

= Washington Park Court District =

The Washington Park Court District is a Grand Boulevard community area neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago , Illinois . It was designated a Chicago Landmark on October 2 , 1991 . Despite its name , it is not located within either the Washington Park community area or the Washington Park park , but is one block north of both . The district was named for the Park .

The district includes row houses built between 1895 and 1905 , with addresses of 4900 ? 4959 South Washington Park Court and 417 ? 439 East 50th Street . Many of the houses share architectural features . The neighborhood was part of the early twentieth century segregationist racial covenant wave that swept Chicago following the Great Migration . The community area has continued to be almost exclusively African American since the 1930s .

= = Architecture = =

Washington Park Court , which runs one @-@ way northbound from East 50th Street to East 49th Street , is a one @-@ city block @-@ long street located at 432 east in the Chicago street numbering system . Officially , it runs from 4900 south to 5060 south in the numbering system . The street and several adjacent homes at one end are recognized as a distinct district within the city , according to the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development . In May 1990 , the district was one of ten that were under consideration for Chicago Landmark status , and it was designated a Chicago Landmark on October 2 , 1991 . The district was named for the Park , which was designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted .

The T. G. Dickinson Real Estate Company , which created the subdivision in 1892 , mandated 10 @-@ foot (3 @. @ 0 m) setbacks for all properties and originally sold lots in small groups of two or three . Between 1895 and 1905 , the tone of the district became clear with the development of its row houses . In 1990 , the district contained forty @-@ nine row houses that span a wide variety of architectural styles including Classical Revival and Romanesque . As of 2004 , the district contained fifty @-@ one properties . The street hosts residential designs of architect Henry Newhouse and of developers Andrew and John Dubach . At least twenty @-@ five of the lots were developed by the Dubaches and at least twelve of the properties were designed by Newhouse . Their architectural contributions set the tone for the block , which uses mostly brick and limestone houses that share porch and cornice lines . Most houses have mansards or recessed roofs with bay fronts .

= = Demographic change = =

Between 1900 and 1934 the African American population in Chicago grew from 30 @, @ 000 to 236 @, @ 000 . The population was initially diluted in scattered places , but during this time , due to the change in the demographics of Chicago , it became concentrated in two large strips of land . The racial concentration was enforced by violence for few decades , until restrictive covenants became the preferred way to enforce segregation . Although they were previously rare , racially restrictive covenants among property owners that outlawed the purchase , lease , or occupation of their properties by African Americans became common in Chicago in the 1920s following the Great Migration , especially after the 1926 United States Supreme Court upheld racially restrictive covenants in *Corrigan v. Buckley* (271 U.S. 323 (1926)) .

During the first half of the 20th Century , The Black Belt was the term for the African American neighborhood from 22nd Street to 31st Street along State Street on Chicago 's South Side . South Side local businessmen and the University of Chicago became alarmed at the prospect of poorer blacks moving from the Black Belt due to a combination of racial succession and economic decline . Because 85 % of Chicago was covenanted , most black neighborhoods were bounded by covenanted areas . The Washington Park Court Improvement Association changed its focus from neighborhood improvement projects , such as planting shrubs and cleaning streets , to upholding segregationist policies . When necessary , the organization resorted to violence to pursue its segregationist purpose , and between 1917 and 1921 , bombs were used to discourage

encroachment into majority white neighborhoods . The bombs were used at the residences of African Americans as well as the properties of real estate agents and bankers .

Eventually the term Black Belt included the region from 39th Street to 95th Street between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Lake Michigan . Since the 1930 United States Census , the Grand Boulevard community area has been over 90 % African American . In both the 1960 and 1990 Census , the community area was over 99 % African American . As of the 2000 Census , the area was 98 @. @ 2 % African American and 0 @. @ 8 % Hispanic .