

SOUTH PARK MANOR HISTORIC DISTRICT

NORTH TO 75TH ST, SOUTH TO 79TH ST.,
EAST TO S. KING DR., WEST TO S. STATE ST.

As in the Irving Park Gardens district, the bungalows comprising the South Park Manor District reflect the rise and popularity of the Chicago bungalow and the promotion of single-family homeownership between 1910 and 1930. The district is unique among Chicago bungalow neighborhoods,



however, because of its spacious landscape. The area's generous 100-foot-wide right-of-ways were put into place in 1869, when real estate developer Levi C. Pitner laid out a 160-acre subdivision in what would become South Park Manor. Anticipating that affluent families would continue to move south to escape the city, Pitner planned 100-foot-wide lots that would easily accommodate substantial suburban residences. However, Pitner's vision of suburban grandeur failed to materialize. When builders finally started developing the neighborhood 45 years later, they divided the lots into three parcels to accommodate the modern bungalow. Nevertheless, the grand right-of-ways survived, giving bungalow builders in South Park Manor the opportunity to merge their residential designs with the prairie landscape.



Until the turn of the century, development of the area south of 75th Street and west of South Park Avenue had been hampered by a lack of transportation lines. Streetcar lines gradually improved access to the area, and by 1910 Chicago's growing population and the network of transit lines brought development to South Park Manor. Bungalow building began in 1915 and

1916, when three bungalows were constructed on the 7600 and 7700 blocks of S. Calumet Avenue. The general form and style of these bungalows soon proliferated on adjacent lots.

Unlike Irving Park Gardens, which was developed by a single company and only two architects, a multitude of participants developed South Park Manor. Several developers, led by John W. Turner and Richard Krogh, commissioned residential architects, led by Anders G. Lund, John



Nevin Coleman, and Luther W. McDonald, to give distinctive shape to the area. Numerous other developers, builders and architects, many working on only a few houses, also shaped the area. Although the nearly complete building of South Park Manor took only about a dozen years, the interval was long enough and the number of builders and architects who took a hand in its development was large enough to give the district a fine cross section of bungalow design.

The wide variety of bungalow designs and the large amount of green space frontage allowed the South Park Manor district to avoid the two major criticisms thrown at urban bungalow neighborhoods—that they fostered monotony and failed to merge residence and landscape. What



emerged in the South Park Manor district was a harmonious and aesthetically cohesive residential landscape. For many early residents, the neighborhood represented a distinct contrast to the urban neighborhoods where they had previously lived. Early bungalow owners in South Park Manor were ethnically diverse and worked in a broad array of skilled blue collar and middle-class



white-collar jobs. Swedish, German, Norwegian, Polish, English, Russian, Bohemian, Italian, Greek and French families lived side by side. Packing house foremen, bricklayers and taxi drivers shared blocks with accountants, salesmen and shop owners. South Park Manor's

residents were united by the American dream of homeownership, and by their desire to protect and enhance their neighborhood.

South Park Manor extended the benefits of middle-class homeownership to many first time homebuyers not only when the new houses were built, but through the decades. After a 1948 Supreme Court decision barred the use of restrictive racial covenants in real estate, African Americans began moving out of older congested neighborhoods to purchase homes for the first time. In the 1950s and 1960s, the neighborhood changed from a white middle-class community to a black middle-class community. The racial character of the neighborhood changed, but it continued to play its historical role of accommodating middle-class homeownership.