

# GARFIELD PARK

There are two adjacent [Garfield Park](#) communities: East Garfield Park and West Garfield Park, and they are quite different in character. East Garfield Park is the one with the park. It's a get out and walk around place with, as its main attraction, [Garfield Park Conservatory](#). In contrast, West Garfield Park is more of a drive around and see what you can see sort of place ... at least that was what the kind police officer explained to me when he saw me wandering around with a camera around my neck. Actually, he said it a little more forcefully, through the window of his police car ... after which he was happy to spend a few minutes chatting about the local architecture. His parting shot was to advise me that if I must walk around, it would be better to hide my camera beneath my coat, and even better if I walked around East Garfield Park rather than West Garfield Park.

If you go to East Garfield Park, visit the conservatory. It's right next to the [Garfield Park L Station](#) ... so you can go there on the L. If you prefer to drive, there is also good parking at the conservatory. The L station is quite an ornate affair, mounted on the bridge that straddles the intersection of Central Park Avenue with Lake Street. The conservatory, which is just north of the station, was conceived by Jens Jensen and dates from 1906. It is a wonderful glass complex with a classic [Palm House](#) that lures you in to a [lush interior](#). Opposite the Conservatory entrance is the [Flower Vocational High School](#) on [Fulton Street](#). This vintage orange brick building, which dates from 1927, has pleasingly clean lines.

After visiting the conservatory, on a sunny day it's nice to walk around the park, which offers some more architectural eye-candy. Walking back to the L station on Central Park Avenue, and then beyond, you arrive at the 1928 gold-terra-cotta-domed [Field House](#). This building, which has an impressively ornate facade, is sandwiched between two lagoons. To the southwest of the Field House, is a slightly run down nineteenth century [Bandstand](#) - a marble Arabian inspired octagonal masterpiece that boasts a Copper roof which can apparently accommodate a 100-piece orchestra. To the east of the bandstand, on Central Park Boulevard, is [Providence-St. Mel School](#), a fine piece of Tudor Revival architecture from 1929. Finally, to the northwest of the bandstand, at the intersection of Madison Street with Hamlin Boulevard, is another 1920's building: the Spanish Baroque Revival [Midwest Athletic Club](#). You are now at the boundary between East and West Garfield Park ... so back to the car to explore the west.

From the conservatory, drive south along Central Park Avenue to Washington Boulevard, and then head west along Washington Boulevard, through the park, and into West Garfield Park which begins at

at Hamilin Street. If you now continue along Washington Boulevard, there is some interesting architecture on the right side. A few hundred yards along Washington Boulevard there is a high rise: a [retirement home](#). Keep going, and in another couple of hundred yards, at the intersection with Pulaski Road, you come to [Guyon Towers](#). This Moorish inspired red- and cream-brick architecture is another Jens Jensen design, and dates from 1928. Continuing along Washington Boulevard, you will see more vintage residences, including some nice apartment buildings, and some fine [Chicago Greystones](#).

Returning to Guyon Towers, one block north of Washington Boulevard is West End Avenue. A few blocks down this street is the [Tilton Public School](#), an interesting example of Edwardian architecture. Just beyond the school there is a nice row of Victorian single family houses with deep porches and Dutch-style roofs. This is where the kindly police officer expressed concern about my well being, and is a good place to finish.

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