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M

ORGAN PARK

I had heard that [Beverly](#) and [Morgan Park](#) were wonderful pockets of vintage architecture - particularly Arts and Crafts style architecture - on the far southwest side of Chicago. When I visited, I was not disappointed. Morgan Park is a little less affluent than Beverly, its northerly neighbor, but is still a pleasant residential neighborhood that offers many architectural gems.

A good place to start, particularly if you are coming from Beverly, is on South Longwood Drive, at the intersection with 107th Street. This is at the Beverly - Morgan Park boundary. Driving South, Longwood Drive is a nice tree-lined residential street. At 111th Street you arrive at Bohn Park and the 111th Street Metra Station. I parked there and walked around. Across the road there are two churches: the stone built neo-Tudor [Morgan Park Presbyterian Church](#) from 1933, and the brick built prairie style [Morgan Park United Methodist Church](#) from 1912. One has a feeling these two ecclesiastic landmarks vie with each other for business. Until I checked on the web, I had thought the Presbyterian church was older. There is a "founder's stone" on one corner marked with the date 1891. However the original church from 1891 burned down in 1933. One of its original 1891 stones was marked with this date and laid as a corner stone for the new church. From Bohn Park, I walked south on Longwood Drive, crossing 111th Street, and then walked uphill on Lothair Avenue on the right. I was heading for the [Morgan Park Church of God in Christ](#), a Craftsman style church from 1916. As you walk up the hill you can't miss it at the summit. I was hoping to peek inside, but unfortunately it was locked. The church is on the corner of Lothair and Hoyne Avenues. A short way along Hoyne, at its intersection with 111th Street, is another fine landmark building: the [Walker Library](#), with two welcoming entrance towers that are reminiscent of a French Chateau. A short walk to the west, along 111th Street, will bring you to the [Morgan Park Academy](#). There is a mixture of architecture on the campus, including a fine red-brick Tudor Revival affair. The oldest building is the gymnasium, which dates from 1900.

Returning to my car, I explored the area across the railroad tracks to the east of Longwood Drive, along Prospect Avenue. This is another street for a stroll, but this time in a tree-lined residential area: the historic Ridge District. Here there are a string of vintage mansions from the late nineteenth century. My favorite is the [William H. German House](#) from 1884. The houses on either side date from the same period. This is probably the nicest residential area in Morgan Park, but there is another interesting area to the west, just to the east of the Clissold Elementary School on Western Avenue. I found it pleasant walking around the back streets: along and between 110th Street and 110th Place. Here there are some fine vintage houses.

In a place called "Morgan Park" you would expect there to be, somewhere, a large park. The largest is Kennedy Park, on Western Avenue. The [Kennedy Park Field House](#) is an unprepossessing building from the 1960's. Finally, from Kennedy Park I headed south along Western Avenue, and then east along 116th Place, back to Longwood Avenue. At the intersection is the [Mercy Home for Boys and Girls](#), which has a distinctive concrete addition.

Morgan Park is worth a visit, particularly if it is combined with Beverly to the north.

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