people they served. The city had experienced tremendous industrial growth and the population was surging. In 1869, when Chicago's original three park commissions were formed, the city's population was 300,000. By 1900, that figure had increased to 1.7 million, and at that time nearly 750,000 people lived a mile away or farther from any park.²⁸¹

Aware of the deplorable living and working conditions and lack of open spaces in the tenement districts within its jurisdiction, the South Park Commission drafted a bill that would empower it to build new parks for

²⁷⁶ *Report of the South Park Commissioners from December 1, 1874 to December 1, 1875*, p. 6.

²⁷⁷ "George W. Gage," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 26, 1875, p. 12.

²⁷⁸ "Criticize A Park Board," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 15, 1900, p. 1.

²⁷⁹ *Report of the South Park Commissioners from December 1, 1900 to December 1, 1901*, p. 10.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ Dwight Heald Perkins, *Report of the Special Park Commission to the City Council of Chicago on the Subject of a Metropolitan Park System*. Chicago: 1904, 39.

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the first time in 30 years. The act, approved by the State Legislature in 1899, allowed for the creation of new parks if they were contiguous to an existing park or boulevard. Before the commissioners could develop a whole series of new parks, they wanted to experiment with some of the playground features that they had been considering. In January of 1901, the South Park Commission acquired a 34-acre site adjacent to a boulevard—S. Western Avenue—north of Gage Park. Known as Brighton Park, the property had previously been the site of the old Brighton Race Track. In October of 1901, the South Park Commission officially named it in honor of President William McKinley (1843 -1901), shortly after his assassination. South Park Commissioner Daniel F. Crilly said “As McKinley was a man of the people, so will McKinley Park be a park for the people.”²⁸²

Located in an overcrowded immigrant neighborhood near the Union Stock Yards, McKinley Park was meant to serve as an experiment for the new neighborhood park concept. Created by South Park Commission designers, McKinley Park’s plan included a 15-acre ball field, 5-acre lawn tennis meadow, swimming and wading lagoons with locker and changing rooms. Though smaller in scale, Gage Park’s playground features were also experimental in nature. J. Frank Foster, General Superintendent of the South Park System, strongly believed that playground components would be highly beneficial to the rapidly growing areas near the boulevards. In the spring of 1903 as the improvements to both Gage and McKinley Parks were underway Foster said “McKinley Park, which will be completed shortly, and Gage Park will be as nearly ideal as the South Park Commissioners can make them. The establishment of playgrounds is the best investment a municipality can make.”²⁸³

That June, the South Park Commission dedicated McKinley Park with a celebration attended by 10,000 people. Henry G. Foreman, President of the South Park Board of Commissioners gave the address, stating:

We are not simply dedicating a new park; we are doing much more than that... We are celebrating the start of a new era of park building in this city. McKinley Park, which heralds the new era, has been created almost by magic. Two years ago this site was a cabbage patch. Today...McKinley Park is adapted to the needs of the people of this district. More that is of actual use to the local population is provided here than in any other park in Chicago.²⁸⁴

The success of McKinley Park prompted the commissioners to move quickly in its effort to create a whole system of neighborhood parks that would provide beautiful landscapes, recreational programs and social services to the densely populated neighborhoods on the city’s south side.

The South Park Commission had secured enabling legislation in 1901 that allowed it to issue bonds to acquire and improve new parks. This law stipulated that the proposed parks had to be contiguous to an existing boulevard and could not be more than ten acres in size. In 1902, the commissioners brought the proposal before public referendum, receiving strong public support. The following year, the South Park Commission went to the State Legislature to amend the 1901 act. The 1903 amendment, known as the Lundberg Act, removed the size limitation, allowed the park commissioners to locate the new parks anywhere in their district and authorized the issuance of bonds. With the legal authority and funding in place, the commissioners could now move ahead on plans to build 14 pioneering neighborhood parks throughout the district.

²⁸² “Name Park for M’Kinley,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 10, 1901, p. 4.

²⁸³ “Play Lots A Crime Cure,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 19, 1903, p. 12.

²⁸⁴ Address of Henry G. Foreman, President of the South Park Commissioners, on the Occasion of the Dedication of McKinley Park, June 13, 1903 (in holdings of the Chicago Park District Special Collections).

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As explained in the multiple property form, J. Frank Foster was largely responsible for conceiving the neighborhood park concept²⁸⁵ Foster believed that the new parks could function as neighborhood centers and uplift and improve the lives of the residents of the overcrowded tenement districts. He suggested that in addition to the ball fields, swimming and wading pools, tennis lawns that had been tested in McKinley and Gage parks, the new parks should also offer a variety of other features. These included separate outdoor gymnasiums for men and women, running tracks, children's sand courts, and a new type of building, the field house. Based on the precedent of Chicago's settlement houses, these innovative parks buildings "would provide athletic, educational, recreational programs and social services throughout an entire year."²⁸⁶ This was particularly useful because Chicago's cold climate had traditionally limited the use of the parks between the late fall and early spring.

In 1905, as efforts were underway to create a system of 14 new neighborhood parks, the South Park Commissioners dedicated a monument to President William McKinley in McKinley Park. Commissioner Crilly had organized a committee of 35 prominent Chicagoans including department store magnate Marshall Field and Charles Dawes, a banker who went on to become a United States vice president. As part of the fund-raising effort, the South Park Commissioners agreed to melt down an old, universally disliked bronze statue of Christopher Columbus in Grant Park, reducing the cost of the new sculpture by \$2,500. Sculptor Charles J. Mulligan (1866-1916) depicted McKinley with one hand on a desk and the other holding the pages of a speech advocating the famous Tariff Act which he presented to congress in 1890. Mulligan's bronze figure stands on an elegant exedra designed by architects Hunt & Hunt. More than 5,000 people attended the dedication for the statue on July 4, 1905.²⁸⁷

The South Park Commission had hired the Olmsted Brothers landscape architects and architects D.H. Burnham and Company to create plans for the entire system of new neighborhood parks. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. had retired in 1898 because of declining health and his practice was carried on by his two sons, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and his half-brother, John Charles Olmsted, who formed the Olmsted Brothers firm that year. By the end of 1905, the first 10 of these parks had opened to the public. Although some of them were located in close proximity to McKinley Park, it was still heavily used by nearby residents. In fact, during the summer of 1905, more than 92,500 people used the swimming and wading pools.²⁸⁸

McKinley Park was so intensely used that in 1906 the commissioners undertook a major expansion to the park. They acquired an adjacent 40-acres east of the original site, more than doubling its size. In-house designers created the expansion plan and construction began in October of 1906. The plan incorporated the existing lawn tennis area, ball field, swimming lagoon and locker facility of the original park. It also retained the earlier irregularly-shaped wading pool, but significantly expanded the waterway by connecting in to a large meandering lagoon intended for boating in the summer and ice skating in the winter. The lagoon had a number of small wooded islands. Along the southwest side of the lagoon extension, the designers created a formal

²⁸⁵ Sniderman, Julia Bachrach and Will Tippens. *Chicago: The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*. National Park Service Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1990. Section FIII, p. 11.

²⁸⁶ Julia Sniderman Bachrach, *The City in a Garden: A Photographic History of Chicago's Parks*, Center for American Places, Harrisonburg, VA: 2001, 12.

²⁸⁷ Julia Bachrach, *Web-Based Guide to Chicago's Fountains, Sculptures and Monuments*, 2010. Available at <http://www.cpdit01.com/resources/planning-and-development.fountains-monuments-and-sculptures/McKinley%20Park/William%20McKinley%20Monument.pdf>

²⁸⁸ *Annual Report of the South Park Commissioners for the Fiscal Year 1905*, p. 61.

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walkway with urns and ample space for a band stand. This connected to winding paths that encircled the lagoon and an adjacent meadow and led to a tree-lined drive.

While this plan also incorporated a children's playground and open air gymnasiums for men and women, it did so within a naturalistic landscape. J. Frank Foster emphasized the importance of providing the new recreational features without forfeiting the kind of beautiful scenery that could be found in Jackson and Washington Parks. He suggested that if properly designed, parks could provide "the enjoyment of all outdoor sports without interfering with the natural beauties or lessening the enjoyment of those who come to the park for the purpose of reaching, as nearly as it is possible for them to reach, the country."²⁸⁹

Constructed between 1906 and 1909, McKinley Park's expansion included the installation of more than 18,000 trees and shrubs.²⁹⁰ Following the 1906 plan, the work included the installation of gymnastic apparatus in the open air gymnasium spaces located in the older section, on the southwest side of the park. The children's area, adjacent to the wading pool, was equipped "with all the apparatus to be found in the other park playgrounds."²⁹¹

In the next several years McKinley Park was well-used by the surrounding community. Considering the numerous field houses located in nearby neighborhood parks, area residents became increasingly aware of their need for a similar facility. Although D.H. Burnham & Company had prepared sketches of a recreational building for McKinley Park years earlier, the commissioners had never pursued it.²⁹² In January of 1916, the South Park Commission received a petition from the Fifth Ward Civic League requesting the construction of a field house in McKinley Park. Stating that "the fifth ward is the only cosmopolitan ward in the city without a field house," the petitioners explained that "since the park is centrally located it offers an excellent location for a field house."²⁹³

A month later, after several prominent citizens appeared before the board to make a similar request, the commissioners adopted a resolution to build a gymnasium facility in McKinley Park. That March, Henry E. Legler of the Chicago Public Library wrote asking the commissioners to include "suitable library quarters" in the new building.²⁹⁴ They agreed to this request and instructed the staff to prepare detailed plans for a field house with a budget of approximately \$160,000. The plans were developed under the supervision of Chief Engineer Linn White (1864 – 1949).

Linn White began working in the South Park Commission's engineering department in 1904, and was promoted to the position of chief engineer by 1909. He remained in this position until the consolidation of the Chicago Park District in 1934. He spent the following several years as consulting engineer to the Chicago Park District and retired in 1940. In a New York Times obituary, White was described as a "leading figure in the negotiations with railroads that resulted in the 1919 ordinance for Chicago's downtown and South Side lake shore improvements."²⁹⁵ Linn White had work closely with D.H. Burnham and Company on the design and

²⁸⁹ J. Frank Foster, "An Article on Small Parks," presented to the Chicago Society for School Extension, April 18, 1903.

²⁹⁰ *Annual Report of the South Park Commissioners* for a Period of Twelve Months from March 1, 1908 to February 28, 1909, p. 93.

²⁹¹ *Report of the South Park Commissioners* for a Period of Fifteen Months from December 1, 1906 to February 29, 1908, p. 35.

²⁹² *South Park Commissioners Proposed Buildings for Recreative Centre, McKinley Park*, Chicago, D.H. Burnham & Co. n.d.

²⁹³ Minutes of the South Park Commissioners, v. 23, January 19, 1916, p. 68

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, March 6, 1916, p. 149.

²⁹⁵ *New York Times*, January 14, 1949.

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construction of the earlier field houses and he was also quite knowledgeable about the use of exposed aggregate concrete, the material from which they were built. In fact, White published an article entitled “The Treatment of Concrete Surfaces” in 1907.²⁹⁶

White was clearly influenced by the D.H. Burnham & Company buildings of a decade earlier for his design of the McKinley Park field house of 1916. Like the earlier field houses, the building was rendered in the neo-classical style, which Burnham so favored. Mirroring many of the original field houses, it included a spacious lobby, two gymnasiums, locker and bathroom facilities, club rooms, an assembly hall, and a library. The McKinley Park field house was also composed of exposed aggregate concrete, sometimes called “marblecrete” or “popcorn concrete.” Considered an innovative building material at the time, the concrete structures could be constructed quickly, relatively inexpensively, and ornamentation could be molded directly into facades. The project also included the construction of a boiler house building, expressing a utilitarian design similar those designed by the Burnham for the neighborhood parks.

Gage Park and the Small Parks Movement

While the McKinley Park community members had been requesting a field house, residents near Gage Park felt that they needed additional green space for their park. A delegation of seventy people including Ex-Governor Charles Deneen and a member of the Chicago Board of Education attended a South Park Commission board meeting in 1916 to request an expansion to the park. The group stated that Gage Park “in its present state is entirely too small for the neighborhood.” They explained, “all the lawn space is taken up by tennis courts, baseball grounds, and a children’s wading pond, the rest is closely planted with shrubbery and trees,” and that “there is not any space for picnics or for people seeking a restful enjoyments and recreation so necessary in the strenuous city life.”²⁹⁷

The commissioners complied with this request and acquired an additional 9.75 acres of property on the southwest side of Gage Park in 1916. The extension involved razing a row of houses on S. Artesian Avenue. Local groups suggested that the commissioners should retain the house at 5536 S. Artesian, described as a “good building” with heating and gas lighting for use as a club house.²⁹⁸ The commissioners agreed in 1917, and although local community members expected that it would soon be replaced with a real field house, the club house continued to be used for more than eight years.

By 1920, area residents were becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of new facilities in Gage Park. In response J. Frank Foster presented a plan for the park to the Board of Commissioners that included a swimming pool with dressing booths, outdoor gymnasiums for men and women, a children’s playground and a field house. The commissioners approved the plan on August 20, 1920, with the exception of the field house.²⁹⁹ The project involved filling the irregularly shaped wading pool and constructing a rectangular swimming pool with a classically inspired dressing room building.

The need for a field house remained strong, and the community continued pressing for the construction of such a facility. In 1924, the South Park Commissioners received petitions signed by more than 2,500

²⁹⁶ *The American Architect and Building News*, May 4, 1907

²⁹⁷ Minutes of the South Park Commissioners, v. 24, Oct. 18, 1916, p. 1.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, v. 25, November 21, 1917, p.3.

²⁹⁹ Minutes of the South Park Commissioners, v. 27, August 20, 1920, p. 178.

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individuals including many teachers and children from nearby Gage Park School.³⁰⁰ Over the next year, many additional community members and groups continued making field house requests. The commissioners finally agreed, and Linn White had his staff prepare plans and specifications for a field house in Gage Park, approved by the board in 1926.

Like the McKinley Park field house which was designed a decade earlier, the Gage Park field house was rendered in a neo-classical style and was also built of exposed aggregate concrete. Although also one story in height, it is somewhat larger and more monumental in scale than McKinley Park's field house. The Gage Park's building had a construction budget of \$335,000, which was substantially higher than that of McKinley Park. The large field house had an assembly hall, indoor gymnasiums, locker and shower rooms, welfare rooms, club rooms, and a library. The project also included the construction of a boiler house on the southwestern side of the park. Both buildings were completed in 1928.

Three years later, the South Park Commissioners hired artist Tom Lea to paint a mural that would adorn the interior of the field house auditorium. More than two decades earlier, a member of the South Park Board, Judge John Barton Payne, had established an art fund to beautify the interior of field houses in the district. Although Payne was no longer a member of the board, the fund was still in effect, and Lea was paid several hundred dollars for the Gage Park Mural.

Born and raised in Texas, Tom Lea (1907 – 2001) came to Chicago to study at the School of the Art Institute under the renowned muralist John Warner Norton. A couple years later, Lea became Norton's apprentice and went on to establish himself as a mural painter and commercial artist in Chicago, eventually moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico. For the Gage Park project, Lea portrayed "French explorers, fur traders, and missionaries René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle, Jacques Marquette and others who first traveled to the Chicago area, and the pioneering families who later came by covered wagon and settled there" with a heavenly figure in the clouds pointing westward.³⁰¹

Gage Park and McKinley Park: Post 1930

By the early 1930s there were 22 separate park districts operating simultaneously in Chicago, including the South Park Commission. The Great Depression rendered all of these independent agencies financially insolvent. To gain access to federal funding through President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, voters approved the Park Consolidation Act of 1934, through which the South Park Commission was unified into the Chicago Park District, along with the 21 other independent park districts.

Between 1935 and 1941 the combination of federal, state, and city funds spent on Chicago's parks totaled more than \$100 million. As "park facilities and landscapes were in various states of completion and disrepair, a significant portion of WPA funds allowed a flurry of construction and improvement projects."³⁰² Chicago Park District staff members did nearly all of the planning, engineering, design, and construction work for these projects. Work in both McKinley and Gage parks included conditioning lawn and the ball fields, planting thousands of new shrubs and flowers, laying sidewalks, building additional tennis courts, and installing

³⁰⁰ Minutes of the South Park Commissioners, v. 32, December 17, 1924, p. 362.

³⁰¹ Mary Lackritz Gray, *A Guide to Chicago's Murals*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 174.

³⁰² Julia Sniderman Bachrach, *The City in a Garden: A Photographic History of Chicago's Parks*, Center for American Places, 2001, p. 24.

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lighting. Also in McKinley Park, work included constructing a new parking lot and remodeling the locker and changing room building next to the swimming lagoon.

During the late 1930s McKinley and Gage Parks offered a large menu of programs and activities to their surrounding communities. They both had broad and varied sports programs including swimming, tennis, softball, football, ice skating, and archery. Drama and social dancing were offered at both parks, and McKinley had folk dancing as well. In addition, McKinley Park offered several music programs such as chorus and orchestra. The Chicago Park District provided an extensive array of arts and crafts classes at both parks including pottery, model yacht and airplane making, woodworking, kite making, leather craft, weaving, sewing, and quilting. Gage Park also had its own Drawing and Painting Club that met several times a week and exhibited in its own club room in the basement of the field house.³⁰³ This club may have been responsible for creating a mural which was painted directly on the wall of the first floor library room (now an office). It depicts an Eastern European family and their folk traditions.

Alterations or improvements to McKinley and Gage Parks slowed during the WWII period, however; during the Post War era, the Chicago Park District began focusing on modernizing the parks often to accommodate recreational programs. Unfortunately, some of these changes had a negative impact on the historic fabric of the parks. In 1950, the park district filled in the old naturalistic swimming pool in McKinley Park and built a new rectangular pool south of the field house. At that time, the historic changing room building was partially demolished and the remaining portion was converted into a trades facility.

In the late 1950s, the Chicago Department of Transportation sliced through the southeast side of McKinley Park's landscape to make way for a ramp providing an express route from S. Damen Avenue to W. Pershing Road. Not only did this truncate the park's landscape, but it also required the filling of the southeastern side of the lagoon. In Gage Park, the Chicago Park District built a handball court in the men's open air gymnasium in 1950. A decade later, the sunken lily pool was filled in, and made into a lawn area.

In recent years, some additional facilities have been added to the parks with less impact on the parks' historic character. In the mid-1990s, the park district built an ice skating rink and an interactive water playground in McKinley Park. At the same time, the lagoon underwent a major renovation project featuring improved access to fishermen. In 2008, the park district installed an artificial turf soccer field in the old children's playground area, with support from the Parkways Foundation.

Over the years, McKinley and Gage Parks have continuously provided a variety of athletic, recreational, social, and educational programs and services to the community. Although they have adapted to current times, the parks retains a good deal of historic fabric. McKinley and Gage Parks offer many of the same kinds of programs as were historically provided such as archery, basketball, football, swimming, gymnastics, and arts and crafts. They also respond to special needs by including therapeutic recreation programs— both parks offer Special Olympics gymnastics programs and Gage has a number of classes for people with disabilities. Today, McKinley and Gage Parks provide Chicagoans with valuable links to the past and continue to enrich the lives of neighborhood residents

Sherman Park

³⁰³ "Tribunes Color Photos Feature Gage Park Show," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 3, 1937, p. SW 4.

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Collaboratively designed in 1904 by landscape architects the Olmsted Brothers and D.H. Burnham & Company architects, Sherman Park is one of the seminal and best preserved of the South Park Commission's neighborhood parks. This type of park reflected a significant change, after 1900, when small parks were created in crowded areas to serve the recreational, social and educational needs of residents living far from the original large 1869 parks. Sherman Park was listed on the National Register in 2004 as part of the *Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*. Sherman Park's relatively large 60-acre site and high water table initially inspired a formal design with an extensive water system as its central element. In an effort to reduce costs and increase space for ball fields, this design was revised to be more naturalistic, with a meandering lagoon surrounding a large central island; a formal complex of buildings, including a field house, was only provided at the north end of the park. The interior of the field house was decorated with murals executed by Chicago Art Institute students paid for from a fund established by South Park Commissioner Judge John Barton Payne.. Sherman Park was named in honor of John B. Sherman, founder of the nearby Union Stock Yards, a South Park Commissioner for twenty-five years, and father-in-law of the park's famous co-designer Daniel Burnham.

Most of this rectangular park is located within a ring road that contains a meandering lagoon with a large central island. This area, like its gently rolling perimeter, is naturalistically planted. In contrast, the north edge of the park is more formal, with classically-detailed buildings symmetrically arranged around a central swimming pool.

THE WEST CHICAGO PARK SYSTEM: 1893-1934

During this period the streets and final route of the West Chicago park and boulevard system were completed. Electricity, new concrete sidewalks and additional landscaping were introduced. Corruption, as well as financial and legal challenges continued to be a problem, with resulting neglect system-wide. Conditions changed considerably in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century under the direction of Jens Jensen, who was made superintendent in 1905. Jensen's signature prairie features were added and sculpture was placed in parks and squares. Railroad crossings were elevated, many on viaducts with attractive ornamental treatments. Considerable effort was invested in adaptation to the automobile, including improved road surfaces, modification of road and square configurations and the addition of traffic signals.

Continued Development of the West Park System

Following the World's Columbian Exposition, extensive residential development would finally reach the parks in the West Park System, filling the many empty lots that still existed on the far west side in the early 1890s. This new burst of development would make completion of the entire parks and boulevard system absolutely essential. Unlike the South Park system, the West Park System was not completely laid out by 1893, with much work to be done well into the third decade of the 20th-century. In the *Logan Square Boulevards Historic District* significant improvements began in the 1890s. This is true for the rest of the West Park System.

Because so much work had been done to prepare the parks and boulevards for the 1893 Columbian Exposition one would expect the latter half of the 1890s to be a period of relative quiet in the West Park System.. On the contrary, the commissioners were busy improving the existing system and making plans for the few sections that were not yet complete. They introduced electric lights to the boulevard system. They also

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oversaw the planting of thousands of shrubs on the boulevards that had broad central lawns. The commissioners were active, but their financial and political problems persisted.

Although corruption, finances and legal challenges had been problems within the West Park System from its very inception, by 1899 the situation was becoming untenable and the resulting neglect of the park system as a whole was obvious to everyone.³⁰⁴ Irrigation pipes were laid but were not hooked up. Trees, shrubs and flowers were planted but not well maintained. Lawns looked tired, where they existed at all. The conversion from gas to electric lights was moving slowly. Some of the roadways were still paved with the old cedar blocks. Enforcement of traffic laws on the boulevards was lax, making them increasingly dangerous as the first automobiles began to appear in the city.

Despite all this, however, the West Park commissioners were able to complete considerable work during the final decade of the 19th-century. In the 1890s on Humboldt Boulevard 4000 shrubs were planted in the center lawns, new concrete cross walks were laid, a new railroad viaduct was built and the existing gas lamps were refurbished while the commissioners wondered how they would pay to introduce electricity.

On Sacramento Boulevard major changes were needed to accommodate increased traffic and new plans were drawn up in 1896. By the end of the 19th-century Sacramento had become a major north-south artery through the west side. South of Humboldt Park drivers encountered a series of closely-spaced traffic obstacles: a railroad viaduct, the square, a sharp right turn, another square, and a sharp left to go through Garfield Park. Once inside the park, there was no convenient through street: drivers had to jog west to pick up S. Hamlin Boulevard. If one tried to proceed on a more direct route through Sacramento Square one immediately encountered another major railroad crossing south of the square. In order to solve this traffic problem, the West Park Commission decided to acquire all of Sacramento Avenue from the city in order to create a true north-south boulevard that would bypass Garfield Park and lead directly from Humboldt Park to Douglas Park. Land acquisition was begun in 1903 and completed in 1913. Although Sacramento never became a true boulevard with side drives and landscaped medians, it was widened and planted with trees and renamed Sacramento Boulevard.

The south part of the West Park System, as usual, was lagging behind the north. Douglas Boulevard was just having its lawns prepared for seeding in 1898, with the *Annual Report* predicting that the surrounding area was “destined to become a first class residence district.”³⁰⁵ Marshall Boulevard and the connection across the Illinois & Michigan Canal were still being reconfigured in response to the massive Sanitary & Ship Canal building project alongside the old Illinois & Michigan Canal.³⁰⁶ An agreement was reached with the Sanitary Commission in 1897 and work began slowly at the end of the 1890s to bring in the fill necessary to create the many short boulevard segments at the south end of the system. Compounding the problem of laying out this section of the boulevards, south of Douglas Park a railroad viaduct still crossed the planned roadway just 10’

³⁰⁴ West Chicago Park Commission, *Thirty-First Annual Report, 1899*, p.9.

³⁰⁵ West Chicago Park Commission *Annual Report 1897*.

³⁰⁶ Along with air pollution, Chicago had serious sanitary issues relative to its drinking water. The state had passed a Sanitary District Enabling Act in 1889 that provided for construction of a new Sanitary and Ship Canal.³⁰⁶ The canal was to collect the city’s sewage, dilute it with lake water and send it to the Mississippi River via the Des Plaines River. The key to this project was reversing the flow of the Chicago River in order to prevent waste from flowing into Lake Michigan, which was the city’s main drinking water supply. After lengthy debate and considerable planning, work on the new canal began in 1894. The canal, like the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the railroads that paralleled it, would pass directly through the juncture of the South and West Park Systems on S. Western Boulevard, forcing the commissioners to adjust their plans for this part of their systems.

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above grade. Completion of this section would not be possible until an agreement was reached with the railroad in 1914.

The first decade of the 20th-century was an important time of change for the West Park System. In July 1905 Governor Deneen removed the existing corrupt commissioners and replaced them with a group of honest men. Of the 619 men and women on the payroll, 299 were fired immediately and the unwieldy team of multiple superintendents was reduced to one, the scrupulously honest Jens Jensen. The new Commission began the process of rebuilding using two pools of money: the \$1 million small parks bond and another \$2 million bond, both passed in late 1905. Jensen prepared a report outlining what was needed, noting that “the parks and boulevards cannot benefit the public to the fullest extent if they are not kept in the best possible condition.”³⁰⁷

On Humboldt Boulevard, work continued on the shrub plantings, new sidewalks and roadway resurfacing that had begun in the 1890s. Conduits for the new electric lights were laid and nearly 100 trees were replaced.

On Sacramento Boulevard work was begun to fix the route of the boulevard through Sacramento Square. By 1908 a new railroad viaduct and electric lights had been completed. Although the park commissioners had always insisted that the railroad viaducts that crossed the boulevards be more than utilitarian in their design, the viaducts that were constructed early in the 20th century began using ornamental concrete facings over the iron substructure. These new designs gave the viaducts a more substantial and beautiful presence along the boulevards, with the cast concrete enabling the designers to provide more architectural detail than had been possible with the structural ironwork. The 1912 *Annual Report* noted with pride that “The ornamental concrete facia adopted for the portals...is the most pretentious effort made for ornamentation of any of the subways constructed in the city.”³⁰⁸ Examples of these portals can still be seen on the railroad crossings over Humboldt Boulevard at Bloomingdale Road. They are in the mode of contemporary Collegiate Gothic architecture with inset paneling and Gothic arches.

Thirty-five years after it was first laid out as part of the system, plans were finally made for Franklin Boulevard, in 1903. Public hearings to review the plans were held, one of the few times such an event was noted in the *Annual Reports*.³⁰⁹ The delay in the planning and construction of this segment seems surprising, given its importance as the northern approach to the heavily used Garfield Park. Perhaps the industrial character of the neighborhood to the east, including extensive train yards and repair facilities, was the cause of this delay. Certainly the area along the eastern edge of the Sacramento Square to this day has the most industrial character of any boulevard segment between Garfield and Humboldt Parks. Although drainage, trees and shrubs were completed by 1909, it would be another two years before this short segment of the boulevard system was complete.³¹⁰

On Douglas Boulevard work continued on planting trees and shrubs according to the plans. The curbs, gutter, pavement and sidewalks were all redone.

³⁰⁷ West Chicago Park Commission *Annual Report 1906*, p. 36.

³⁰⁸ West Chicago Park Commission, *1912 Annual Report*, p.112.

³⁰⁹ West Chicago Park Commission, *1909 Annual Report*, p.16.

³¹⁰ West Chicago Park Commission, *Forty-third Annual Report*, 12/31/1911, p.22.

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In 1907 an agreement with the railroad was finally reached to raise the viaduct over Marshall Boulevard. Work was completed in 1908, making this one of the fastest construction projects in West Park history. Installation of electric lights, trees and lawns were completed shortly afterwards.

In 1919, the 50th anniversary of the original park legislation, the city's population had grown nearly tenfold to 2.9 million. The parks and the boulevards were in greater demand than ever as residential, institutional and industrial development continued to fill in the city's western neighborhoods.

During the 1910s the West Park Commission was focused on developing, at last, a series of small neighborhood parks. This was a decade of maintenance for most of the boulevard system while Jensen worked on his plans for Columbus Park, a new large park at the far western edge of the city, as well as a comprehensive plan for a metropolitan park system.³¹¹ In 1915 the first attempt was made to consolidate all of the city's park districts under one administration. The bill was defeated, with the West Park commissioners claiming under-representation on the proposed new board for their populous neighborhoods.³¹²

Trees and shrubs continued to be planted throughout the system in the 1910s and several new railroad viaducts with the new ornamental concrete were built to replace earlier ones. These new viaducts were opened in 1911 on Sacramento Boulevard, in 1913 on Humboldt Boulevard and in 1914 on Marshall Boulevard. The 1920s saw more of the same, with some resurfacing on the boulevards in the southern part of the system. Much of the focus in the 1920s was on traffic hazard relief.

In 1909, the City of Chicago rationalized its street numbering and naming system, forcing the West Park commissioners to make final decisions about the names of the various boulevard segments. Douglas Boulevard became S. Independence Boulevard (Jackson Boulevard to Independence Square) and W. Douglas Boulevard (Independence Square to Douglas Park). Central Boulevard became N. Central Park Boulevard (Garfield Park to Franklin Boulevard), Franklin Boulevard (N. Central Park Boulevard to Sacramento Square), and Humboldt Boulevard (Sacramento Square to Humboldt Park). An extended Sacramento Boulevard ran due south from Sacramento Square to connect Humboldt Park directly to Douglas Park.

The inclusion of sculpture in squares began to take place at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. The idea, however, was an important reverberation from the 1893 World's Fair. In 1896 the west commissioners expressed a desire to receive donations of sculpture and fountains that could be placed in the three boulevard squares.³¹³ With their request for these artworks, the commissioners hoped to make the squares more ornamental so that they would become beautiful turning points and landmarks within the overall system.

The squares had originally been envisioned as 400' square mini-parks that would break up the formality of the boulevards and their straight ranks of trees. By 1886 all three squares had been graded, filled and planted with over 3000 trees.³¹⁴ As development and traffic moved to the west side and the boulevards became predominantly traffic routes rather than pleasure drives, it was inevitable that the squares, with their relatively small size and turning-point locations, would suffer. Sacramento Square would undergo a major reconfiguration

³¹¹ West Chicago Park Commission, *1917-1918 Annual Report*.

³¹² West Chicago Park Commission, *1915 Annual Report*.

³¹³ West Chicago Park Commission, *1896 Annual Report*, p. 20.

³¹⁴ West Chicago Park Commission, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, 2/28/1886, p. 20.

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in the 1910s to accommodate the increasing traffic and industrial activity in this part of the city.³¹⁵ With most drivers choosing the more direct route of Sacramento Boulevard, Garfield Square would fade into the background. Independence Square, the only one to receive a fountain, was redone in 1901 and its northern quadrant is now shorn away by the turn of the boulevard. Garfield Square, became 300' x 325', considerably smaller than the standard 400' x 400' ;it was redone at the time of Franklin Boulevard's design and construction in 1911.

Although the commissioners had expressed an interest in receiving donations of fountains and/or sculptures in 1896, it was not until 1900 that preparations began for a large fountain in Independence Square entitled "*American Youth and Independence Day*."³¹⁶ The design of the fountain, children celebrating the 4th of July, was suggested by Commissioner Charles Lichtenberger, Jr. and executed by well-known sculptor Charles J. Mulligan. Mulligan, a student of Lorado Taft, had been the foreman of the sculpture shop at the Columbian Exposition and had recently created two sculptures for the Chicago Autumn Festival of 1899. For "*American Youth and Independence Day*" he executed a design that is both joyous and monumental. Set on a granite base, the circular shape of the fountain visually turns the corner, just as the boulevard traverses the northeast corner of the square. Cast bronze panels, now missing, surrounded the base and it is surmounted by a circular pedestal on which dance two boys and two girls with flags, drums and a small cannon at their feet. Although no longer in operation, the water once sprayed above the children's heads. The children are also cast in bronze and Mulligan wonderfully portrays both their motion and their excitement. Although we have no drawing of the design of the square when the fountain was installed, apparently it was planted with some type of willow tree. Not happy with this choice, one of Jensen's first projects after he became Superintendent was to redesign the landscaping of the square.³¹⁷

A second sculpture was placed on the boulevards in 1926 at the turning point between Marshall Boulevard and W. 24th Boulevard. The *Jacques Marquette monument* was designed by Hermon Atkins MacNeil and paid for by the B.F. Ferguson Fund.³¹⁸ This fund was a bequest of Benjamin F. Ferguson to the Art Institute at the time of his death in 1905. Ferguson, a lumber magnate, bequeathed \$1 million to be used for sculptures "commemorating worthy men or women of America or important events of American history."³¹⁹ The first sculpture to be paid for by the fund was the 1913 Fountain of the Great Lakes at the Art Institute, followed by a series of important works through the 1920s.³²⁰ The Marquette Monument was part of this first group. The bronze sculpture depicts Marquette holding his cross with Louis Joliet on his left and an Algonquin Native American on his right.³²¹ It is set on a rectangular granite base with a series of low steps leading up to it on all four sides. The front panel on the base depicts a canoe being portaged and bears an inscription dedicating

³¹⁵ The 1896 Sanborn Atlas already shows factories along Franklin and Sacramento Boulevards in this area.

³¹⁶ West Chicago Park Commission, *Thirty-second Annual Report*, 1900, p. 34,

<http://www.askart.com/AskART/artists/biography.aspx?artist=108991>. a thorough biographical sketch of Charles J. Mulligan.

³¹⁷ West Chicago Park Commission, *1906 Annual Report*, p.50.

³¹⁸ McNeil was the sculptor for the relief panels at the 1895 Marquette Building by Holabird & Roche, 140 S. Dearborn. Alice Sinkevitch, ed. *AIA Guide to Chicago* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1993), p. 66.

³¹⁹ http://chicago-outdoor-sculptures.blogspot.com/2010/05/bfferguson-monument-fund_10.htm

³²⁰ The Ferguson Fund continues to fund important sculpture in Chicago.

³²¹ http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM7JW7_Jacques_Marquette_Monument_Chicago_IL. This website also notes that the monument was erected after the Ferguson Fund "received a petition signed by 15,000 schoolchildren asking that a monument be created." The monument is seen every day by the elementary school children of the John Spry Public School immediately behind it on Boulevard Way and the high school students at Carter Harrison High School on the opposite side of West 24th Boulevard.

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the monument to Marquette. The monument is set at an angle to be highly visible to cars passing along the curve between California Boulevard and W. 31st Boulevard.

Adaptation to New Technology: Electricity, the Automobile

As in the South Parks, the West Parks started the 20th-century by adapting to electricity and the increasing demands of motor vehicles throughout the system. Cars were to be an especially stubborn and expensive problem. The boulevards and the side streets that crossed them felt an immediate impact from the expansion of automobile and truck traffic. By 1921, 99% of the traffic on the boulevards was motor vehicles.³²² The number of accidents was alarming. In 1921 the West Park System installed the city's first stop signs and its first automated traffic signals.³²³ By 1925, like much of the rest of the city, the West Park System had completely phased out the use of horses, switching to trucks and tractors for all maintenance work.³²⁴

Although traffic had been an issue on the boulevards since the completion of the first long segments in the 1890s, it grew into an exponentially more complicated problem as real estate development finally took hold on the west side and streetcars extended their lines west across the boulevards.³²⁵ Wagons were prohibited from the boulevard main drives but they were common on the side drives and the cross streets. Carriages and horses, strolling pedestrians and streetcars also created hazards. By 1900, automobiles were to heighten the danger considerably as their speed and noise alarmed the many horses that were still in use.

In the central business district uniformed police officers directed traffic at busy intersections, but there were no city officers, stop signs or traffic signals on the west side. The West Park System had its own extensive police force, but they were ever more challenged to enforce traffic laws throughout the system, particularly given the new, speedier automobiles that were beginning to appear.³²⁶ Horses, wagons, carriages, cars and streetcars were all using the boulevards at the turn of the century. Boulevard crossings, especially where streetcars were involved, had become serious safety hazards.³²⁷ In 1909 the city passed an ordinance requiring that all streetcar crossings be rebuilt to new safety standards that included rounded turns.³²⁸

Like the city, the West Park commissioners knew they needed to respond to these growing dangers. Considerable time was spent in the 1910s evaluating traffic problems on the boulevards and experimenting with various solutions. The West Park System took its first one-day traffic count in 1911 and a second one in 1914 at the corner of Jackson and Sacramento Boulevards. In this three year span horse-drawn wagon traffic dropped from 260 to 97 and motor-driven trucks doubled from 406 to 812. Automobile traffic exploded from 765 to 3551 in a single day. In response to this increasing traffic volume, the commissioners placed an experimental "pilot post" or "dummy policeman" with an electric light on it at Carroll Avenue on Sacramento Boulevard in 1912. In order to address the growing problem of accidents where side streets crossed the busy boulevards, in

³²² West Chicago Park Commission, *Forty-Sixth Annual Report (1914)*, p. 18 and *Annual Report (1921)*, p.46.

³²³ West Chicago Park Commission, *1921-1922 Annual Report*, p.16.

³²⁴ West Chicago Park Commission, *1925 Annual Report*, p. 10.

³²⁵ West Chicago Park Commission *1894 Annual Report*, first mention of racing on the boulevards.

³²⁶ For example, the *1905 Annual Report* notes the "attitude of many of the automobiles on the boulevards...in exceeding the speed limit..." p.16.

³²⁷ For an example of a West Park System Police Report from this period see West Chicago Park Commission, *1912 Annual Report*, p. 212.

³²⁸ West Chicago Park Commission, *1909 Annual Report*, p.51.

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1919 the commissioners placed over 600 specially-designed boulevard stop signs at every intersection in the system, the first use of fixed stop signs in the city.³²⁹

In 1921 the West Park commissioners decided to take action to try and control traffic hazards throughout the system through a series of important steps, some of which were the first of their kind in the city:

They widened the drives on Sacramento Boulevard, now a major north-south artery through the west side

They created rounded corners on the boulevards in order to ease turning

At the rounded corners they installed “mushroom lights,” electric lights set into the pavement with a shallow domed iron cage above them. They served to light the intersection and could be driven over safely by most vehicles³³⁰

They instituted directional signs throughout the system, a method that had not yet been tried elsewhere in the city

They erected a series of automated signal towers, the precursors to our modern-day stop lights. The city was still using people to direct traffic at hazardous intersections, but the West Park commissioners were convinced that these automated signals would be more economical in the long run and they had the added advantage of being there twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

The installation of all these safety devices was completed by 1926.

. Bond issues in 1905, 1915, 1923 and 1927 all helped to increase park lands, carry out improvements, build park buildings and provide maintenance to existing parks. The West Park System had been able to capitalize on the prosperity of the 1920s by passing a \$10 million bond issue in 1927. With this money the West Park commissioners built twelve new buildings, including the massive new field houses in Humboldt, Garfield and Douglas parks. Even the boulevards, which often were the last areas to receive any benefit from bond issues, had \$1 million spent on their rehabilitation and widening.³³¹ As a result of reduced tax revenues and their own decades-long mismanagement, the healthy financial conditions of the late 1920s would come to a screeching halt once the last of the bonds were spent in 1928. When the Depression started in late 1929 the parks were once again facing a backlog of deferred maintenance. Shortly after the onset of the Depression it became necessary for the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission to provide labor for park and boulevard maintenance.³³² By 1933 the West Park Commission was \$20,000,000 in debt.³³³

THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT: CONSOLIDATION: 1934-1942

Following the onset of the Depression of the early 1930s, the parks, boulevards and squares were in a state of severe disrepair. The Depression also resulted in all of Chicago's park districts being consolidated into the

³²⁹ West Chicago Park Commission 1919 Annual Report.

³³⁰ West Chicago Park Commission 1921 Annual Report

³³¹ West Chicago Park Commission, 1927-1928 Annual Report, p.13.

³³² Chicago Park District, First Annual Report, 5/1/1934 to 12/31/1935, p. 17.

³³³ Sniderman, *The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District*, Section E, p.14.