

Located in Chinatown, the Ping Tom Memorial Park uses Chinese architectural details in the design of its playground and recreational areas. This community area suffers from a lack of open space generally, so the Chicago Park District's acquisition of the 12-acre site from a railroad and its development in the late 1990s served a critical need for Chinatown. The river became an amenity that can be used and enjoyed rather than a mystery glimpsed only from bridges.

The expansion site is on the opposite (north) side of 18th Street from the existing park, and is large enough to transform Ping Tom from a park serving only nearby residents into a regional park. The property is already owned by the Chicago Park District, and landscape designers are discussing the possibility of constructing a field house, ball fields and soccer fields.

The generous width of the site allows for the opportunity to develop a gently-sloped river bank **2** rather than the steep, inaccessible banks that are

more typical along the South Branch. This will allow public access to the river and the creation of planting areas for aquatic and wetland plants along the river's transition to prairie plants on the higher, drier areas. Habitat improvement will be a feature of the park's design.

Currently the area is fenced. There is an existing, unimproved trail running perpendicular to the river. Second growth woods of mostly weedy trees thrive along the river bank.

One of the most dramatic features of both sections of the park is the criss-cross of bridges over the river; an old draw bridge upstream stands permanently raised. One of the better views of the Ping Tom Expansion is from the 18th Street bridge; to the south is the existing park, and to the north is the new parkland with its naturalistic edge.

PING TOM MEMORIAL
PARK EXPANSION

Site No 59

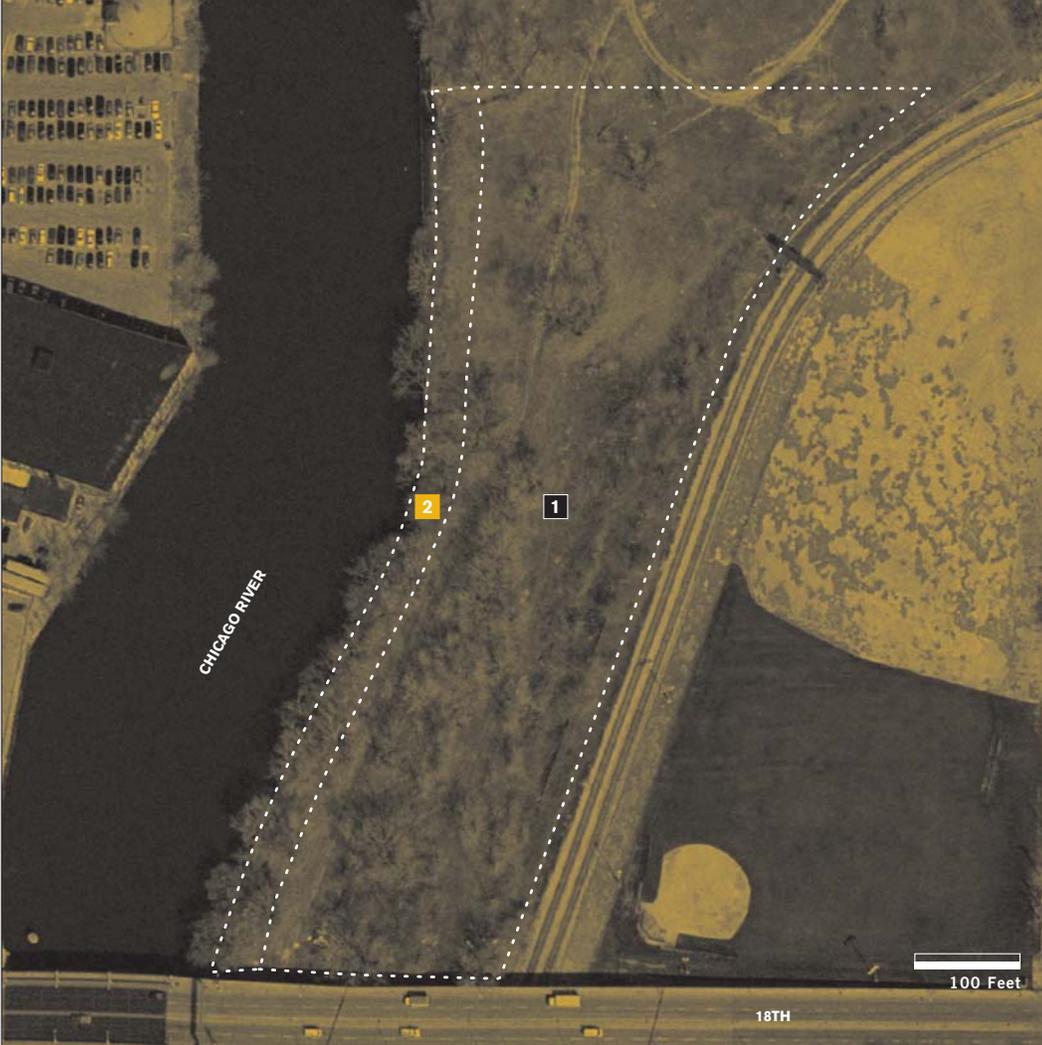


1800 SOUTH / 200 WEST



**Ping Tom Memorial
Park Expansion**

No 59



ADDRESS 1800 S Wentworth Ave
OWNER Chicago Park District
ACREAGE 5.40

HABITATS
1 Potential Habitat
2 Riparian / Water Edge

DIRECTIONS At the corner of Wentworth and 18th Street, turn North onto a dirt road. Park in the big vacant lot and walk west toward the river.

Ping Tom Memorial Park Expansion

Chicago Habitat Directory 2005