

= Douglas Park ( Chicago ) =

Douglas Park is a large Chicago Park District park that also serves as a cultural and community center on the West Side of Chicago , Illinois . It is named after the U.S. Senator Stephen A. Douglas , who died in 1861 . Originally named South Park , its 173 acres ( 0 @. @ 70 km2 ) are in the North Lawndale community area of Chicago in Cook County , Illinois , United States with an official address of 1401 S. Sacramento Drive .

= = History = =

In 1869 , the Illinois state legislature established the West Park Commission , which was responsible for three large parks and interlinking boulevards . Later that year , on November 4 , 1869 the commissioners named the southernmost park in honor of Stephen A. Douglas ( 1813 ? 1861 ) . Best remembered for his pre @-@ Civil War presidential defeat by Abraham Lincoln despite superb oratorical skills , Douglas was a United States Senator who helped bring the Illinois Central Railroad to Chicago . In 1871 , designer William Le Baron Jenney completed plans for the entire West Park System which included Douglas , Garfield , and Humboldt parks . Jenney 's engineering expertise was especially helpful for transforming Douglas Park 's poor natural site into parkland . He had manure from the Union Stock Yards and sand added to the marshy site . This process brought the 173 acres ( 0 @. @ 70 km2 ) of land to grade level . In the center of the landscape , Jenney created a picturesque lake , and a small section of the park was formally opened in 1879 . Inflated construction costs and post Great Chicago Fire tax collection difficulties resulted in phased projects . The first improvements were made to the park by Oscar DuBuis in the 1880s . Between 1886 and 1888 Douglas Park , like the other West Park System parks , replaced its greenhouse with a conservatory . In 1895 , members of several German turners ' clubs petitioned for an outdoor gymnasium , and the following year one of Chicago 's first public facilities was constructed with an outdoor gymnasium ( pictured right ) , swimming pool , and natatorium .

= = = 20th @-@ century redevelopment = = =

By the turn of the century , the West Park Commission was riddled with political graft , and the three parks became dilapidated . As part of a reform effort in 1905 , Jens Jensen was appointed as General Superintendent and Chief Landscape Architect for the entire West Park System . Jensen , now recognized as dean of the prairie style of landscape architecture , improved deteriorating sections of the parks and added new features . Among Jensen 's improvements were a semi @-@ circular entryway at Marshall Boulevard , and a formal garden at the corner of Ogden Avenue and Sacramento Drive . By the time Jensen designed the garden , Ogden Avenue , a diagonal roadway with a major streetcar thoroughfare that would later become part of Route 66 , had already been constructed . The road divided the park into two separate landscapes , creating a busy intersection at the junction of Ogden and Sacramento Avenues . Jensen 's solution was a long axial garden on the southeast side of the intersection , providing a buffer between Ogden Avenue and playing fields to the south . Jensen demolished the conservatories in each of the West Park System parks in favor of one grand conservatory at Garfield Park .

At the entrance to the garden , the area closest to the busy roadway intersection , Jensen placed a monumental garden shelter , known as Flower Hall , and a formal reflecting pool . The designer of the structure is unknown , however , it was possibly Jensen himself , or his friend , prairie school architect Hugh Garden . East of the building , the garden becomes more naturalistic . Jensen included perennial beds , a lily pool , and unique prairie @-@ style benches . In 1928 , the West Park Commission constructed a fieldhouse in Douglas Park . The structure was designed by architects Michaelsen and Rognstad , who were also responsible for other notable buildings including the Garfield Park Gold Dome Building , the Humboldt and LaFollette Park Fieldhouses , and the On Leong Merchants Association Building in Chinatown . In 1934 , Douglas Park became part of the Chicago Park District , when the city 's 22 independent park commissions merged into a

single citywide agency .

= = Today = =

The park has served as a central location for recreation since it was first built . It currently houses a miniature golf course , five playgrounds , an outdoor swimming pool , soccer fields , basketball courts , and an oval running track . The park also retains its original lagoon , a wide variety of trees and the original Jenney designed stone bridge . The greenhouse that attracted visitors from throughout the city was torn down in 1905 . The statue of Czech patriot , Karel Havlíček Borovský , by Joseph Strachovsky was moved to Solidarity Drive on today 's Museum Campus in the vicinity of the Adler Planetarium in 1981 . Chicago 's 2016 Olympic bid included plans to host the Olympic cycling competitions in this park , including a velodrome and a BMX course . Beginning in 2015 , the park is the new home of the Riot Fest .