

WASHINGTON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD GUIDE

"The Washington Park Chamber of Commerce believes that in order to build an economically strong community; our businesses, institutions, and organizations must collaborate, and be committed to invest in the capacity of it's people."

- Donna Hampton-Smith, President

The Mission of the Washington Park Chamber of Commerce (WPCC) is to create and sustain economic opportunities in the

Washington Park community that improve the quality of life for all of its residents; businesses, and institutions through advocacy, initiatives, and partnerships for community and economic development.

Follow WPCC at:

(773) 955-0199

wpcc@hsaigmail.com

thewashingtonparkcchc.org

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A community distinctively enriched with charm of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Washington Park Community Area is 40 is seven miles south of the Loop. Washington Park takes its name from the recreational area situated along the eastern border of the community, stretching east-west from Cottage Grove Avenue bordering north-south from 51st Street to 65rd. Washington Park's greatest features are the beautiful Washington Park, cultural institutions, stately graystones, historic landmarks, great transportation, and close proximity to the future home of the Obama Presidential Center.

WASHINGTON PARK
Chamber of Commerce

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Office of Civic Engagement

WASHINGTON PARK RICH HISTORY

Bud Billiken Day Parade
Every Second Saturday in August

The African Festival of the Arts
Labor Day Weekend

UniverSoul Circus
Every October



1 Pate-Comitly House (1901)
5915 S. Michigan Avenue
Limestone house designed (for Chicago lumberman Davey Pate) by Prairie School Architect George Maher was later owned by White Sox owner Charles Comitly.

2 Chicago Orphan Asylum (1899)
5114-28 S. King Drive
This Colonial Revival Style building was built by the firm which also designed the Art Institute and The Chicago Cultural Center. It later became Parkway Community House and was run by sociologist Horace Cayton Jr. co-author of "Black Metropolis". Since 1957, it has been The Chicago Baptist Institute.

3 Washington Park National Historic District (1870's)
5531 S. King Drive
Olmedo and Vaux designed the park, but the blueprints burned in the Great Chicago Fire. Olmedo's plan however was substantially implemented by Horace W.S. Cleveland, though with cutbacks due to the fire and a depression in the 1870's. The Park was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

4 General Richard L. Jones Armory (1931)
5208 S. Cottage Grove Avenue
This massive Art Deco style building was built on land transferred to the State of Illinois at the north end of Washington Park. In 1970, it was named in honor of Brigadier General Richard Lee Jones who served in both world wars and was appointed by President Eisenhower to be U.S. Ambassador to Liberia.

5 The Schulze Baking Company (1914)
400 E. Garfield Boulevard
Company founded in 1893. This building, designed by John Altschager, was the home of Interstate Bonds and Hostess Buttertut Bread until 2004. The building is scheduled to re-open as a data center.

6 Garfield Boulevard 'U' Station (1892)
319 E. Garfield Boulevard
The oldest station facility on the L, the 55th street station was built as part of the system's extension to the Columbian Exposition. It is typical of the alley 'U' stations. It was closed in 2001 and was designated a Chicago Landmark that year.

7 Robet House (1871)
5720 S. Lafayette Avenue
An Italianate style mansion designed by Architect Thomas Wing for saloon keeper turned Alderman John Robet. Vacant for decades, the house seems a lure for redevelopment proposals ranging from vineyard to park to youth center to sustainable housing.

8 Du Sable Museum of African American History (1910)
740 E. 56th Place
Founded by a group headed by Dr. Margaret Taylor Burroughs in 1901, in 1973 it moved into a former post administration building that was designed by D.H. Burnham and Co. It has a 1973 addition named for Harold Washington, Chicago's first African American mayor. But it is the original building that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places within Washington Park.

9 Lorado Taft Fountain of Time Monument (1920)
770 E. 60th Street
The fountain was designed by Lorado Taft as a testament to the first one hundred years of peace between the U.S. and Britain after the signing of The 1814 Treaty of Ghent. It is a contributing structure within the National Register of Historic Places.

100 Club DeLisa (1934)
5521 S. State Street
Originally at 5516 S. State, the four De Lisa brothers rebuilt across the street after a 1941 fire. But from 1934 until it closed in 1958, the Club De Lisa was one of the most popular nightclubs in Chicago, with stars on the stage and in the audience.

100 Rhumbaogie Cafe (1940)
343 E. Garfield Boulevard
This popular jazz club opened in 1940. Joe Louis was rumored to be a part owner. But 343 E. Garfield was a popular music venue for 30 years under a variety of names.

102 Jesse Binga House (1890's)
5926 S. King Drive
In 1908, businessman Jesse Binga opened a bank at 56th and State to serve African Americans, when white owned institutions would not. His home, purchased in 1871 is of note because of its ownership and its tale as the site of seven bombings as residents began to leave the "Black Belt".

100 Lorraine Hansberry's Childhood Home
5926 S. King Drive
Playwright Lorraine Hansberry gained fame for becoming the first African American woman to produce a play on Broadway, 1959's "A Raisin in the Sun". Hansberry lived at 5926 S. King Drive while in high school after her parents had challenged Chicago's restrictive real estate covenants all the way to the Supreme Court. Her play was partly based on the life in Chicago's "Black Belt".

What to See

Events