

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**SENT TO D.C.**

12-1-09

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 : **Berger Park**

other names/site number : **Park No. 1255**

**2. Location**

street & number: **6205-47 N. Sheridan Road**

☐ Not for publication

city or town : **Chicago**

☐ vicinity

state **Illinois**

code **IL**

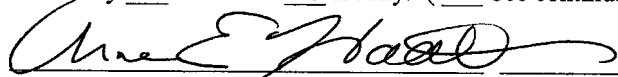
county **Cook**

code **031**

zip code **60660**

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Deputy SHPO

12-1-09

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

**Berger Park**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.		
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the		
<input type="checkbox"/> National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.		
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the		
<input type="checkbox"/> National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain):	_____	_____

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#### 5. Classification

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Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

☐ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

☐ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  4  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u>     </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u>     </u>	<u>  1  </u> structures
<u>     </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>  4  </u>	<u>  1  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register      N/A

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

**Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District**

**Berger Park**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

**DOMESTIC/ single dwelling**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

**LANDSCAPE/ park**

**RECREATION AND CULTURE/ outdoor recreation**

**OTHER/ field house**

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

**LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/ Other: American Four Square**

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation:

Roof : **ASPHALT**

Walls: **BRICK**

Other:

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

**Berger Park**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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

- ☐ 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.
- ☒ 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)

**ARCHITECTURE**

Period of Significance: **1906 - 1910**

Significant Dates: **1906, 1910**

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

Cultural Affiliation **N/A**

Architect/Builder: **William Carbys Zimmerman**  
**Myron Church**

**Berger Park**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State Narrative

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## 8. Statement of Significance - continued

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

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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
- ☐ Other

Name of repository

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: **3.34 acres**

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

	Zone Easting	North	Zone Easting	North
A. 16	445706	4649581	B. 16	445706 4649388
C. 16	445800	4649585	D. 16	445780 4649390

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**

**Berger Park**  
Name of Property

**Cook County, Illinois**  
County and State

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Christine M. Whims

organization:

date: May 7, 2009

street & number: 950 W. Huron

telephone: (815) 483-8609

city or town: Chicago

state: IL

zip code: 60642

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**Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name **Timothy J. Mitchell, General Superintendent & CEO, Chicago Park District**

street & number **541 North Fairbanks**

telephone (312) 742-7529

city or town **Chicago**

state **IL**

zip code **60611**

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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.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

**Berger Park**

**Cook Co. IL**

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**Narrative Description**

Berger Park is located at 6205-47 N. Sheridan Road in Chicago's Edgewater community area, which is located about nine miles north of the Loop. The park is situated at the northeast corner of North Sheridan Road and West Granville Avenue. To the east is Lake Michigan and on the north end of the park is three-story apartment building. The site where Berger Park sits today was once known as Granville Park and Beach, named for the street, which ended on the shores of Lake Michigan. Today, the park sits on 3.34 acres of land and consists of two mansions, two coach houses and an 8,000 square foot playground [5]. The Joseph Downey Mansion and the Samuel H. Gunder Mansion, now known as the Berger Park South Mansion and the North Lakeside Cultural Center, respectively, face west on to Sheridan Road and can both be approached via concrete walkways. Both mansions are good examples of the American Four Square style, a typical style for this community area. Four Sqaures generally feature a cubic shape with a hipped roof and dormers.

The 1906 Berger Park South Mansion [1], located at 6205 N. Sheridan (formerly 2792-94 Sheridan Road)<sup>1</sup> has a square footprint with a few projections. The building features handsome Prairie style details. It is an 8,200 square foot two story home with a raised basement, clad in long narrow, buff colored roman brick. Limestone stringcourses make there way around three sides of the home, situated right below the first story windows. Fenestration varies, but is primarily comprised of one-over-one wood sash windows with limestone sills. The house has a hipped roof and its ridgeline runs east-to-west, parallel to the North and South sides of the house. The roof has a wide eave overhang that is coffered without brackets. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles and has numerous hipped roof dormers. There are two brick chimneys located on the North slope of the roof. The large roof overhang, long narrow roman brick, limestone banding and horizontal grouping of windows all contribute to the horizontal details of the Prairie style.

The front (west) elevation is asymmetrical and features a first floor partial width porch. The porch has a low wall composed of roman brick with limestone coping. It is accessed via a short flight of steps and has a shed roof that extends from the north and ends slightly past the middle of the home. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and is supported by two heavy squared piers with floral and egg and dart detailing. The porch features an off-centered wood-framed main entrance door with a fixed glass pane and sidelights. Around the wood doorframe is decorative stonework. To the north of the door is a ribbon of windows; three small windows over three longer windows. To the south of the door is another ribbon of windows; five small windows over five longer windows. The second floor of the front elevation has four one over one windows and one small centrally located window with decorative stone detailing around the frame. The roof on the west elevation of the home has a hipped roof dormer with three windows. The dormer has brackets with acanthus leaves and rosettes.

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<sup>1</sup> *Polk's Chicago Numerical Street and Avenue Directory*. 1928.

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**Berger Park**

**Cook Co. IL**

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The south elevation has two raised basement windows, eleven windows on the first floor and four on the second floor. First floor windows include a multiple groupings of three or more windows. One such grouping is a rounded bay window featuring five windows separated by pilasters. There is also a three-sided bay window, which continues the use of pilasters to separate the three windows. The roof for both bay windows is flat and has a limestone cap. On the southeast side of the mansion is a one-story projecting wing with a roof deck. The south elevation has two dormers; one identical to the west elevation and the other dormer has just one window with no detailing.

The north elevation has two doorways at ground level. There are five basement windows, seven windows on the first floor and three windows on the second floor. There are also windows that are placed in between the typical placement of the first and second story windows. This includes a ribbon of five windows with a transom window over them. Pilasters separate the vertical windows in the same ways as the bay windows on the south elevation. There is also another oddly placed window above the second story that meets at the roofline. Fenestration varies the most on this elevation. As with the south elevation, there are two dormers on the north elevation and both are identical to those on the south elevation. The north slope of the roof also features two brick chimneys.

The rear (east) elevation has a one-story projecting wing that is rounded on the east elevation. The projecting wing has a flat roof that features a roof deck with an open railing which spans the width of the house. There are two basement windows and a short stairwell at ground level leading down to the basement. The first floor has a raised door on the south end of the elevation that can be accessed via a concrete ramp. The one-story projecting wing has a grouping of twelve windows on the south elevation, twelve windows on the east elevation, and six windows on the north elevation. In addition, there are three other windows on the first floor, to the north of the projecting wing. The first floor also has a small wooden door where I think it is fair to assume that ice was delivered at one point in time. The second floor has four windows and a door to gain access onto the roof deck. There is one dormer on the east elevation with two sliding windows and no details.

The Berger Park South Mansion's coach house [2] is on the northeast side of the house and has a rectangular footprint. The two-story building is composed of roman brick. The coach house has a normal or simple pitched hipped roof that features a square cupola in the center of its ridgeline. The ridgeline runs north-to-south, parallel to the East and West sides of the coach house. The roof has a wide eave overhang without brackets and is covered in asphalt shingles. Fenestration varies, but all windows have limestone sills. The main entrance to the coach house is centered on the west elevation. The main entrance double doors to the coach house have fixed glass panes and sidelights. There are four windows on the first floor and three windows on the second floor. They all vary in size; one window on the second floor is rather large in comparison to the others and sits prominently over the main entrance. This window has a round arch top that extends above the roofs cornice line. The roofline mimics the arch of the window on the west elevation only. The first floor of the south elevation has a ribbon of ten windows (five smaller windows over five longer windows) and two smaller windows and six windows on the second floor. The north elevation has three windows on the first floor and a



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vent on the second floor. The rear (east elevation) has a centrally located door on the first floor with twelve windows on either side of the door (two ribbons of six on either side). The second floor has one window centrally located over the door and two other window openings; one of the openings has been converted to hold an air conditioning unit and the other opening is sealed off.

The 1910 North Lakeside Cultural Center [3], located at 6219 N. Sheridan has a square footprint and features Classical details. It is a two-story structure with a raised basement composed of cream-colored brick. Fenestration varies widely in this home, offering casement and one-over-one wood sash windows with limestone sills. A cornice is situated a few feet beneath the roofline and wraps around all four elevations. The house has a decked (flat-topped) hipped roof. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles and has through-cornice roof dormers. There are three brick chimneys located on the North and South slopes of the roof.

The front (west) elevation is asymmetrical and features a main entrance on the southern end. The main entrance has a fixed glass pane and gold ironwork detailing. Over the door is an arched transom with ironwork. The entrance features lamp posts on either side of the door, which can be accessed via a short flight of stairs. To the north of the door is a round bay window featuring ten windows; five small windows over five longer windows. The roof over the bay window is flat and has a limestone cap. The second floor of the front elevation has four one over one windows. The roof on the west elevation of the home has a dormer with two windows extending through the cornice line. The dormer has decorative limestone classical detailing.

The south elevation has five raised basement windows, twenty-four windows on the first floor and twenty-nine on the second floor. The first and second floor windows include multiple groupings of three or more windows. One such grouping is a ribbon of ten windows (five over five) on a small projection on the first floor. The roof of the projection is flat and has a limestone cap. The south elevation has one through cornice dormer with eight windows. Detailing is identical to the dormer on the west elevation. The south slope of the roof features a chimney on the western end of the house.

The north elevation has one doorway at ground level. There are two basement windows, four windows on the first floor and eleven windows above the first floor. Fenestration varies the most on this elevation. The north elevation has one dormer with a circular roof and unlike the other dormers does not go through the cornice but sits on the roof. The north slope of the roof also features two brick chimneys.

The rear (east) elevation has a door on the northern end that is accessed via a short flight of stairs. There is also a short stair well at ground level leading down to a basement entry door. There are fifteen windows on the first floor and twenty-four windows on the second floor. The second floor features a three-sided bay window with bracket supports and a flat roof. There is one through cornice dormer on the east elevation, but it lacks details found on the other dormers. This dormer has four windows.

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The North Lakeside Cultural Center's coach house [5] is on the northeast side of the house and has a square footprint. The one-story building is composed of brick and features classical details. The coach house has a deck, (flat-topped) hipped roof. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles and has through-cornice roof dormers. A cornice is situated a few feet beneath the roofline and wraps around all four elevations. The main entrance to the coach house is off-center on the south elevation. The south, north, and west elevations each have two windows on the main floor and through cornice roof dormers with two windows. The east elevation has been altered to accommodate the current café by adding sliding doors.

The two mansions and two coach houses show excellent integrity. A restoration of both mansions was completed in the late 1980s, leaving the front facades and many of the interior details intact and significantly unaltered. Originally, there were driveways along the north sides of both mansions, but those were removed to introduce more green space for the park. Some of the windows in the Berger Park South Mansion were missing and/ or replaced, but many of the leaded stained glass windows remain. The kitchen in the Berger Park South Mansion was altered to make two bathrooms and the terra cotta roof was replaced with asphalt shingles. The addition of a concrete ramp was added on the east elevation of the Berger Park South Mansion for ADA accessibility as well as hand railings near steps on the exteriors of both mansions. The restoration efforts brought these two mansions and coach houses back to their early 1900s appearance, while also updating them to function as public recreational facilities.

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**Berger Park** **Cook Co. IL**

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**Contributing Features**

**Non-contributing Features**

Berger Park South Mansion  
South Mansion Coach House  
North Lakeside Cultural Center  
Cultural Center Coach House

**Buildings**

**Sites**

**Structures**

**Objects**

8,000 square foot playground

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**Berger Park**

**Cook Co. IL**

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**Statement of Significance**

Berger Park is located at 6205-47 N. Sheridan Road in Chicago's Edgewater community area. The park includes two mansions and two coach houses, which are locally significant under Criterion C for architecture. Berger Park qualifies for listing under the multiple documentation form "The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District." As explained in the form (E, p. 14) the Great Depression fostered the consolidation of the city's 22 independent park commissions into the Chicago Park District in 1934. Over the years, the Chicago Park District has increased its amount of acreage through land acquisition efforts. Some of the acquired acreage, such as the Berger Park site, includes earlier historic structures. The property's period of significance ranges from 1906 to 1910, when the Berger Park mansions were constructed.

The Berger Park South Mansion [1] (originally the Joseph Downey house) and coach house [2], designed by architect William Carbys Zimmerman were built in 1906 at 6205 N. Sheridan Road (formerly 2792-94 Sheridan Road). The North Lakeside Cultural Center [3] (originally the Samuel Gunder house) and coach house [4], constructed in 1910 at 6219 N. Sheridan Road were produced by architect Myron Church. The land that both the Berger Park Mansions sit on today was part of John Lewis Cochran's second addition to the Edgewater community. During Edgewater's heyday, mansions lined the lakefront. Today, these are the only few remaining examples of lakeside mansions. The two-and-a-half story Berger Park mansions are excellent examples of the American Four Square style, featuring a square floor plan, off-center entrance, hipped roof, central front dormers, and varying secondary details. These two mansions and coach houses exhibit a process of development that took place all over the country and they remain without substantial change.

**The American Four Square Style**

Although the origins are unclear, American Four Squares were built in neighborhoods throughout America, in urban, suburban and rural settings between the 1890s and 1920s. The style was named for its square floor plan consisting of four rooms, which were roughly equal in size on each floor. Although avant-garde at the time, the style quickly became an architectural phenomenon, prized for its ease of construction, practicality, and roomy interior.

Denver architect, Frank E. Kidder likely played an important role in the development of the American Four Square style. He was the first to publish an American Four Square design for his own house in *Architecture and Building* magazine in 1891. American Four Squares soon began appearing in popular builder's magazines around 1895 and mail-order plan companies helped spread the idea too. This began a stylistic movement against the overly ornate eclecticism of the Queen Anne style. The American Four Square style was dubbed part of the "Rectilinear" movement; a movement, which avoided historical decoration, flattened surfaces and emphasized geometric forms.<sup>2</sup>

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Beginning in the early 1900s the new ready-cut housing industry also helped to promote the Four Square. Companies such as Montgomery Wards, Sears, Roebuck & Co., Aladdin, Lewis Homes and Gordon VanTine included many Four Square variations among their designs.<sup>3</sup> Fans of the uniform, cube-like designs praised the subtle variations from house to house. They may not have been unique, but they are an example of a process of development that was taking place all over the country. The largest concentration of American Four Squares is in community areas that were developed during the styles heyday (1900 – 1930).<sup>4</sup>

Four Square houses feature a simple square or rectangular floor plan, hipped roof, and symmetrical facade. The entrance, which may be centered or off-center, is a conspicuous focal point of the façade. Broad front porches and central front dormers are common on Four Square facades as well. Other identifying features are one story wings and porches, dormers, and double hung windows.<sup>5</sup> Four Squares were typically built on consistent lot sizes and built out of a variety of materials, including wood, brick, and stucco. These homes used very little ornament, but they featured varying secondary details,<sup>6</sup> such as many of the Prairie and Classical style details that can be seen on the Berger Park mansions.

Four rooms characterize the interior of a four square, one in each corner, roughly equal in size, on each floor. The first floor would feature an open plan, whereby archways or large sliding doors would often connect the corner reception hall, parlor, and dining room. The kitchen would be the only room partitioned off. There would also be a side stairway that would lead to the private spaces on the second floor. The second floor would usually have three or four bedrooms and a bathroom. Often times, there would also be generous living space beneath the dormered roof.<sup>7</sup>

The 1906 Berger Park South Mansion and the 1910 North Lakeside Cultural Center at 6205-47 N. Sheridan Road in Chicago's Edgewater community are good examples of the American Four Square style of architecture and both retain very good integrity. The form of the building, essentially a box with attachments, itself became a universal shape and is found throughout Chicago and in community areas such as Edgewater that developed during the styles heyday. Today, these two American four square mansions make-up part of the six remaining in Edgewater and the only two to line the lakefront.<sup>8</sup>

**The Architects of the Berger Park Mansions**

William Carbys Zimmerman (1856-1932), the architect of the Berger Park South Mansion, was born in

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>4</sup> Commission on Chicago Landmarks & the Chicago Department of Planning & Development, *Chicago Historic Resources Survey* (Chicago, 1996),

<sup>5</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 439.

<sup>6</sup> Commission on Chicago Landmarks & the Chicago Department of Planning & Development,  
<sup>7</sup> Hanchett, 51.

<sup>8</sup> Commission on Chicago Landmarks & the Chicago Department of Planning & Development,

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Thiensville, Wisconsin. He came to Chicago in 1880 after completing school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he studied architecture. In 1886, he became a junior partner in the John J. Flanders architecture firm. During Zimmerman's time with Flanders, the two built a reputation for designing residential buildings in a variety of architectural Revival styles.<sup>9</sup> Zimmerman soon became a fellow of the American Institute of Architects and opened his own practice in 1898. His office was located in Steinway Hall at 64 E. Van Buren St., an office building famous for housing progressive architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Dwight Perkins, and Pond and Pond. Zimmerman continued to specialize in residential architecture, designing houses in the Kenwood District, Edgewater, and Rogers Park.<sup>10</sup>

In 1905, Zimmerman was appointed Illinois State Architect. Through 1915, he designed a number of prominent public buildings in Chicago and throughout Illinois, including the Supreme Court Building in Springfield, the Physics Building at the University of Illinois, and the 7th Regiment Armory in Chicago.<sup>11</sup> During this time, he also designed field houses and other buildings for almost a dozen neighborhood parks in the rapidly expanding West side park system and became the architect to the West Park Commission in 1907. It was during his time as the architect to the West Park Commission that Zimmerman began to design in the Prairie style, a style that was considered innovative at the time. Most of his field houses and other park buildings were designed in the Prairie style. Although many of his other residential properties were fanciful Revival styles, Berger Park South Mansion reflects Prairie style features.<sup>12</sup>

Myron Henry Church, architect of the Gunder Mansion, now the North Lakeside Cultural Center, was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1852. He began his business life in the shipyards of the Wyandotte Iron and Ship Building Works. From there he went into the offices of architects in Detroit. He moved to Chicago in 1876, and continued working under several architects. He established a practice in 1889 working in partnership with C. Frank Jobson.<sup>13</sup>

Church and Jobson had an office at 1233 Marquette Building. The pair designed a variety of residential houses in communities throughout Chicago from roughly 1889 – 1900. According to American Contractor's Chicago Building Permit Database, Church and Jobson applied for numerous permits in the Edgewater community area during 1898 – 1912. Church lived in Edgewater and as a result designed many houses for Edgewater's founder, John Lewis Cochran. Aside from their work in Edgewater, they also designed notable Flemish Revival style rowhouses in the Calumet/Giles Prairie District on Chicago's south side. From 1901 – 1912, Church worked on his own, designing more homes, again many in the Edgewater community area, such as the North Lakeside

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<sup>9</sup> Henry F Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), 678.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Planning and Development, *Pulaski Park Fieldhouse*, by Terry Tatum. Landmark Designation Report (Chicago, 2003), 16.

<sup>11</sup> Withey, 678.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Planning and Development, 16-19.

<sup>13</sup> Albert N Marquis, *Who's Who in Chicago: The Book of Chicagoans* (Chicago: Albert N. Marquis & Co., 1911).

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Cultural Center (1910). He also designed a few manufacturing buildings, of which one known building is on the west side of Chicago designed in the Classical Revival style.

**Early Development of Edgewater**

The community of Edgewater is an example of a Chicago neighborhood that transformed from a suburban to an urban neighborhood. Originally, Edgewater was a farming community, known as the “celery-growing capital of the Middle West.” One of the earliest settlers was a Luxembourger named Nicholas Krantz. In 1848, he constructed the first notable structure in the area, a frame homestead, called Seven Mile House for its distance from the Chicago City Hall. Edgewater remained relatively rural and sparsely populated until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when John Lewis Cochran purchased lakefront property in 1885 to develop the land for homes. Two years later Cochran, who became known as the father of Edgewater, founded and named the community in honor of its proximity to Lake Michigan.<sup>14</sup>

Cochran’s first subdivision was bounded by what is today Broadway, Bryn Mawr, Lake Michigan and Foster Avenue. He had grand plans for Edgewater, which included subdividing 350 acres, installing macadam streets, stone sidewalks, a drainage system, and Edison lights. Cochran energetically promoted his Edgewater subdivision in the mid 1880s in an attempt to attract residents to the new area. Between 1885 and 1896 Cochran commissioned designs for houses from such architects as Joseph Lyman Silsbee, George Washington Maher, Niels Buck, Murphy and Camp, and Church and Jobson just to name a few. He named the streets after towns along the Main Line of his native Philadelphia. Advertisements in the late 1880s celebrated Edgewater’s stylish mansions and the fact that it was “the only electric lighted suburb adjacent to Chicago.” Settlers of Edgewater at this time were primarily German, Scandinavian and Irish.<sup>15</sup>

In 1889, Edgewater was annexed by the City of Chicago as part of the City of Lake View. One catalyst for the transformation of Edgewater from a suburban to an urban neighborhood was the extension of a transit line, which made the community more accessible. Initially, only two railroad lines had passed through Edgewater, The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad ran along the route now used by the CTA elevated train, and the Chicago and North Western railroad ran by Ravenswood Avenue on the western boundary of Edgewater, with the closest stop being in Evanston to the north.<sup>16</sup> Cochran was a major force behind the construction of the North Western elevated railroad, which would continue to extend service and open more stations throughout Edgewater over the next few decades. With trains expanding service, residential construction and an increase in settlement soon followed.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Local Community Fact Book Chicago-Metropolitan Area. (1980), 193.

<sup>15</sup> Alice Sinkevitch, *ALA Guide to Chicago*. (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2004), 238-240.

<sup>16</sup> *Local Community Fact Book Chicago-Metropolitan Area*, 193.

<sup>17</sup> Dominic A Pacyga and Ellen Skerrett. *Chicago: City of Neighborhoods*. (1986), 145.

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By 1910, Sheridan Road had been built up with substantial brick mansions and coach houses. In keeping with Cochran's original plans for Edgewater, apartment buildings were excluded from Sheridan Road. During WWI, construction in Edgewater ceased, but quickly resumed during the 1920s. In 1922, the last area of unoccupied land in Edgewater was subdivided. The population continued to increase as Edgewater was regarded as one of Chicago's most prestigious communities. Edgewater's building boom peaked in 1926, but with the onset of the Depression in the 1930s, construction stopped and did not resume until after WWII.<sup>18</sup>

After WWII, many of the larger homes and apartments in Edgewater were broken up into smaller units to accommodate the increased demand for housing. Between the mid-1950s and the 1970s, most of the large homes on North Sheridan Road were torn down and replaced with high-rise apartments. By 1974, approximately 6,150 apartment units had been built in the eight blocks from 5600 to 6400 North Sheridan Road, making this an area with one of the highest population densities in the city.<sup>19</sup>

In 1960, the Edgewater Community Counsel was established in an effort to control lakefront development, and to foster the restoration of the deteriorated buildings in the community. Over the next decade, Edgewater's population increased again, as a result of the dense construction of the high-rise apartments. The increase in population brought newer ethnic groups and a need for more recreational space.<sup>20</sup> In 1981, the Chicago Park District recognized that the residents of crowded Edgewater needed more parkland, and purchased a large block of lakefront land at Granville Avenue and North Sheridan Road, naming it Berger Park. The project not only involved creating recreational space for the community, but also saving the last few remaining lakeside mansions.

**History of the Berger Park Mansions**

Both the Berger Park Mansions occupy land that was originally part of John Lewis Cochran's second addition to the Edgewater community.<sup>21</sup> Berger Park South Mansion (formerly 2792-94 Sheridan Road) and coach house, located at 6205 N. Sheridan Road were built by Joseph Downey in 1906. Downey was born in 1849 in Kings County, Ireland. He immigrated to America in 1856, moving to Chicago. Upon finishing school, he went to work for James McGraw, a builder and contractor to learn the trade. He became a partner in 1874 and was soon identified with many of the largest and most prominent building contracts in the city. Over time, Joseph Downey became involved in many important civic groups and affairs in Chicago. He served as a member of the Chicago Association of Commerce, Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Commission for the Board of Education, Commissioner of Buildings and of Public Works during Mayor Swifts' administration and later a member of the Board of Education under Mayor Harrison.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Local Community Fact Book Chicago-Metropolitan Area*, 195.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 195.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 195.

<sup>21</sup> Cook County Recorder of Deeds Office. Section 5-40-14, pp. 155-156.

<sup>22</sup> Albert N Marquis. *Who's Who in Chicago, The Book of Chicagoans*. (Chicago: Albert N. Marquis & Co., 1911).



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In 1885, Downey married Lena Kleine and the couple lived in an elegant home on Chicago's west side. In 1906 he hired architect, William Carby Zimmerman to design them a home in Edgewater on the northeast corner of Sheridan Road and Granville Avenue at a cost of \$20,000.00.<sup>23</sup> According to the 1910 Census, four other people lived in the Joseph Downey house besides him and his wife: Fred W. Klein (brother-in-law), Mary Duggan (servant), Joseph Burke (chauffer), and Elizabeth Burke (boarder).<sup>24</sup> In 1911, Joseph Downey retired from active practice and by the time of the 1920 Census, Joseph and Lena Downey were no longer living in Edgewater. In 1925, Joseph Downey died in Tacoma, WA.

The North Lakeside Cultural Center and coach house, located at 6219 N. Sheridan Road was built by Samuel Gunder in 1910. Gunder was born in 1859 in Anderson, Indiana. He married Nettie E. Weaver in 1884 and later became President of Pozzinni Pharmaceutical Company.<sup>25</sup> In 1909 Nettie E. Gunder purchased the lot to the north of the Berger Park Mansion<sup>26</sup> and Samuel Gunder hired architect Myron Church to design a home for the lot at a cost of \$20,000.00.<sup>27</sup> According to the 1910 Census, Samuel Gunder and his wife Nettie lived in the house with their son, Jeane and Martha Peters (servant). In 1919, the Gunder's sold the home and moved to Los Angeles, California, where Samuel Gunder later died in 1925.<sup>28</sup>

Over the next decade, the city's Bureau of Parks and Recreation would add beachfront land along Lake Michigan on Chicago's north side in an effort to help meet the summertime recreational needs of Edgewater residents who lived beyond easy reach of Lincoln Park. By the end of 1937, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation was operating 27 street-end beaches, one of which was the ½ acre parcel of beachfront land at the end of Edgewater's Granville Avenue, just south of the Berger Park South Mansion. The street-end beach was named Granville Beach and Park and would later be named after Albert E. Berger, one of the proponents of developing such beaches.<sup>29</sup> Although the topography of the land changed slightly, both homes survived as single-family residences until the 1940s when the Viatorian Fathers acquired both properties.

The Clerics of St. Viator, an order of Catholic priests, used the mansions for housing student priests. In 1945 two permits were issued to allow the Clerics of St. Viator to convert both coach houses into living quarters. They were also issued a permit to erect a brick garage on the property.<sup>30</sup> The Clerics of St. Viator occupied the mansions and coach houses for a little over three decades, until 1979, when they decided to move.

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<sup>23</sup> *American Contractor* (April 28, 1906), 30.

<sup>24</sup> 1910 United States Federal Census, Heritagequestonline.com.

<sup>25</sup> Gabrielle Davoust. "The Gunder Residence." *Home Tour Book*, (September, 1991).

<sup>26</sup> Cook County Recorder of Deeds Office. Section 5-40-14, pp. 155-156.

<sup>27</sup> *American Contractor* (January 10, 1910), 45.

<sup>28</sup> 1910 United States Federal Census. Heritagequestonline.com.

<sup>29</sup> Chicago Park District. "Berger Park & Cultural Center." (Chicago).

<sup>30</sup> Permit no. 66783 (12 June 1945)

Permit no. 143206 (17 July 1945)

Permit no. 67181 (17 July 1945)

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During that time, Granville Beach and Park changed ownership from the City of Chicago to the Chicago Park District under the Act of Functional Consolidation effective Jan 1, 1959. In 1965, the Chicago Park District acquired the riparian rights of the property on the southeast corner of Sheridan Road and Granville Ave. In 1976, the City of Chicago constructed a .11-acre play lot along the northern right-of-way of Granville Ave., naming it the Albert E. Berger Beach and Park, which the Chicago Park District maintained.<sup>31</sup> This was done in an attempt to address the recreational needs of the many apartment dwellers with small children that had moved in to Edgewater's modern high-rises, as a result of Sheridan Road homes being torn down.

When the Clerics of St. Viator decided to move in 1979, developers immediately began to inquire about buying the houses, in the hopes of tearing them down and constructing high-rise apartment buildings, which was common during that time in Edgewater. This was met by immediate opposition by the Edgewater Community Council. As the Council rallied to save the buildings they were able to convince the Chicago Park District to purchase the land and the structures. The Chicago Park District recognized that the residents of crowded Edgewater still needed more parkland, so they purchased three additional acres from the Viatorian Fathers in 1981. The Viatorian Fathers agreed to the sale, as long as the Chicago Park District would restrict the use of the buildings to not-for-profit community purposes. They also agreed to reduce the price of the land to \$2,300,000.00, less than the \$6,000,000.00 they were offered by developers.<sup>32</sup>

Shortly after the Chicago Park District acquired the remaining land, they named the whole park in honor of Albert E. Berger. A native Chicagoan and Edgewater resident, Berger was born in 1900 and educated in Chicago Public Schools, graduating from Medill High School in 1918. He became a tax consultant and prominent north-side real estate developer, forming the Albert E. Berger Co. in the 1920s. Albert Berger was a member of numerous philanthropic and civic groups. In 1928, he convinced a group of developers that additional lakefront beaches and parks should be developed as recreation areas for children and neighborhood residents. Berger lived with his wife, Dorothy, and their three sons just south of what is now the park, at 6142 N. Sheridan Road until he died in 1950.<sup>33</sup>

After the naming of the park, a Conservation Report was completed on the buildings in Berger Park in 1982. The Chicago Park District concluded that the Gunder Mansion (North Lakeside Cultural Center) was so badly deteriorated that it was not worth preserving. This outraged local residents who thought the Park District would save both mansions from demolition. The Park District agreed to delay demolition of the Gunder Mansion if the neighborhood could raise the money needed to rehabilitate and adapt the building for a new use. Over the next five years, money trickled in from fundraisers and corporate and government grants. The most important donation came from the City of Chicago in the form of a \$216,000.00 Community Development Block Grant.

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<sup>31</sup> Chicago Park District. "News Release." (January 30, 1987).

<sup>32</sup> Stevenson Swanson. "Edgewater wouldn't let old mansions die." *Chicago Tribune*, (December 6, 1987).

<sup>33</sup> Chicago Park District. "Berger Park, Lakefront Region." (Chicago).

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Ronald Berger, Albert Berger's son made a matching donation, which helped to build credibility in their fundraising efforts.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1985, the Chicago Park District requested that the Corps of Engineers fund, design, and construct a stone embankment along 450 feet of the shoreline. The construction of the embankment caused the loss of the original beach, but protected and prevented further erosion of the parkland.<sup>35</sup> Also during 1985, the North Lakeside Cultural Center was incorporated as a non-profit arts organization with Viatorian Committee Chairman, Roula Alakiotou-Borenstine as President. The Chicago Park District entered into a formal agreement with the North Lakeside Cultural Center to rehabilitate the Gunder Mansion and operate it as a cultural center for 25 years. By 1988, the neighborhood had raised \$430,000.00 to renovate the mansion.<sup>36</sup> Over the next year, both mansions underwent renovations to return them to their original splendor. The Berger Park South Mansion was renovated by the Chicago Park District and the North Lakeside Cultural Center by Roula Assoc. Architects with Simon & Co. Both mansions were made ADA-accessible with the addition of ramps and/ or chair lifts and hand railings were added near steps on the exteriors of both mansions. The kitchen in the south mansion was altered to create two bathrooms and the terra cotta roof was replaced with asphalt shingles. Many of the oak, mahogany, and mosaic tile details that make this building so special were restored as well.

In addition to the work done on the buildings, the Chicago Park District improved the surrounding landscape. The site landscaping included the removal of the small playlot on the northeast corner of Sheridan Road and Granville Avenue and erecting a new 8,000 square foot playground on the north side of the Cultural Center. Two driveways, which were along the north sides of the mansions were also removed, introducing more green space for the park. By the fall of 1988, the Berger Park South Mansion and North Lakeside Cultural Center were open to the public. Today the Berger Park South Mansion and coach house function as a recreational facility for the park while the North Lakeside Cultural Center offers classes and workshops and its coach house is now the location of a neighborhood café. Berger Park offers many activities and events throughout the year for both children and adults. Some of these activities include senior aerobics, computer, jewelry making, and writing classes; and theater and music programs. The Berger Park South Mansion and North Lakeside Cultural Center are excellent examples of incorporating new uses without disturbing their inherent aesthetics. These buildings have excellent integrity and are enjoyed by the Edgewater community.

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<sup>34</sup> Ben Joravsky. "The last house on the lake: Edgewater's community development success story." *Reader*, (September 30, 1988).

<sup>35</sup> Lynch, John, Principal Assistant Engineer, Chicago Park District. "Inter-office Correspondence to Luke Cosme, Consultant, Chicago Park District." March 24, 1987.

<sup>36</sup> Brenda Warner Rotzoll. "Edgewater center keeps plugging away." *Chicago Sun-Times*.

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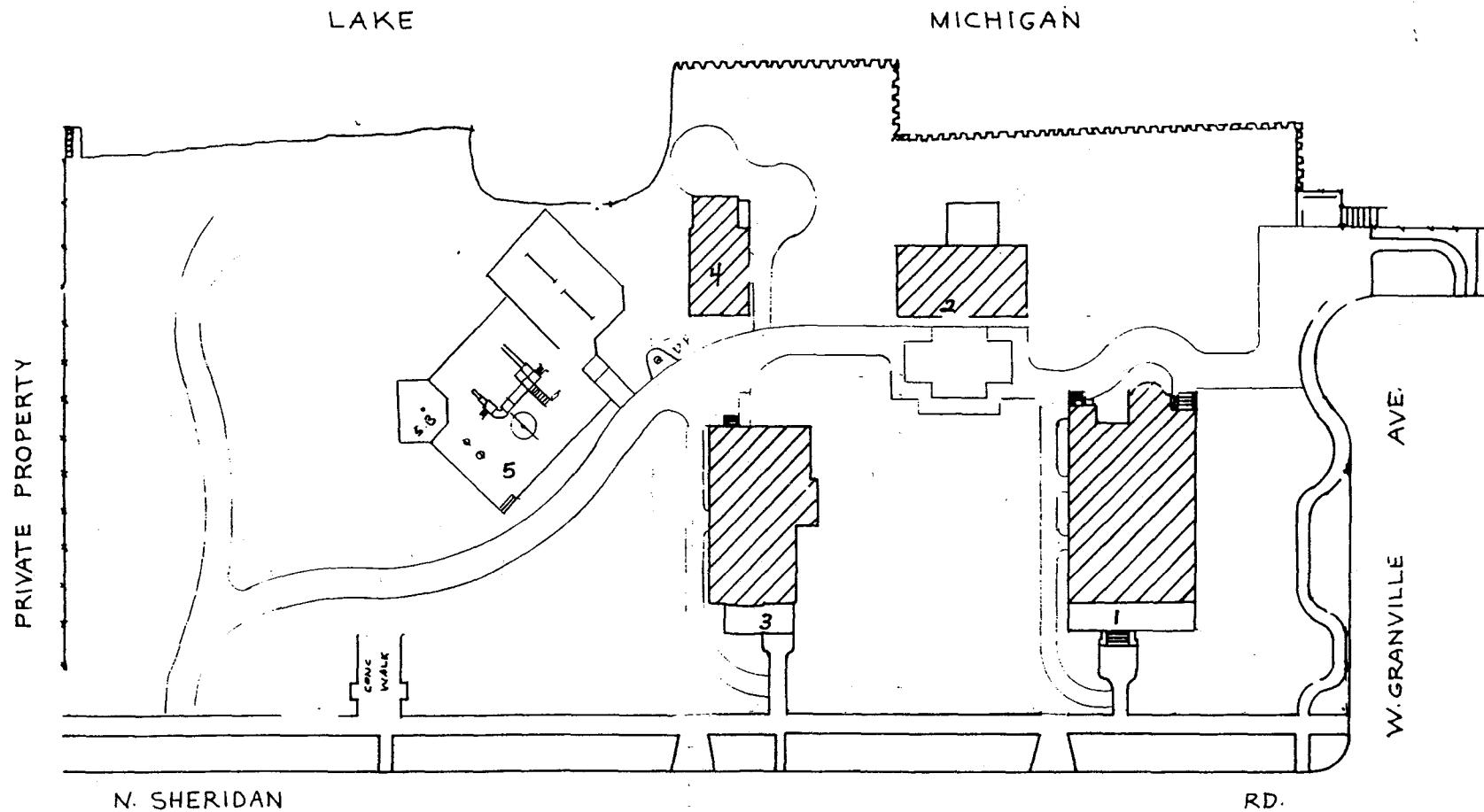
**Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property is bounded on the west by the east curb-line of N. Sheridan Road, on the south by the north curb-line of W. Granville Avenue. To the east of the property is Lake Michigan, and on to the north end of the park is a three-story apartment building.

**Boundary Justification**

This the plot of land historically associated with the park during its period of significance.



PARK NO. 1255  
COMM. NO. 48-49

PLOT PLAN  
BERGER BEACH AND PARK  
SCALE: 1"=40'  
CHICAGO PARK DIST. 17

DRN. BY R.W. CKD. BY R.W. SEPT 10, 1984



ILLINOIS, Cook County  
Berger Park,  
6205-47 N. Sheridan Rd.,  
Chicago, 09001225,  
LISTED, 1/12/10  
(Chicago Park District MPS)

MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS INDEPENDENT CITY,  
Federal Cold Storage Company Building,  
1800-28 N. Broadway,  
St. Louis, 09001226,  
LISTED, 1/12/10

NEW YORK, DUTCHESS COUNTY,  
Trinity Methodist Church,  
8 Mattie Cooper Square,  
Beacon, 09001227,  
LISTED, 1/12/10

NEW YORK, HERKIMER COUNTY,  
Masonic Temple-Newport Lodge No. 445 F. & A.M.,  
7408 NY 28,  
Newport vicinity, 09001228,  
LISTED, 1/13/10

NEW YORK, ONONDAGA COUNTY,  
Dock Hill Road Extension Stone Arch Bridge, Dock Hill Rd. Extension, Cornwall-on-Hudson,  
09001230, LISTED, 1/13/10 (Stone Arch Bridges of the Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson MPS)

OREGON, MULTNOMAH COUNTY,  
Ladd Carriage House,  
1331 SW Broadway St.,  
Portland, 09001211,  
LISTED, 1/07/10

PENNSYLVANIA, CHESTER COUNTY,  
Chandler Mill Bridge,  
Kennett Township,  
Kennett, 09001213,  
LISTED, 1/11/10

PENNSYLVANIA, CHESTER COUNTY,  
Cheyney, Squire, Farm,  
1255 Cheyney Thornton Rd.,  
Thornbury, 09001214,  
LISTED, 1/11/10

PENNSYLVANIA, CHESTER COUNTY,  
Hopewell Farm,  
1751 Valley Rd.,  
Valley, 09001215,  
LISTED, 1/11/10