A Summary of Information on the

SOUTH PULLMAN DISTRICT

Chicago, Illinois
June, 1972
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The Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks greatly appreciates the assistance of the Pullman Bank and Trust Company in the publication of this booklet. It also extends its gratitude to the Pullman Civic Organization, its various committees and members for providing invaluable assistance throughout the course of this study.
SOUTH PULLMAN DISTRICT

An area generally bounded by
East 111th Street, the alley east of South Langley Avenue,
East 114th Street, the alley east of South Champlain Avenue,
the alley north of East 115th Street, South Forrestville Avenue,
South Cottage Grove Avenue,
and an irregular parcel of land north of East 111th Street,
Chicago, Illinois

Dates of Development: 1880-1894

Solon Spencer Beman, Architect
Nathan F. Barrett, Landscape Architect
Benzette Williams, Sanitary Engineer

Founder and Developer: George M. Pullman

Landmark Site (all land within the following boundaries):

From a point of beginning on the west line of South Cottage Grove Avenue, 948.51 feet north-northeast of the northwest corner of the intersection of East 111th Street and South Cottage Grove Avenue; thence east to a point 503.83 feet east of the east line of South Cottage Grove Avenue; thence south 933.37 feet along a line to its intersection with the north line of East 111th Street; thence east along the north line of East 111th Street to a point of the intersection of said north line of East 111th Street with a line coincident with the east line of the alley next east of, and parallel to, South Langley Avenue; thence south along the east line of said alley to its intersection with the south line of East 114th Street; thence west along said south line of East 114th Street to its intersection with the east line of the alley next east of, and parallel to, South Champlain Avenue; thence south along the east line of said alley to its intersection with the south line of the alley next north of, and parallel to, East 115th Street; thence west along the south line of said alley to its intersection with the west line of South Forrestville Avenue; thence north along the west line of South Forrestville Avenue to its intersection with the south property line of Lot 10, Block 10 of this Subdivision; thence west along said south property line to its intersection with the east line of the alley next west of, and parallel to, South Forrestville Avenue; thence south along the east line of said alley to its intersection with a line coincident with the south property line of Lot 40, Block 10 of this Subdivision; thence west along said south property line to a point of its coincident intersection with the west line of South Cottage Grove Avenue; thence north-northeast along said west line of South Cottage Grove Avenue to the point of beginning.

This includes all streets, alleys, parkways and sidewalks, and the properties that are legally described as:

Lots A-D of Block 1, Lots 1-45 of Block 2, Lots 1-50 of Block 3, Lots 1-3 of Block 4, Lots 1-3 of Block 5, Lots 1-43 of Block 6, the Market Block, Lots 1-56 of Block 7, Lots 1-62 of Block 8, Lots 1-3 of Block 9, Lots 1-10 and 40-52 of Block 10, Lots 1-32 and School Lot of Block 11, Lots 1-62 of Block 12, Lots 1-63 of Block 13, Lots 1-26 of Block 14, Lots 1-12 of Block 15, Lots 1-12 and 23-46 of Block 16, Lots 1-25 and 36-59 of Block 17 of the Original Town of Pullman, being a Subdivision of part of the Northeast 1/4 of Section 22, Township 37 North, Range 14, North of Indian Boundary Line, lying East of the Easterly Line of the Right-of-Way of the Illinois Central Railroad, East of the Third Principal Meridian. Also, a parcel at the southeast corner of the intersection of East 111th Street and South Langley Avenue, containing approximately 6178 acres, located in the Northeast 1/4 of Section 22, Township 37 North, Range 14, North of Indian Boundary Line, lying East of the Easterly Line of the Right-of-Way of the Illinois Central Railroad, East of the Third Principal Meridian; and a parcel at the northeast corner of the intersection of East 111th Street and South Cottage Grove Avenue, containing approximately 12.65 acres, located in the Southeast 1/4 of Section 15, Township 37 North, Range 14, North of Indian Boundary Line, lying East of the Easterly Line of the Right-of-Way of the Illinois Central Railroad, East of the Third Principal Meridian.
Criteria for South Pullman District

The proposed South Pullman District meets the following criteria for designation as a Chicago Landmark as set forth in Chapter 21, Section 21-64(b) of the Municipal Code of Chicago:

(1) Its character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

At the time the town was constructed in the early 1880s, the railroad industry in the United States had reached a very high level of importance. Due to the expansion and resulting demand for products related to the industry, George Pullman recognized the need to expand his car-building operations. When production at the Pullman factory commenced, the demand for more and better rail cars (passenger as well as freight) was satisfied. This fact was in great part responsible for the growth rates experienced by the industry during the decade of the 1880s.

(2) Its location as a site of a significant event.

The town has been called the first planned industrial community in the United States. From a planning standpoint, then, the town served as a model for subsequent developments in which industry, housing and public spaces were combined into an harmonious unit.

Also, the Pullman Strike of 1894 signaled a milestone in the continuing development of the labor movement. The town served as a focal point for many of the actions surrounding this event.

(3) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Chicago.

George M. Pullman is most readily identified with the City of Chicago because of his choice to make the town of Pullman the site of the national headquarters of his railroad car-building operations. He was also very active in many of Chicago's cultural and civic organizations (The Chicago Citizen's League, the Calumet Club, the Commercial Club, the Chicago Athenaeum, the Chicago Relief and Aid Society, the Chicago Musical Festival Association, and others) and held the offices of president, vice-president, director, and counselor in many of these groups.

(4) Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of Chicago.

The town was constructed in the early 1880s by George M. Pullman as an expansion site for his railroad car-building operations, and to house the employees that would work there. The Calumet region offered both rail and water transportation facilities necessary for the operation of the business, and the decision to build there guaranteed Chicago's continuing role as the railroad center of the United States. The opening of the facilities also brought many persons to the area who were seeking employment, and the town became the focal point of the region's continued development and expansion.

Thus, as a result of this growth and the subsequent demand for municipal services, the town was annexed to the City of Chicago with the Village of Hyde Park in 1889.
Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.

The town's architectural scale, visual continuity, compatible design characteristics and integrity of materials distinguish it as having been planned within a framework of "total design." The elements of a number of architectural styles can be found (Richardsonian Romanesque, Queen Anne, Neo-Classic, etc.), but the blending of these elements with overall form and function set the District apart as being unique.

Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of Chicago.

The town, work of architect Solon S. Beman and landscape architect Nathan F. Barrett, has been called the first planned industrial town in the United States. After becoming famous for his design of the company buildings and housing, and with the aid and assistance of George Pullman, Beman was commissioned to design a number of buildings in Chicago's downtown district (the Pullman Building, the Fine Arts Building, Grand Central Station, and others), as well as many residential structures, of which the Kimball House on South Prairie Avenue remains.

Its embodiment of elements of architectural design, details, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.

Probably one of the most important features of the town from a technical standpoint was the amount of exhaustive planning that went into the project before actual construction began. The sewage system, water and gas distribution, grading and site layout are a few examples of this work. The brick used in the construction of the buildings was fashioned from clay obtained through the dredging of Lake Calumet. Though the town's main function was of a utilitarian nature, aesthetics were not overlooked; the detailing of many of the buildings attests to this fact. The care that was taken in constructing the buildings was likewise significant, and the present condition of the structures bears this out. Having been begun in 1880, it was also the first major work by an architect of the "Chicago School." In short, the town represented innovations in a number of areas, all of which merged to form the unit.

Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the City of Chicago.

The unique qualities, character, location and coherence of the District establish it as a definite, bounded neighborhood and community within the City of Chicago. Its individual identity is assured and clearly defined by the Illinois Central Railroad right-of-way and industrial land uses, and it blends pleasingly with its surroundings to retain this identity in an urban environment. The similarity of the structures in their construction, materials and details also serves to unify the District from a visual standpoint; the harmonious quality is apparent throughout. Each of the many structures within the District (Florence Hotel, Administration Building and Clock Tower, and others) is readily associated with the historic town.
Contemporary Scene

Pullman, Illinois, was a dream, an experiment, a model, a business enterprise, and, for the most part, a success. A well-planned company town, employing the most advanced methods of construction, landscaping, and sanitation, its physical aspects were universally acclaimed. The company-town concept in general, however, and the paternalistic management of this one in particular drew praise from some, condemnation from others. Whether George Pullman's motives were benevolent or malevolent, philanthropic or mercenary, they were a matter for public discussion not only throughout the country, but throughout the world. While economists, city planners, and businessmen unstintingly extolled the virtues of the town, the infant labor movement viewed it with mixed emotions. Although labor leaders at first commended George Pullman for providing his employees with better-than-average working conditions, excellent housing, fine public services, and good recreational facilities, later they came to disapprove of his monarchal rule over the company, the town, and the lives of his employees, who had no voice in company policy or town government.

Whatever the town of Pullman was in the past, it remains today a legacy of a bygone era that is important not only to the student of history, economics, or sociology but also to a generation that has lost touch with the past. For the most part still intact, Pullman stands as a concrete, living study of orderly town planning, well-thought-out architectural scale and continuity, and life in a distinctive, cohesive urban community. Its past is important, but so is its future.

A pleasant neighborhood on the southeast doorstep of Chicago, South Pullman provides not only an historical and architectural link to the past but a visual and spiritual relief from the central city's jam-packed conglomerate of structures running the entire spectrum from plush high rise to abject slum.

There is physical space and breathing space in South Pullman. And there is a strong sense of community, of belonging, among the residents.

The population of approximately 3,000 includes a few remaining residents who came as immigrant laborers in the 1920s. For the most part, the population is made up of blue-collar and white-collar workers, along with a small percentage of professional people. This last group, which includes the local minister, doctors, lawyers, city planners, architects and engineers, has been growing within the last decade, as more and more young families have become interested in architectural heritage and environmental quality--particularly when these are available at moderate cost.

Nearly 600 pupils attend the George M. Pullman Elementary School, dating from 1913. Just west of the District are the Mendel Catholic High School, occupying the building that originally housed George Pullman's Free School of Manual Training, and the Pullman Branch of the Chicago Public Library. Fenger (public) High School is about 1½ miles west, on Halsted Street. A new campus of Chicago State University is under construction at 95th Street and King Drive.

There are no medical facilities within the District itself, but Roseland Community Hospital is only 1 mile west, and there are medical and dental offices and clinics about five blocks west, in the Michigan Avenue shopping area. It was sometime after the construction of the Roseland Hospital in 1924 that Pullman's local clinic was closed.

The Illinois Central Railroad, which forms the District's west boundary, provides transportation service to the Loop, and there is also a Chicago Transit Authority bus link to the CTA's Dan Ryan Expressway trains.

East of the District are some factory buildings, vacant land, and the Calumet Expressway (which connects with the Dan Ryan).

Occupying a few of the District's 600 buildings are a small number of grocery stores, taverns, and restaurants, and there is some light industry and warehousing within South Pullman's confines. The old red-brick Administration Building of the Pullman Palace Car Company, for example, contains some warehousing operations of the Intercontinental
Steel and Union Steel companies, and immediately north of it is the well-kept, modern building of the Sherwin-Williams Research Center. The large, sprawling structures of the Sherwin-Williams paint factory lie adjacent to the south boundary of the District. For the most part, however, the District is residential.

The only church in the District is the so-called Greenstone Church, or Pullman United Methodist. Others are nearby.

South Pullman owes its present healthy state as a community with a future to the fact that in 1960 a real-estate developer had plans to demolish the town and put up an industrial park. This so aroused the citizenry that in 1960, members of the local civil defense organization of World War II regrouped and formed the Pullman Civic Organization. So well did they organize that when a public meeting was held on the developer’s proposal, practically the entire town turned out in vociferous protest and succeeded in winning the case for preservation.

Members of the Civic Organization today include a large percentage of the total population, and various efforts directed toward general preservation and beautification of the District are proceeding. Various committees within the Civic Organization carry out specific functions in these efforts. Archives of historical information are being developed in order to make such material available to the public. A grant from the Illinois Arts Council has been of great assistance in developing these archives.

The Pullman Civic Organization also issues a monthly flyer containing community notes and historical data, in an effort to educate the citizens concerning their heritage as residents and instill in them an interest in preservation and a feeling of being a part of a distinct and distinctive community. In addition, the Civic Organization makes the services of architectural consultants available to residents contemplating repairing or renovating their houses, in an effort to prevent incongruous alterations (some unfortunate examples of which do exist). Through the efforts of the Civic Organization and its Beman Committee, Pullman was declared a state landmark in 1969, and was granted national landmark status by the U. S. Department of the Interior in 1970.

With this sort of concern among its residents, South Pullman has a bright future.
A view of the 11200 block of Champlain Avenue. 1969 (Courtesy Pullman Civic Organization.)

A view of the 11100 block of Langley Avenue. 1969 (Courtesy Pullman Civic Organization.)

An aerial view of a portion of the town. The "Greenstone Church" is to the left and a portion of "Arcade Row" can be seen in the foreground. Some idea of housing variety is apparent in this photograph. 1969 (Courtesy Pullman Civic Organization.)
A view of the 11400 block of Champlain Avenue. These are the "bay entrance" homes found on both sides of this particular block. 1969 (Courtesy Pullman Civic Organization.)

One of the four "circle buildings" at the intersection of 112th Street and Champlain Avenue. The arcade treatment gives the impression of a building in a southern European town. 1969 (Photo by Philip A. Turner.)

A view of the 11200 block of St. Lawrence Avenue. On the left is a portion of "Greenstone Church." 1969 (Courtesy Pullman Civic Organization.)
GEORGE M. PULLMAN
(1831-1897)

Founder and Builder
of
The Town of Pullman
Historical Background

The history of the town of Pullman dates back much further than 1880, the year of its birth. Pullman is the history of a man, his company, and his ambition, and to view it adequately, one must start almost 50 years prior to the town's creation.

Beginnings

George Mortimer Pullman was born in Auburn, New York, on March 3, 1831. His father, a carpenter, was a strict disciplinarian, and as a result of his teachings, George was to hold honesty, devotion to work, and acceptance of religious and family duties among his highest priorities throughout his life.

In 1845, after completing his formal education, George became a clerk in a small general store in Westfield, New York. Three years later, he joined his family in Albion, a town on the Erie Canal, where he worked as a cabinetmaker in his brother Albert's shop.

When the widening of the Canal in the early 1850s necessitated moving some of the buildings along its banks, George's father was chosen to handle the work at Albion. After his death in 1853, George took over his father's unfinished contracts on the canal work.

Two years later the job was finished, and George, like many other young men of his time, decided to travel west. He chose Chicago, first because the young city offered adventure, excitement, and promise; second, because he had heard that building-moving operations were soon to commence there. Chicago was going to raise its muddy streets -- and hence its buildings -- from four to seven feet above their original level to permit adequate surface drainage.

By the time Pullman arrived in Chicago, the work on raising the streets in the downtown area was well under way, and visitors to the city were writing home that it appeared as though the buildings were being swallowed up by the bottomless swamp Chicago floated upon. This was especially true of Chicago's largest commercial building, the five-story Tremont House at the corner of Lake and Clark Streets. Since the hotel was of masonry construction, its owners saw no way of raising it to the new street level. George Pullman, however, assured the owners that he could, indeed, raise the building, and furthermore, could do so without breaking a single pane of glass or waking even one guest!

This venture was only one of many building-raising projects undertaken by Pullman. By the end of 1858, he had succeeded in amassing $20,000 and was known to many of Chicago's more prominent citizens.

Pullman was now financially able to become an entrepreneur in an industry in which he had become very interested -- sleeping cars. According to legend, he first decided to build a better sleeping car while on one of his many trips between Chicago and New York. After lying awake in the berth of one of the cars that passed for a sleeper, he called the three-and-a-half-day trip a "nightmare" and determined to do something about it.

In Albion, Pullman had met Benjamin Field, a businessman and politician who, after leaving the New York State Legislature in 1856, had obtained the right to run sleeping cars on the Chicago & Alton and the Galena & Chicago Union railroads. Pullman now grasped the opportunity to begin a partnership with Field and his brother. During the summer of 1858, at the Chicago & Alton yards, he outfitted two bare passenger cars for use as sleepers, at a cost of $2,000.

The Pullman Palace Car Company

Although Pullman's cars were not very different from others of the time (experiments with sleeping cars in the United States had been undertaken as early as 1836, and by 1858, the Wagner Sleeping Car and the Woodruff Sleeping Car companies were established businesses), he was constantly thinking of ways to improve the service and facilities. By 1864, he came up with what he thought would be the perfect sleeper. This was the "Pioneer," an elegantly finished car that served as a coach during the day and a sleeper at night. Its interior included such luxuries as red carpeting, hand-finished...
woodwork, and silver-trimmed coal-oil lamps, while cast-iron wheel trucks topped with coil springs and rubber blocks provided a more comfortable ride. Although its $20,000 cost was extremely high, Pullman felt that people would be willing to pay a premium for luxury and beauty.

Though the "Pioneer" was indeed the answer to the problem of comfortable rail transportation, its height and width prohibited its use on existing track. With the railroads not wanting to change their standards to fit his car, Pullman was in a quandary until the tragic death of President Lincoln brought an end to the impasse. Col. James H. Bowen, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, who was to figure substantially in Pullman's later dealings, chose the "Pioneer" as a fitting part of the funeral cortège as it passed through Illinois. Platforms and trestles were altered to comply with the car's dimensions, and thousands of people viewed the car as the retinue made its way from Chicago to Springfield on the last leg of the journey. The "Pioneer" received national acclaim, and Pullman's prominence as a car-builder was established.

By the end of 1866, Pullman had 48 cars in operation, with others under construction. He dominated the sleeping-car industry in the Midwest, but because of his almost insatiable drive and ambition, he naturally wanted a piece of the action.

Pullman felt that the time had now come to form a corporation. He had previously bought the Field brothers' interests and dissolved the partnership, and on February 22, 1867, the State of Illinois issued a charter to "Pullman's Palace Car Company." The $1-million initial capital stock offering had been quietly sold to Chicago businessmen and railroad figures, and it was only natural that at the August 1 organizational meeting, George Pullman was elected president and general manager.

The years following the establishment of the company found Pullman constantly seeking ways to improve railroad service. In his quest, he developed the dining car, an innovation that made the rolling stock self-sufficient. Now, the passenger could not only sleep comfortably, but also dine on the train, and the delaying stops for meals were eliminated.

An excellent indicator of Pullman's success was the fact that he satisfactorily survived the depression of the 1870s. Although company profits fell slightly as a result of the over-all lull in business activity, Pullman's revenue from car operation remained steady. Thus, by the end of the decade, when business had again righted itself, Pullman's Palace Car Company was in a very favorable financial position.

There was a general rise in demand for Pullman's products following the depression, and his shops in St. Louis, Detroit, Elmira (N. Y.), and Wilmington (Del.) were unable to handle the large volume of new orders. It was now time to greatly expand his facilities, so Pullman began looking for a large tract of land. Certain requirements, such as proximity to water and rail transportation were dictated by the very nature of the business, so St. Louis was first considered. To Pullman's chagrin, however, real estate brokers, who had learned his plans, began speculating on properties. The resulting inflated prices finally became prohibitive, so Pullman turned his back on St. Louis and began to look for another site.

This time he would be more secretive in his dealings, in order to prevent another St. Louis occurrence. While touring the countryside under the guise of selecting a site, Pullman's agents were, in fact, merely misleading the public, for he had other plans. Back in 1869, at the suggestion of his old friend Colonel Bowen, he had bought some land in the Lake Calumet area near Chicago. Now Bowen was instructed to purchase additional acreage, only this time for a secret buyer. Because the many small parcels Bowen acquired were in the hands of a number of owners, the entire transaction, including over 4,000 acres, took quite a while to complete. Finally, in April 1880, Pullman announced that his new national headquarters would be located in the Calumet area.

Earlier that month he had unveiled the plans for his new works -- plans that included not
just shops but an entire company town for the workers and executives. A young New York architect, Solon Spencer Beman, had worked on the plans throughout the winter of 1879-80, and along with landscape architect Nathan F. Barrett, had laid out the town on paper. Beman was responsible only for designing the buildings, while Barrett sited them in addition to landscaping the grounds.

Pullman had first become acquainted with Barrett when the latter was recommended to do some landscaping at Pullman's summer estate, Fairlawn, in Long Branch, New Jersey. Barrett, in turn, had introduced Beman to Pullman who, being dissatisfied with his Chicago architect, commissioned Beman to do some work on his Prairie Avenue mansion and to draw up plans for a model industrial town. Later, Pullman was to be instrumental in helping Beman obtain numerous commissions in Chicago, including the Pullman Building (1884), the Chicago Manual Training School (1884), the Studebaker (now Fine Arts) Building (1886), Grand Central Station (1890) -- recently demolished -- and the Mines and Mining Building at the World's Columbian Exposition (1892).

The Town

Company and model towns were by no means new. For example, housing for the employees of the Lawrence Manufacturing Company in Lowell, Massachusetts, was constructed in the early 1830s. Brook Farm and New Harmony were idealized experiments of yet another kind. The town of Pullman, though, exhibited qualities that were unapparent in its predecessors. According to John W. Reps, writing in *The Making of Urban America*:

Pullman was a remarkable achievement. Not since Williamsburg had an entire town been designed with equal attention to the ground plan and to the buildings that would form the third dimension. Beman and Barrett succeeded in creating in their two town squares real civic design. Despite the relatively small size of the town, the whole effect remained distinctly urban in character. The designers must be given full credit, but George Pullman deserves equal praise for his vision of what a model industrial town might be.
Form, function, and beauty were combined with detailed aspects of user requirements, sanitation and quality of construction. Beman and Barrett, along with experts from a number of other fields, joined together to produce a project as nearly perfect to the most minor specifications as they could make it.

To avoid any legal complications that might arise out of company ownership of land, the Pullman Land Association was formed in the spring of 1880 to take over control of all but 500 acres of the property. This was done because the charter of the Pullman Palace Car Company stated that the company was not to hold any property that was not directly connected with the operation of the business. The Land Association, however, being under direct control of the company, was never more than a legal fiction, a fact to be duly noted in a later court decision.

On April 24, 1880, preliminary work was underway on construction. Surveyors began laying out the placement of streets and building foundations, and Benzette Williams, former Chicago superintendent of sewage, began laying out the water, sewer, and gas systems. The ingenious sewer system included plans for fertilizing a farm to be located some three miles from the town proper. Sewage was to be piped from the town to a collection reservoir beneath the large Water Tower and thence pumped to the farm for distribution over the fields. After being filtered through some six feet of earth, pure water was then returned to Lake Calumet. This was perhaps the first large-scale application of proper disposal, continued-use and filtration methods.

In late May, ground was broken for the Allen Paper Wheel Works, the first structure scheduled for completion. By October, with all buildings of the factory partially or fully completed, attention could be turned toward the residential and public buildings. In November construction of the hotel and 100 dwelling units located between 111th and 112th Streets was begun. The assembling of many of the elements employed in the buildings (doors, window frames and sash, bricks, etc.) inside the company’s shops by company-paid employees greatly facilitated the construction work. Although the work on the exteriors was halted by cold weather, interior work proceeded throughout the winter.

In April 1881, the Illinois Central's Pullman station was opened, and the Corliss steam engine, most powerful in the world, was set into operation. By summer, the first 100 dwellings had been completed, and another 400 were under construction.

The hotel was completed in September 1881 and named the “Florence” after Pullman’s favorite child. The church, livery stables, Market Hall and Arcade were also under construction. Thus, the town began to take on much more than a casual shape, and population figures approached 2,000. The number of people continued to grow at a rapid rate, and by the fall of 1882, the original town (South Pullman) had been outgrown. To satisfy the increasing demand for housing, an additional 600 units were constructed in a five-block area north of the car works, between 104th and 108th Streets, which became known as North Pullman. By September 1884, over 1,400 dwelling units had been built, the company’s total investment near $8 million, and Pullman’s population rose to more than 8,500.

Some residual construction took place in South Pullman between the years 1884-91, but by this time the town’s basic appearance had been established. Two churches, the Swedish Elim Lutheran (1888) and Holy Rosary Roman Catholic (1890), were also built during this period on vacant land west of the I. C. tracks and the town. In 1892, the Market Hall was destroyed by fire, and rebuilt on the same site in 1893-4, taking on a completely different form. Four “circle buildings” were erected around the Hall to better define the Market Square, while the addition of the “graystone” mansion served to enhance the entrance to the Square. Throughout this 14-year evolution of the town, Beman remained the designer and supervisor of all construction.

For a number of years following 1884, the town continued to grow and prosper. In 1889 it was annexed to Chicago with the Village of Hyde Park. Times were economically sound, and the company’s production reached a high level of output. Suddenly, though, in 1893, the country entered another business depression, as a direct result of the
over-expansion of the railroad industry. For a while, Pullman weathered the storm and absorbed his losses. In order to keep his plant at Pullman open, he even went so far as to cut production drastically at his other factories. Eventually, unable to keep pace with the downward spiral, he was forced to impose layoffs and wage cuts. Already dissatisfied with the high cost of living at Pullman (some of the workers were paying more than 50 percent of their income on rent alone), and angered because wages were cut without a corresponding cut in rents and other fixed costs, the embittered employees decided on taking drastic action.
A grievance committee was formed, and weeks of argument followed, but Pullman was not willing to compromise. He still insisted that the company and town remained two separate and distinct entities. The notorious Pullman Strike of 1894 was the result. Pullman cars were burned and overturned at many locations. Many workers were injured in battles between strikers and strikebreakers. Communications between Governor Altgeld and President Cleveland became personality struggles until finally, against the Governor’s wishes, Federal troops were called in to quell the violence. The strike was put down, but the outcome was a disaster to the “contented” community that had existed.

An interesting sidelight of the strike is that the rents which had accrued before, during, and shortly after it were never collected. Whether this reflected George Pullman’s inveterate paternalism or a guilty conscience is not known.

Although the town fell into public disfavor as a direct result of the strike, it received one final note of commendation in 1896, when, at the Prague International Hygienic and Pharmaceutical Exposition, in competition with similar efforts by European industrialists, it was found to be “without peer” in the entire world. Even this, though, was not enough to dispel the depression from which George Pullman was suffering.

In 1897, at the age of 66, he died of a heart attack.

The following account of his burial, as told in Emmett Dedmon’s Fabulous Chicago, conveys the amount of bitter feelings still held for him:

The funeral services for Pullman were held privately in his mansion on Prairie Avenue late in the afternoon. The funeral cortège pulled away from the house just at dusk. It was night when the procession arrived at Graceland Cemetery where elaborate preparations had been made to assure that Pullman was “more secure from the encroachment of the living world” than any of “the Egyptian monarchs supposedly resting under the ponderous weight of the pyramids.” A pit as large as an average room had been dug on the family lot and lined across its base and walls with reinforced concrete eighteen inches thick. Into this the lead-lined mahogany casket was lowered, covered with a wrapping of tar paper and covered with a quick-drying coat of asphalt which would exclude all air from the casket. The balance of the pit was filled to the level of the casket with solid concrete, on top of which a series of heavy steel rails were laid at right angles to each other and bolted together. The steel rails were then imbedded in another layer of concrete. The work of filling in the grave required two days. Then “the sod was replaced, the myrtle planted” and the grave “differed in no outward respect from the thousands of others under the shadow of the trees of Graceland.” Such was the price of victory in the Pullman strike.

Following Pullman’s death, Robert Todd Lincoln, son of the late President, was appointed director of the company and became its president four years later. Drastic policy changes were announced, and the company’s attitude toward the workers began to shift in the eyes of the public. Much of this was brought about by an Illinois Supreme Court decision of 1898 which overturned a lower court’s decree and forced the company to relinquish its ownership of all but the industrial property. Because of a depressed real estate market, the company asked that the deadline be postponed, and by 1907 approximately half of the town’s available property had fallen into private ownership.

As the company sold its nonindustrial property, it discontinued its maintenance of the buildings and grounds. Thus, the parks lost their charming, well-groomed appearance and the houses their ordered, uniform look. The years 1907-8, then, became the turning point of the physical town, as the new owners lacked respect for architectural design and remodeled their homes to suit their personal tastes.

It was at this time, too, that the company changed to all-steel car construction and hence needed to build additions to the car works. The new additions were not in keeping with
the original architecture, landscaping and character of the town.

Another factor contributing to the town's decline during these years was the large population turnover. After the company had switched to all-steel car production, there was no longer any demand for wood-carvers, cabinet-makers and some other types of skilled workers. As a result, these workers moved away and were replaced by unskilled immigrants. Though World War I and federal laws slowed the immigration rate, many unskilled workers continued to move to Pullman because of the town's low rents.

It was not until the 1920's that the community again began to return to a somewhat stable state. Although residents now began to take more pride in their individual dwellings, Pullman in this period was just another Chicago neighborhood.

Demolition of some structures has taken place through the years (the School in 1913, the Arcade in 1926, and the Water Tower and some industrial buildings in 1956-7), but recent renewed interest in the town's historic and architectural heritage has prevented further destruction. Preservation efforts are now being conducted on a large scale, and many buildings have already been restored to near-original condition by a community that cares once again.

The following two pages contain photographs of portions of the original presentation drawing (early 1880) for the Administration Building and Clock Tower. Whether Solon S. Beman, the town's architect, or Irving K. Pond, one of his draftsmen, worked on this drawing has not been determined.

The first photograph shows the west elevation of the Clock Tower, flanked by portions of the two wings of the erecting shops. The only major difference between the presentation drawing and the building as constructed was the omission of the decorative treatment around the main entrance arch. Later remodelings to the Clock Tower's facade have been only slight.

The second photograph shows a detail of the left-end pavilion which terminated the elongated wings of the erecting shops. Changes to this facade have, again, been kept to a minimum, although the right-end pavilion and wing are no longer extant.

(Photos by Richard Nickel. Courtesy of Pullman, Inc. and the Pullman Civic Organization.)

(Copying of this and other original drawings in the possession of Pullman, Inc. has been made possible through grants from Mrs. C. Phillip Miller and the Pullman Civic Organization.)
Public and Company Buildings

For purposes of description, the town's physical make-up has been divided into two parts: public and company buildings and residential housing.

The public and company buildings include those structures located in the industrial area north of 111th Street, notably the Administration Building and Clock Tower, the erecting shops, the Water Tower, the Allen Paper Wheel Works, the Iron Machine Shop, and others. These buildings were among the first to be completed when the town was originally constructed.

Of particular interest is the architectural design and treatment of these industrial buildings. Up to the time of Pullman's construction, architects were concerned only with utilitarian criteria when designing such buildings. Thus, factories became anonymous structures with no identifiable decorative characteristics of their own. In designing Pullman, though, Beman was concerned with giving these structures a pleasing architectural identity in keeping with the rest of the town's appearance. Barrett enhanced these buildings by placing them in park-like settings, and all the visitors to the town praised George Pullman for his respect for beauty.

The buildings also provided fine working conditions for the employees. They were more than adequately lighted, excellently ventilated, and the painting of the walls in light colors contributed to a cheerful atmosphere. In short, they were a far cry from the sweat-shop conditions prevalent in that era.

The public buildings included the Greenstone Church, the Market Hall, the Arcade, the Pullman Stables, the Florence Hotel, the Elementary School, and others. Like the company buildings, they, too, were rich in ornament and detail, and helped to create a pleasant environment.

The following pages include photographs and descriptions of eight of the more important public and company buildings. Of these, three have been demolished, but five are still standing. Both contemporary and historic photos of those still standing are shown in order to provide the proper bases for reference and comparison.

The Administration Building and Clock Tower

The Administration Building complex, constructed in the early 1880s, is located at the corner of East 111th Street and South Cottage Grove Avenue. Originally about 700 feet in length, this red facebrick structure was made up of three parts: center section, flanking wings, and pavilions. The center section contained three floors of corporate offices of the Pullman car works. It was somewhat similar in appearance to Chicago's railroad depots (S. S. Beman also designed Grand Central Station some years later), a fact apparent in the large clock tower that rose to an impressive height of 120 feet above the entrance arch.

Flanking the center section on either side were two elongated wings housing the erecting shops. In these shops, cars were constructed in an assembly-line fashion. Using this process, advanced for its time, the company could produce cars at the rate of more than two per day. The two wings were terminated by three-bay-wide pavilions which complemented and balanced the symmetrical structure.

Lake Vista, a reflecting pool located adjacent to the main entrance on the west side of the building, provided a park-like setting for the industrial structure. The lake was not a purely aesthetic feature, however. Pullman had bought the powerful Corliss steam engine that had supplied the power for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 to run the shop machinery. Located in a near-by building, the engine required a cooling reservoir and run-off collection basin, and Lake Vista filled this need.
In 1907, a large addition was attached to the southern wing. This addition, approximately sixty feet in height, begins south of the center section and continues south parallel to the old wing, the facade of which was covered with the installation of the new structure. Its architectural treatment is only vaguely sympathetic to the original appearance, and because of differing design characteristics (especially with respect to height and property setbacks), the symmetrical qualities of the original complex have disappeared completely.

The Pullman Company has vacated the building, Lake Vista has long since been removed to make way for Cottage Grove Avenue, and the original edifice remains only partly intact. The Administration Building and Clock Tower, along with the north wing and pavilion, however, remain an impressive and integral part of the community of Pullman.
The Arcade

This structure, rising some 90’ above ground level, was located on South Cottage Grove Avenue between East 111th Place and East 112th Street. Its plan dimensions were approximately 160’ X 250’, and it was the largest commercial structure of its type in the Chicago area. It was, in effect, a completely enclosed shopping center that served a wide variety of needs in both Pullman and the surrounding area.

Arcades, or enclosed “bazaars” as they were sometimes called, were by no means new. However, the development of iron-and-glass construction in the mid-19th century had made possible the enclosure of large areas with greenhouse-like structures, and it did not take long for the idea of enclosing whole shopping areas to evolve. By the 1870s, many such “arcades” were in operation both in Europe and America.

The Arcade in Pullman was truly a multi-use building, containing shops, a bank, a post office and a 6,000 volume library (most of the books being George Pullman’s personal donation). There was also a theatre which, at the time of its construction, was one of the finest in the Chicago area. The theatre’s interior appointments were executed by Hughson Hawley, an “architectural watercolorist and designer of stage settings,” who was famous for his work on the Madison Square Theatre in New York City.

The building itself was in the form of a rectangular block, transversed by two multi-story pedestrian “streets” (interior walkways comparable to malls in present-day shopping centers). The liberal use of iron and glass that covered these streets added a light and airy feeling to the interior space, and made the building quite a pleasant place in which to shop.

When the company lost its control over the town after the turn of the century, small shops began to spring up throughout the community and its surrounding area. This may have provided a healthy competitive spirit for the many entrepreneurs and small businessmen in the town, but the Arcade suffered. Thus, due to a continuing lack of patronage and increasing operating expenses, the Arcade was demolished in 1926. The property lay vacant for a number of years, and an American Legion Hall now occupies the site.
The Florence Hotel

Named after George Pullman's favorite daughter and located at the corner of East 111th Street and South Cottage Grove Avenue, this structure was (and is) one of the first buildings to greet the visitor to the town as he stepped off the Illinois Central train at the 111th Street Station. During the early history of the town, many persons roomed here while either studying the various aspects of the community or visiting on George Pullman's personal invitation.
Besides containing rooms for 100 persons and dining facilities for 125, the hotel also contained a bar, pool room and barber shop for the use of its guests. An interesting fact is that the hotel’s bar was the only one to be found in the entire town, and was never used by the community’s residents. This was deliberately in keeping with George Pullman’s wishes to remove all temptations that might adversely affect his workers.

Nothing was omitted in providing the most luxurious accommodations possible for the guests, and the hotel was widely known for its fine hardwood paneling and woodwork and plush furnishings. It also contained the most up-to-date facilities in sanitation and fire-protection.

Though Irving K. Pond later wrote in the *Monthly Bulletin of the Illinois Society of Architects* (June-July 1934) that “there is no attempt in Pullman to produce sophisticated architecture....” the Florence Hotel must surely have been an exception. Its Queen Anne treatment, characterized by a variety of color and texture, gables, the importance of the chimney element, and the gracious veranda and detailing helped it to take on much more than a strictly utilitarian appearance. The residents of the town must have had the same feelings as they “viewed, but dared not enter” George Pullman’s favorite structure.

Although slight changes have been made to the facade, and a large annex added to the northeast corner of the building after 1910, the hotel’s fine overall appearance and pleasing qualities are readily associated with the District.

The Greenstone Church

Located at the corner of East 112th Street and South St. Lawrence Avenue, the Greenstone Church is perhaps the most charming building in the entire District. Its name is derived from the green color of its New England serpentine-stone facade. The massiveness of the masonry coupled with the large spire and arches suggest the influences of the Gothic Revival and Romanesque styles utilized in the late 1800s. The influence of architect H. H. Richardson is therefore suggested.

Although the church was dedicated on December 11, 1882, it was opened only on special occasions until 1885. It seems that no denomination could afford to pay the high rents charged by Pullman for the place of worship, since it, too, was expected to return a 6 percent profit on its cost. At first, people were sure that George Pullman’s religious convictions prompted him to include a church in the town’s plan, but in an interview with a newspaper reporter, he confided that religion was not his only motive: he expected the church to add to the visual appeal of the town as well as satisfy the workers’ need for spiritual fulfillment. He did, however, stress the visual aspect.

Since the Presbyterians had rented the church in 1885, the Catholics and Swedish Lutherans asked Pullman’s permission to build their own structures. He resisted their pleas for years but finally leased property to them so they could build. Swedish Elim Lutheran Church (1888), and Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church (1890), both designed by Beman, were constructed on vacant land some blocks west of the town to satisfy the needs of these congregations.

Today, the Greenstone Church is in excellent condition. Both the interior and exterior have undergone extensive restoration, and it remains much the same as it did when George Pullman attended services there.
The Water Tower

Constructed in the early 1880s, the Water Tower was located northeast of the Administration Building in the industrial area north of 111th Street. The importance of the building lies in the structural technology employed in its construction. It was 70' square at the base and 195' high, making it the tallest building west of New York (surpassed only by Richard Morris Hunt's 260' - high Tribune Building, New York City [1873-5] and George B. Post's 230' - high Western Union Building, New York City [1873-5]). Its load-bearing capacity was also much greater than virtually any other building in the country.

The interior floors of the structure were supported by four massive phoenix columns resting on large, cone-shaped concrete foundation piles. These columns were terminated at the eighth floor, where the two-story, 500,000 - gallon octagonal water storage tank was located. The size of this tank and its height above ground made for a water pressure of about 75 pounds per square inch -- more than adequate to fill the needs of the community.
The 40' subbasement contained three water pumps, four sewage pumps, and a 300,000-gallon sewage reservoir. All of the town's sewage was collected in this cistern, then pumped to a company farm some three miles away where it was distributed over the fields and used as fertilizer. Thus, even the town's waste material was used for gaining a profit!

The structure was demolished in 1957, when the original Pullman factory buildings were sold.

The Market Hall

This structure is located in the middle of the intersection of East 112th Street and South Champlain Avenue. By deliberate design, the building was placed at this location to break up the sometimes monotonous regularity of the streets' grid system.

The first Market Hall was a two-story structure with plan dimensions of 100' X 110'. The first floor contained a lunch counter and 16 stalls for the sale of fresh meats and vegetables, many of which were grown at the company-operated "sewage farm" (see description of Water Tower). The premises were inspected daily by a company employee to insure cleanliness and sanitary conditions. The second floor contained a meeting hall which could accommodate 600 persons. Many important speeches were given here, including one in 1891 by Clarence Darrow on the eight-hour day. Though built to last, the structure was gutted by fire in 1892 and demolished.
The first Market Hall, destroyed by fire in 1892, ca. 1890 (Photo by H.R. Koopman, Courtesy Pullman Civic Organization.)

The second and present Market Hall. Constructed in 1893-94 on the site of the first Market Hall, 1900 (Photo by John Ehretsman.)

The Market Hall as it appears today. The top floor was removed after being destroyed by fire in 1931. The building to the right is one of the four “circle buildings” around the Market Hall. 1971 (Courtesy Pullman Civic Organization.)
The second Market Hall was constructed on the same site in 1893-4. It was three stories high, and of similar plan dimensions as the original, but its architecture was considerably altered by Beman. At the same time, four new "circle buildings" were constructed in the area immediately surrounding the Hall to better define and enhance the square. These new buildings, with their graceful colonnades and arches, accomplished just that.

The first floor of the second Market Hall contained only 12 stalls, as opposed to the original's 16. The second floor contained an assembly hall complete with stage facilities, and the third held lodge rooms and additional meeting space. After a fire in 1931, the upper half of the building was removed, and the structure is now occupied by a grocery and tavern.

The Elementary School

The school, located at the corner of East 113th Street and South Cottage Grove Avenue, was a three-story brick structure containing 13 classrooms. It could accommodate over 800 students, since 60 pupils to a room were not considered too many by the standards of the day. A playground was located adjacent to the building.

The rooms have been described as being "light and airy," and for this and other reasons the building was praised as meeting the highest educational standards by Board of Education officials and other visitors to the town. Perhaps the only obvious flaw in Beman's design for the town was the siting of the school just across the street from the ungraded Illinois Central Railroad tracks. Though this presented an obvious danger to the youngsters, no evidence can be found that a tragedy ever occurred.

The basement of the school served as a play area until 1888, when enrollment exceeded 1,300 students and all spare space was needed for classrooms. This problem of overcrowding continued until 1913, when, at the insistence of the residents, the school was demolished and replaced by a new building one-half block east of the old site. Light industry now occupies the site of the original school.
The Pullman Stables

This structure is located at the corner of East 112th Street and South Cottage Grove Avenue. According to a town rule, all the horses of residents and visitors had to be kept here, apparently to prevent unnecessary clean-up tasks as well as to provide a profitable service. The volunteer fire company was also housed in this building for a number of years, and was known for its good service.

Around the turn of the century, a popular Sunday-afternoon activity was to rent a carriage team, tour the countryside, and enjoy a family picnic. The company provided for this service at the stables, and individuals could rent a horse and buggy for $3 a day.

A service station, auto repair shop, and awning company now occupy the building, but interesting reminders of the past are still apparent, including two carved horses' heads located above the 112th Street entrance to the garage.
Pullman Housing

In an article on Pullman in the April-June 1970 issue of Historic Preservation, a publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Norbert J. Pointner describes the workers’ housing as follows:

No other element of the town deserves more attention than the quality of the worker’s housing. A majority of the 6,000 persons employed by the Pullman Palace Car Company and its associated industries lived in the company-owned and maintained dwellings. The buildings were predominantly brick row houses containing from two to seven rooms. The company brick yard produced over 30 million bricks during each of several peak years to meet construction demands. Foundations and trim were made of stone and the roofs were slate. These row houses, produced in blocks of two or more, provided economy of construction and maintenance compared to individual free-standing units. The resulting residential densities are nearly three-quarters of the density of present-day Chicago, yet every home had direct access to a private fenced yard and a woodshed which opened onto a paved alley. The alley also served as access for vendors and trash collection, a company service included in the rent.

A variety of dwelling unit types was to be found on and within each block throughout the town. These architectural differences were designed to meet the varying income, status and family characteristics of the workers, and furnished a basis for meaningful variation in the street facades. Adding to the richness and identity of each street were structural and artistic variations in detailing, landscaping, roof line, lintels, chimney configuration and brick coloring. Continuity was maintained by similarity of proportions, repetition of key details, brick-textured surfaces, setbacks and the rhythmic lines of eaves and lintels.

No dwelling was more than two rooms deep in order to secure cross ventilation and sunlight. Additional light was obtained on the top floors by the use of skylights and the usefulness of basements was increased by windows. A space of 100-110 feet was allowed between parallel rows of houses facing across the tree-lined streets. The quality of construction, concern for a healthful environment and variety of dwelling types help to account for the staying power of this historic community. During the 90 years of continuous use, families have been able to move from one home to another to meet changing family and financial conditions without leaving the community and established social and personal ties.

The following pages contain photos and descriptions of 14 housing types providing a representative sample of all the units in the District. The maps following the photographs document the type into which all of the housing units in the District fall. The types illustrated merely represent basic categories of units, and are not concerned with minor differences in detailing, "mirror images," etc.
Type 1
Date of construction: ca. 1881

This building is the Pullman Club, a gathering place for the Pullman Palace Car Company’s executives. It occupies the corner lot at East 111th Street and South St. Lawrence Avenue.

Type 2
Date of construction: ca. 1881

One of the large, 2½-story residences on East 111th Street. These homes were occupied by the executives, the only group that could afford the very high rents.

Type 3
Date of construction: ca. 1881 and ca. 1890

6-and 7-room row houses, 1½ or 2 stories high, occupying 20' and 25' lots. There are two types of facades: 1) first and second stories of brick, 2) first story of brick, top story treated as mansard. There are both single and double facades of this type.
TYPE 4
Date of construction: 1894

This is the “graystone mansion,” so-called because of the color of its masonry. An addition was made (right) after 1900.

TYPE 5
Date of construction: 1893-4

The top photo is of a building containing two 6-room residences, the bottom photo is of a 2-story, 3-flat building. These are the “circle buildings,” erected at the time of construction of the second Market Hall.

TYPE 6
Date of construction: ca. 1881

4-room row houses (known locally as cottages); 2-story brick facades with hipped or gabled roofs.
TYPE 7
Date of construction: ca. 1881 and ca. 1890

8- and 9-room residences. The first and second stories are of brick (with wooden decorative elements in some cases), while the top stories are of wood.

TYPE 8
Date of construction: ca. 1881

3-story tenement housing. These buildings provided housing for the lowest-paid workers and their families. They were all located on South Langley Avenue on the east side of the town.
TYPE 9
Date of construction: ca. 1882 and ca. 1890

4-flats, either 2 or 2½ stories high, constructed on 40' lots. The interesting "bay entrance" homes on South Champlain Avenue fall into this category.

TYPE 10
Date of construction: ca. 1882

5-room row houses (or cottages), 1½ or 2 stories high, constructed on 14', 16', or 18' lots. There are two types of facades: 1) first and second stories of brick, 2) first story of brick, top story treated as mansard. There are both single and double facades of this type.
TYPE 11
Date of construction: ca. 1881

4- or 5-room 2-flats, 2 stories high, constructed in row-house style on 24' lots.

TYPE 12
Date of construction: ca. 1882

2½-story buildings such as this originally served as boarding houses. The first and second stories are of brick, the top story treated as mansard. The buildings are located on East 113th Street between South St., Lawrence Avenue and South Langley Avenue.
TYPE 13
Date of construction: ca. 1881

For a number of years, this 2½-story building served as the company's infirmary. It is located immediately south of the Greenstone Church on

Type 14
Date of construction: ca. 1881

3-story, 3-flat buildings constructed in row-house style on 24' lots, each unit having a double entrance in the center. The first two stories are of brick, while the third is given full or partial mansard treatment.
Administration Building and Clock Tower

East 111th Street

South Cottage Grove Avenue
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