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Beverly/Morgan Park Railroad Stations District

SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS
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CITY OF CHICAGO
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The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The Commission makes its recommendation to the City Council only after careful consideration. The process begins with an extensive staff study, summarized in this report, which discusses the historical and architectural significance of the proposed landmark.

The next step—a preliminary determination by the Commission that the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration—is important because it places the review of building permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission during the remainder of the designation process.

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the Commission's recommendation to the City Council should be regarded as final.

COVER: The six stations in the proposed historic district are (top row, left to right): 91st Street, built 1889; 95th, 1945; (middle row) 99th, 1890; 107th, 1916; (bottom row) 111th, 1892; 115th, 1892.

Beverly/Morgan Park Railroad Stations District

91st, 95th, 99th, 107th, 111th
and 115th streets, along the
Metra-Rock Island railroad line
(generally, 2000 West)

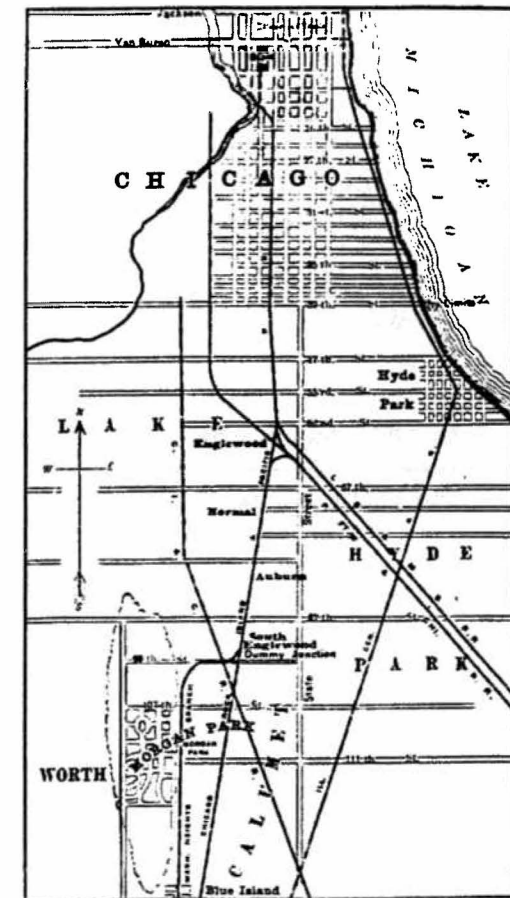
Built: 1889, 1945, 1890, 1916,
1892, and 1892, respectively

The six stations along the Beverly branch of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad (now Metra) are rare survivors--in Chicago--of a once-common, nineteenth-century building type: the commuter rail station.

Located between 91st Street and the Chicago city limits, these six grade-level stations and their surrounding open space serve as a central spine for the Beverly and Morgan Park neighborhoods, which are located ten to 14 miles southwest of the Loop. The stations are on a line connecting Joliet with the LaSalle Street Station in downtown Chicago.

Built between 1889 and 1945, the stations represent the period of development of the two communities. The stations also share the scale, materials, and style of architecture of the surrounding residential buildings, a common feature of late-nineteenth century rail stations. Furthermore, the pedestrian traffic generated by the stations has made them an important part of the community, influencing the placement of local parks, public and private institutions, and retail development.

The stations are an important link in the historical development of the communities. Like many other outlying areas of Chicago, Beverly and Morgan Park were established as "railroad suburbs," residential districts whose economic viability was



An 1886 map of the South Side, showing the branch line of the Rock Island Railroad running parallel to the "Ridge" in Morgan Park.

based on commuter railroads as links to the central business district.

Unlike other Chicago railroad suburbs, however, the tracks along the Beverly branch of the Rock Island Railroad, which carried no freight rail traffic, were never rebuilt on an embankment to raise them above the level of the streets. As a result, these six at-grade stations continue to function and appear as they did when they were constructed.

Part 1: The Stations

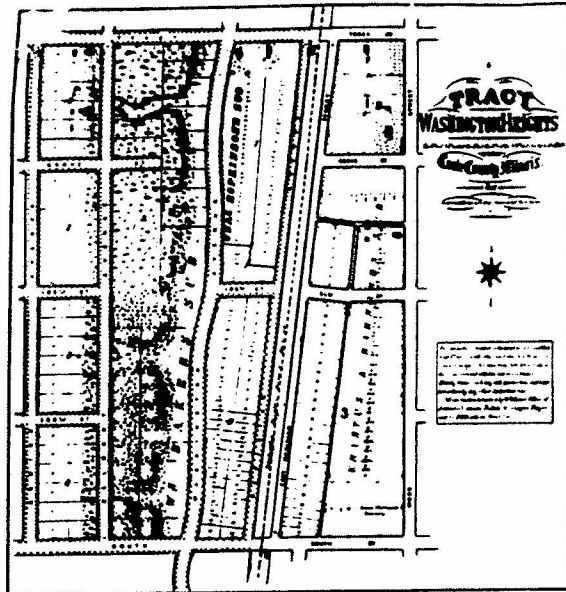
The community of Beverly evolved as the western half of the independent village of Washington Heights, which was incorporated in 1872 and annexed to Chicago in 1890. Immediately to the south and west is the community of Morgan Park, which was incorporated as a village in 1882 and annexed to Chicago in 1914.

The primary attraction of this area for early settlers was an 80-foot-tall hill that interrupted the flat prairie landscape. Known variously as the "Blue Island" or the Ridge, this series of terraced embankments today extends from 87th to 125th streets, roughly between Ashland and California avenues, parallel to the Rock Island Railroad tracks.

In addition to topography, Beverly and Morgan Park share many other characteristics, having been developed as commuter suburbs. They have no industry or major commercial area. Both are overwhelmingly residential in character, being dominated by freestanding single-family dwellings, some of which stand on lots that are uncommonly large compared to those found in other parts of the city. The establishment and later extension of the commuter rail line influenced this pattern of development.

Local institutions, such as churches, schools, and the few small-scale commercial buildings that cater to the needs of local residents, are concentrated in close proximity to the railroad stations. Parks and open land tend to be found along the railroad right-of-way in both communities.

The street pattern in these low-density residential enclaves is generally oriented along a north-south axis, paralleling the railroad tracks and



An 1885 map of what later became known as Beverly, between 103rd and 107th streets.

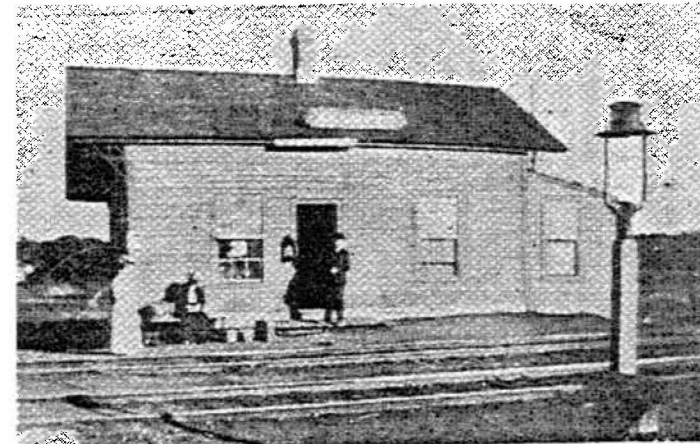
the Ridge. However, Morgan Park, which was platted first, has curvilinear streets conforming to the contours of the topography.

The Rock Island Railroad's commuter stations are located on the principal east-west streets. The concentration of pedestrian traffic generated by the commuter stations, as well as the placement of local institutions near the stations, helped make these areas the focal points of the economic and social life of the two communities.

The Stations as a Building Type

The typical neighborhood commuter railroad station of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century had a scale and style distinctive from its counterparts in downtown areas. Its features included: exterior shelters for passengers, a ticket agent office, and at least one waiting room. The stations often also included a second waiting room (to separate men and women or smokers from non-smokers), sleeping quarters for the station agent or manager, and public washrooms.

The function of these buildings determined that they should have many windows to allow passengers to see approaching trains; wide portals to allow large groups of passengers to exit; and broad eaves to provide shelter over the platforms. The loose application of an architectural style allowed for a combination of motifs, in a way that made the stations strong visual features of their communities.



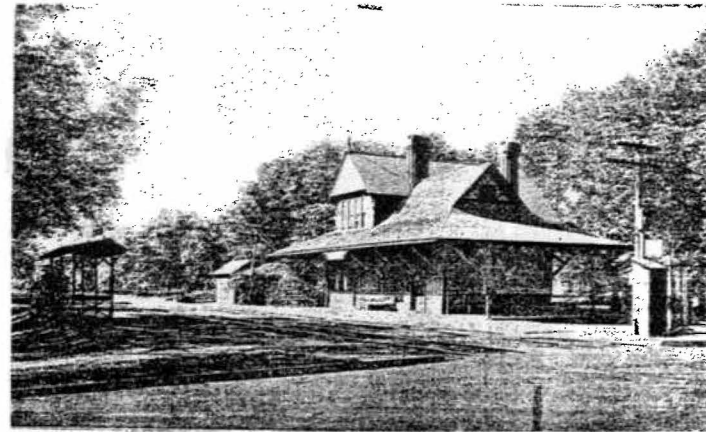
The "Belmont Station" at 107th Street was the last survivor of the original 1870's stations. It was torn down in 1916.

The first commuter stations on the Rock Island branch line were simple shed designs, built shortly after the line's construction in 1869. As the communities developed, so did the size and quality of the station design. Larger, more ornate stations were built between 1889 and 1893, after the line was extended north. These stations included such nonfunctional features as dormers or turrets, along with elaborate rooflines. The buildings were typically two stories high; however, their functions were accommodated on one floor, with their second floors used for storage. It was the functional need for broad eaves over the platforms, combined with the aesthetic preference for picturesque rooflines, that determined these buildings' height.

None of the original small frame stations on the Rock Island branch line survive. Of the six stations included in this district, four were built between 1889 and 1893 (at 91st, 99th, 111th, and 115th streets), in a restrained variation of the Queen Anne style. The two other stations, at 107th and 95th streets, were constructed in 1916 and 1945, respectively. Although of a later period, their scale, materials, and details also reflect the styles of homes built in Beverly and Morgan Park at that time.

Not included in the district is the one-story brick station that currently serves 103rd Street. It was built circa 1967 to replace a two-story frame structure constructed around 1890. Little more than a ticket booth and heated vestibule, the design of this station does not reinforce the character of the neighborhood or the designs of the other stations.

Each station is a freestanding structure



The 103rd Street Station (left), which is not included in the proposed district, was built in the late-1960s to replace the original 1890s building (above, c.1900)

surrounded by green space, with facades that face the tracks and the community. The stations were built by the Rock Island Railroad, often with contributions from local residents. However, they have been owned and operated since the late 1980s by Metra, the metropolitan commuter rail authority.

All are, as of early 1994, still in use as commuter rail stations, and most have ticket offices and waiting rooms open for their passengers. Most of the interiors have been altered with paneling and security doors, although in some cases original interior details have survived. The upper floors of the stations have been closed for many years and are no longer in use; most were originally used for storage. In every case the original boardwalk platforms have been removed and replaced with asphalt walkways.

Building Descriptions:

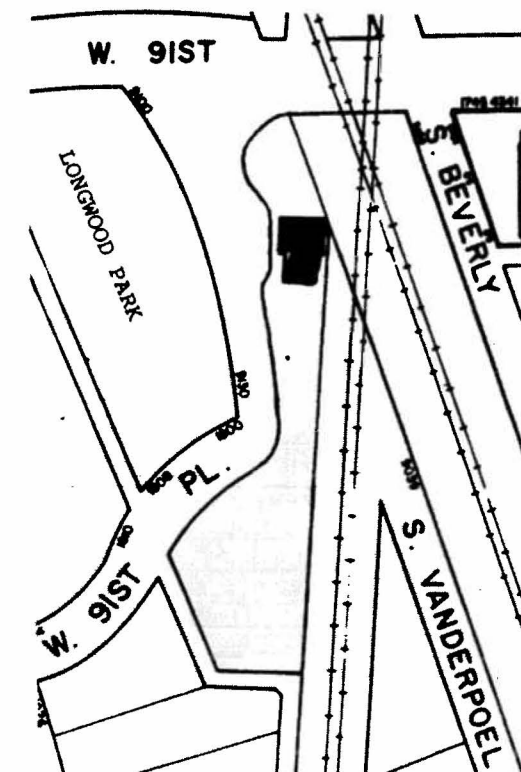
91st Street Station
(formerly "Beverly Hills Station")
1801 W. 91st St.

Architects: Charnley and Evans
Built: circa 1889

The 91st Street Station is located on the south side of the street, west of the tracks, and near the intersection of Beverly Avenue and 91st Street. It was built when the branch line was extended in

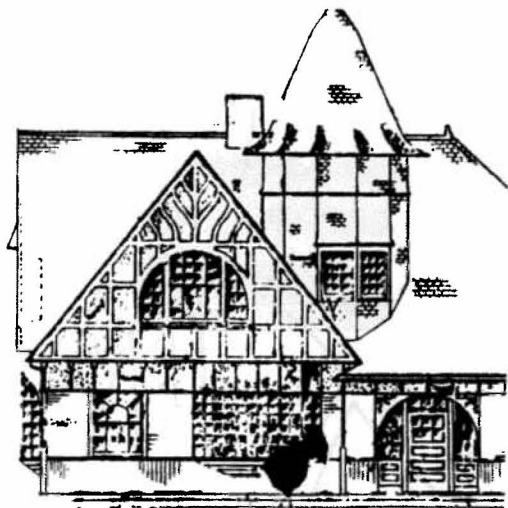


The 91st Street Station, fronting on Longwood Park, is the northernmost building in the proposed district.



1889-90, and is the only station to have occupied the site. The building fronts on Longwood Park, which is distinguished by a rolling landscape and bounded by curving streets following the irregular topography of the area. The houses that overlook the park have a panoramic view with the station as its centerpiece. To the north of the station is Dan Ryan Woods, a county forest preserve.

The station was designed by Francis S. Charnley and Harry H. Evans, whose partnership lasted from 1887 to 1890. Few records of Evans' work in Chicago survive, although Charnley practiced here at least from 1877 through 1895, originally with John Mackay. Charnley's designs include houses for Eugene S. Pike, a banker and real estate speculator, at 2101 S. Prairie Avenue, and James Gore, a liquor wholesaler, at 2618 S. Michigan



A 1889 drawing (left) of the 91st Street Station indicates the original Queen Anne-style details. Above, a contemporary photo of the station.

Avenue (both demolished), as well as a number of speculative houses on Drexel Boulevard near 40th Street for the Parmeley Brothers real estate firm.

The 91st Street station is a two-story frame building that demonstrates its Queen Anne design in the varied features of its roof. The ridgepole of the roof connects a gable at the south end with a hipped roof and dormer on the north. A crossing gable faces east, toward the tracks, and a turret over the trackside entrance has a bell-cast roof with a simple finial at the top, all typical Queen Anne elements.

While it retains many of its original elements, the 91st Street station has been altered over the years. It originally had extensive Queen Anne-style detailing, including textured stucco, scalloped shingles, and bands of decoration in imitation of half-timbering. The current wood siding replaces the original in a similar but simplified pattern.

The original windows, which have been removed, were divided into many small squares, or "lights". Reproductions of two of these windows are in place at the northeast corner of the building. A porte cochere at the station's west entrance, which provided shelter for passengers arriving by carriage, was removed sometime around 1976.

On its interior, the station has been extensively altered and is now faced with pressboard wall paneling. The original plan is still reflected in the current use of the spaces for a ticket office and waiting room. The second floor, which was used apparently for storage and temporary lodging for railroad employees, has been closed for many years.

The name Beverly Hills became attached to this station early in its history, purportedly after the town of Beverly, Massachusetts. The name became so identified with the area that when Illinois Bell consolidated several local telephone exchanges in 1914, the name "Beverly" was chosen for the new exchange.

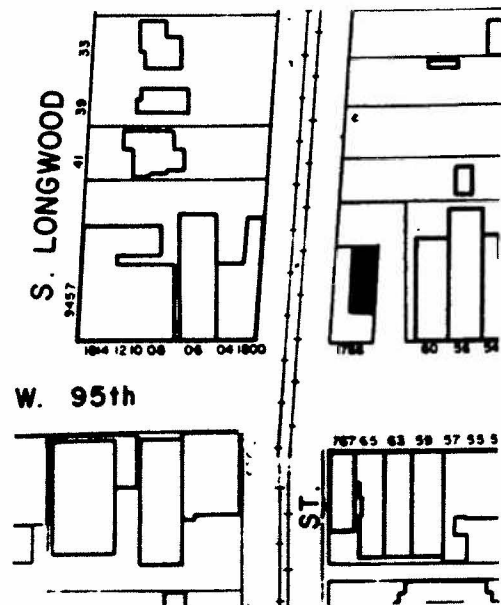
By 1917 its popularity moved local business owners to petition the Rock Island Railroad to change the names of all of the commuter stations from 91st Street to 103rd, prefacing each numbered street with "Beverly Hills". The railroad agreed, and the neighborhood was further distinguished from the community to the east, which was still referred to as Washington Heights. The name Beverly Hills has generally been simplified in common usage to Beverly in recent years.



The youngest of the six stations, the 95th Street Station was built in 1945. The canopy was added in 1965.

95th Street Station
 (formerly "Longwood Station")
 1766 W. 95th St.

Architect: John R. Fugard and Company
Built: 1945



This station stands on the north side of the street, east of the tracks. 95th is the most heavily used commercial street crossing the commuter line. Its density of retail uses and dependence on the automobile has transformed it into a heavily traveled route. The station and surrounding commercial buildings are the second to be built on their sites, constructed in the years immediately following World War II.

The current brick station of 1945 replaced the original two-story frame structure built circa 1890. The new station was designed by the office of John Reed Fugard (1886-1968), a native of Newton, Iowa, who received his architectural education at the University of Illinois. He was a principal of Fugard & Knapp from 1918 to 1924, and of Thielbar & Fugard from 1925 until Thielbar's death in 1941. The firm continued under Fugard's direction into the 1960s.

Among the designs by Fugard's offices were three apartment buildings in the East Lake Shore Drive Historic District, at 181, 219, and 229 Lake Shore Drive; the Moody Memorial Church (1925) and Moody Bible Institute (1931 and 1937); and the McGraw-Hill Building, at 520 N. Michigan.

LONGWOOD



The original 95th Street Station, built c.1890, was replaced by the current structure in 1945.

The commuter station at 95th Street is a two-story brick building with Colonial Revival-style decorative details, including a hipped roof with no eaves and raised brickwork quoins. "Quoins" are decorative elements characteristic of neo-classical designs, derived from the stone reinforcements found at the corners of historic buildings. On the 95th Street Station, however, the windows wrap around the corners of the building in a modernist fashion, and the quoins were used to frame windows in a highly unusual fashion.

Overall, the design is an institutionalized variation on the then-popular Colonial Revival residential style, making it consistent with the design and materials of the homes being constructed nearby. This continues the precedent set by the earlier stations of referring to the architecture and scale of residences in the nearby community.

The two-story main part of the building houses the ticket office and washrooms, while a one-story extension to the south houses the waiting room. The interiors have been updated, leaving little of the original material in place. The one incompatible exterior feature of the station is its modern canopy. Apparently the lack of eaves, or of any other protection for passengers on the platform, made this addition necessary sometime around 1965. With this exception, the station retains a high degree of design integrity and remains in use as a commuter station.



The eight-sided, onion-shaped dormer roof gives the 99th Street Station a distinctive profile.

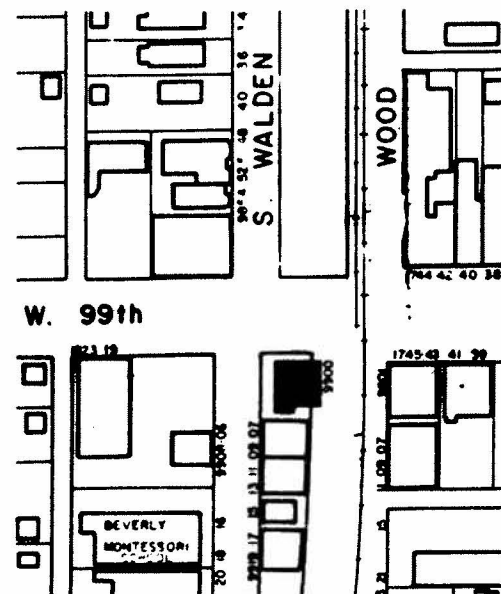
99th Street Station
 (formerly "Walden Station")
 1801 W. 99th St./9900 S. Wood St.

Architect: unknown
Built: circa 1890

99th Street was the location of the northernmost station on the original branch commuter line, which was established in 1869. (The stations at 91st and 95th were built after the line was extended north in 1889).

The original names of the stations, as well as many streets along the original portion of the rail line, were taken either from important individuals or from towns known for their natural beauty or rural serenity. Both this station and 99th Street itself were originally called "Walden" which, according to the recollection of a local resident writing in the 1920s, was in honor of Henry David Thoreau's famous chronicle of life on Walden Pond. The use of this name may reveal the developer's intention to associate this place with Thoreau's ideas which promoted rural life as uplifting for the mind and the soul.

The current station, which stands on the south side of 99th Street, between Walden Parkway



and the tracks at Wood Street, was built in 1889. It is the second station at the site, replacing an original shed-style station constructed circa 1870. A two-story frame structure, it is among the smaller stations on the line.

While the architect of this station is not definitively known, it was probably designed by one of the several architects who worked for the Rock Island Railroad. This list includes Charnley and Evans, designers of the 91st Street Station; John T. Long, designer of the 111th Street and, possibly, 115th Street stations; and Charles S. Frost and Alfred H. Granger, who designed the downtown LaSalle Street Station for the Rock Island in 1902.

The 99th Street Station reveals its original Queen Anne style in the variety of its roofline, which features a hipped roof with flared eaves and dormers on its east, south, and west faces. The proportions of the roof, its decorative Craftsman-style brackets, and the overhanging eaves lend a distinct horizontal emphasis to the entire structure.

The east elevation, facing the tracks, is nearly symmetrical, and is dominated by a wide bay on the ground level that is the same width as the dormer above. The dormer has an eight-sided, onion-shaped roof that gives the entire station a unique profile. Two pressed-metal finials appear on the roof's crest. All of the window openings retain their original double-hung wood sash windows on the first floor.

While the 99th Street Station remains



Stretching north of the 99th Street Station is a two-block-long section of Ridge Park that abuts the tracks.

essentially intact, some alterations have occurred, including the recent addition of metal security doors and the loss or covering of the original decorative shingle and clapboard by asphalt siding sometime before 1960. In spite of these minor changes, the building retains most of its original features and its associations to the use and scale of the surrounding residential community. This building is still in use as it was originally, as a commuter rail station with a ticket office and a waiting room for passengers.

Stretching north of the station, on the west side of the tracks from 99th to 97th streets, is the only linear green space along the track right-of-way. A southern extension of Ridge Park, this tree-lined space helps contribute to the bucolic quality of the rail line and the community.

A small-scale neighborhood shopping district has grown up in proximity to the station, on the south side of 99th Street and facing Walden Parkway. This cluster of buildings is made up of historic, one-story commercial storefronts that serve a predominantly pedestrian clientele. They are distinct in scale and character from the more automobile-oriented commercial frontage on 95th Street.

**107th Street Station
(formerly "Belmont Station")
1901 W. 107th St.**

**Architect: unknown
Built: 1916**

The original name of this station apparently was taken from the suburb of the same name near New York City, following the developer's practice of naming stations after other rural residential communities. The original 1870s-era station at this location survived longer than any of its contemporaries on the line; it was not replaced until 1916 (see photo on page 3).

The current two-story station, which is located west of the tracks and south of 107th Street, has a less exuberant design than the stations that were built around 1890, yet it has retained the scale and materials of its predecessors.

As with the 99th Street Station, no architect is known for that at 107th Street. Published sources indicate that the Rock Island Company was the



The design of the 107th Street Station (above) is similar to the scale of surrounding buildings, including nearby commercial structures (right).

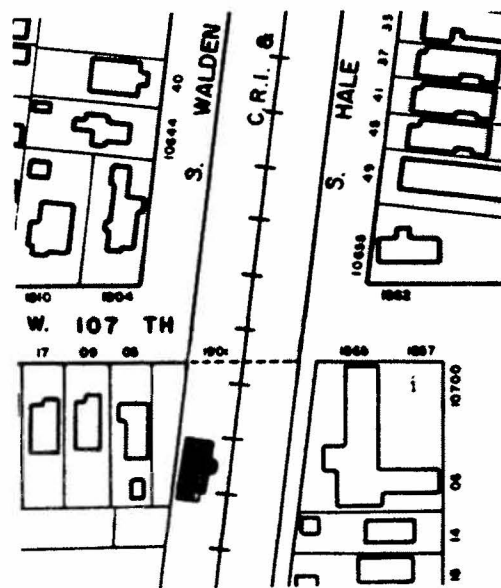


architect, without mentioning the name of the individual or firm responsible.

The symmetrical elevation of the 107th Street Station has a two-story central section with a wide first-floor bay, flanked by one-story wings. The hipped roof over the two-story central section has a simple flared edge, borrowed from Prairie-style designs. The ticket office is located in the north wing (closest to 107th), and a waiting room was accommodated on the first floor of the central and southern sections of the structure. The second story was available for storage or other miscellaneous uses. The eaves extend over the platform, providing shelter for passengers.

The building remains essentially intact, having a facing of horizontal clapboards on its entire exterior and retaining its original three-over-one wood sash windows. Major alterations include the recent addition of steel security doors, interior pressboard paneling, and a dropped ceiling. Although the railroad has closed the ticket office at this station, the waiting room is open for the use of passengers during periods of inclement weather.

Immediately north of the station is a landscaped area, maintained by Metra and members of a local gardening committee. The station is in close proximity to a small cluster of commercial/residential structures dating from the turn of the century, at the corner of Hale Avenue and 107th Street.





Fronting Bohn Park, the 111th Street Station is one of the most prominent features of the Morgan Park community.

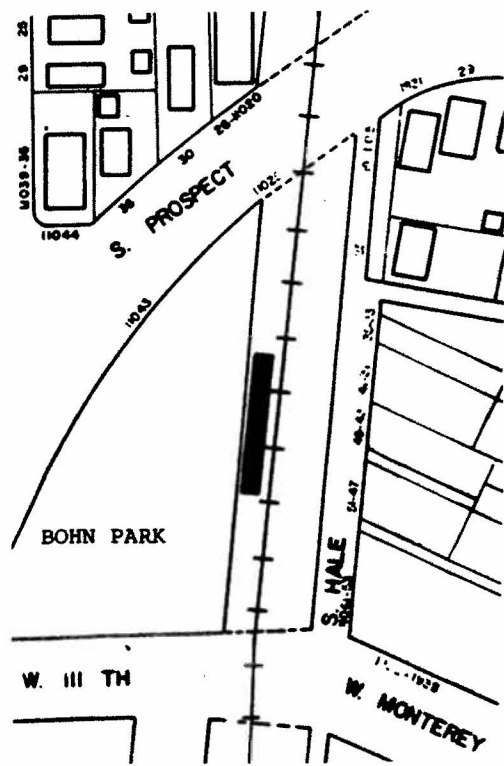
111th Street Station
(formerly "Morgan Park Station")
1914-18 W. 111th St.

Architect: John T. Long
Built: 1892

The most visually arresting station along the line was designed by architect John T. Long, and completed in 1892. Its site, facing a park and surrounded by curvilinear streets, makes it a prominent feature of Morgan Park.

Long was known principally as a designer of churches and public buildings, many in what were then the Chicago suburbs of Normal Park and Englewood. Among his designs were the 41st Street Presbyterian Church, the first Englewood Presbyterian Church, Covenant Baptist Church of Englewood, and the Normal Park Baptist Church. Of these, only the first survives: a Romanesque Revival building, now known as the Metropolitan Community Peoples Church, at 41st Street and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Long's most prominent extant building in Chicago is the 1892 seven-story Yale Apartments, located at 66th Street and Yale.

Long also designed other stations for the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad during the 1880s, including the passenger stations at Wichita and Topeka, Kansas. The Topeka station's adjacent office building functioned as the railroad's regional office.



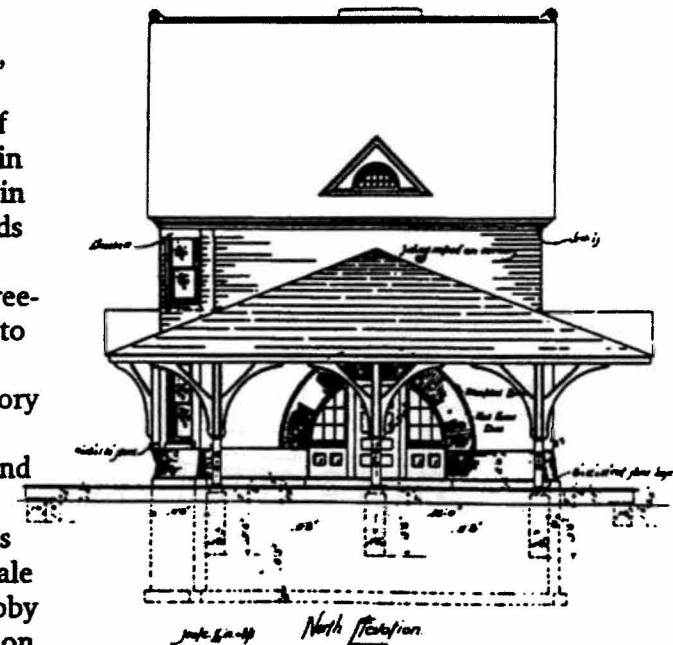
The station that Long designed at 111th Street (to replace one of the original, 1870s-era shed stations) is a frame building that makes use of Romanesque motifs, particularly in the arches of its portals. An original drawing reveals that this station was intended to have been built of brick up to the window sills of the first floor, with frame construction above. Financial constraints, however, seem to have prevented the realization of at least this part of the plan. Another unrealized proposal for this station was a platform with a canopy intended to stand on the east side of the tracks. This feature was not built due to the widening of Hale Avenue.

Even though its plan was carried out on a less-ostentatious budget, the 111th Street Station is the largest and most elaborate of the surviving 1890s stations. Its scale and the extent of its surviving detail, particularly around the portals and in the brackets supporting the eaves and projecting roofs, reflects the upper-class design tastes of the local residents who were its regular clients. The input of the residents regarding the design was important, in that they donated over \$2,700 of the \$5,200 used in the construction of the station. The remaining funds were provided by the Rock Island Railroad.

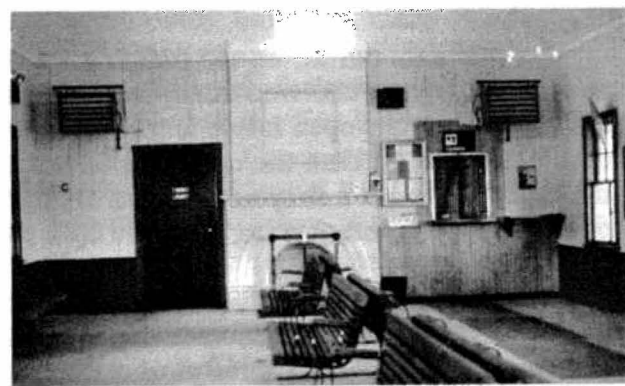
The east elevation has a central, gabled three-story section flanked by a two-story waiting room to the south and a one-story baggage area and open shed on the north. This station is the only three-story building on the line, and its upper floors were apparently used as overnight lodging for Rock Island employees.

The main portals on the east and west sides of the building are centered under monumental-scale arches. The portals open into a large passenger lobby that is more intact than the other station interiors on the line. It includes a fireplace with an arched opening and a plaster ceiling bordered by a picture rail.

Passengers entered the station under this arch to wait in a lobby that was consistent, in its finishes and ornament, with the character of the domestic interiors of the surrounding community. After leaving the lobby through another arched portal for the platforms, they entered the realm of industry, commerce, speed, and efficiency, as represented by



An 1892 drawing by architect John T. Long, of the north elevation of the 111th Street Station.



Views of the 111th Street Station (top to bottom): looking northwest across the tracks, the north baggage area, the main entrance portal, and the interior waiting room and its arched brick fireplace.

the trains themselves. The commuting experience of a century ago is most easily understood at this station, through these domestic references and through the building's symbolism as a portal between the domestic and commercial activities of its patrons.

In addition to the quality of its design, this station retains a relatively high degree of integrity. Although asphalt siding has been added to the exterior and some of the windows have been boarded up, the massing and the majority of the decorative features of this structure--such as the decorative treatment of the arches, the portals, and the eaves and overhangs--remain. The building also continues in use as a commuter rail station.

The 111th Street Station has always been a major focus of neighborhood activity. It faces Bohn Park, a prominent open space in the area. Several churches and the Morgan Park Academy are located near this open space. In the past, the park has been used for gatherings on national holidays and for outdoor concerts.

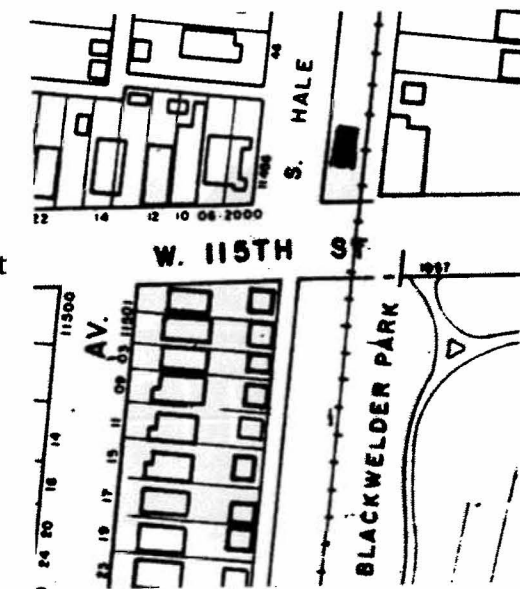
East of the station is the intersection of Hale and Monterey avenues, which had been the community's main commercial center from the 1880s through the 1960s. Most of the retail buildings were demolished in the early 1970s as part of an urban renewal effort.

**115th Street Station
(formerly "Raymond Station")
11449 S. Hale Ave.**

Architect: possibly John T. Long
Contractor: Porter J. Walker
Built: 1892

The design of the 115th Street Station cannot be attributed to a particular architect, although contemporary accounts imply that the designer may have been John T. Long, the architect of the 111th Street station. A local contractor, Porter J. Walker, built the structure in 1892. A resident of Morgan Park, Walker's contracting firm was responsible for the construction of many homes in the area.

Located on the north side of 115th Street, between the tracks and Hale Avenue, this station is



a modest affair, restrained in design. The smaller scale of this building reflected the slower pace of development in the area, due to the later completion date of its sewer system.

A two-story frame structure, the station is faced with vertical tongue-in-groove siding above and below the windows and with horizontal clapboards between its windows. It is crowned with a bell-cast roof, with very broad eaves and dormers on three sides. The first floor housed the ticket booth and passenger lobby; the second was for storage.

Variety was introduced in the designs of the dormers: the east dormer is a half-octagon in plan with a five-sided, hipped roof, while the south dormer has a rectangular plan and simple hipped roof, and the north dormer has a simple gable roof. Although less ornate than the other stations, this one is unique in that the corners of the floor plans for the dormers and first floor are curved rather than square.

Like the majority of the stations on the line, the 115th Street Station is the second to stand on its site. The station is currently surrounded by a gravel parking lot and is the only one (besides 91st Street) not to have a concentration of retail or institutional buildings in its immediate vicinity. To its southeast is a public park named after I.S. Blackwelder, a president of the village board of Morgan Park during the 1890s.

The most significant alteration to the building was the addition of a concrete basement under the north end of this station, sometime after about 1940. Other alterations have included the boarding up of

some of the windows, the recent addition of steel security doors and corner brackets to help support the wide, overhanging eaves.

Interior alterations are in keeping with those in the other stations, including new paneling and security features. Currently, this station is often inaccessible, as it does not have a ticket agent and is only open to passengers during inclement weather.

Part 2: The Role of the Stations in Their Communities

Beverly and Morgan Park are exemplary of the type of suburbs that developed along railroad lines during the late-nineteenth century.

The traditional pattern of urban settlement was greatly transformed by the invention of the railroad in the mid-nineteenth century. As new residential developments were planned around commuter railroads, many affluent and middle class residents began to leave the congestion of the central city for the open space of the suburbs.

Development of the Railroad Suburb

Sam Bass Warner, Jr. documented this transformation in his book *Streetcar Suburbs*, noting that "many of the familiar modern problems of city life began to emerge [at this time, including]: the bedroom town; the inundation of country villages by commuters; ...the spread of the metropolis beyond any encompassing political boundaries."

Many of Chicago's earliest suburbs, such as Kenwood, Hyde Park, and Evanston, were first settled as separate villages in the 1830s. They did not evolve into residential extensions of the Chicago metropolitan area until the opening of railroad service in the early 1850s.

The pace of suburbanization in the Chicago area increased dramatically after the Civil War, due to development along new railroad lines. The Austin



The 115th Street Station: at left, in 1928, when it was still known as "Raymond Station;" at right, in 1994.

community on what is now the city's West Side was established in 1866 by Henry W. Austin; the town of Edgewater, on the city's North Side, was founded around 1880; and the Edgebrook community was settled sometime after 1885 on the far Northwest Side. All were subsequently annexed into the city of Chicago.

The importance of the railroad for residential development was recognized immediately, and the opening of a new station was considered a major community event. For example, when the Illinois Central opened its new railroad station at 47th Street and Lake Shore in Hyde Park in 1858, the occasion was treated as a gala celebration. Music, food, and speeches were featured, and the ribbon was cut by the railroad's vice-president, George B. McClellan, who during the Civil War became general of the Union's Army of the Potomac.

In each case, the movement to establish a new "railroad suburb" was an effort to provide an alternative to life in the urban center, with an emphasis on developments in natural settings. The influence of nature, which was seen in contrast with the man-made industrial world of nineteenth-century commerce, was promoted as an uplifting element that would have a beneficial effect on the health and moral character of the family living within it.

The pattern of development in the Beverly and Morgan Park communities is very similar to those Chicago neighborhoods. However, unlike the rail lines in those railroad suburbs, the tracks on this branch of the Rock Island Railroad were never elevated above grade. As a result, the original grade-level relationship between the railroad, its stations, and the communities they serve has remained intact.

Development of Beverly and Morgan Park

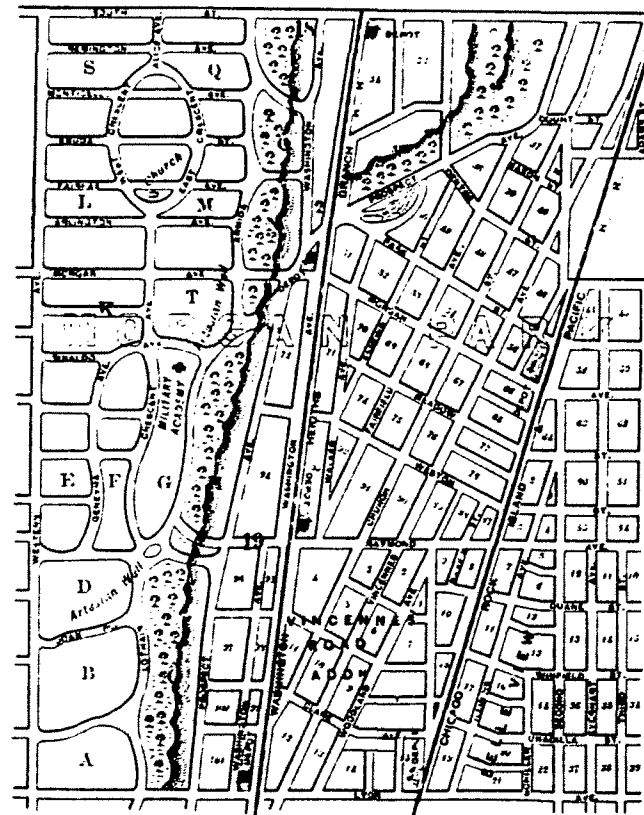
The geological formation known as the Ridge was formed during the last Ice Age, comprising a series of terraces that descend toward Lake Michigan. Native Americans established a trade route along the Ridge, connecting the future site of Chicago with points south and southeast. Its relatively high elevation made this the driest and best route for year-round transit.

With the formation of new settlements, the

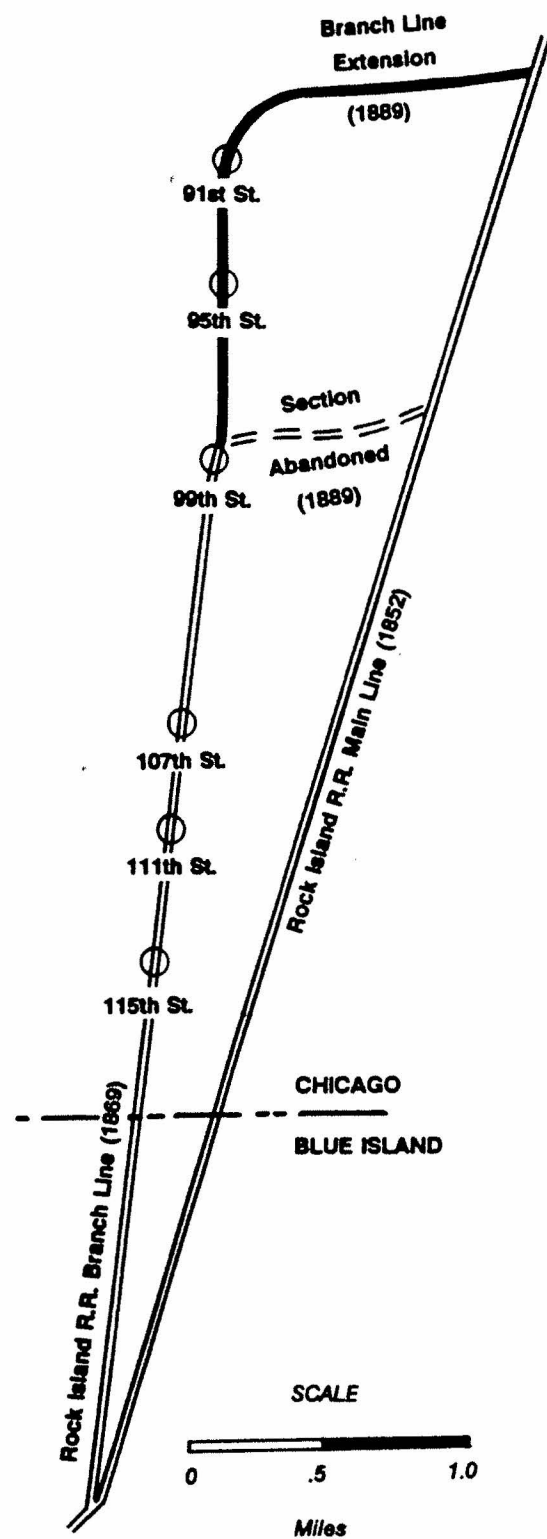
"Vincennes Trail" became an important road that, by 1832, had been graded and marked with milestones. By 1838, stagecoach service had been initiated along it from Chicago to Joliet.

Thomas Morgan (after whom Morgan Park was later named) bought 3,200 acres in 1844, located between what are now 91st and 115th streets and stretching from roughly Ashland to Western avenues. Morgan built his home near Pleasant Avenue and 92nd Street. Although he farmed a portion of it, he left most of the land in an untouched, natural state.

In 1852, the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad Company began construction of its railroad tracks parallel to, but a mile east of, the trail. The railroad's decision drastically affected the future development of the area. Roadbed construction necessitated drainage of a low-lying marsh, opening the area to development. It also freed the Ridge area from any concentrated commercial or industrial development, assuring the retention of its natural wooded beauty.



An 1886 map of Morgan Park, showing the various street grids that parallel the rail and ridge lines. Present-day 107th Street is at the top; 119th Street is at the bottom.



The branch rail line through Beverly and Morgan Park was developed as two sections: In 1869 and 1889.

In 1868, Morgan's heirs sold the land (south of 107th) to Frederick H. Winston, who, six months later, sold it to the newly formed Blue Island Land & Building Company, of which he was an investor. Soon, the first streets and subdivisions were laid out for the community named "Morgan Park," marking the beginnings of the area's suburban settlement.

Washington Heights Branch Line

The Rock Island Railroad began construction in 1869 on a new single-track, grade-level branch (or "dummy") line that left the main line at what is now 97th Street, ran west along 99th Street to the base of the Ridge, and then south to 129th Street in the Village of Blue Island, where it rejoined the main line.

The new line was called the "Washington Heights Branch," after an unincorporated community that had developed near the intersection of the Rock Island and the Panhandle (later the Penn Central) railroad lines, near current-day 103rd and Throop streets. (It subsequently became popularly known as the Beverly Branch).

Written accounts leave it unclear exactly who was responsible for initiating the new line: the railroad or the land development company. The president of the railroad, John F. Tracy, was also a stockholder of the development company, along with Frederick Winston (who had purchased the land) and such notables as David Davis, a U.S. Supreme Court Justice appointed by President Lincoln.

Winston and Tracy were commemorated, by street names, for their role in establishing the communities: Winston Street runs between 95th Street and Vincennes Avenue; and 103d Street was originally named Tracy.

Real Estate Marketing

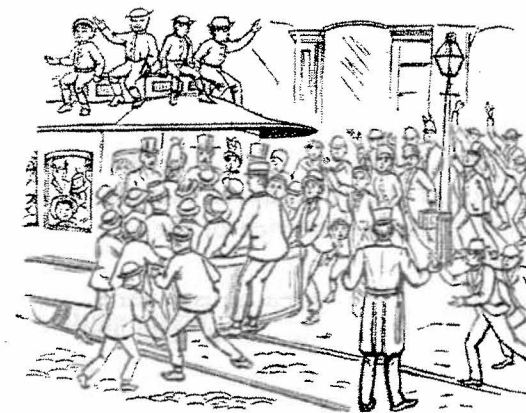
The first of many real estate auctions was held in Morgan Park in the spring of 1870 and, although the new branch line was not yet carrying commuter traffic, the railroad ran special trains between the downtown LaSalle Street Station and 107th Street. In addition to free transportation to visit the home sites, the railroad provided other incentives to prospective buyers, including reduced fare coupons on the commuter line for the first two years after purchasing property in the community.

The earliest development inspired by the new commuter line concentrated on Prospect Avenue, its closest parallel street, and on streets east of the tracks. However, the village's most valuable land--and where most of the largest homes subsequently were built--was concentrated west of the tracks along the Ridge, near the commuter line. By 1872, the entire area north of 107th Street had been incorporated as the Village of Washington Heights.

Further stimulus to the development of the area, particularly south of 107th Street in Morgan Park, was the establishment of educational institutions. In 1873, the Morgan Park Military Academy (the present-day Morgan Park Academy) was founded near the 111th Street Station. This was followed by the Chicago Female College in 1875, the Baptist Theological Seminary in 1877 (which moved in 1892 to Hyde Park, becoming a part of the new University of Chicago), and the American Society of Hebrew, a correspondence school, in 1880. All of these facilities attracted new settlers to the area, increasing its profile and prestige. In 1882, the



The way we get to Morgan Park.



The way the city people get to their homes.


Illustrations from an 1886 Blue Island Land & Building Company brochure, touting the transit service to Morgan Park.

WOULD YOU NOT BE HAPPIER?

With a home in the suburbs, convenient to the city, with pleasant social conditions and the advantage of frequent train service landing you in the heart of the city at La Salle Station. Wouldn't you?

There is a delightful suburban home district along the Rock Island where these and other agreeable conditions prevail.

There is opportunity for profit to the builder and investor also. Better look it over.



JOHN SEBASTIAN
PASSENGER TRAFFIC MANAGER

L. M. ALLEN
GENERAL PASSENGER AGENT

LA SALLE STREET STATION
CHICAGO

A 1908 advertisement, demonstrating the continuing relationship between the Rock Island Railroad and the development in Beverly and Morgan Park.

Village of Morgan Park was incorporated.

Morgan Park and the western section of Washington Heights, which later became known as Beverly, both counted among their residents the executives or owners of companies. Although the majority of the population remained working class, the number of affluent residents was large enough to create an upper-middle class image for the respective communities.

In a sales brochure published in 1886, the Blue Island Land & Building Company advertised Morgan Park as an ideal location for suburban living. The brochure compared the area to life in the city, and lauded the "pure atmosphere, free from smoke and other nuisances," the rolling landscape, the excellence of the educational facilities, and the frequent commuter service of the Rock Island Railroad.

The scale of area houses varied according to the wealth of the original builders and occupants, but they generally shared common styles, rooflines, building materials, and details. Most were single family in character and often built in wood. The predominant early style was Queen Anne, and the majority of these buildings stood on large lots, surrounded by lawns, trees, and gardens.

Branch Extension and Annexation

In 1889, due to continuing land development, the Rock Island's branch rail line was expanded to two tracks and extended north from 99th to 90th Street and east to the main line at 87th Street (See map on page 22).

In addition to the new stations constructed north of 99th, all of the original 1870s-era shed stations south of that point were eventually replaced. The design of the new stations reflected the sophisticated residential styles in the community as it matured.

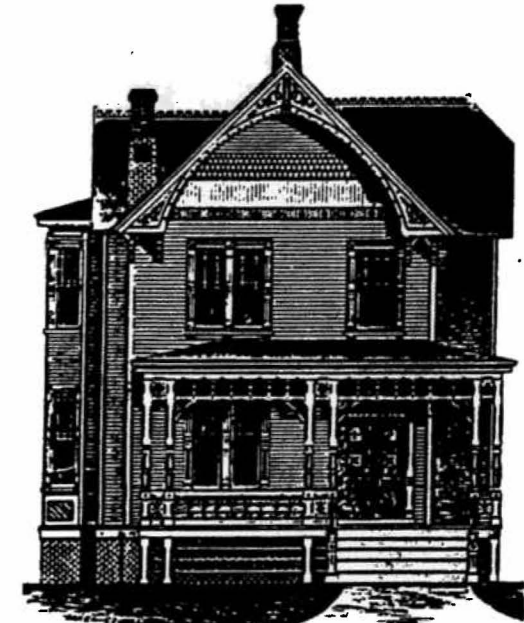
In the wake of the branch line's expansion, the Village of Washington Heights was annexed in 1890 to Chicago. However, the momentum generated by early development along the rail line was blunted by a series of events in the early 1890s, including the Depression of 1893.

Later periods of development, such as those in the years before and after World War I, were steady but still left available land. Even after the annexation of Morgan Park to Chicago in 1914 and the extension of streetcar lines into the community in 1930, new residential construction was slowed by the onset of the Great Depression. As a result, development in the area did not reach maturity until the building boom following World War II.

The steady growth in the population of Washington Heights and Morgan Park spurred the expansion of local retail business districts around the Rock Island stations at 95th, 103rd, and 111th streets. Many of the stations are still surrounded by small-scale buildings that attract retail trade due to the pedestrian traffic generated by the commuter stations.

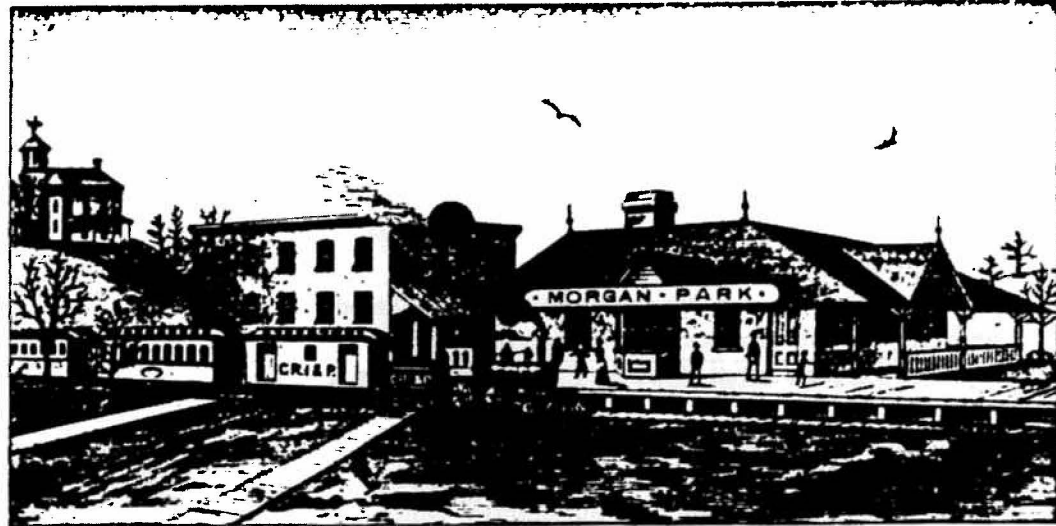
Conclusion

Unique among the nineteenth-century rail stations in Chicago, the commuter stations in Beverly and Morgan Park have physically and functionally retained their status as pivotal features of their communities. In contrast with other areas where rail lines became barriers between communities after



No. 12. — This house, with a fifty-foot lot, will cost from \$3,200 to \$3,500, according to the location of lot.

An 1886 house plan, as published by the Blue Island Land & Building Company.



A view of the original 111th Street Station (demolished c. 1892), as published in an 1886 real estate brochure.

being elevated above grade, the Rock Island commuter line in Beverly and Morgan Park has remained at grade. As a result the line remains a unifying feature, rather than physically dividing the communities.

The six surviving historic stations on the line are individually and collectively significant as examples of the transformation of the American residential ideal during the second half of the nineteenth century. This transformation effectively turned the historic pattern of settlement inside out, moving many of the most affluent members of society out of the center of cities to open spaces on the urban periphery.

The development of the railroad suburb in Chicago, the center of the national railroad network, was a significant event that is best interpreted through the surviving stations in Beverly and Morgan Park. The stations' rarity, quality of design, visual prominence in the community, and relatively intact fabric has helped preserve the pattern of development of these communities. They continue to be important elements in the life of these two city neighborhoods.

APPENDICES

Criteria for Designation

Designation of the Beverly/Morgan Park Railroad Stations District as a Chicago Landmark is recommended because the buildings collectively meet four of the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 of the Municipal Code of Chicago.

CRITERION 1

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

The stations in Beverly and Morgan Park are important links to the historic development of these two communities as "railroad suburbs." The development of the railroad suburb, while not a phenomena unique to Chicago, changed a pattern of urban living that had been established for millenia. The walking city, with its densely populated neighborhoods and concentration of services, was disrupted by the introduction of the commuter railroad, which gave easy access to the open spaces beyond the city limits and spurred the development of suburbia.

The development of Beverly and Morgan Park was one of the first of its kind in the Chicago area, having been started concurrently with others such as Riverside. Many outlying areas later annexed by Chicago--including Austin, Irving Park, Edgebrook, and others--also developed in a similar manner. The intent of developers was to create new communities in remote locations dominated by natural beauty. However, the Beverly/Morgan Park Railroad Stations District is the only area in the city that retains the character of its initial development as a railroad suburb.

The development of these two neighborhoods was accomplished with the cooperation of the Rock Island Railroad, through the participation of its president in the development company that founded the community. With no local industry, the economic life of Beverly/Morgan Park has always been connected to the Loop, made possible by the railroad. The six historic stations are the visual symbols of this railroad and its prominence within the community.

CRITERION 4

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

The typical late-nineteenth century neighborhood commuter station was distinctive

in its scale and style from railroad terminals in urban centers. Its features included a ticket agent office, at least one waiting room, and exterior shelters for passengers, encompassed in a building whose style reflected the tastes of its patrons. The six historic stations in Beverly/Morgan Park are exemplars of this type, housing these functions in Queen Anne-style buildings that refer, in their scale, materials, and decorative scheme, to the contemporary residential development that grew up around them.

In spite of the importance commuter rail stations had for the development of new patterns of living and working, the pace of change has not been kind to the early examples of the type. The continued outward expansion of suburban development, changes in local demographics, and physical alterations to the tracks themselves--particularly in the elevation of most rail lines on embankments--led to the demolition or abandonment of most late-nineteenth century commuter stations, particularly in Chicago. The effect of these changes, however, has not been the same along the branch line in Beverly/Morgan Park. These six historic railroad stations are rare survivors of the period of early suburban development. They have remained relatively intact, retaining their function as commuter rail stations and their relationship to their communities.

CRITERION 6

Its representation of an architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other theme expressed through distinctive areas, districts, places, buildings, structures, works of art, or other objects that may or may not be contiguous.

The six commuter rail stations form a district of non-contiguous properties that are nonetheless unified in use, scale, materials, and architectural style. These characteristics reflect and reinforce the qualities of the predominant free-standing single family architecture that characterizes Beverly and Morgan Park. All of the stations stand at grade in park-like settings. Located on the major east-west streets, most are near the small-scale local retail districts which developed from the pedestrian activity the stations generated.

The stations are a rare, readily recognizable collection of intact commuter rail facilities from the late-nineteenth century. Their status as an intact grouping argues for their preservation as an ensemble.

CRITERION 7

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

As the central transportation feature of the Beverly and Morgan Park communities, the railroad line and its stations became the focal point of community activities. Churches, parks, schools, and commercial developments all clustered around the stations, making them the central elements of local economic, social, and educational life. Their functional prominence, at the center of these varied activities, and their visual prominence, expressed through their location and design, make these stations distinctive and singularly outstanding in their communities.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Based on its evaluation of the Beverly/Morgan Park Railroad Stations District, the staff recommends that the significant historical and architectural features be identified as the stations, their platforms, and the open space immediately adjoining the stations. In particular:

91st Street Station

Parcel Boundaries: The south line of 91st Street, the Metra tracks, the north line of 91st Place (extended), and the east line of South Prospect Square.

Features: The station and the open space defined by the parcel, including all exterior aspects of the station, its roofs, and the train platforms.

95th Street Station

Parcel Boundaries: A line continuous with and extending from the south property line of 9440 S. Vanderpoel Ave., the west property line of 1760 W. 95th St., the north line of 95th Street, and the Metra tracks.

Features: The station and the open space defined by the parcel, including all exterior aspects of the station, its roofs and platforms, but excluding the modern canopy.

99th Street Station

Parcel Boundaries: The south line of 99th Street, the Metra tracks, the north property line of 9907 S. Walden Pkwy., and the east line of Walden Parkway.

Features: The station and the open space defined by the parcel, including all exterior aspects of the station, its roofs, and platforms.

107th Street Station

Parcel Boundaries: The south line of 107th Street, the Metra tracks, a line continuous with and extending from the south property line of 10715 S. Longwood Dr., and the east property line of 1905 W. 95th St.

Features: The station and the open space defined by the parcel, including all exterior aspects of the station, its roofs and platforms.

111th Street Station

Parcel Boundaries: The southeast line of Prospect Avenue, the Metra tracks, and 111th Street.

Features: The station and the open space defined by the parcel, including Bohn Park; all exterior aspects of the station, its roofs and platforms; and the interior of the station's waiting room, including the fireplace and high ceiling.

115th Street Station

Parcel Boundaries: A line continuous with and extending from the north property line of 11442 S. Hale Ave., the Metra tracks, the north line of 115th Street, and the east line of Hale Avenue.

Features: The station and the open space defined by the parcel, including all exterior aspects of the station, its roofs and platforms.

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Sources of Illustrations

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(pp. 1, 23, 25, 26)

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