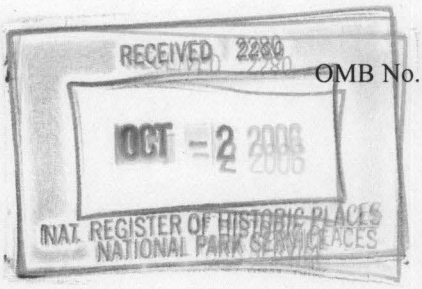
1015

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **AUSTIN TOWN HALL PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT**

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number **Roughly bounded by West Lake Street, North Central Avenue, North Parkside Avenue, and West Race Avenue** _____Not for publication

city or town **Chicago** _____vicinity

state **Illinois** code **IL** county **Cook** code **031** zip code **60608**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Ahern 9/29/06, SHPO

Signature of certifying official Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau American Indian Tribe

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
✓ entered in the National Register	for Edson H. Beall	11.15.06
___ See continuation sheet.		
____ determined eligible for the National Register		
___ See continuation sheet.		
____ determined not eligible for the National Register		
____ removed from the National Register		
____ other (explain):		

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
- _**X**_ private
- _**X**_ public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
- ___ building(s)
- _**X**_ district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
___**5**__	__**0**__	buildings
___**0**__	__**0**__	sites
___**0**__	__**0**__	structures
___**0**__	__**0**__	objects
___**5**__	__**0**__	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register **0**

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School
EDUCATION: Library
RELIGION: Religious facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Auditorium
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports facility
SOCIAL: Meeting Hall
DOMESTIC: Institutional housing

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School
EDUCATION: Library
RELIGION: Religious facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Auditorium
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports facility
SOCIAL: Meeting Hall
DOMESTIC: Institutional housing

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Colonial Revival
Late Gothic Revival
Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
Foundation **Concrete**

Roof **Asphalt Shingles**

Walls **Brick**

other **Limestone**

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

Description
Summary Paragraph

The Austin Town Hall Park Historic District occupies a level urban site seven miles west of Chicago's downtown. The district is made up of five public and quasi-public buildings completed between 1907 and 1930. The buildings stand on or immediately adjacent to a small four-acre park. The district is roughly bounded by West Lake Street on the south, North Central Avenue on the east, North Parkside Avenue on the west, and West Race Avenue on the north; the district includes the properties on the north side of West Race between North Parkside and alley east of North Central. The district's five buildings represent a diverse palette of turn-of-the-twentieth-century revival designs: Dwight Perkins designed the Francis Scott Key School (1907) in a spare collegiate Gothic style; Michaelsen & Rognstad designed the Austin Town Hall (1929) in Colonial revival style; Alfred S. Alschuler designed the Henry W. Austin Branch of the Chicago Public Library (1930) in Classical revival style; Berlin & Swern designed the Austin Young Men's Christian Association (1926) in Renaissance revival style; Sidney R. Badgley designed the Austin Methodist Church (1900) in Gothic revival style. Despite the diversity of their stylistic sources all five buildings have a strong degree of architectural harmony; they all share fairly uniform materials, combining a dominant use of brick with white limestone trim. Between certain individual buildings there is a purposeful architectural harmony; this can be seen, for example, in the arcaded window motif shared between the Y.M.C.A. and the Austin library and in the carefully composed symmetry of plan that exists between the Austin library and the Town Hall, the two buildings that have sites directly on the district's park land. The five buildings in the district are all contributing buildings to the district. They maintain a very high degree of their original architectural and urban integrity. An attached addition made to the north side to the Y.M.C.A. in 1941-1942 was designed by one of the building's original architects and was completed in the form, style, and materials of the original building. This addition is considered a contributing part of the Y.M.C.A. building. The architecture of the buildings within the district is quite distinct from the form, style, and type of the largely residential and modern institutional buildings that surround the district. The district's boundaries are similarly distinct.

The clustering of the district's five buildings, their forming of a neighborhood civic center, represents a key aspect of their historical and architectural significance. The buildings constitute a center more through proximity than through any strict or preconceived formal composition. The institutions that created the Austin neighborhood civic center were built with the clear understanding that they were developing an important urban landscape beyond the lot lines of their individual properties. Nevertheless, they were not able to thoroughly coordinate their designs given the timing of their construction and the particularities of the individual sites and programs. The ad hoc quality of the center's constituent pieces is apparent in the fact that the five buildings actually have their primary elevations facing three separate streets. The Austin Town Hall faces south on West Lake Street. The Austin Library faces north on West Race Avenue. The Francis Scott Key School faces west on North Parkside Avenue. The Austin Methodist Church faces east onto North Central Avenue and lines up with the west facing Austin Y.M.C.A. building facing west across North Central Avenue. The Library and the Town Hall are the two buildings that have sites on the small park area that forms the heart of the district. They

have ample setbacks from the edge of the park; the Town Hall is set back 135 feet from the southern edge of the park and the library stands 25 feet from the northern edge of the park. Both buildings have entrances centered on the midpoint of their respective 281-foot-wide street and park frontages. The buildings of the Austin Methodist Church, the Austin Y.M.C.A., and the Francis Scott Key School sit much closer to their front lot lines, having only 10 to 15 foot planting strips between the front elevation and the sidewalks. The cupola of the Town Hall and the 100-foot spire of the church dominate the district's skyline.

The boundaries of the Austin Town Hall Park Historic District are quite apparent. South of the southern boundary line at West Lake Street there is the elevated embankment of the Lake Street transit line. West of the west boundary along North Parkside Avenue and east of the east boundary along North Central Avenue there is a mixture of residential building types, quite distinct from the civic buildings within the district. There are also residences north of the Austin Methodist Church and north of the Y.M.C.A. The boundary runs east-west between the 1907 building of the Francis Scott Key School and the detached modern addition to the school. All five buildings in the district retain a high degree of their original architectural integrity.

District Building List

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY SCHOOL (#1)
517 North Parkside Avenue
Architect: Dwight H. Perkins
Date Completed: 1907
Style: Collegiate Gothic Revival

This three-story school building with a full English basement is built of brown brick with white limestone trim. The primary elevation, which is the west elevation, is symmetrically composed with seven bays. The north and south end bays, which contain the two main interior stairways, project slightly forward of the main elevation. Each end bay also has an entrance from the sidewalk—originally the south entrance was for girls and the north entrance was for boys. The central bay and entrance provides access to a wide stair leading directly to the main floor and the school auditorium. The seven bays make up an arcade running across the front elevation—the arcades are dominated by large expanses of classroom windows, with three double-hung windows, grouped together as a single unit, on each floor of each arcaded bay. The arcade springs from the heavy limestone course that runs across the elevation separating the English basement from the three upper stories. A keystone projects from the top of each of the arcaded bays and decorative heraldic shields top the piers separating the bays. The building's three main entrances project slightly forward from the main elevation. The projecting north and south entrances rise through a single story while the central entrance projects through two stories. The school's north and south, side, elevations are unembellished with two windows on each level that illuminate the main interior hallways. One story attached wings at the northeast and southeast corners house the school's main bathrooms. The attached three story wing with the school's two-story auditorium and one-story gymnasium projects eastward from the school's rear, or east, elevation.

AUSTIN TOWN HALL (#2)
5626 West Lake Street
Architect: Michaelsen & Rognstad
Date Completed: 1929
Style: Colonial Revival

Austin Town Hall is a two-story field house and community building built of red brick with white limestone trim. The primary elevation, which is the south elevation, has a rigorously symmetrical five part Palladian plan; the dominant central section, topped by a stepped tower and cupola modeled upon Philadelphia's Independence Hall, is connected by the east and west wings to projecting east and west terminal bays that are topped by distinct hipped roofs. The composition of the building is carefully balanced; the vertical lines are established by the pedimented central entrance bay and the tower and cupola are counted by distinct horizontal lines set up by the foundation, the limestone stringcourse that runs continuously between the first and the second story, and the cornice and roofline that all run horizontally across the elevation. Red brick encloses the exterior walls. White limestone frames the windows and also encloses the corners with prominent quoins. On the primary elevation, the projecting end bays have two windows on each level, the wings have five windows on each level, and the central section has three windows lined up over the three main entrances. The projecting auditorium wing dominates the north elevation. The white limestone quoins and stringcourse that characterize the primary elevation also extend to the north elevation. Large arched windows open into the auditorium.

HENRY W. AUSTIN BRANCH OF THE CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY (#3)
5615 West Race Avenue
Architect: Alfred S. Alschuler
Date Completed: 1930
Style: Classical Revival

The Henry W. Austin Branch is a one-story library building built of red brick with white limestone trim. The primary elevation, which is the north elevation, is composed symmetrically around a shallow projecting entrance portico supported by four classical columns with papyriform capitals. The entrance and the building's windows are all arched with a subtle step back reveal in the wall. The corners are marked with vertical white limestone panels. The library is given its balanced composition with a continuous white limestone cornice and a continuous projecting stringcourse just below the cornice, which balances compositionally the vertical lines set up by the portico and pediment and the corner panels. The cornice and stringcourses are continued from the front elevation to a point midway along the side elevations. On the interior there is a second floor mezzanine level with a meeting room in the central portion of the building.

AUSTIN YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION (#4)
501 North Central Avenue
Architect: Berlin & Swern
Date Completed: 1926; north addition completed 1942
Style: Renaissance Revival

The Austin Y.M.C.A. is a handsome four-story athletic, community, and residential building built of red brick and white limestone trim. The four main stories rise above the full English basement. Something of the complexity of the building's functions is captured in the exterior elevations. The primary elevation, which is the west elevation, has large arched windows lining the first floor where the building's main public community spaces are located. Six arched windows are located north of the slightly projecting main entrance with its classically detailed limestone frame and its two engaged columns while there are seven arcaded windows to the south of the entrance. The twenty-two windows crossing the primary elevation on each of the upper floors open into the residential rooms and are simply opened into the brick wall without ornamented window frames; this is the case with all of the windows except three windows on the second floor that have classical window surrounds with modest pediments. There are modest reveals in the primary elevation that set up four visually distinct wall sections. The largest section stretches through the main entrance, at the north edge through five of the arcaded windows on the main floor. This major section is flanked on either side by two sections that are set back modestly from the main section; to the south the section reaches the corner with two arched window openings; to the north a section set back a similar amount has three arched windows. An addition made to the north, and completed in 1942, has three more arched windows on the main floor and sit back with a modest reveal from the adjacent section. The main elevation has dominant horizontal lines set up by projecting sill courses and stringcourses and a dentil cornice and a rooftop balustrade. All of these elements are constructed of white limestone and standout against the red brick walls. One the first floor every sixth brick course projects forward from the elevation, giving the building a sense of the rusticated stonework common in many Renaissance palazzos. The secondary elevation, facing south, adopts the same basic treatment as the primary elevation and is slightly longer than the main elevation. A notable difference is in the area on one of the building's first floor athletic spaces there are blind arches rather than arched first floor windows—these blind arches extend the arcaded motif across the entire elevation.

FRATERNITE NOTRE DAME (#5)
[Historically AUSTIN METHODIST CHURCH]
502 North Central Avenue
Architect: Sidney R. Badgley
Date Completed: 1900
Style: Gothic Revival

The Fraternite Notre Dame (historically known as the Austin Methodist Church) is a two-story church and community building built of brown brick with white limestone trim. A 100-foot high spire and entrance

bell tower that takes up the southeast corner of the building dominates the building's overall composition. The entrance is through a pointed arched limestone door surround projecting forward from the brick wall. On the south side of the tower a tracery window with white limestone trim opens from the otherwise unembellished wall of the lower tower. The upper tower has tall vertical window openings with pointed gable dormers. To the west and the north of the corner tower identical gabled elevations with a dominant upper tracery stain glass window open into the main sanctuary of the church. Below these two tracery windows are a pair of square windows with limestone window surrounds. The east elevation terminates to the north with a secondary entrance surmounted by a lower tower. The south elevation terminates to the west with a two-story community building with three windows opening on each floor. The entrance to this section of the building is through an engaged tower that while lower than the main tower spire echoes its massing and its openings. The church's English basement is enclosed in rusticated courses of limestone. Between the towers and the gables on the elevations the dominant lines of the building are vertical.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

__X_ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

____ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

__X_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
Social History
Community Planning and Development
Architecture

Period of Significance **1900-1956** Significant Dates **1900, 1907, 1926, 1929, 1930, 1942**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation **N/A**

Architect/Builder **Badgley, Sidney R.; Perkins, Dwight H.; Berlin & Swern; Michaelsen & Rognstad; Alschuler, Alfred S.; architects**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) **See Continuation Sheet**

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Austin Town Hall Park Historic District represents Chicago's most completely developed neighborhood civic center, a novel urban form inspired by innovative early-twentieth-century planning and reform ideals. In leading cities in the United States social reformers and urban planners proposed neighborhood civic centers as an important means to promote civic order and patriotism among new urban residents, especially those arriving from foreign countries and from rural areas of the United States.[1] The Austin Town Hall Park district is made up of a group of five public and quasi-public buildings: Francis Scott Key School (1907), Austin Town Hall (1929), Henry W. Austin Branch of the Chicago Public Library (1930), Austin Young Men's Christian Association (1926), and the Fraternite Notre Dame: Our Lady of Frechou Traditional Catholic Church, historically known as the Austin Methodist Church (1900). These buildings are located on and adjacent to the four-acre Austin Town Hall Park, originally known as Holden Park, an area first dedicated to public use in 1865. The Austin Town Hall Park Historic District is locally significance under National Register Criterion A in the area of social history. It also corresponds to National Register Criterion C for architecture and community planning and development. The period of significance is 1900 to 1956.

Neighborhood Civic Center Movement

Built with an eye to the significant advantages of grouping their separate institutions in a single center, the buildings constructed in and around Austin Town Hall Park helped transform the late-nineteenth-century civic landscape of the independent village of Austin into a vital neighborhood center for the growing City of Chicago. Austin, an independent village in Cicero Township, had been annexed to the city of Chicago in 1899 against the wishes of village residents who voted against the annexation. However, residents of Chicago and the balance of residents in Cicero Township supported the annexation and Austin became a neighborhood on the western edge of Chicago. Austin residents helped propel Chicago's impressive growth. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, Chicago's population more than doubled. The number of Chicagoans rose from 1,698,575 in 1900 to 3,376,438 in 1930. The uncoordinated physical growth of the city struck many observers as chaotic and poorly planned. Socially it seemed to accommodate an equally chaotic and troubling mass of humanity from diverse backgrounds and from disparate cultures. For city leaders, there was an open question about how this growing and shifting mass of people located in the second largest city in the United States would ever come to share a common set of civic values, a common set of civic virtues, and a common social and political culture.[2] They worried about how they could bring social unity and order out of social strife and chaos. Impoverished and illiterate residents lived in deplorable housing conditions. Chicago's turbulent labor history in the late nineteenth century, which spiked with the railroad and general strike of 1877, the Haymarket riot of 1886, and the Pullman Strike of 1894, helped create a sense of urgency in the discussions among civic and economic leaders about ways to make Chicagoans out of the many disparate peoples and interests gathered in the city. The viability and vitality of the city seemed to hang in the balance.

The visions of urban unity that appeared briefly in the temporary classical architectural ensembles of the Court of Honor at the Columbian Exposition directly influenced the aesthetic ideal of early 20th century urban

planning. Many plans for civic and cultural centers were outlined in the 1890s and early 1900s in which aesthetic unity dominated. The architects, planners, and civic leaders envisioned their plans as one means of inspiring feelings of social, cultural, and economic unity. The various proposals culminated in the monumental City Beautiful vision of Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett's 1909 Plan of Chicago, sponsored by the Commercial Club. At the heart of the 1909 plan of Chicago, outlined in a chapter of the plan entitled "The Heart of Chicago" stood the dramatic effort to create a civic and cultural landscape that would dominate all other forms of the contemporary cityscape, including the modern commercial skyscraper. Calling for a center of arts and letters on the lakefront and a civic and administrative center at South Halsted and Congress streets, Burnham and Bennett proposed architectural ensembles of such grandeur and unity, weaving together buildings across plazas and open spaces, that they would actually dwarf the monumentality of individual commercial skyscrapers. In fact, the major administrative building in the Chicago civic center was to be "surmounted by a dome of impressive height, to be seen and felt by the people, to whom it should stand as a symbol of civic order and unity."[3]

The lakefront center of arts and letters and the civic center were viewed by the advocates of the city plan as citywide centers. Nevertheless, they also envisioned outlying centers that would effect a parallel "civic order and unity" at the neighborhood level. Burnham and Bennett noted the "squalid and ugly" conditions that often developed in neighborhoods on the edge of great cities. They encouraged public officials to provide for neighborhood centers built through the clustering of public and semi-public buildings. They declared that outlying communities and neighborhoods should provide spaces for "public schools, and each school should have about it ample playgrounds, so that during all the year the school premises shall be the children's center, to which each child will become attached by those ties of remembrance that are restraining influences throughout life. Next to the school, the public library should have a place; and here again the landscape setting should be generous and the situation commanding. The town-hall, the engine house with its lookout tower, the police station with its court of justice, and the post-office, all naturally form a group of buildings that may be located about a common or public square, so as to form the suburban civic center."[4] With its branch library, public school, field house and community center, church, and Y.M.C.A., all tied into the setting of a landscaped public square, the Austin Town Hall Park, located seven miles west of downtown Chicago, represents precisely the sort of neighborhood civic center envisioned by Burnham and Bennett as part of their metropolitan civic vision for Chicago.

Burnham and Bennett were not the first city planners to feature a call for coherent and harmonious neighborhood civic centers. The 1907 City Beautiful plans for St. Louis advocated both a central civic center and a series of smaller civic centers throughout the city, including one in the Soulard Market area. In 1908 the chairman of the St. Louis Civic Center Committee argued that "To build a beautiful city is a worthy aim; a higher one is to develop it so as to mould the character of its people." He linked the grouping of schools, parks, playgrounds, baths, and libraries in neighborhood center plans directly to a broader urban vision—he argued that neighborhood civic centers would foster "the mental, moral, [and] physical up-building of the neighborhood in which they are situated." Moreover, the "civic pride" instilled in the centers would "extend to

every home in the district." These centers would provide the "socializing" influence in immigrant neighborhoods while "serving as rallying-places for the development of neighborhood feeling, the lack of which has much to do with our present corruption and inefficiency in political life."[5] Davis concluded that quite apart from their "aesthetic importance" the social value of neighborhood centers would soon make them the most important feature of the modern city plan.

In surveying the history of the neighborhood civic center it is possible to see how this form of urban planning developed in parallel with the vision of bringing organized, supervised, recreation to city neighborhoods as part of the small park and field house movement, and with the institutional initiatives of numerous Chicago settlement houses.[6] At the same time proponents of the City Beautiful movement explored the aesthetic and civic possibilities of grouping civic buildings as a way of promoting civic art. In 1903, Charles Mulford Robinson, a leading advocate of the City Beautiful Movement, promoted "comprehensive plans for the future development of all the public or semi-public institutions" not by themselves but rather in "relation to the community as a whole and to the other structures of its type." In Robinson's view public buildings were "gregarious;" they had a much greater aesthetic and social affect when they were grouped rather than built separately. Robinson argued that in grouping public buildings, "there is a civic gain, in the added dignity and importance which the buildings seem to possess. Collectively, they appear to make the city more pride worthy; they suggest the co-operation of departments rather than that individual sufficiency which separate buildings recommend and which is at the root of so much administrative evil; they make the municipality, in this representation of the mightiness of its total business, seem a more majestic thing and one better worth the devotion and service of its citizens. They make it seem better worth living for and working for, as of larger possibilities of good, than could the same buildings when scattered about the town and lost in a wilderness of commercial structures." Nor did Robinson envision only one center to serve or represent the public; he argued, "in these days cities have grown too large to crowd into a single space quite all that is important. In the physiology of cities it is not accurate to-day to speak of 'the heart' of the town; but, rather, of a series of nerve centers."[7] Robinson wanted public officials to take advantage of every public building project to promote order, harmony, and beauty in the city. He sketched the importance of gathering public buildings into centers and considering their designs in relation to a broader whole; he pointed to the "object-lesson" of the harmonious groups of buildings at the Columbian Exposition and concluded, "that is the secret at the root not only of comprehensive planning, but of civic art."[8]

During the 1910s, planners in Chicago and in many other major American cities turned with increasing interest to neighborhood civic centers as an important component of the nascent city planning movement. Architect Ernest Flagg's 1911 paper delivered at the Third Annual National Conference on City Planning titled "Public Buildings" pointed to the enthusiasm for civic centers and noted that "the opinion is rapidly graining ground that no public building of great importance should be undertaken singly."[9] Edward H. Bennett continued to promote civic centers in his city planning projects. In 1916, he contributed a chapter titled "Public Buildings and Quasi-Public Buildings" to John Nolen's important book, City Planning. Bennett used the book to extend the themes he and Burnham had outlined in the Chicago Plan. He insisted that "Public buildings may

be truly said to be the representation in ideal form of community ideals; they should typify its permanence, and should be . . . the free embodiment of civic life."[10] Bennett promoted the broader grouping of public buildings as a planning form capable of challenging the vertical monumentality of the skyscraper filled commercial landscape. He envisioned multiple centers for public buildings including administrative, educational, art, and transportation centers. The educational centers were most likely to fit into neighborhood planning ideals. Arthur Coleman Comey's chapter on "Neighborhood Centers" came immediately after Bennett's chapter in Nolen's book. Comey argued that the "neighborhood center is the group of buildings and grounds in which provision is made for the various educational, recreational, and social functions of the city . . . that is, our mental, moral, and physical up-building."[11]

City Club of Chicago Design Competitions for Neighborhood Centers

The influence of the neighborhood center movement was crystallized in Chicago in two important design competitions promoted by the City Club of Chicago in 1913 and 1914-1915. The 1913 competition sought plans for the orderly development of a 160-acre tract of undeveloped Chicago land into a residential neighborhood. The competition brief pointed out that "the outskirts of the city is being rapidly built up with homes without that intelligent direction which is necessary for the good of the city and its population. Recreation centers and parks are not being located until population has made them absolutely necessary, and then at large cost for the requisite land. Nor are the essentials for good housing and neighborhood institutions being recognized." Competitors were instructed to approach their design "showing the essentials of good housing in the broadest sense, the best methods of subdivision of residential land, the best disposition of space for parks and recreation centers, the most practical width and arrangements of roads, the most convenient location of stores and of public and semi-public grounds and buildings." Following these instructions, the designers who submitted plans for the competition entries were notable for their consistent provision of grouped public and quasi-public buildings. These buildings provided a distinctive civic hierarchy and order in each plan. Wilhelm Berhhard's first prize plan, for example, endeavored "to create a community center as an architectural emphasis and as a center for the business and civic life." Schools, churches, a library, clubhouses, shops, and a theater were gathered around a plaza and park space near the entrance of the new neighborhood. The City Club competition entries were placed on display at the City Club building in March, 1913, and vividly demonstrated the contemporary significance of neighborhood centers within the emerging city planning movement.[12]

In 1914-1915, the City Club sponsored a second competition that aimed to hone new designs for the civic core of the residential neighborhood, soliciting designs for a neighborhood civic center. George E. Hooker, civic secretary of the City Club, declared, "each neighborhood should have not merely a 'social' or 'civic' center for recreation and discussion, but a well designed grouping of the many important institutions of different sorts belonging to or needed by that neighborhood. Not only would a desirable architectural and landscape picture be secured in this way, but neighborhood pride and action concerning neighborhood matters would be encouraged." Anna Pendleton Schenck used the winning design that she completed with her partner Marcia Mead for the 1914-1915 City Club competition to illustrate her article "The Need For Neighborhood Centers in American Cities," published in April, 1915, in the municipal affairs journal American City. Schenck

insisted that the economic concentration of public and quasi-public institutions would "promote the neighborhood pride which is the foundation of patriotism." As if describing the neighborhood center that would later develop around Austin Town Hall Park, Schenck pointed out that schools in her neighborhood center would assume an expanded civic role, "The function of the school is enlarged to include an intellectual stimulus to grown people as well, in the reading room, library and museum, and in night classes, lectures, concerts, and art exhibits. The playgrounds and gardens for little children and the athletic fields and gymnasia for older people of both sexes are part also of the educative program. An auditorium, assembly hall and club rooms, a theatre and restaurant and an ample provision for parks fill the recreation needs of a neighborhood center; while the churches or other places of worship, added to such philanthropic institutions as suit the character of the district, supply the stimulus along spiritual lines. . . . By wise forethought and careful planning, they could be so brought into the general scheme as to harmonize with its architectural style and form a part of its beneficial influence upon the community."[13] The ideal supporting both architectural harmony and social uplift combined to propel the neighborhood center movement.

The Village of Austin's Civic Landscape

In many cases, the reform vision behind the neighborhood center movement underestimated the formidable obstacles to planning and grouping disparate institutional buildings together in the urban landscape. Neighborhood centers required an unusual degree of coordination between public and private institutions that often approached their building projects in terms of their own institutional imperatives, their own budget cycles and bond issues, and very much apart from plans and programs of separate civic projects. The Austin neighborhood had several important advantages when it came to constituting a model neighborhood center. It had a local civic and business community that tirelessly advocated neighborhood interests. The fact that the neighborhood had enjoyed a clear identity as a village, from 1865 to the 1899, perhaps helped local residents focus on the distinct interests of the community. Their boosting of the community ranged from a major fund raising campaign for a local branch of the Y.M.C.A, to a library committee that lobbied for a new branch library, to meetings with the mayor and the park board to ensure the construction of the Austin Town Hall community center. Perhaps more importantly the community had an established focal point for civic institutions, dating from its years as a village, that served as a nucleus and rallying point for the extended articulation of the neighborhood civic landscape. In 1865, when Henry W. Austin purchased a 280-acre farm to establish a temperance residential and manufacturing subdivision named "Austinville," located within the Cicero Township, he envisioned a park-like setting for new homes. He established tree-lined parkways along neighborhood streets. The Austin station of the Chicago & Northwestern Galena division stood on West Lake Street in front of a four-acre park named in Austin's subdivision "Holden Park." Holden Park, honoring C. C. Holden, president of the United States Clock Manufacturing Company,[14] quickly became the civic focus for the village. In 1870, Cicero Township government decided to locate its town hall in Holden Park. The cornerstone of the two and a half story stone building, topped by a distinctive cupola, was laid in November 1870.[15] At the same time that the town hall was constructed, the township also built a public school on the north side of Race Street, fronting on Holden Park. In 1871, the stone contractor who built the town hall and school with stone quarried from Batavia, Illinois, contracted with the leaders of the local Methodist church to build a stone church

adjacent to the new school building, also facing south towards Holden Park and the new Cicero Town Hall. These three building provided the village with a substantial civic presence around Holden Park. The park also became the site in the late-nineteenth-century for community band concerts and leisure gatherings. The neighborhood center's Key School and Austin Methodist Church were simply the replacements for buildings first constructed adjacent to Holden Park the1870s. The Austin Town Hall community building provided the space for community organizations that had come to use the old Cicero Town Hall, as a meeting place in the years after Austin was annexed to Chicago. Although none of these three original buildings on and adjacent to Holden Park survived beyond 1928, when the Cicero Town Hall building was demolished as part of the construction of the library and the Austin Town Hall community building, the three 1870s buildings provided the important kernels for the neighborhood center.

Austin Methodist Church

In the years after Austin's annexation to Chicago, the neighborhood expanded rapidly as apartments and two-flats and higher density houses were added to the lots and blocks in the community. The increase in the number of residents put considerable pressure on existing institutions that then resolved to build larger buildings. The Austin Methodist Church started planning a new building in 1895, less than twenty-five years after completing the building that faced Holden Park. Architect Arthur G. Morey designed the new church.[16] However, when the church leaders laid the cornerstone for the new building in 1899, they had turned instead to Cleveland architect Sidney R. Badgley for the design. Even though the church had to deal with the inconvenience of having no church building during the years of construction, it resolved to keep its location facing Holden Park. The church demolished its original building to provide a portion of the new site while expanding onto an adjacent empty lot to the east, at the northwest corner of North Central Avenue and Race Street. The handsome new Gothic Revival building, built of brownish red brick and white limestone window surrounds, belt courses, and trim, opened for services in May 1900, with a church membership that was larger than the entire village of Austin had been when the original church building opened in 1872. Just as adjacent institutions viewed themselves as ministering to the social, civic, and cultural needs of the community, the Austin Methodist Church saw itself playing a vital role in serving the religious needs of the community. When the church interior was destroyed by fire in June 1909, the congregation again retained Sidney R. Badgley's Cleveland firm to rebuild the inside.[17]

Neighborhood Uses for the Old Cicero Town Hall and Holden Park

In the years immediately after annexation to Chicago, the city's Special Park Commission maintained Holden Park as one of its small parks. The Commission improved the park adding electric lights, a water fountain, eight-foot wide gravel paths, an ornamental iron fence, and many new trees and shrubs. A new bandstand, added to the park in 1908, provided a venue for band concerts that attracted between two and three thousand people. Elms and maple trees ringed the perimeter of the park and chestnut, basswood, and long needle pine trees grew inside the park.[18] The former Cicero Town Hall building continued to occupy a central portion of the park. Chicago officials adapted the building for use as a police precinct after annexation. The Town Hall continued in use as a police station until May 15, 1918, when the precinct moved to a new station at

5357 West Chicago Avenue. After that point, numerous Austin civic organizations used the old Town Hall for regular meetings. The groups included Kilpatrick Post, 276, Grand Army of the Republic, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, Austin Post 52, American Legion, Auxiliary of Austin Post, 52, American Legion, Ida McKinley Tent, 21, Daughters of Union Veterans.[19]

Public Schools as Community Centers: Francis Scott Key School

Like the Austin Methodist Church, the public school built in the 1870s facing Holden Park was also demolished at the turn of the twentieth century to provide a site for a new building, better able to accommodate a growing neighborhood population. Constructed in 1906-1907, the Francis Scott Key School was constructed of brick with three stories and an elevated basement. Designed in a spare collegiate Gothic style, the Key School contained fourteen classrooms as well a large auditorium and gymnasium. Viewed in relation to the social reform ideals that provided the foundation for the neighborhood center movement, the construction of the Francis Scott Key School had special importance. The school was designed during the architecturally innovative and politically turbulent years, from 1905-1910, when Dwight H. Perkins served as the architect for the Chicago Board of Education. He was appointed to this position with the support of social reformer Jane Addams, who joined the Board in 1905. Under Perkins's direction, Chicago public school design began to be viewed for its potential to provide the immediate neighborhood with needed public space for community needs during the times in which school was not in session. In 1901, the Special Park Commission outlined for the Chicago city council the utility of such an approach to school use and construction. Under the leadership of Charles Zueblin and Graham Taylor, the Commission suggested that "school houses be turned over more to the public than they are now for the purpose of recreation and entertainment at such hours and in such manner as would not interfere with the regular work of education. With such a policy the public school would become what it should be—a social and civic center, a resort for public education, recreation and entertainment."[20] The school was designed so that public access could be provided to meeting rooms in the elevated basement without providing access to the entire building. A central wing projected from the rear of the school had a large auditorium on the first and second floor and a gymnasium on the third floor. These spaces were quickly pressed into service for community events well beyond the bounds of the primary school education provided in the building. The school also included cooking and manual training rooms. The school's continued location adjacent to Holden Park appropriately represented the broader neighborhood mission of the building.[21]

Perkins also made efforts to provide Chicago schools with convenient playgrounds and to flood interiors with ample amounts of sunlight and fresh air. The School Board purchased the three houses immediately north of the 1870s school to provide a larger site for the construction of the new school. When the building was completed in 1907, the older school building, standing on the south end of the larger lot was demolished to provide playground space adjacent to the new school. The school also stood directly across the street from Holden Park. The Key School's main elevation had projecting first floor bays that marked the girls' entrance on the south, the boys' entrance on the north, and the main entrance in the middle. Contrasting with the dark stone and brick of the site's 1870s building, Perkins selected buff colored brick and white limestone trim, helping to underscore the new interest in light and airy school interiors. To increase interior illumination,

Perkins placed two exterior windows on either end of the main corridors on each floor; he dedicated substantial amounts of wall surface to the six windows opening into each classroom; he drew light through the principal's office, located above the main entry, to interior windows that indirectly lit the main stair leading to the auditorium and first floor. Perkins also placed the school's two main stairways, located in the north and south bays, of the building against the front elevations, with landings lit by large exterior windows. As Perkins developed his various models for different size new schools, he set out to remove restrooms from the basement and to place them on every floor of the building. In this regard the Key School represents a transitional design; the rest rooms were neither in the basement nor in the on each floor; instead, they occupied well lit single story wings connected to southeast and northeast corners of the building. In the 1920s at the height of the Austin neighborhood center development, the Francis Scott Key School enrolled about 715 students each year.

Settling the Unsettled: Austin's Young Men's Christian Association Building

In 1906, Chicago public school officials maintained the prominent site of the Austin schoolhouse on Holden Park by purchasing and demolishing residences on the block just north of park, adjacent to the old school. In the early 1920s, a committee seeking to build a permanent Austin branch of the Young Men's Christian Association adopted a similar approach; they purchased and demolished several residences on the corner of the block, just northeast of Holden Park, in order to have the new building stand on an especially prominent civic setting. The main house demolished for the new building, which stood at the northeast corner of North Central Avenue and West Race Avenue, interestingly had served for years as a local boarding house. In the years prior to being purchased by the Y.M.C.A., Oscar Jones, a butcher who maintained a shop just west of Holden Park, operated this house as a boarding house. Jones had 10 boarders living in the house as well as his wife, his mother-in-law and his sister-in-law. The boarders worked as teachers, stenographer, salesman, clerks, and bill collector. Interestingly this diversity was soon accommodated in the Y.M.C.A. In reviewing the plans for the Y.M.C.A. building the *Austinite* announced that the building "will be placed on one of the prettiest sites in Austin and in the opinion of Harry Gardner, [Y.M.C.A.] executive secretary, on a more attractive site than any other association building in Chicago." The building committee looked forward to building "about the finest and one of the largest Y.M.C.A. buildings in the country."[22] The site for the Austin Y.M.C.A. seemed especially appropriate because the institution came steeped in the organization's broader vision of civic good work. Chicago's Young Men's Christian Association was founded, in 1853, to meet the spiritual and social needs of young men settling into a new and unfamiliar city. The Y.M.C.A. expanded to include athletic programs and baths and residences—built around an effort to guide the moral development of young men living away from home. In the 1910s, the Y.M.C.A. also included classes and lectures that aimed at Americanizing Chicago's large immigrant population.[23]

Surveying the work of the Chicago Y.M.C.A. after World War I, the business manager of the Y.M.C.A. pointed to buildings "bursting with men and boys," dormitories with long waiting lists, crowded educational classes, and an institution that had to turn away hundreds every day. Despite working at full capacity the Y.M.C.A. concluded that 85 percent of the city's population remained outside the range of existing Y.M.C.A. buildings. The organization resolved to raise 19 million dollars to support an ambitious expansion program that

would include the construction of 27 branch buildings.[24] The central Y.M.C.A. organization relied on neighborhood based fund raising to build its branches. Austin had established a branch of the Y.M.C.A. in 1912, initially operated in rented quarters in the old Oaks clubhouse, located at Lake Street and Waller Avenue. A committee that included Perley D. Castle, president of the Austin State Bank, George J. Dehn, president of Austin's Compound Injector Specialty Company, Judge Charles S. Cutting, and A.H. Clement, a paint store merchant, organized a drive for an Austin branch building, in February 1922, and quickly raised nearly $300,000. The Chicago architectural firm of Berlin & Swern, which designed several 1920s buildings for the Y.M.C.A., developed an initial plan for the Austin branch in 1924. The building was a four story brick Romanesque-style building with a prominent corner turret and projecting bays.[25] The committee then revised and expanded their initial plans and raised more money in 1925, ending with a total local building fund of nearly $500,000 contributed by over 3,000 individual donors. The central Y.M.C.A. invested $250,000 to construct dormitories that could be rented to provide operating funds for the building. Berlin & Swern's final building plan called for a more refined four-story Renaissance Revival style building. Arched windows with white limestone keystones ran across the rusticated, receding and projecting, brick courses of the main floor. Rectangular windows opened from the upper floors, and white limestone trim, continuous stringcourses, a cornice of dentils, a rooftop balustrade, and a projecting stone entrance frame gave the building's design its visual sense of quiet, balanced, monumentality. The building's cornerstone was laid on January 25, 1925. The building was dedicated and opened to the public on February 28, 1926—over 5,000 people toured the buildings on the first afternoon that it was open—they saw the building's two gymnasiums, swimming pool, handball courts, club rooms, billiard and game rooms, lobbies and library, cafeteria, locker rooms, and the 208 dormitory rooms on the upper floors.[26]

As soon as the Austin Y.M.C.A. opened, it began fulfilling the civic neighborhood role suggested by the broad fund raising campaign that supported its construction and by the prominent site it occupied in the community's civic landscape. Local community organizations like the Austin Lions Club and the Austin Kiwanis Club began holding regular weekly meetings in the dining room and clubrooms at the Y.M.C.A. The athletic facilities were heavily used. The residential section of the building provided a "friendly, congenial atmosphere, . . . a safe, clean thoroughly wholesome place for young men away from home" many of whom were employed by neighborhood industries, including the nearby Western Electric manufacturing plant; the residents came to Chicago "seeking their fortune thru work or thru education." For many the Y.M.C.A. provided an important starting point for settling into the city and forming new friendships and social networks. In the first four years of operation, the residences provided accommodations to over 2,000 men, said to be from every state in the Union and many foreign countries as well. When the federal census enumerator visited the Y.M.C.A. in April 1930, he found 165 men in residence. The vast majority of them were single and in their twenties. Residents came from Indiana, Minnesota, Texas, Illinois, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Montana, North Dakota, Missouri, Georgia, and South Dakota. They also came from Canada, Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Norway, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Sweden, and Italy. They worked as clerks, bookkeepers, chemist, engineers, attorneys, bakers, welders, locomotive firemen, pattern makers, salesmen, electricians, foremen, chauffeur,

laborers, draftsman, mill supervisor, waiter, pastor, press operator, inspector, service man, bank teller, photographer, traffic manager, usher, post clerk, jeweler, elevator operator, telephone engineer, painter, druggist, die maker, metal worker, and janitor. In many ways this diverse mass of young, unsettled, people living in rooms at the Y.M.C.A. stood close to the center of the urban reformers' vision of coalescing urban residents around a shared civic culture, crystallized in neighborhood centers. The Y.M.C.A. had its own institutional aims along these lines. However, building when they did and where the Austin Y.M.C.A. juxtaposed its program with the broader urban and architectural movement promoting neighborhood civic centers.[27] The enthusiasm for Berlin & Swern's Austin branch design led branch committee's in the Englewood and South Chicago neighborhoods to closely model their own 1925-1926 buildings on the Austin branch. The architectural form, style, and materials were quite similar; however, in Englewood and South Chicago the buildings occupied sites adjacent to residences and stores. They both lacked the distinctive civic setting that proved such an important part of the Austin branch development.

Chicago's Branch Library Movement: The Henry W. Austin Branch

In the months surrounding the February 1926 dedication of the Austin Y.M.C.A., Chicago city officials took the next major step in the development of the Austin neighborhood center; they approved the construction of a branch library on a site on the northern edge of Holden Park just across the street from the new Y.M.C.A. building. The decision to build a new branch library came after decades of lobbying by local residents. The Austin branch had a modest beginning, in 1896, when Emily Wright Thorndike advocated the opening of an Austin branch library. A socially prominent Austin resident, Thorndike was a civic activist who was founder and president of the Catholic Women's League, Big Sisters, and the Chicago Artists Association.[28] The first Austin branch of the library opened at 5642 West Lake Street in a building that had formerly been a blacksmith shop. After a fire destroyed the building, the library moved, in 1910, into the second floor of a building reconstructed on the site, above ground floor shops. In 1911, Thorndike joined her neighbors, Irwin R. Hazen and John G. Schaefer, in collecting the signatures of 2500 Austin citizens on a petition that they presented to the mayor calling for the construction of a new branch library; they presumably sought a free-standing building rather than the recently obtained space above the store on West Lake Street. Despite popular interest, the library movement lapsed until 1924, when Schaefer again rallied neighborhood residents in support of a new library. Austin residents met with Mayor Dever to argue their case for a new branch library. The Mayor supported their plan by proposing a $3,000,000 bond issue that would enlarge the central library and start a branch library construction program that aimed at placing a branch in all 50 wards of the city. In the mid-1920s, Chicago had thirty-nine branch libraries but the vast majority of them were in makeshift quarters, similar to the branch in Austin. The library board owned only five branches; eleven branches occupied rented spaces, and thirty-three branches were located in park buildings, schools, and other institutions not designed for library service. Thus, the vision of a specially designed branch library involved a notable if somewhat unusual civic gesture.[29]

Mayor Dever's general support for an Austin branch led neighborhood library advocates to begin considering possible locations for the library. Holden Park seemed ideal. It was on the block just east of the

rented space housing the Austin branch. For years Holden Park had been a central icon of the local civic landscape. Moreover, it could be obtained for library purposes without cost. In December 1925, the Board of Directors of the Chicago Public Library officially requested that the city grant the library space in Holden Park for a new branch library. The City Council prepared an ordinance granting the library a lease on a section of Holden Park and the terms of the lease were approved by the City Council in May 1926. In July 1926, the Library Board commissioned Chicago architect Alfred S. Alschuler to design the Austin branch library for Holden Park.[30]

The Center vs. The Branch: The Library and the Old Town Hall Preservation Campaign

To library officials, Holden Park seemed ideal as a site for the Austin branch; however, library plans led some residents to object that, "Town Hall, Austin's historic landmark is doomed." They disputed the claims staked out for the "center" of Austin. They worried about what would happen if the old Town Hall were demolished—the building which had stood as "the center of the community's social activities, and pioneers recall many pleasant memories of gatherings of friends and neighbors in the famous old structure, which has stood like a sentinel watching the march of progress." Civic organizations that used Town Hall would be displaced for a single-purpose library building. In December 1926, Lulu M. Snodgrass wrote forcefully in favor of preserving Town Hall—"I should like personally to see our former Town Hall preserved for all time. The quaint building lends distinction to Austin. It calls attention to our suburb. When it is gone our identity is gone. . . .The city council . . . is determined in the face of decided opposition and contrary to the prevailing sentiment, to deprive our community of its only neighborhood center and allow and urge the erection of a building in its place which will be without a unit for a center! Without the feature more needed in Austin than a library building. Without a center, the demand for which has been growing by 'leaps and bounds' each year as condensed living grows in popularity and expansion is absolutely necessary somewhere, somehow." Snodgrass proposed a vacant lot on Central Avenue as more appropriate and questioned that logic that suggested that the library needed a "large, elaborate building" on the most central site in Austin. The protest against the library plan confirmed the long established centrality of Holden Park as a significant civic space in Austin. In the face of the protest, John Schaefer asserted that although "all are agreed that the new library will be of great benefit to Austin" it would not require the demolition of Town Hall. He hoped old Town Hall would continue to be used "for many years." Indeed, the library board and the city council modified slightly the boundaries of the library plot in Holden Park so that it no longer encompassed the ground where Town Hall stood.[31]

Budget difficulties in the library system slowed the start of the construction of the Austin branch. Construction did not begin until 1928, and the building opened to the public on January 12, 1930, with more than 600 people visiting. On the first day of business, 3,423 books were signed out to patrons breaking the previous one day Chicago branch circulation record. When library officials started construction they declared that they hoped to make the Austin branch "as home-like as possible with little of the institutional appearance." The library would have a central circulation desk with reading rooms for adults and children on opposite sides of the library. A mezzanine with a public auditorium would have an ornamental balcony adding to the handsome interior. The aspirations for a home-like interior did not deter the library's architect from carefully

conceiving the library exterior as a civic monument with a columned portico, with papyriform capitals, over the front entrance. In describing the building the librarian pointed out that the red brick and white trim of the building was designed "to harmonize" with the adjacent Y.M.C.A. building. Indeed, the arcaded window openings on the library directly echoed the arcaded motif employed recently by Berlin & Swern for the first floor of the Y.M.C.A. Thus, Alschuler's design tended to underscore what was apparent to Austin leaders and residents and that was that the library was conceived of, as and would contribute to the making of, a broader neighborhood center.[32]

West Chicago Parks Commission and the Austin Town Hall Community Center

The Austin Town Hall was the final and most monumental building conceived of as an integral part of the Austin neighborhood center. The community and recreation building constructed by the West Chicago Park Commission was planned after the library but was completed and opened to the public in April 1929, nine months before the library opened. As in the case of the library, the Town Hall project originated when civic and community leaders lobbied for neighborhood improvements with key public officials. The opportunity for new building arose on June 6, 1927, when Chicago voters approved a ten million dollar bond issue for the West Chicago Park Commission for rehabilitating parks and boulevards and for constructing several field houses and a West Park administration building.[33] Soon after the approval of the park bond issue several Austin residents, including George J. Dehn, Frank A. Bentley, Frank W. Savage, Edward Snodgrass, Edward H. Fox, and Perley D. Castle, formed a committee that sought to convince the West Chicago Park Commission to build a major community building in Austin. Several of the committee members had worked together earlier to raise funds for the construction of the Y.M.C.A. The committee proposed that a West Chicago Parks community building could appropriately be built in Holden Park. The West Chicago Park Commissioners, including the commission president John Dill Robertson, who was a resident of Austin, indicated their willingness to undertake a building project in Austin. On August 23, 1927, a delegation of two hundred Austin residents, "representing practically every club and civic organization in the community, went to city hall to lobby the city council for the transfer of Holden Park from the city to the West Chicago Park Commission. With the support of Mayor William Hale Thompson they succeeded in having the jurisdiction over the park transferred and planning for the Austin Town Hall began in earnest.[34] The West Chicago Park Commission trimmed the budget for its other building projects and dedicated $427,000 of its bond issue to a new building for Austin's Holden Park.

The architectural firm of Michaelsen & Rognstad designed the West Park Commission's building for Holden Park, loosely modeled upon Philadelphia's Independence Hall. When the Commission had appealed to the Illinois legislature, in 1926-1927, for legislative permission to seek voter approval of its $10,000,000 bond issue, it presented its case in three bound volumes with tentative plans for proposed buildings. Christian S. Michaelsen helped develop the building plans for the Commission without charge. In March 1927, the Commission resolved that if the bond issue were approved by the legislature and the voters, the Commission would have Michaelsen design the necessary buildings in recognition of the "meritorious work already performed."[35] In the end, Micahelsen and his partner Sigurd A. Rognstad received the commission of all of the buildings built by the Commission with the money from the 1927 bond issue—including the golden domed

Garfield Park Administration Building, Humboldt Park Refectory, Harrison Park Field House, LaFollette Memorial Building, a Warehouse and Shop Building, and the Austin Town Hall community building. The buildings showed incredible eclectic range, including Baroque, Renaissance Revival, and Colonial. The Austin neighborhood center had great civic import and was linked to reform visions of Americanization. It thus seemed fitting that in the year following the Philadelphia celebration of the sesquicentennial of American independence, including a high profile restoration of Independence Hall, which Michaelsen & Rognstad would turn to this architectural icon as a model for their Austin design. The Austin Town Hall design followed, by only a few years, the 1924 design by A. Epstein of Chicago's Stockyards Trust and Savings Bank Building on South Halsted Street in Bridgeport, which also used Independence Hall as a model. In describing the bank building in 1924, Epstein declared that Independence Hall was the "finest example of colonial architecture in the country," and that he hoped that with the building's historical associations it would be "of educational value to the people of Chicago."[36] Ironically, the patriotic overtones of Austin's Independence Hall model did not bar Michaelsen and Rognstad, who were both the Illinois born children of Norwegian immigrants, from reveling in ethnic particularity when, in 1928, they used traditional Chinese architectural motifs to design the On Leong Chinese Merchants' Association Building on Wentworth Avenue in Chicago's Chinatown neighborhood. The Austin project reveled in assimilation while the On Leong building gestured proudly to ethnic building traditions. To further underscore the patriotic theme the exterior of the Austin Town Hall carried bas-relief sculptures of George Washington, John Paul Jones, William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, and the Marquis de Lafayette.

Michaelsen & Rognstad's plans for the Austin Town Hall had to contend with difficult site issues including the existing location of the former Cicero Town Hall and the proposed location of the Austin branch library. They considered several different options for locating the new building. The architects thought that the best option for harmonizing the library and the new Town Hall would be to have them both face into the middle of the park—rather than fronting on the street. The difficulty with that plan was that it would place the proposed 1,300 seat auditorium of the new Town Hall on the noisiest part of the park, along Lake Street with its commuter and elevated railroad lines. The architects also considered placing the Town Hall along either the east or the west side of the park, such a position would require the immediate demolition of the old Town Hall, and having learned from the debates over the library, the West Chicago Park Commission sought to avoid the immediate demolition of the older building. Interestingly the neighborhood committee supporting the project actually encouraged the West Park Commission to adopt a site plan placing the new building in the center of Holden Park that would have required the immediate demolition of the old Town Hall. Dr. Edward Snodgrass, a dentist and an active member of the neighborhood committee, supported this plan, even though his wife had earlier led the campaign to preserve the old Town Hall, when it was threatened by the branch library plans. One important difference was that the proposed building would now have space to accommodate all the civic and patriotic groups displaced from the old Town Hall. In the end, the Park Commission accepted Michaelsen & Rognstad's option of having the Town Hall front onto Lake Street with a substantial landscaped setback of 135 feet between the building and Lake Street. In this position the east and west wings of the building would provide something of a sound barrier to Lake Street noise for the auditorium, which projected north from the

middle of the building further into the park. The plan was also calculated to avoid, narrowly, the older Town Hall building on Holden Park. In January 1928, when bids were opened for the preliminary design of Austin Town Hall, the building was over the available budget and the architects revised the plan while maintaining the distinctive stepped central tower and cupola.[37]

Great community celebrations accompanied the various stages of the building of the new Town Hall on Holden Park. George H. Dehn, a key member of the committee that successfully lobbied for the new community building, served as the marshal for the parade that would precede the laying of the cornerstone for the building. Austin's business organizations, patriotic groups, and clubs all cooperated in the planning and helped organize a parade that was expected to have 3,000 floats and decorated automobiles that would wind its way through the main streets of Austin past buildings and streets decorated with flags and banners.[38] Illinois Governor Len Small led the cornerstone laying ceremonies. Unfortunately, for the planners of the ceremony, rain, sleet, and snow fell on the April 7th event ruining the decorations and the floats. The ceremonies went on, but with a reduced crowd on hand. George Dehn thanked everybody "who brazed the blizzard," declared that "regardless of the storm it was the greatest demonstration of community spirit that Austin has ever made."[39]In April 1929, one year after the cornerstone laying, the West Chicago Park Commission opened the new Austin Town Hall to the public. Nearly 4,000 people toured the building on the dedication day and listened to performances by the American Legion band; the Austin High School girls' chorus; and Elbert B. Wheeler, an Austin tenor who sang "The Soldiers Chorus," The Sunshine of Your Smile," and "O Sole Mio."[40] The enthusiasm that greeted the opening of the building seemed to flow into its use. In December 1929, an official of the West Chicago Parks declared his surprise and pleasure in seeing 800 people in a two-hour period using Town Hall. Their activities ranged from a musical recital in the auditorium, to classes in the gymnasium, swimmers in the swimming pool, to six different clubs using the meeting rooms, to another club using the basement rifle range, to twenty girls participating in a handicraft class. There was also an art gallery and games room, and two kitchens available in the building.[41]

In 1929, just days before the dedication of the Town Hall, the West Chicago Park Commission passed a resolution officially changing the name of Holden Park to Austin Town Hall Park. Their action acknowledged the "sentiment frequently expressed by many of the old time residents of Austin" of attachment to the old Town Hall.[42] Although the new Town Hall was designed to avoid the demolition of old Town Hall, the West Chicago Park Commission began demolishing "Austin's Ancient Landmark" in August 1928.[43] A single photograph in the *Austinite* showed the new Town Hall rising while the old Town Hall was being demolished.[44] The image and the discourse around the development captured the sense of Austin's civic continuity and change as the civic landscape was transformed. The *Austinite* even published a poem titled "Austin's Old Town Hall"[45] that took measure of the transition; the poem read in part:

In the old town hall of Austin,
In the years that now are gone,
Village government was seated;

There its justice was completed;
Round that center the community
Was drawn
. . .

So last Saturday we saw,
Tho the wind was cold and raw,
And the snow was falling, falling
With a chill that reached the bone
We saw the glad elation
Of the Austin population
As they laid the "center's"
Cornerstone

Soon the old town hall of Austin
Will pass out beyond recall;
Soon we hope the new library—
'Spite of all that's been contrary—
Will arise to be a sister
To the new communal hall.

Nay those two most worthy buildings
Which shall rise upon this park,
Be a means of better service
All that's good and is deserving
And spread light and kindly feeling
In all places that are dark.

So the old town hall of Austin.
Which has served so well its day,
As a memory will linger
Thru the future's glorious way.

After the workers completed the 1928 demolition of old Town Hall, none of the three 1870s buildings that defined the civic center of the village of Austin survived. It is notable that the new buildings for the school, the church, the Y.M.C.A. the branch library and the Town Hall successfully held the "center" and fostered cherished images of a "centered" and vital urban neighborhood. Building upon the historic civic spaces of the village, neighborhood residents realized Chicago's fullest expression of the modern neighborhood civic center. Austin Town Hall Park with its cluster of neighborhood institutions could easily have been found amidst the

idealized plans submitted to the City Club of Chicago's 1913-1914 neighborhood center competition. In Austin, the neighborhood center ideal was realized in substantial architectural and landscape form.

Endnotes

---

[1] See: Christopher Silver, "Neighborhood Planning in Historical Perspective," *American Planning Association Journal*, (Spring 1985): 161-174.
[2] See Paul S. Boyer, Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).
[3] Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, Plan of Chicago (Chicago: Commercial Club of Chicago, 1909), 116; see also Daniel Bluestone, Constructing Chicago (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991): 152-204.
[4] Burnham and Bennett, Plan of Chicago, 35.
[5] D. R. Davis, "The Neighborhood Center—A Moral and Educational Factor," *Charities and the Commons*, 19 (1 February 1908): 1504-1506; quoted in Christopher Silver, "Neighborhood Planning in Historical Perspective," *American Planning Association Journal*, (Spring 1985): 161-184.
[6] See Julia Sniderman and William W. Tippens, A Breath of Fresh Air, Chicago's Neighborhood Parks of the Progressive Reform Era, 1900-1925 (Chicago, 1989).
[7] Charles Mulford Robinson, Modern Civic Art; Or, The City Made Beautiful (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1903), 85.
[8] Charles Mulford Robinson, Modern Civic Art; Or, The City Made Beautiful (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1903), 275, 286.
[9] Ernest Flagg, "Public Buildings," Proceedings of the third National Conference on City Planning, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 15-17, 1911, pp. 49.
[10] Edward H. Bennett, "Public Buildings and Quasi-Public Buildings," in John Nolen, editor, City Planning; A Series of Papers Presenting The Essential Elements of A City Plan (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1916), 105.
[1111] Arthur Coleman Comey, "Neighborhood Centers," in John Nolen, editor, City Planning; A Series of Papers Presenting The Essential Elements of A City Plan (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1916), 117.
[12] Alfred B. Yeomans, editor, City Residential Land Development (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), 1-2, 10.
[13] Anna Pendleton Schenck, "The Need For Neighborhood Centers in American Cities," *American City*, 12 (April 1915): 337-339; for note on Schenck & Mead see *New York Times*, 8 March 1914.
[14] Anne M. Danegger, Early Austin, (Chicago: Austin Friends of the Library, 1944), 18.
[15] *Austinite*, 31 August 192.
[16] *Chicago Tribune*, 23 June 18895.
[17] Alice Sinkevitch, AIA Guide to Chicago (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company), 299; *Chicago Tribune*, 7 June and 24 August 1909; A Brief History Austin Methodist Episcopal Church for the Seventieth Anniversary Celebration November Seventh to Fourteenth Nineteen Thirty-Seven, (Chicago: 1937).

[18] On park improvements see: Annual Report of the Special Park Commission, 1908-1912 (Chicago: Special Park Commission, 1909-1913).
[19] *Austinite*, 31 August 1923
[20] Report of the Special Park Commission to the City Council of the City of Chicago Adopted 4 February 1901, (Chicago: 1901), 9.
[21] *Austinite*, 26 February 1926; Austinite, 11 May 1949.
[22] *Austinite*, 23 January 1925.
[23] Paula Lupkin, "Young Men's Christian Association," Encyclopedia of Chicago History, http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org
[24] Emmett Dedmon, Great Enterprises; 100 Years of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago (New York: Rand McNally, 1957), 216-225.
[25] Design was published in: *Chicago Tribune*, 11 May 1924.
[26] *Austinite*, 26 February 1926, 5 March 1926.
[27] Fifteenth Census of the United States, City of Chicago, 1930, Enumeration District 16-2741; see also *Austinite*, 7 February 1930.
[28] *Chicago Tribune*, 18 September 1929.
[29] *Chicago Tribune*, 25 November 1924, 9 December 1924; Austinite, 12 March 1926.
[30] Chicago City Council Proceedings, 30 December 1925, 2025; Chicago City Council Proceedings, 19 May 1926, 3510; Proceeding of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Public Library from January 4, 1924 to December 28, 1925, 389; Proceeding of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Public Library from January 11, 1926 to December 26, 1927, 1, 11, 104, 131.
[31] *Austinite*, 3 December 1926, 10 December 1926; Chicago City Council Proceedings, 26 January 1927, 5342.
[32] *Austinite*, 25 May 1928.
[33] Tomaz F. Deuther, editor, Report of the West Chicago Parks on the $10,000,000 Bond Issue1927-1928 (Chicago: West Chicago Park Commission, 1928.
[34] *Austinite*, 26 August 1927; Austinite, 5 April 1929; Record of the Proceeding of the West Chicago Park Commissioners, 31 January 1928, 76-77; Record of the Proceeding of the West Chicago Park Commissioners, 22 August 1927, 208-209.
[35] Record of the Proceeding of the West Chicago Park Commissioners,, 23 March 1927, 600.
[36] *Chicago Tribune*, 25 May 1924.
[37] "Report of the Art Committee On Location of Community Building to be Erected in Holden Park," Record of the Proceeding of the West Chicago Park Commissioners, v. 18, 31 January 1928.
[38] *Austinite*, 23 March 1928, 30 March 1928, 6 April 1928.
[39] *Austinite*, 13 April 1928.
[40] *Austinite*, 12 April 1929.
[41] *Austinite*, 27 December 1929.
[42] Record of the Proceeding of the West Chicago Park Commissioners,, 28 March 1929, 20-21.

[43] *Austinite*, 24 August 1928.
[44] *Austinite*, 7 September 1928.
[45] *Austinite*, 13 April 1928.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
_**X**_ Other

Name of repository **Chicago Historical Society**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **7.6**

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	__	_____	_____	3	__	_____	_____
2	__	_____	_____	4	__	_____	_____

_**X**_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheet

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheet

Bibliography

Austinite, neighborhood weekly newspaper, 1900-1930.

Bennett, Edward H. "Public Buildings and Quasi-Public Buildings," in John Nolen, editor, City Planning; A Series of Papers Presenting The Essential Elements of A City Plan (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1916).

Bluestone, Daniel. Constructing Chicago (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

Boyer, Paul S. Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

Dedmon, Emmett . Great Enterprises; 100 Years of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago (New York: Rand McNally, 1957).

Silver, Christopher . "Neighborhood Planning in Historical Perspective," American Planning Association Journal, (Spring 1985): 161-174.

West Chicago Park Commissioners, Record of the Proceeding, located in the Chicago Park District Archives, Chicago, Illinois.

Geographical Data

Boundary Description

The Austin Town Hall Park Historic District included the entire area of the Austin Town Hall Park, site of the Austin Town Hall and the Austin Branch of the Chicago Public Library, as well as the first buildings located north of Austin Hall Park touching the north line of West Race Avenue, including and limited to the Key School, the former Austin Methodist Church, and the Austin Y.M.C.A. The north boundary runs from North Parkside Avenue, just north of the historic section of the Key School to a mid-block alley, it then runs south and turns east with the east leg of the alley. The boundary then crosses east across North Central Avenue and runs east along the north lot line of the Y.M.C.A. to the mid-block alley. It then runs south along the alley to West Race Avenue and turns west along West Race Avenue where it joins the boundary the runs around the edges of Austin Town Hall Park.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to completely encompass all of the public and quasi-public institutions that constitute the Austin Town Hall Park neighborhood center.

UTM

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	436412	4637670
2	16	436463	4637670
3	16	436458	4637624
4	16	436575	4637624
5	16	436575	4637558
6	16	436519	4637558
7	16	436514	4637395
8	16	436407	4637390

11. Form Prepared By

name/title **Daniel Bluestone, Director**

organization **Historic Preservation Program, University of Virginia** date **April 2006**

street & number **P.O. Box 400122** telephone **434-924-6458**

city or town **Charlottesville** state **Virginia** zip code **22904**

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **multiple owners**

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

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.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Photographs

Austin Town Hall Park Historic District
Cook County, Illinois
Daniel Bluestone
University of Virginia
2005

Austin Town Hall facing northwest on Lake
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 1

Austin Town Hall facing northeast at the corner of Lake and Parkside
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 2

Austin Town Hall (rear) facing southeast on Parkside
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 3

General View looking east down Race Street showing the Austin Branch of the Chicago Public Library (right) and the Austin Methodist Church and YMCA (left)
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 4

Key School facing southeast on Parkside
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 5

No photo 6

Entrance detail of Key School facing east
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 7

Austin Branch of the Chicago Public Library facing southwest on Race
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 8

Austin Methodist Church facing northwest at the corner of Central and Race
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 9

YMCA facing northeast at the corner of Race and Central
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 10

General view looking south down Central showing the YMCA (left) and the Church, Library and Hall (right)
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 11

Austin Town Hall facing northwest on Central
IL_Cook_Austin Town Hall HD 12

USGS **Oak Park, Illinois, United States** 10 Apr 2002



Image courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey
© 2004 Microsoft Corporation. **Terms of Use** **Privacy Statement**

Photograph Key

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Austin Town Hall Park Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ILLINOIS, Cook

DATE RECEIVED: 10/02/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/24/06
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/08/06 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/15/06
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06001015

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

√ ACCEPT ___ RETURN ___ REJECT 11.15.06 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA_____

REVIEWER_____ DISCIPLINE_____

TELEPHONE_____ DATE_____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.


20

Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

Cook Co.

IL

1



Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

Cook Co.

IL

2



Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

Cook Co.

IL

3


SCHOOL
SPEED
LIMIT
20

Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

Cook Co.

IL

4



Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District
Cook Co.
IL
5



Austin Town Hall Park H.D.

Cook Co, IL

7



Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

Cook Co

IL

8



Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

Cook Co.

IL

9



Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

Cook Co.

IL

10


Loreto Family
Care Center

Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

Cook Co.

IL

11



Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District

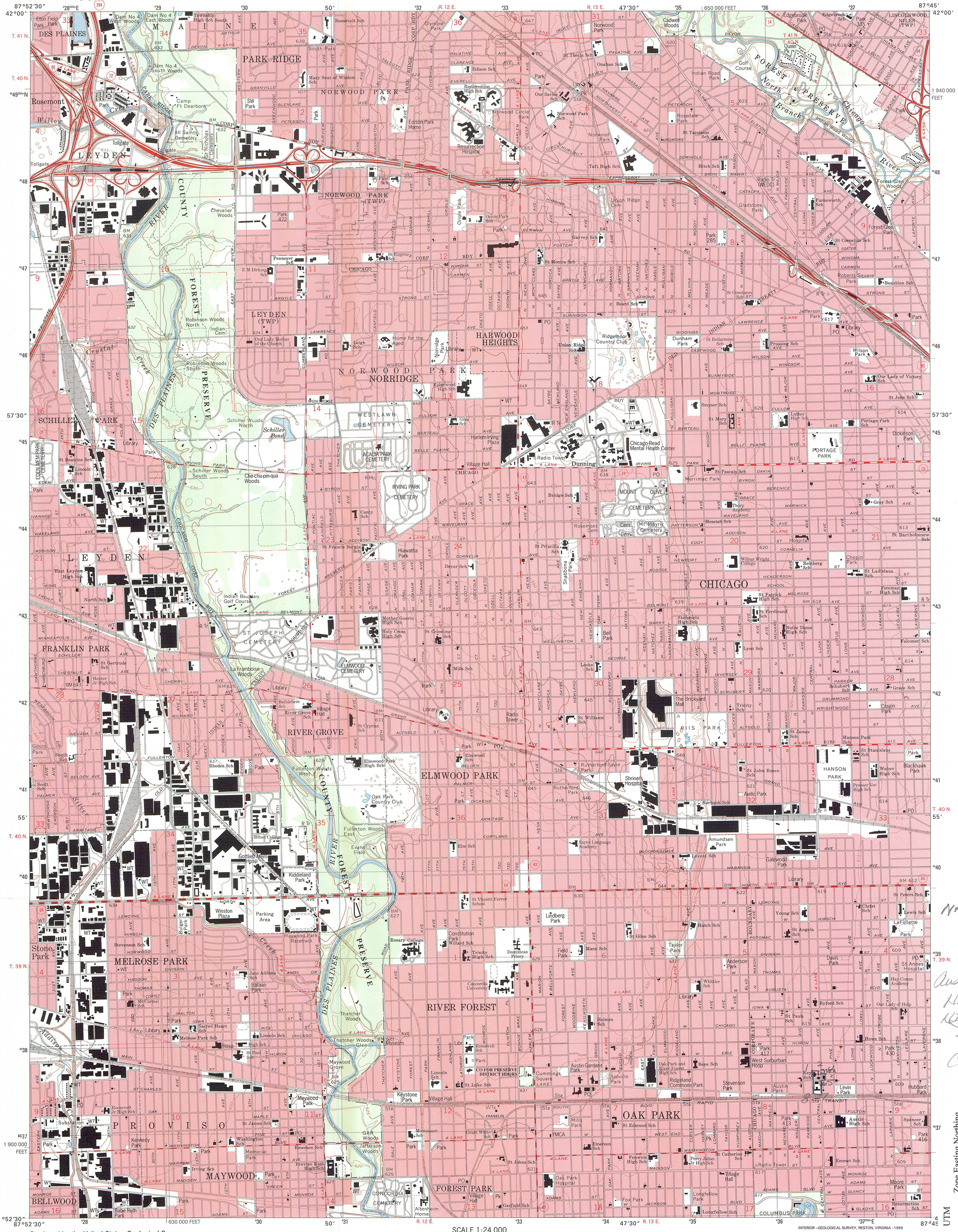
Cook Co.

IL

12

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

RIVER FOREST QUADRANGLE
ILLINOIS-COOK CO.
7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Derived from imagery taken 1988 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery taken 1997; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLSS and survey control current as of 1992
Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: Illinois coordinate system, east zone (transverse Mercator)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

MN GN
2½° 44 MILS 0°33′ 10 MILS
UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

1 0.5 0 KILOMETERS 1 2
1000 0 METERS 1000 2000
1 0.5 0 1
MILES
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000
FEET

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
AND ILLINOIS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ILLINOIS
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4		5
6	7	8

1 Arlington Heights
2 Park Ridge
3 Evanston
4 Elmhurst
5 Chicago Loop
6 Hinsdale
7 Berwyn
8 Englewood
ADJOINING 7.5′ QUADRANGLE NAMES

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway hard surface
Secondary highway hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

RIVER FOREST, IL
1997
NIMA 3467 IV NE-SERIES V863

INTERIOR–GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA–1999

NPS copy

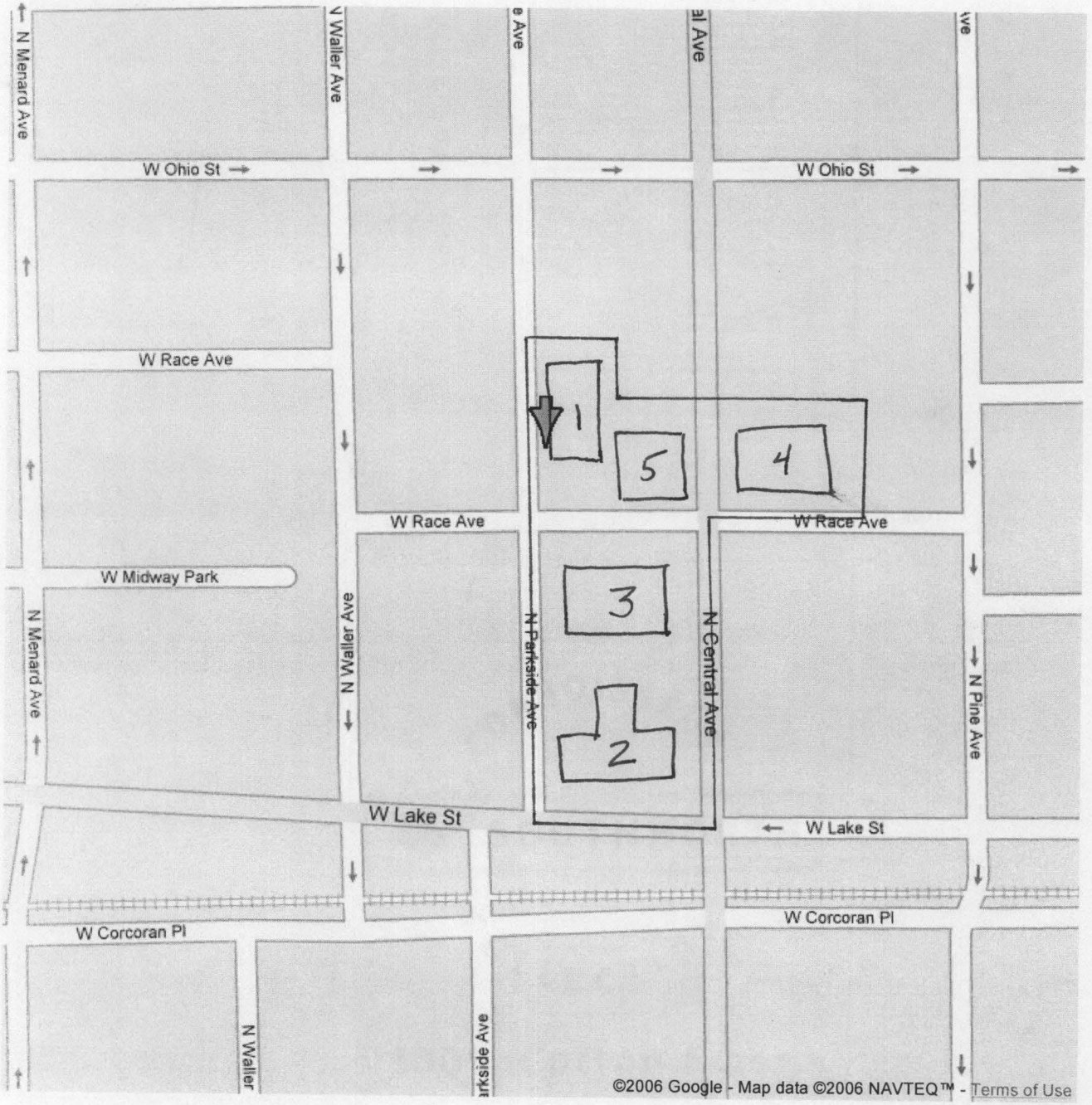
Austin Town Hall Park Historic District
Cook Co.
IL

UTM Zone Easting Northing
1 16 436412 4637670
2 16 436463 4637670
3 16 436458 4637624
4 16 436575 4637624
5 16 436575 4637558
6 16 436519 4637558
7 16 436514 4637395
8 16 436407 4637390

ISBN 0-607-91717-2

Google Maps

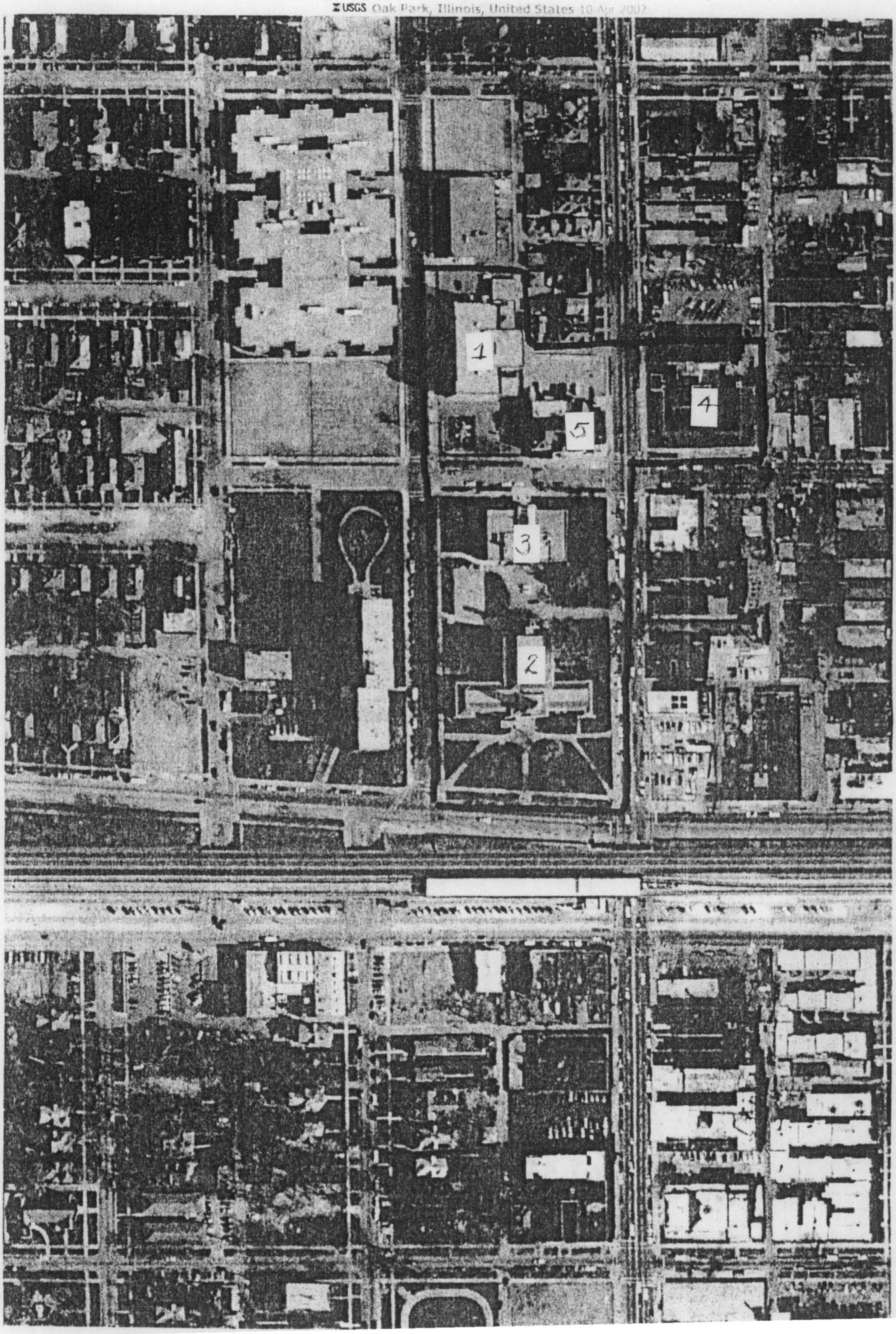
Address **517 N Parkside Ave**
Chicago, IL 60644



Boundaries of Austin Town Hall Park
Historic District
Cook County, IL

Send To Printer Back To TerraServer Change to 8.5x11 Print Size Show Grid Lines Change to Color Image

USGS Oak Park, Illinois, United States 10 Apr 2002



Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio National Historic District
Oak Park, Illinois

Illinois Historic
Preservation Agency

Voice (217) 782-4836
1 Old State Capitol Plaza • Springfield, Illinois 62701-1512 • Teletypewriter Only (217) 524-7128
www.illinois-history.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Richard M. Daley, City of Chicago
Brian Goeken, Landmarks Division, Department of Planning and Development

FROM: Tracey A. Sculle, Survey and National Register Coordinator TAS

DATE: June 7, 2006

SUBJECT: Preliminary Opinion for the Austin Town Hall Park Historic District

Austin Town Hall Park is a distinct district comprised of five buildings: Francis Scott Key School (1907), Austin Town Hall (1929), Henry W. Austin Branch of the Chicago Public Library (1930), Austin branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (1926), and the Austin Methodist Church (1900). The district is roughly bounded by West Lake Street, North Central Avenue, North Parkside Avenue, and Race Avenue.

The Austin Town Hall Park Historic District is locally significant and meets Criterion A and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for the following areas of significance: Social History, Community Planning and Development and Architecture. This area represents Chicago's most completely developed neighborhood civic center, an urban form inspired by innovative early-twentieth-century planning and reform ideals. In leading cities in the United States social reformers and urban planners proposed neighborhood civic centers as an important means to promote civic order and patriotism among new urban residents, especially those arriving from foreign countries and from rural areas of the United States. Architecturally, the period revival styles (Colonial, Classical, Renaissance and Gothic) represented in the district, while stylistically varied, work in harmony and share fairly uniform materials, combining a dominant use of brick with white limestone trim.

While the history of the area dates originally to an earlier time period, the period of significance for the district dates from 1900, when the first extant building was constructed, to 1956, the fifty-year cutoff for National Register significance. The Austin Town Hall Park Historic District retains its overall integrity and clearly reflects both its historic and architectural significance. The district will make an excellent addition to the National Register of Historic Places.

Printed on Recycled Paper

City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning
and Development

Lori T. Healey
Commissioner

Suite 1600
33 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602
(312) 744-3200
(312) 744-9140 (FAX)
(312) 744-2578 (TTY)

http://www.cityofchicago.org

August 7, 2006

Tracey A. Sculle
Survey & National Register Coordinator
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
1 Old State Capitol
Springfield, IL 62702

Re: Chicago nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for

- **Cook County Hospital Administration Building, 1835 W. Harrison St.;**
- **Goldblatt Bros. Department Store, 4700 S. Ashland Ave.; and**
- **Austin Town Hall Park Historic District, comprised of the following five properties:**
  - **Austin Town Hall and Park, 5626 W. Lake St.**
  - **Henry W. Austin Branch, Chicago Public Library, 5615 W. Race Ave.**
  - **Francis Scott Key Public School, 517 N. Parkside Ave.**
  - **Austin Branch, YMCA, 501 N. Central Ave.**
  - **Fraternite Notre Dame: Our Lady of Frechou Traditional Catholic Church (originally Austin Methodist Church), 502 N. Central Ave.**

Dear Ms. Sculle:

This is in response to your letters of June 6, 2006, to Mayor Richard M. Daley and the Commission on Chicago Landmarks asking for the Commission's comments on the nominations of the properties referenced above to the National Register of Historic Places. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the City of Chicago is given the opportunity to comment on local nominations to the National Register prior to being considered by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council.

At its regular meeting of August 3, 2006, the Commission voted unanimously to support the National Register listings for all three nominations. The Commission's resolution is attached. As part of their review of two of the nominations, the Commission also made some technical comments, which are incorporated in the resolution.

NEIGHBORHOODS Alive!
BUILDING CHICAGO TOGETHER

CHICAGO WORKS TOGETHER

Please contact Terry Tatum of my staff at 312-744-9147 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Brian Goeken
Deputy Commissioner
Landmarks Division

Originated by:

Terry Tatum
Director of Research
Landmarks Division

encl.

cc: Alderman Madeline L. Haithcock, 2nd Ward
Alderman Arenda Troutman, 20th Ward
Alderman Isaac S. Carothers, 29th Ward
Alderman Emma Mitts, 37th Ward
President Bobbie Steele, Cook County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Mike Quigley, Cook County Board of Commissioners
Jason Liechty, 10th District Office, Cook County Board of Commissioners
Bruce Washington, Cook County Office of Capital Planning & Policy
Elizabeth Melas, Cook County Office of Capital Planning & Policy
Linda Peters
Emily Nelan, 4700 South Ashland LLC
Daniel Bluestone
Phil Krone
Tim Mitchell, Chicago Park District
Arnold Randall, Chicago Park District
Mary Dempsey, Chicago Public Library
Arne Duncan, CEO, Chicago Board of Education
Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, Fraternite Notre Dame, Our Lady of Frechou Traditional Catholic Church
Dale Kelley, Executive Director, Austin YMCA
James Keane, Executive Vice-President and General Counsel, YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago
Lori T. Healey, DPD
Kathleen Nelson, DPD
Mary Bonome, DPD
Judy Minor-Jackson, DPD
Juanita Charlton, DPD
Lynette Wilson, Ref. # 06-01012826

Resolution
by the
Commission on Chicago Landmarks
on the
Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places
for the

Cook County Hospital Administration Building,
1835 W. Harrison St.

Goldblatt Bros. Department Store,
4700 S. Ashland Ave.

Austin Town Hall Park Historic District

August 3, 2006

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks finds that:

1. The **Cook County Hospital Administration Building** at 1835 W. Harrison St. meets both Criterion A for health/medicine, education and social history, and Criterion C for architecture for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, with the following comments:
   - The nomination mentions, albeit briefly, the building's rear pavilions. It is the Commission's understanding that the nominators wish only to nominate the administration building, and not the rear pavilions that are soon to be demolished. Yet, and consistent with the Commission's understanding of National Register guidelines, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA)'s preliminary opinion indicates that the pavilions would be considered contributing, having been constructed within the building's period of significance (1912-1956) as defined by the National Register nomination. The nominators should speak further with IHPA staff about this issue and how the pavilions should be treated in the nomination; and
   - For the purposes of Criterion A, the nomination should more thoroughly discuss the history of Cook County Hospital as an institution important in both local and national medical history. The hospital is known for innovations in several medical fields, including emergency medicine and the nation's first blood bank. More information on this aspect of Cook County Hospital's history, including where these activities occurred within the building, would strengthen the case for meeting Criterion A.

2. The **Goldblatt's Department Store** at 4700 S. Ashland Ave. meets Criterion A for commerce and Criterion C for architecture for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

3. The **Austin Town Hall Park Historic District** in the Austin neighborhood meets Criterion A for social history and community planning and development, and Criterion C for architecture for

listing on the National Register of Historic Places, with the following comment:

- that the church building included in the nomination, originally built as the Austin Methodist Church, be identified in the nomination by its current name, Fraternite Notre Dame: Our Lady of Frechou Traditional Catholic Church.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks that it hereby supports the listing of all three nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

The recommendation was adopted unanimously.

David Mosena by

David R. Mosena, Chairman
Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Dated: 8/3/06



Fraternite Notre Dame

Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik,
Founder and Superior General
502 North Central Avenue, Chicago IL 60644-1501 USA
-Telephone (815) 923-7955 -Facsimile (815) 923-7956 -Mobile (773) 550-1214
BishopJeanMarie@FraterniteNotreDame.com - www.FraterniteNotreDame.org
[501 (c) 3 Non-Profit Organization; all contributions are tax deductible]

Ms. Tracey A. Sculle
Survey & National Register Coordinator
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
1 Old State Capitol
Springfield, IL 62702

August 16, 2006

Dear Ms. Sculle,

This letter to indicate to you that we attended the August 3rd, 06 meeting dealing with nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

I have a request to make to you regarding the name of our church, and I know that the Commission on Chicago Landmarks supports us in this regard.

I would like the name of Austin Methodist Church to be omitted so our name can appear in its integrity: Fraternite Notre Dame, Our Lady of Frechou Traditional Catholic Church.

Anybody appreciates it to be called by his own name, and not someone else's, even though we have the highest respect for it.

In the event we cannot be granted this legitimate right, we would rather like not to be included in the Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, and get however our place in the history of our City, being recognized under our true and unique name:

Fraternite Notre Dame, Our Lady of Frechou Traditional Catholic Church.

With our thanks to you for taking this request into account, please believe, dear Ms. Sculle, in our sincere friendship, and gratefulness for your playing a part in the History of the United States.

God bless you.

Jean Marie +snd Bishop

Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie + snd.
Founder & Superior General of Fraternite Notre Dame

Copy to: Mr. David R. Mosena, *Chairman; Commission on Chicago Landmarks.*
Mr. Richard M. Daley, *Mayor of the City of Chicago.*
Mr. Terry Tatum, *Supervising Historian & Director of Research; Department. of Planning & Development, Landmarks Division.*