

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Illinois	
COUNTY: Cook	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Riverside Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Riverside Landscape Architectural District

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Boundaries as shown on annexed map and described on continuation sheet.

CITY OR TOWN:
Riverside

STATE: Illinois CODE: COUNTY: Cook CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	In Process <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
Multiple public and private ownership (Mr. Robert W. Heidrich, President, The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside)

STREET AND NUMBER:
165 Longcommon Road

CITY OR TOWN: Riverside STATE: Illinois 60546 CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Cook County Recorder's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
County Building

CITY OR TOWN: Chicago STATE: Illinois CODE:

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1,500 acres

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The suburban commuter community of Riverside, as planned and developed by Olmsted and Vaux in 1869-71, was comprised of 1,600 acres. About 700 acres of this total were set aside for parks, roads, and walks. The plan called for the construction of 40 miles of carriage roads, from 15 to 50 feet in width, and 80 miles of walks. Most house lots were 100 feet wide and 200 feet deep. Residences were set back at least 30 feet from the front of the lot and each dwelling built had to cost at least \$3,000. Development of the town began in the southwest portion - adjacent to the tracks of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad - in 1869. Superintendent of Construction for the development was L. Y. Schermerhorn. By 1871 nine and one-half miles of carriage roads had been completed and two more miles graded. Seven miles of asphalt-covered walks and 16 miles of storm drains and sewers had been built. Gas and water pipes had also been installed. A gas works and water works had been erected and 200 gas street lights set out. Forty-seven thousand shrubs, 7,000 evergreens, 32,000 deciduous, and 2,500 large shade trees had been planted.

As to structures, a red-brick and stone 2 1/2-story block of stores and offices (still standing), a stone chapel capable of seating 300 people, a large frame hotel in the Swiss chalet style (now gone), and about 50 frame residences - mostly designed in the Gothic Revival style - had been erected by 1871. The architects of these first buildings were Calvert Vaux, Frederick C. Withers of New York (1828-1901) (who designed the business block and church), and John C. Cochrane (1835-1875), a Chicago architect.

The Panic of 1872 and resulting depression threw the Riverside Development Association into serious financial difficulty and the community thereafter grew much more gradually. Many additional residences have been added over the years, utilizing Olmsted's original overall plan for the town. A number of other important architects have worked in Riverside since 1871. There are still extant a number of houses by William L. B. Jenney (1832-1907), Chicago architect and a resident of Riverside; three by Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), including his Avery Coonley House of 1908; two dwellings by Louis Sullivan (1856-1924), and one (1912) by Gruenzel and Drummond.

Only minor changes have been made in Olmsted's original plan in the 1,500-acre portion of Riverside that is included in the historic district. What was once a park (the area marked x on the attached maps) was changed to a landscaped residential area in the 19th century and a few of the large house lots have recently been subdivided to permit the construction of adjacent dwellings. About five of residences built 1869-71 are still standing, and the later dwellings richly illustrate the many and changing architectural styles used in the period 1871 to 1969. Gas street lamps are still utilized in all residential sections of Riverside. There are no intrusions. The historic district is now closely hemmed on all sides by typically unplanned and unsightly urban sprawl and Riverside's planned open spaces and greenery make a particularly dramatic contrast with the surrounding communities.

Approximately 100 acres of the original tract (that area now bounded by Forbes Road on the east, by Salt Creek on the south and west, and by Logan Avenue on the north) has been excluded from the historic district.

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3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>	Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Political <input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering <input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Philosophy <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Historic <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Science <input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Invention <input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/>	
Art <input type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Theater <input type="checkbox"/>	
Communications <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	
Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Music <input type="checkbox"/>		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Designed in 1868-69 by the master landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1903), and the noted architect Calvert Vaux (1824-1895), Riverside is the prototype of the comprehensively planned and landscaped suburban commuter community in which the natural features have been preserved and added to in order to offer the benefits of rural life. Here, for the first time and in a classic example, landscape design was applied to a suburban development to utilize the topography and natural features for the purpose of enhancing the quality of community living. A quality environment was created by the establishment of a park-like atmosphere, the planned openness of the town site, and by the use of gracefully curved and sunken roads adapted to the topography and natural features of the land. Except for very minor changes, Riverside has preserved its original landscaped plan almost intact.

Olmsted's Ideas and Plan

Just prior to the Civil War large American cities began to develop their first commuter suburbs. Fast railroad service enabled wealthier families to leave the central sections of cities and live in mansions set in a rural surrounding. Believing that "the mere proximity of dwellings which characterize all strictly urban neighborhoods is a prolific source of morbid conditions of the body and mind, manifesting themselves in "nervous feebleness...and various functional derangements," Olmsted saw the well-planned suburb, in contrast to the central city, as the place where one could find "the most attractive, the most refined, and the most soundly wholesome forms of domestic life, and the best application of the arts of civilization to which mankind has yet attained." In 1869 Olmsted set out to create for the Riverside Development Association a new community that would illustrate his ideas. With his partner, Calvert Vaux, he used careful planning to make the proposed Chicago suburb a place to foster the "harmonious cooperation of men in a community and the intimate relationship and constant intercourse and interdependence between families."

Given practically free rein by the trustees of the organization chartered to develop the Riverside suburb, Olmsted and Vaux found themselves with a 1600-acre site admirably suited to the type of bedroom community being developed in the post-Civil War period. Located on a site six miles west of Chicago, Riverside had both the efficient railroad link with the central city and attractive topography which sloped gently toward the Des Plaines River. Prior to 1868, American suburban planners and developers invariably followed

(continued)

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Riverside in 1871, with a Description of Its Improvements Together with some Engravings of Views and Buildings (Office of the Riverside Improvement Company, 73 Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois, 1871).

Julius Gy. Fabos, Gordon T. Milde, & V. Michael Weinmayr, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., Founder of Landscape Architecture in America (University of Mass. Press, 1968), 47-56.

Walter L. Creese, The Search for Environment, The Garden City Before and After (New Haven, 1966)

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE			
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	87°	50'	00"	47°	50'	35"		
NE	87°	48'	09"	47°	50'	35"		
SE	87°	48'	09"	47°	48'	59"		
SW	87°	50'	00"	47°	48'	59"		

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service

DATE: 2/10/70

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 - 19th Street, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D.C. 20006

CODE: _____

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST: _____

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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2. Location (cont.) 2.

Boundaries of the Riverside Historic District:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of Ogden and Harlem Avenues, thence north along Harlem Avenue to the intersection with the southerly line of the Illinois Central Railroad tracks, thence northwest along said tracks to the intersection with 26th Street, thence west along 26th Street to the intersection with Des Plaines Avenue, thence south along Des Plaines Avenue to the intersection with 31st Street, thence west along 31st Street to the intersection with 1st Avenue, thence southerly along 1st Avenue to the intersection with Salt Creek, thence easterly along Salt Creek to the intersection with the Des Plaines River, thence easterly along the Des Plaines River to the intersection with Ogden Avenue, thence northeasterly along Ogden Avenue to its intersection with Harlem Avenue, the point of beginning.

The historic district includes approximately 1,500 acres of the 1,600 acres that originally comprised the town site.

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7. Description (cont.)

There have been many changes and intrusions made in the section north of Forest Avenue, which is largely occupied by the Chicago Zoological Park and two schools. The Olmsted plan was never utilized in the portion south of Forest Avenue. Instead, another developer substituted a travesty of the Olmsted plan: Tiny public "parks", small house lots, and "curved" roads. In this section these "features" are jammed together in a small area for the purpose of utilizing every last square inch of land.

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8. Significance (cont.)

the practice of imposing a rectangular grid system of streets and lots on whatever topography existed. Natural features such as hills or streams were regarded as an inconvenience to be corrected or ignored. In his plan for Riverside Olmsted established the foundation for an entirely different line of suburban design. Instead of imposing the rigid grid system, the streets were allowed to flow around the landscape and topography in harmony with the meandering Des Plaines River and land along the river was preserved for general use in the form of public parks or commons.

His approach, as outlined in his firm's preliminary report of 1868 to the trustees of the Riverside Development Association, became a classic guide for later developers of suburbs. The primary objectives of the trustees, Olmsted wrote, should be the development of a general plan, the fault of most existing suburbs being that "no intelligent design has been pursued to secure ... distinctly rural attractiveness." In the execution of the Riverside plan Olmsted reinforced the existing natural beauty by planting roadside trees in irregular clusters to give a spontaneous effect and to exploit the beauty of massed foliage. To avoid the problem of ugly architecture, he suggested that "we can require that no house can be built within a certain number of feet of the highway, and we can insist that each householder shall maintain one or two living trees between his house and the highway line." Both of these suggestions were adopted by the trustees.

In further efforts to create a rural atmosphere, Olmsted and Vaux stressed in their report the importance of unfenced parks and recreation grounds with the "character of informal village greens." Various such parks were to be scattered throughout the development, often with facilities for "croquet or ball grounds" or other "objects of general interest." The spacious front yards of the residences were to be unfenced and a further damming of the Des Plaines River was suggested to provide facilities for pleasure boating.

In designing their transportation network, Olmsted and Vaux again introduced a new concept. Interior roadways wound around interesting natural features; they focused on the river; they were often depressed to create a less disturbing effect on the open sight lines, and for the first time streets were also deliberately curved - "the idea being," in Olmsted's words; - "to suggest and imply leisure, contemplativeness, and happy tranquility." Within the development a separation of business and pleasure traffic was also suggested. Finally, one of Olmsted's most radical innovations, not actually adopted by Riverside, was for a six-mile pleasure parkway connecting the community with Chicago for the benefit of commuters who wished to ride their horses to and from work. This idea Olmsted was not able to apply in practice until his work on his Boston project-after 1878.

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9. Major Bibliographical References (cont.)

C. S. Stein, Toward New Towns for America (M.I.T. Press, 1966)

Christopher Tunnard, Man-Made America Chaos or Control? (New Haven, 1963)

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., Preliminary Report Upon the Proposed Suburban Village at Riverside, Near Chicago (New York, 1868)

Henry F. Withey and Elsie R. Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Los Angeles, 1956)