

ROGERS PARK MANOR HISTORIC DISTRICT

W. LUNT AVE (NORTH), N. WESTERN AVE (EAST), BOTH SIDES OF W. FARWELL AVE. (EAST) AND N. CALIFORNIA (WEST)



The area of West Rogers Park, or West Ridge, was inhabited first by Potowatomi Indians in the 17th century, followed by German and Luxembourger farmers who settled the area during the 1830s and 1840s. West Ridge was incorporated as a village in 1890 and was annexed to Chicago in 1893. However, interest in wide-scale residential real estate development to fill the open land

between the brickyards and the emerging commercial corridor along Western Avenue would not begin in earnest until after World War I, when the population boom created a scramble for new housing in previously undeveloped parts of the city. National City Realty sold the first parcels of land in the new subdivision of Rogers Park Manor around 1918; the remaining lots were sold over a 15-year period between 1915 and 1930 to willing developers and builders who, in combination with various architects and contractors, built homes in the subdivision one at a time or in small groups of no more than five. This pattern of development gave Rogers Park Manor a sense of diversity in its housing stock that more rigidly planned bungalow neighborhoods lacked.

Bungalow building began in earnest in Rogers Park Manor in 1923; Architects and developers followed a simplified, economical formula for the bungalows in Rogers Park Manor until the later 1920s, when the form of the Chicago bungalow in Rogers Park



underwent a dramatic transformation as more white-collar households took an interest in the area and housing prices rose. These bungalows featured the rounded or polygonal front bays, inconspicuous corner or side entrances, and more costly details like art glass windows that were more typical of late 1920s Chicago bungalows.

Chicago bungalow neighborhoods like Rogers Park Manor offered home buyers more than solid, well-made homes; they made good residential design accessible to middle-class families. Local bungalow architects Benedict J. Bruns, Ernest Braucher, Lyman Allison, and dozens of others experimented with form and stylistic detailing to create bungalows that were truly unique to Chicago. Nowhere is this trend more evident than in Rogers Park Manor, where the early form of the practical and efficient but understated bungalow quickly gave way to large and elaborate homes that challenged the accepted idea of the Chicago bungalow. Developer Edward Zeches and architect



Benedict J. Bruns designed and built a large percentage of the homes in the Rogers Park Manor nomination area. Although not always paired together, Zeches and Bruns were the most influential forces in shaping the development of Rogers Park Manor, and the many other architects,

developers and builders in the district followed in their footsteps when they built bungalows in the neighborhood. Despite the variety of participants, the Rogers Park Manor district exhibits a uniform scale and a sense of cohesiveness because of the predominance of one-and-one-half story brick bungalows.

Like most bungalow districts in Chicago, Rogers Park Manor drew families from a diverse array of ethnic and economic backgrounds together under the common goal of homeownership. Among the more colorful of the neighborhoods residents were known gangsters Timothy (“Big Tim”) Murphy, who was shot and killed in front of his bungalow at 2525 West Morse in 1928, and Joseph Aiello, who lived with his extended family in the two story home at 2553 West Lunt Avenue until his murder in 1930. Murphy’s death may have made Rogers Park Manor front page news, but no doubt residents preferred the less volatile professions of other famous faces in the community, including xylophonist Lou Chiha (“Signor Friscoe”), who recorded twelve records for Edison and was well-known among the vaudeville circuit, and artist George B. Petty. Petty, famous for his female pin-up drawings known as “Petty Girls” which helped launch *Esquire* magazine in 1933 and were distributed in magazines and calendars across the nation, worked from a studio in the basement of his bungalow at 2609 West Coyle. It was here that he designed his most celebrated work, the poster for the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair.