

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Land Subdivisions with Set-Aside Parks, Chicago, Illinois

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Emergence of Land Subdivisions with Set-Aside Parks: An Economic, Social, Cultural and Architectural Theme in Mid-19th Century Chicago (1833-1917)

City Mansions, Rowhouses and Related Buildings: Architectural Collections Around Park Settings (1833-1917)

C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Wheeler / SAHP 7-2003
Signature and title of certifying official Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Aug. 21, 2003
Date

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

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Statement of Historic Contexts

Introduction

The settlement history of early Chicago is marked by land speculation fueled by the Illinois and Michigan Canal and later the railroads. Chicago promised to become a transportation hub and fortunes were to be made. Eastern capitalists moved to the town and formed land companies that purchased tracts of land, subdivided them and sold them to investors. A relentless grid of lots with perpendicular streets was surveyed from the lake extending west across the Chicago River and its branches. The grid's pattern would have remained unrelieved but for several influences. The early 19th century plan to expand New York City's original town was influential. It included entire blocks reserved as open space. By the mid-19th century, Andrew Jackson Downing was advocating horticulture, gardens and open spaces to be reserved as parks. Early Chicagoans were concerned about the perception of their burgeoning city and began to lobby for preserved open space. The canal commissioners, when reserving land for the canal route, created the first two open areas by setting aside portions of the lakefront and creating Dearborn Park. Private land companies soon followed their example and created land subdivisions with set-aside parks. These parks were to remain forever available to the public. They functioned as neighborhood amenities and boosted land values leading to fashionable districts around the parks.

Emergence of Land Subdivisions with Set-Aside Parks: An Economic, Social, Cultural and Architectural Theme in Mid-19th Century Chicago.

In 1673, Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet discovered the Chicago River. They had explored the Mississippi River in search of a better route to the Great Lakes. The Indians told them of a route along the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers. From there they discovered it was only a short portage to the Chicago River. They had discovered the link they were looking for, the link between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. Chicago owes her beginnings to this simple discovery. Marquette proposed a canal connecting the south branch of the Chicago river with the Illinois River. Nothing happened for one hundred years until 1781 with the establishment of a permanent settlement. Jean Baptiste Point du Sable built a cabin at the mouth of the Chicago river on the north bank. Other structures extended south along the lakeshore. Fort Dearborn, named after the Secretary of War, General Henry Dearborn, was completed in 1804.

It was not until 1822 that the United States Congress authorized the State of Illinois to survey and acquire a 90-foot swath of land for the canal. Three canal commissioners were appointed in 1829 and the route was selected. James Thompson, a civil engineer, filed the plat that designated the route in 1830. It set the city's early boundaries. These maps show a grid pattern of streets and lots beginning west of the lake's edge and extending in an unrelenting grid pattern across the main branch of the Chicago River and its two branches. (Figures 1, 2)

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A public square was indicated. It was bounded by Clark, Randolph, LaSalle and Washington Streets with a courthouse in the northeastern corner. Sales of the other surveyed lots were to finance canal construction. Herein lies the origin of speculative real estate transactions that were endlessly repeated in Chicago's early years.¹

Gridiron Cities and Checkerboard Plans

Chicago's early grid plan and public square were characteristic of the plans of American frontier towns. New England village planning in the 17th century centered on some form of open space, variously termed the village green or common. Actual usage varied because the site was sometimes used for the meetinghouse, mustering and grazing cattle, and later for other public buildings.² Although for the most part, the greens remained open. At the very least, it was an attempt to set aside open space as a community amenity. Construction on lots facing the green was expected to honor a respectable setback. Meetinghouses and churches were natural candidates because they reflected their importance to the settlement. Once the public open space was located, a pattern of streets was laid out surrounding it. House lots immediately surrounded the square followed by larger outlying farm lots. The influence of New England town planning was felt throughout other New England cities.³ In the Northwest Territory, which was the name for the frontier land that included Chicago, the in-lot and out-lot system was followed.

Most of the earliest cities along the Eastern seaboard were laid out in the pattern, such as Philadelphia's town plan with its gridiron pattern and provision for public squares. The grid was easily laid out by surveyors with chains and readily adaptable by speculative investors. On the frontier, towns were begun and expanded on the grid.

What at first seemed like a rational town plan with straight streets that intersect at right angles, evolved into plans that were predictable and dull. Planners sought departures or variations in the pattern. One solution was to combine the gridiron plan with a radial design; however, this rarely was adopted in American cities. Another solution was New York City's plan in the early 19th century. It began by expanding the grid of the original town with a super grid. When the New York state legislature established a commission to survey the new streets, they also were empowered to locate 500 acres of open space. They created several small parks that occupied the equivalent of only four blocks in the massive grid. Although the proposed parks relieved the grid pattern, their small size was dwarfed by the rest of the plan. The commissioners were prepared to defend these small open spaces with the fact that "large arms of the sea" surrounded Manhattan Island.⁴ Despite the drawbacks, New York's plan was tremendously influential.

Land Speculation and American Town Planning

Towns with grid patterns were the land speculator's dream because they readily divided the land into saleable lots. Land speculation was a national phenomenon in the 1830s. To some extent, it was present in every

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venture into American town planning.⁵ With the subjection of the Indians along the frontier, the accumulation of wealth along the eastern seaboard, and the filling up of eastern settlements, came the ingredients for land speculation. Stories circulated about sudden fortunes and fabulous wealth that could be accumulated it seemed overnight. The potential for financial gain rarely was overlooked. Speculative land companies were formed for the purpose of laying out tracts, subdivisions, and town sites. The earliest companies acquired land, conducted site surveys, and promoted sales through fairs, with horse races, dances and theatrical performances.⁶ Owners of large tracts of land soon subdivided them into smaller lots. Lots were snapped up at feverish paces. Choice lots often were reserved by the land company, which further maximized profits when they later were put up for sale. Often public squares were included within the plans and frequently named after George Washington or Benjamin Franklin.⁷

Speculation was fueled by the realization that land values were greatly undervalued and this led to hundred fold and even thousand fold increases. Speculators came from all ranks of labor from farmer, to mechanic to lawyer to doctor.... Credit was recklessly extended and resulted in indiscriminate lending. Money was printed like handbills. Towns were laid out at every creek and streamlet that emptied into Lake Michigan. Then the miserable waste of sand and fens which lay unconscious of its glory on the shore of the lake, was suddenly elevated into a mighty city, with a projected harbor and light-house, railroads and canals, and in a short time the circumjacent lands were sold in lots 50 feet by 100 under the name of 'Additions'".⁸

In Chicago, land speculation was fueled by passage of the Canal Bill in January 1836. It insured that construction would begin along with plans for a system of railroads and river improvements. Values on land adjacent to transportation routes rose with unprecedented rapidity. The taste for sudden wealth and high living attracted an unequalled stream of Eastern capital and Eastern investors. Chicago was frequently the center of their operations.⁹ The following quote describes a Chicago land company and its operatives:

Private land companies, many of them ephemeral, such as the American Land Company and the Rockwell Land Company, promoted sales with rare skill....The former organization, officered by men of foresight and keenness, with stockholders such as Charles Butler who had gained experience in financing farmers in western New York, did much to direct attention to the raw, young town of the West. In 1833, Butler with Arthur Bronson, financier and real estate broker, visited Chicago. Immediately they were converted to the optimism concerning the town's future so current in the 'thirties. Through Butler's influence, William B. Ogden, his brother-in-law, came to Chicago to take care of interests there.¹⁰

William B. Ogden

Ogden typifies the successful land speculator that arrived in Chicago in the 1830s from the east coast. After a youth spent in Delaware County, New York, where his law education was interrupted, he arrived in Chicago in May 1835 with the intent of buying into the Chicago real estate market.¹¹ At first little impressed him. The north section, the area that would soon encompass his major holdings, was an unbroken field with a coarse growth of oak trees and underbrush all wet and marshy from the recent rains.¹² Soon he succumbed to the

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mania and entered land sales promotion. His first sale was in June, 1835 of Block 1, in the original town. At first his principal energies were devoted to the management of real estate, but by the next year he created a general land agency to care for and sell real estate in Illinois, Wisconsin, western Michigan and northern Indiana and began to devote his time to many other projects, such as the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the railroads.¹³ Within two years, he became Chicago's first mayor.

His real estate operations were immense. Sales for him and others amounted to tens of millions of dollars, and the firm's annual sales exceeded millions of dollars for some years. Efforts to improve the north section, particularly the lots in Kinzie's Addition just north of the river, were successful due largely to his efforts. Along with friends he made purchases including Wolcott's Addition and nearly half of Kinzie's Addition. The latter included the block that would ultimately hold the freight houses of another of his interests, the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, Chicago's first railroad. (Figure 3) Ogden and his clients financed public improvements that included more than 100 miles of streets and numerous bridges, including two over the Chicago River. He built the first floating swing-bridge at Clark Street to enhance the value of the real estate he owned in the north section.¹⁴

Ogden was also a contractor on the Illinois and Michigan Canal devoting untiring efforts to its resuscitation and eventual completion. Although canal construction did not begin until 1836 and was not completed until 1848, it was enough to continually spur lively speculation in city lots. The first boom occurred in 1833 culminating in 1836. In three years, Chicago's population jumped from about 300-500 people to 4,000. The boom collapsed with the nationwide financial panic of 1837 but by the early 1840s it had resumed. In 1848, with opening of the canal, the population was 20,000. However, by its completion, the canal was already obsolete. It was replaced by the railroads. Chicago's first line opened the same year, and by 1860 it was the focal point of ten rail lines. The most rapid population growth of any American city occurred in the following years. In 1865, the population was 180,000, which doubled by 1872 and quadrupled by 1885. As the city grew, the grid expanded.

Beyond the Grid: Land Subdivisions and Set-Aside Parks

Open spaces, gardens and parks more closely reflected 19th century citizen values than the rampant materialism of speculation. With the abuse and pollution of the land, waterways and air, citizens have been perpetually at odds with nature. Land was to support town development, but nature's benefits were also inspiring to the soul and healthy for the body. These values contributed to the phenomenon of land subdivisions with set-aside parks.¹⁵

Chicago grew quickly from a village on the edge of the prairie to the second largest city in the United States. As discussed, the exponential growth was due in part to real estate speculators who were also Chicago's leaders. The hindsight of history may relegate this to rampant materialism; but at the same time, 19th century Chicagoans were also concerned about how their city was perceived. This vein of civility was due in part to

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European sources. A number of individuals from the east coast settled in Chicago. They had traveled to Europe, perhaps had been educated there, and were exposed to its grand cities. The European experience kindled connections with history that translated to a wish to recreate their wide city boulevards and elegant architecture. Emulation of European customs extended to gardens and parks. The upper middle class, the managers, clerks, and white-collar workers, created new boundaries for themselves and they aimed for respectability. This culminated in an interest in parks and in architectural revivals, such as the Gothic Revival in mid-century.

Andrew Jackson Downing, the American landscape gardener, horticulturalist and architectural critic contributed a similar influence culminating in his work "Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America, with a View to the Improvement of Country Residences" published in 1840. He advanced the concepts of horticulture in general, and parks in particular. He cited the lack of parks in American cities compared to those in London, Paris and Frankfurt. He admonished wealthy citizens to donate the land and the revolutionary idea that, once obtained, they would be maintained by taxpayer money. He advanced that parks were an antidote to crowding and congestion in the city. In the 1840s, this philosophy resulted in land for public squares or parks to be set aside, which was deemed satisfactory to satisfy the need for open space. William Cullen Bryant began the campaign in 1844 for additional park space in New York City and he found supporters in Downing and in Washington Irving. His effort led to the purchase of land for what is now Central Park.

The 1830s and 1840s saw an interest in ornamental horticulture. Once again, with his interest in private garden horticulture, William Ogden provides the example of an influential citizen affecting the course of Chicago's development. Ogden lived in the elite circle of Chicago's leaders and his control and exchange of the land secured his position. Being in the center of land speculation, he attracted a class of scoundrels; yet, his simultaneous interests in ornamental horticulture were perhaps an attempt to redress these ills.

His home was situated on a four-acre lot bounded by Rush, Ontario, Erie, and Cass Streets. (Figure 4) In 1836, he enlisted John M. Van Osdel to design it. It was the first architect-designed home in Chicago. The Greek Revival mansion had a two-story square plan with recessed porches on each side with ornamental columns. The roof had an observatory. Ogden preserved the existing trees and transplanted plants from the Calumet Lake region. A glass conservatory was added. The whole complex was connected by gravel footpaths.

Ogden created an urban retreat rather than move to one in the suburbs or country, as some of his counterparts did by having second homes in what is now the Riverside and Lake Geneva area. He shared his love of gardening with other Chicago elite, such as Jonathan Y. Scammon and John H. Kinzie. The latter had a few acres of ornamental and fruit trees around his residence that was near Ogden's. George W. Snow, who was a lumber merchant credited with the invention of the balloon-frame, cultivated a garden and a greenhouse with

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ninety varieties of camellias and twenty-five varieties of cactus. Dr. William B. Egan, a medical doctor as well as real estate dealer, cultivated strawberries, vegetables and flowers, and maintained a large nursery of evergreens that he transplanted along the lakeshore. Henry G. Hubbard, a successful merchant, was reputed to be the most successful planter of forest trees. Justin Butterfield drew up the canal bill and had one of the most beautiful flower gardens in the city.¹⁶ In the 1850s, on the north side, Samuel H. Kerfoot developed a private park that he opened to the public. Kerfoot was a real estate developer. The park was located five miles north of downtown amidst a tract of land he was developing as an elite residential development. He sought to create the “first specimen of artistic landscape gardening in this section of the county...[the] most thorough piece of work in its way west of the Hudson River”.¹⁷ The 10-acre park later became his residence with a carriage drive, artificial ponds, arbors, bridges and plantings. Kerfoot was the gentlemen gardener, with extensive library holdings and painting collections, modeled on Ogden and other horticulturalists.

All of these enthusiasms and interests culminated in the formation of the Chicago Horticultural Society in 1847 with Kinzie as its first president. The society sought to encourage appreciation of horticulture. Whereas Downing advocated a country existence, Ogden used Downing's precepts to enhance city living and ultimately his property values. Chicago's urban horticulturalists were speculators. The public grounds they created were treated as amenities to boost real estate values. By the 1860s, the twin interests of real estate speculation and horticulture were not viewed as opposing interests, but rather as an interest in nature improved or the creation of something from nothing.

Chicago's early public grounds, Dearborn Park, the Public Square and Lake Front Park, drew on these ideas. The city motto *Urbs in Horto* refers to the garden in the hinterland. Interest in public open space extended to the public at large and they demanded more of it. The lakefront was the city's greatest scenic amenity and some felt it should become public grounds to be accessible to all the people all the time. In response, the canal commissioners created two public parks from the 54-acre site that was formerly Ft. Dearborn. The first was Lake Front Park that extended along the lakefront between Madison and Randolph Streets and east of Michigan Avenue. It would later become Grant Park. The second was Dearborn Park, a 1.08-acre public square west of Michigan Avenue from Randolph south to Washington Street. Along the west park enclosure were significant houses occupied by prominent families. In 1836, more of the lakefront was set-aside as a public park as far south as 12th Street. These two parks initiated a trend towards establishing a great number of small parks that peppered many of the city's districts.

In 1848, Jefferson Park, a 5-1/2 acre site on the west side, was set aside by the canal commissioners as they created subdivisions. (Figure 5) Winnemac, North Laramie, Argyle and North Lockwood Avenues in the town of Jefferson, which was annexed to the city in 1889, bound it. Its name was changed to Roberts Square when the larger Jefferson Park was established in the west division, the area west of the Chicago River. The first Jefferson Park was administered by the Small Parks Commission, which significantly improved it.

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Small, private developers followed the example of the canal commissioners and dedicated small squares as public parks in the midst of private blocks for sale. In 1842, the owners of Bushnell's Addition donated one of the lots, 2-1/4 acres, in the subdivision to the city to be forever preserved as a public square. They named it Washington Square. (Figure 5) The remaining 24 blocks were subdivided into smaller parcels and soon became a fashionable district.

In the 1850s, Henry D. Gilpin deeded the 4-acre Vernon Park on the west side as part of his real estate development. Gilpin purchased canal lands in 1839 lying between Harrison Street and 12th Street west of the river. Vernon was named after George Washington's Mt. Vernon. It has 6.14 acres bounded by Macalister Place, Lytle Street, Gilpin Place and Sibley Street.¹⁸ After beginning his education in this country, Gilpin furthered his studies in England eventually entering the law profession and becoming the U.S. District Attorney in Philadelphia. Upon retirement in 1840 he was chosen president of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He and Mrs. Gilpin arrived in Chicago in 1859, and their legacy maintains the Gilpin Library within the Chicago Historical Society. The park is situated between two large campuses, the Illinois Medical Center and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Nonetheless, significant residential structures dating from the 1870s through the 1890s exist along Lexington and Loomis Streets, two of the park's boundary streets.

Astor Park, on Astor Street, originally occupied the entire block of land that belonged to John Jacob Astor. The land was acquired by H.O. Stone, who reserved this park to benefit the other buildings he had in the vicinity. Stone also had other dreams of improving the area. Once he owned all the land that Goethe Street traversed, he planned on a water slip that would connect the lake and the north branch of the river. It was to be a commercial waterway providing a cargo route that would reap millions in wharf privileges. The Grand Haven Slip was never built.

Union Park was conveyed to the City in 1854. Its 17 acres were bounded by Bryan Place, Odgen, Warren and Ashland Avenues and it was part of a tract owned by Samuel Snowdon Hayes. His gift was to provide for a public park. As with the Bushnell gift, there was a personal as well as a benevolent aim. At the time, Hayes was probably the largest broker in real estate, and he was one of several real estate investors on the west side who donated improvements to entice investment in the south section, then the largest section, of the young city. The improvements were intended to make the south section the most attractive. Some of the investors built large homes with lavish grounds to further entice settlement. During the 1860's Union Park furthered the development of one of the city's most significant residential neighborhoods, which was located along Washington Boulevard between Halsted and Ashland Avenues. The Union Park Congregational Church, 1869, is located at 46 N. Ashland and residential structures from the 1860s through the 1890s are located along Washington, Warren and Ashland Avenue. After the Fire, Ashland Avenue succeeded Washington Boulevard as the west side's most fashionable street.

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Ellis Park was donated in 1855. It contains four acres bounded by 37th Street, Langley Avenue and Elmwood Court along the south shore of Lake Michigan. As with the other parks, it retains the name of its donor. Mr. Ellis arrived when the government lands just outside the city were being sold for \$1.25/acre. Ellis purchased a quarter section south of 35th Street between Grand Boulevard and the lake. Initially he cultivated the tract as a farm; but eventually he laid it out in two additions to the City of Chicago. Large purchases further subdivided it into smaller additions until all were owned in small parcels and improved.

Located just north of Ellis Park and just inland from the lake, is Groveland Park and Woodland Park. They are part of Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas's land. He purchased the 60-acre tract in 1852. The subdivision around Groveland was developed by his sons in the 1870s, and several Italianate and Queen Anne residential structures dating from the 1880s exist. The Groveland Park Gatehouse is a Gothic Revival structure dating from the 1870s.

Further west is Shedd Park, which is bounded by 21st Street, Cermak Road, Ridgeway and Longley Streets. Just north of the park, the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad tracks were laid in 1857, which encouraged settlement in the area now called South Lawndale. In 1869, the eastern two-thirds of the community were annexed to Chicago. A.C. Millard and E.J. Decker subdivided the land just south of the railroad line, and beginning in 1875, large single-family houses were constructed. The park is named after John G. Shedd, president of Marshall Field and Company and benefactor of the Shedd Aquarium. He donated the park for this railroad suburb. A significant number of houses from the 1870s and 1880s remain along Millard and Central Park Avenues, one and two blocks east of the park.

Ashburn Park, on Chicago's south side, extends along Winneconna Parkway bounded on the west by Fielding Street and Stewart Street on the east. The community is now called Greater Grand Crossing because of the intersection of several railroad lines. The park has a lagoon and Queen Anne houses from the 1880s are nearby.

Chicago's central business district was a bustling, energetic and noisy environment, and one that could be walked to from residences in many sections of the city. What was to become the Loop was a defined, confined area, bordered by the river. The residential setting was intentionally separate from the commercial setting, and gardens and parks were one way to reinforce the separation. They were artificial forms of nature, small enclaves that symbolized an escape. The home and its grounds were realms distinctly separate from the realm of money making.¹⁹ The parks and gardens became parts of the city and not separate environments. Landscapes became places to maneuver between public life on the one hand and the private one on the other. Chicago's development was segmented into the urban office and the genteel, civil, park-like residential setting.

Private gardens and public grounds preceded the movement for larger parks in all sections of the city. The interest in garden settings, parks and open spaces was advanced with passage of the Chicago parks bills in 1869

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by the Illinois legislature. It created a system of public parks linked by miles of landscaped boulevards. By then, parks were viewed as acts of a civilized community or the "public realm of refined leisure".²⁰

Set-Aside Parks and the Effect on Land Values

Gardens and parks added to the value of the surrounding real estate. By 1848 with the completion of the canal, the real estate market had recovered, including the fashionable residential areas created on the north side on LaSalle and Dearborn Streets, and Cass and Pine Streets, and on the south side along Wabash and Michigan Avenues. (Figures 6) In 1856, with the completion of the first railroad, lots sold for \$125/foot on Clark Street north of Chicago Avenue, while the price on LaSalle near Oak was \$200/foot. Both are near Washington Square. (Figure 7) Between 1865-71, fashionable residential neighborhoods were in all sections of the city and public amenities echo the settlement patterns. Distance from the river was a plus because odors from slaughterhouses and tanneries that lined its banks were offensive. Although the chief trend in fashionable residential growth was southward, the north side continued to be desirable and noted for its stands of mature trees, some as tall as church steeples. Values on LaSalle and Dearborn continued to remain high.

The Chicago Fire in 1871, although devastating to the central district and the north section, did not destroy the patterns of settlement or set-aside parks. Post-fire rebuilding repeated the patterns.²¹ Although initially lagging behind other sections of the city, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in September, 1872 reported that many fine homes were being restored and new ones added in the north section. First class, three-story mansions were being built as far south as Illinois Street. The renewed north side would extend further east and south than before the Fire.

The hope so often expressed by former residents of the North Division, that the majority of the families that had lived there so long would find their way back to the old neighborhoods, and thus restore some of the old associations, seems likely to be realized to a considerable extent.²²

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* goes on to report that 100 good residences were being built within a half-mile radius of the New England Church, which fronted on Washington Square. The paper sums up the many benefits of living on the north side: an unobstructed lakefront for a considerable distance, the planned extension of Lake Shore Drive both north and south, woodland growth to the north along the lakeshore, no claims as a city business section, streets free of the noise and bustle experienced in other sections, and a few minutes walk to the business district.

Late 19th Century Through American Entry Into WWI

The Fire ended residential occupancy in the downtown area as those families relocated further south. Correspondingly, land values in the downtown and on the North Side declined 30% because rebuilding remained an uncertainty. However, retail and financial interests were soon drawn back to the same downtown locations and values in the south end of it fully recovered. The fashionable North Side was rebuilt within a year. The West Side saw the greatest population increase after the Fire as many of the homeless sought refuge there.

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In a lecture delivered to the Chicago Lyceum in 1876, Joseph Balestier, a member of the bar asked:

What will keep the wealthy in Chicago Parks are of no use, unless ample means and skilled men are provided for their immediate improvement....The more Chicago fosters literature, art, the drama, and music, for the public, and the more generally culture, elegance, and even luxury are to be found in private circles, the more desirable Chicago will become as a residence for the rich....Those who can do so are holding on to their property....The magnificent city of commercial palaces and princely hotels, built with a certain approach to uniformity and mutual fitness, which has taken the place of the medley of grand and mean structures, built on varying planes, will ensure to the permanent advantage of the city. And especially the annihilation of masses of inflammable hovels, in places where they were most dangerous and least wanted, and the future exclusion of wooden houses from the entire city, cannot fail to prove immensely beneficial to the common welfare.²³

Balestier speaks to the rebuilding of the downtown area and to the cultural institutions that established the city's reputation as sophisticated city. As Chicago continued to grow, its population exceeded one million people according to the 1890 census. What is today the North Michigan Avenue area remained relatively undeveloped throughout the 19th century and it was not until the current Michigan Avenue Bridge was completed in 1920 that development occurred along that area.²⁴ Other transportation resources supported the city's growth. During the 1890s, the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad laid tracks along the north branch of the river. Cable lines were also installed and later replaced by electric surface lines. The northwestern elevated lines were also started.

However, with the introduction of the Federal income tax, both corporate and individual, and the U.S. entry into World War I in 1917, construction of large residences was momentarily halted. Transportation routes not only aided commuters but they also shifted populations. As some of the wealthy could not afford the tax on their expansive residences, they sold them and left the area. Many residences were subdivided into rooming houses and others were converted into hotels for transients. It was not until the 1970s that the trend, in some city neighborhoods, was reversed and the structures were converted back to single-family use.

City Mansions, Rowhouses and Related Buildings-Architecture

The creation of land subdivisions with residential and other lots around a park required an architecture suitable to the setting. The setting was meant to be desirable and the park was meant for promenading. It emulated the European custom as a place to gather. These subdivided lots commanded higher prices and thus became neighborhoods for the upper middle class. Just as the speculative fever had generated investment in the lots themselves, that fervor continued with lot improvements or the actual construction of residences. The individual of means could not only build and occupy a city mansion, but he or she could also invest in groups of row houses to be leased out.

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Churches and institutions, such as schools and libraries, were located within the residential realm because their activities were sympathetic to the residential environment. Just as the early New England public squares or commons were fronted with public meetinghouses and churches, so too were the squares in Chicago. In the Washington Square District on the north side, members of the Unity Church wanted their place of worship near their homes.²³

Lots facing the park and those of the adjoining streets were lined with mansions of the well to do. They were usually architect-designed in the current popular style. Rowhouses were also common to these districts. They could be easily assimilated into the district because the rowhouse could be grouped in a way to suggest a single mansion or even a palace while maintaining a modest-sized residence.

Combinations of both forms, the single-family dwelling and the rowhouse, were common in Europe after development of the rowhouse in the 17th century. The earliest format was a small, single-fronted house two rooms deep. Two rows of them were built in London in the 1670s, ironically just after their fire of 1666. Houses with as little front as possible suited the requirement to rebuild in fireproof materials such as brick. Their narrow vertical form needed a minimum of facing brick. However, even the most modest houses were to have front and back walls two bricks thick up to at least the first floor level. Many were raised on a generous Roman podium creating the lower floor that was half-basement. By the next century, in the hands of English architects, the vertical form was successfully grouped to create elegant rows that lined boulevards and fronted squares.

In Chicago, the residential streets and boulevards near set-aside parks were built up in the last half the 19th century, more specifically after the Fire. Architecture during this time is loosely grouped under the term Victorian. It is a period of eclecticism with many revivalist modes in fashion. Architects were able to design in a variety of styles for their wealthy and discerning clients. The success of the railroads and industrialization permitted more complex house components through mass production thereby adding to the intricacy of the Victorian styles. Many of these styles take their design inspiration from medieval prototypes. Design elements were freely adapted. Facades were often asymmetrical with a plethora of textures and colors. Roofs were steeply pitched. Since detailing was often exuberant, and stylistic sources were mixed, truth to a historical style was not the goal. Oftentimes multiple styles were evident in one façade. Thus, in the last quarter of the 19th century, on a Chicago street, one might see a Second Empire mansion next to a Tuscan Villa. Construction materials suggested permanence and an attempt at fireproofing. Brick, limestone and brownstone were used.

The collection of architectural styles can include the Italianate, Queen Anne, Victorian Gothic, Second Empire and Richardsonian Romanesque styles. Structures around parks can include mansions and rowhouses. The Italianate style is generally two or three stories with low-pitched roofs and overhanging eaves. The underside of the eaves is elaborate with moldings and decorative brackets, sometimes of more than one size. The windows

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are tall and narrow, often round-arched, with decorative hoods or crowns. Italianate townhouses were prevalent from 1860-80. They had low or flat roofs that were concealed by the cornice.

The Queen Anne style was popular in Chicago in the 1880s and 1890s. The name was coined in England to encompass eclectic designs characterized by asymmetry. In a townhouse, the form usually has a front-gabled façade with a flat roof. Each unit may have its own design or the entire front may be unified in a single design.

The High Victorian Gothic style uses the standard features of the Gothic style but with an all-together different result than the Early Gothic style. One of the most obvious differences is that the former is polychromed, that is different color materials are combined in one façade. Secondly, the details of moldings, tracery or carved ornament are heavier or fatter. Rooflines are more complex. Spires are less slender. There are strong scale contrasts with large and small features next to one another in the same elevation. Overall, the effect is one of solidity.

The Second Empire style was dominant in American architecture from 1860 to 1880. Its principal characteristic is the distinctive roof, or mansard roof, appearing in one of five main shapes ranging from straight-sided to an s-curve. Decorative patterns in the roofing materials are common. The roof frequently has dormers and the molded cornice has decorative brackets beneath the eaves. Those houses with a simple mansard roof are symmetrical with either square or rectangular plans. Door and window details are similar to those in the Italianate style.

As with all Romanesque styles, Richardsonian Romanesque is round-arched. Most of these buildings, which were inspired by the Boston architect, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886), are noted for wall surfaces of rock-faced masonry, while structural details, such as columns, lintels and arches, are of a different material. These buildings appear large and heavy but with a simplicity of form. Windows may be straight-topped or arched. Ribbon windows with arches supported by thin columnettes occur frequently. Steep gabled wall dormers are prominent features. Projecting bays are conical.

The Georgian Revival is one of the most long-lived styles in American architecture. It is characterized by flat wall surfaces, classical details surrounding the main entrance, detailed cornices, most commonly with dentils, and decorative quoins. The main entrance is usually centered creating a principal elevation that is symmetrical. Windows are double-hung sashes and arranged in horizontal rows and vertical columns.

Eclecticism gained momentum after the Columbian Exposition of 1893 and continued in to the 20th century. However, architects, particularly those trained in Europe, draw on additional period styles such as the Chateausque, Beaux Arts, Tudor and Colonial Revival styles. Prior to the first World War, the first wave of the modern movement produced structures in the Craftsman and Prairie styles.

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The Colonial Revival is a symmetrical style with an emphasis on the main entrance around which most of the detailing is centered, such as enframing columns or pilasters, pediment and overhead fanlights or sidelights. Window arrangement reinforces the symmetry. By contrast the Tudor style is asymmetric with a principal façade dominated by crossing gables with steeply pitched roofs. Windows are tall and narrow and frequently grouped. If half-timbering is present, it is decorative.

The Chateausque is based on 16th century French chateaus. These houses have steeply pitched hip roofs with a profusion of vertical elements, such as dormers, spires, turrets and chimneys. Multiple dormers pierce the cornice line and the walls are constructed of stone. Beaux Arts structures are also constructed of stone and the first level is usually rusticated. The façade is symmetric and often divided into bays by paired Corinthian pilasters. Wall surfaces are decorated with garlands, plant motifs or shields.

In addition to mansions, the area may also include rowhouses. Rowhouse groupings create a visual mass comparable to a multi-bayed mansion thus forming a unified street front while at the same time offering a more modest-priced dwelling. The rowhouse shares common sidewalls with its neighbors and a narrow front that matches window and cornice lines with adjacent buildings. The interior plan is generally a side hall plan with rooms off to one side. The rowhouses vary in height between two and three stories over a raised basement. They are generally 25 feet wide.

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Associated Property Types

The following is an analysis of the two principal properties associated with residential subdivisions with set-aside parks, the district and the individual buildings themselves.

District with Set-Aside Park

Description

After the Indians ceded the six-mile square tract of land that included the Chicago region in 1830, the canal commissioners ordered a survey. The first survey began the process of subdividing the land into parcels. Each parcel, or subdivision, was recorded in the tract books and ultimately filed with the Recorder of Deeds thus becoming a document within the public record. Oftentimes, the subdivisions were referred to as additions along with the purchaser's name, such as Wolcott's Addition on the north side. The subdivisions were further divided into blocks and then lots. With the exception of those reserved as canal lands, the subdivisions were privately owned and for sale on the real estate market. A residential district with a set-aside park is an example of a subdivision with a group of contiguous lots one of which is designated as public ground or a park.

Significance

Chicago's land subdivisions with set-aside parks are locally significant as districts under National Register Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Land Development. Land speculation was a national phenomenon in the 1830s and Chicago is a prime example of the fever in the Northwest Territory. These districts are physical remnants of Chicago's early speculative history.

Speculative land companies were formed for the purpose of laying out tracts and subdivisions, and, in some instances, entire town sites. The earliest companies acquired land, conducted site surveys, and promoted sales. Chicago was frequently the center of their operations. These organizations were headed by men with the rare skills of foresight and keenness, oftentimes Eastern capitalists, who did much to attract attention to Chicago. The first boom occurred in 1833, culminating in 1836. As the city grew, the original grid plan of subdivisions expanded.

Many of the early speculators remained in Chicago. They strove to dispel the growing reputation that the town's only purpose was "to make a buck." Open spaces, gardens and parks more closely reflected their citizen values than the rampant materialism of speculation. This vein of civility was due in part to European sources and the influence of Andrew Jackson Downing who advanced the concepts of horticulture in general, and parks in particular. These values created land subdivisions with set-aside parks. By the 1860s, the twin interests of real estate speculation and horticulture were not viewed as opposing interests, but rather as an interest in nature improved or the creation of something from nothing. Eventually the combination of subdivisions and parks was

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advanced with passage of the Chicago parks bills in 1869 by the Illinois legislature. It created a system of public parks linked by miles of landscaped boulevards.

Chicago's land subdivisions with set-aside parks also qualify under Criterion C for architectural significance. Urban real estate interests relied on natural landscape design to enhance property values. The parks became a neighborhood amenity. The subdivisions became fashionable neighborhoods and the residents requested homes that reflected their wealth. Architects were hired to design and build significant mansions, rowhouses and institutional structures. Each architectural design contributed the district around the set-aside park.

Registration Requirements

To qualify under Criterion A or C, the district must demonstrate the sense of a neighborhood with public ground set aside. Usually the intent is recorded in plat maps that in turn are preserved in a public record such as county tract books. The set-aside park must be in perpetuity, that is some form of public record must indicate that the park is to remain forever a park. The park or open space must remain intact. The area must be contained within the boundaries of the original subdivision plat.

The set-aside park functioned as a magnet and an anchor for the subsequent development of a neighborhood. Under Criterion A and C, the neighborhood or district must retain some evidence of its association with the set-aside park. Since the set-aside park increased adjacent property values, the resulting districts attracted the wealthy who in turn commissioned significant mansions and rowhouses. They also encouraged certain institutions to become a part of their residential enclave, such as churches, libraries and schools. District coherence is demonstrated with common setbacks, institutional entities facing the park and substantial construction materials that reflect wealth and permanence such as stone and brick.

City Mansions, Rowhouses and Related Buildings

Description

Mansions, rowhouses and related buildings that date to the period of significance, 1833 to 1917, represent an eclectic phase of American architecture. The period of significance is represented by the first year of land speculation in Chicago, 1833, and the passage of federal income tax laws and the U.S. entry into World War I. No single architectural style dominated this time span. By the 1840s, several styles competed as fashionably acceptable and these began with the Greek Revival. The popularity of Andrew Jackson's publications, in particular *Cottage Residences*, encouraged other revivalist styles including the Gothic Revival and designs based on the Italian Renaissance which remained popular through the 1880s. Technically, these styles date to the reign of Queen Victoria, 1837-1901, but the term Victorian is generally applied to the last two decades of her reign. The period is marked by several trends that range from increasingly complex designs and construction materials to more precise copies of earlier styles. Added to all these is the influence of Henry

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Hobson Richardson and the Romanesque Revival. All of these styles can be represented in the structures around park settings. The collection of architectural styles can include, but are not limited to, the Italianate, Queen Anne, Victorian Gothic, Second Empire and Richardsonian Romanesque styles.

Significance

City mansions, rowhouses or related institutional and commercial structures are locally significant under the National Register Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development. They document the structures that were built to complement and embellish the park itself. The setting was meant to be desirable. The park anchored the neighborhood and created a meeting place, a place for promenading. It emulated the elegant European custom as a place to gather. It follows that the subdivided lots, and ultimately the structures on them, commanded higher prices and became wealthy and fashionable neighborhoods.

The city mansions, rowhouses and related structures qualify under Criterion C because they reflect a particular architectural style or combination of styles. One of the groups to settle in Chicago, after those born and raised in the immediate area, was from the east coast. They had traveled to Europe, perhaps had been educated there, and they were exposed to its grand cities. The European experience created connections with history that translated in to a wish to recreate European city boulevards, parks and architecture. The upper middle class, the managers, clerks, white-collar workers hired prominent architectural firms in Chicago to insure their respectability. In Chicago, the residential streets and boulevards near set-aside parks were built up in the last half of the 19th century, more specifically after the Chicago Fire of 1871. Architecture during this time is loosely grouped under the term Victorian. It is a period of eclecticism with many revivalist modes in fashion.

Requirements

To qualify for listing under Criterion A or C, the mansion, rowhouse or related structure must be constructed during the period of significance. It should retain the majority of its original architectural features that connect it with the style intended at the construction date. The majority of the exterior ornamentation should be in place. If the structure has been altered, the alterations must not eliminate its historic appearance. Its historic use may be different. It must, however, retain its physical relationship to the park, even if the property is not immediately adjacent to the park, by retaining its original location, building scale and setback from the street.

Endnotes

1. Repts, p. 300.
2. Repts, p. 124.
3. Repts, p. 146.

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4. Reps, p. 299.

5. Reps, p. 349.

6. Reps, p. 351.

7. Reps, p. 360.

8. Balestier, p. 29.

9. Pierce, Vol. 1, p. 61.

10. Pierce, Vol. 1, p. 64.

11. Wille, p. 20.

12. Andreas, Cook Co., p. 131.

13. Pierce, Vol. 1, p. 64.

14. Dedmon, p.18.

15. Bluestone, p. 2.

16. Bluestone, p. 11.

17. Bluestone, p. 17.

18. Many of the street names used in the text are the names used in the 19th century. Some of been changed, as has the park names. Vernon Park is now possibly Arrigo Park. All the other parks are extant with the exception of Astor Park. The parks mentioned in this document are a partial list. Further research will probably identify other land subdivisions with set-aside parks.

19. Bluestone, p. 3.

20. Bluestone, p. 7.

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21. Community Fact Book, p. 21.

22. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September, 1872.

23, Balestier, 10,11.

24. Pacyga, 39.

25. Andreas, Vol. II, p. 439.

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Geographical Data

The corporate limits of Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

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Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The nomination is based on the research and reports prepared for the Commission on Chicago Landmarks for the Washington Square District Extension, a locally-designated Chicago Landmark District consisting of 15 historic structures which was designated on June 7, 2000, and principally compiled in a report entitled "Washington Square District Extension: 22-28 and 27-31 West Chestnut Street and 802-18, 811-67, 1012, 1023-29 and 1150-54 North Dearborn Street".

General Research

In addition to the above, research was conducted at the Department of Planning and Development, Landmarks Division offices, the Chicago Historical Society and the Arlington Heights Public Library. The following sources were searched:

Subject Indices: Card catalogs and periodical indexes provided information on Chicago history and showroom design.

Chicago Building Permits: Permit research was conducted on most of the buildings to determine real estate transfers, permit dates, ownership, architect of record, and a brief description of the proposed construction.

Chicago Newspapers: Various articles had information about the Washington Square.

Sanborn Maps: The maps identified the buildings and lot characteristics.

Chicago Historic Resources Survey

Commission on Chicago Landmarks research files

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Additional Documentation

1. Map of Chicago, 1830.
2. Chicago with the School Section and Kinzie's Addition.
3. Map of Chicago Showing Original Subdivisions: 1830-43.
4. 1857 Panorama of Chicago by J.T. Palmatary/Braunhold and Sonne, detail.
5. Chicago Boulevard and Park Systems, 1879-80.
6. Map of Chicago Showing Land Values – 1835 Indicated by Sales of Acre Tracts.
7. Map of Chicago Showing Land Values – 1841 to 1843 Indicated by Sales of Acre Tracts.
8. Map of Chicago Showing Land Values Per Front Foot – 1856.

Figure 2
Chicago with the School Section and Kinzie's Addition



Figure 3
Map of Chicago Showing Original Subdivisions: 1830-43

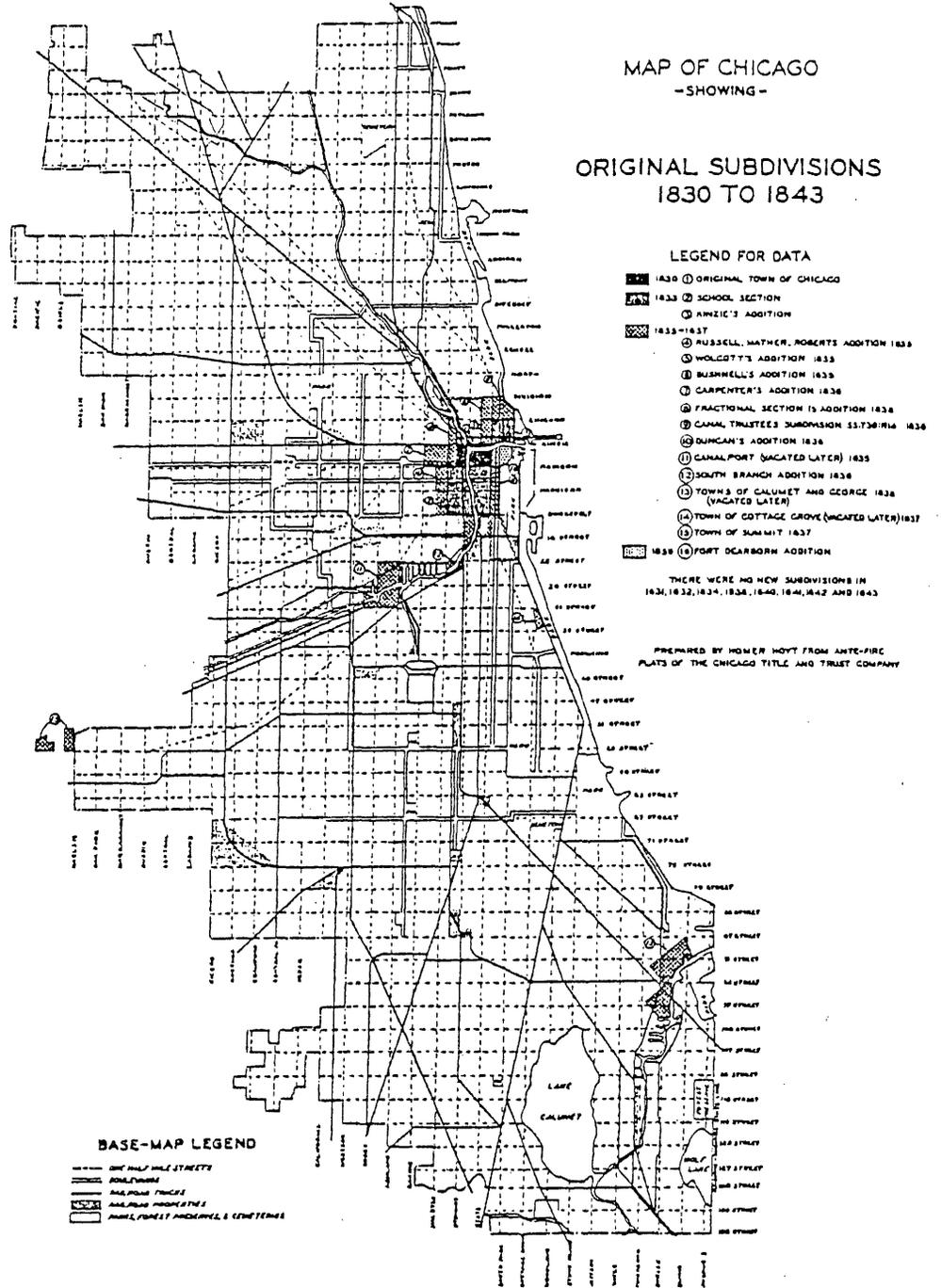
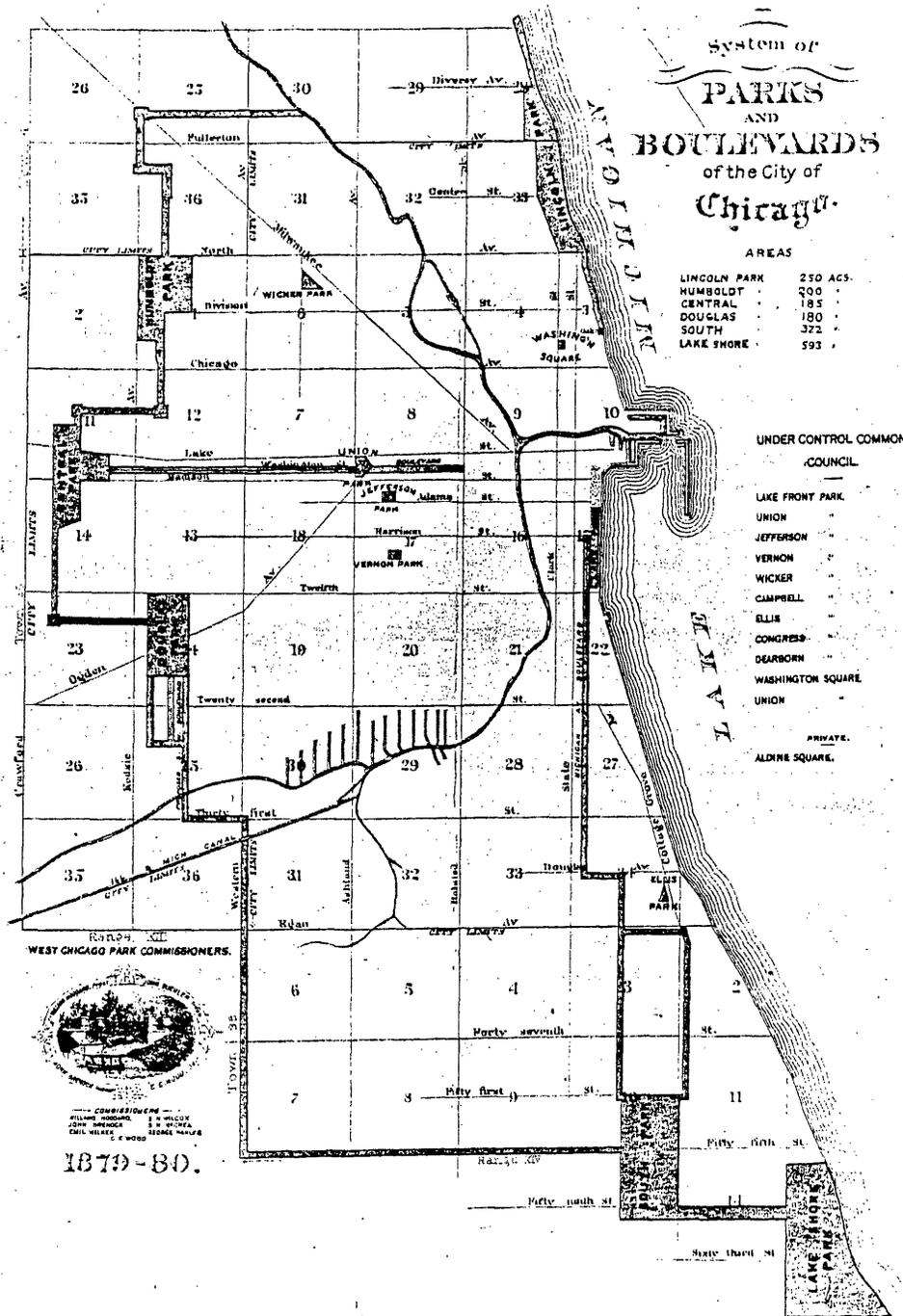


Figure 4
Detail of 1857 Panorama of Chicago by J.T. Palmatary/Braunhold and Sonne



1. Panoramic view of north-side houses and gardens. Detail of the J. T. Palmatary/Braunhold and Sonne, 1857 panorama of Chicago. The house with a cupola and garden in the center foreground is William Butler Ogden's. It is adjacent to St. James Church and is surrounded by the neighboring houses of Isaac Arnold, H. H. Magee, Walter L. Newberry, and Mark Skinner. At upper right is Holy Name Church. Chicago Historical Society, ICHS 05662.

Figure 5
Chicago Boulevard and Park Systems, 1879-80



Chicago Boulevard and Park system, 1879-80. Map published in West Chicago Park Commission annual report, 1880. Library of Congress.

Figure 7
Map of Chicago Showing Land Values Per Front Foot – 1856

MAP OF CHICAGO
 -SHOWING-
LAND VALUES PER FRONT FOOT
1856

