

HISTORIC LANDMARK AWARDS

Villa Historic Landmark District



In 2004, the Villa Historic District was awarded a Historic Landmark plaque by the Villa Park Historic Preservation Commission to recognize its significance to the Village of Villa Park. These buildings represent such an important part of Villa Park's heritage and history and its future. The districts location is extremely convenient and accessible.

On November 10, 1908, the subdivision of Villa Park was formed. In 1914, it was incorporated with the Ardmore subdivision and was named Ardmore. Then in 1917, the name was changed to Villa Park. This business district grew around the former Chicago, Aurora and Elgin Railroad at the Villa Avenue stop. Early residents commuted daily to Chicago and workers from the city came to work on the Ovaltine factory site and construction of new housing.

Early developers were Colonel Calhoun, Charles Heisen, Wander Company from Switzerland, and Ballard and Pottinger.

Several commercial buildings were constructed in the late 1910s. The first store was Calhouns Grocery, built in 1910, which is now located at 336 E. Central Boulevard.

In the early days, there was also a dime store, shoe store, soda fountains, drug store, jewelry store, men's and women's apparel shops, hardware store, camera shop, grocery stores, meeting hall, and car dealer located in this thriving district.

The Villa Historic Landmark District consists of a variety of diverse buildings that now services the community and surrounding area in many ways. The former Chicago, Aurora and Elgin Villa Avenue train station, built in 1929, which is now the Historical Society Museum and Resource Center. The former Ovaltine factory buildings, founded in 1917, have been converted to loft apartments by Lincoln Properties, Inc. The 17 stories high factory chimney remains at this site. Also included in this district are the Villa Park Bank, Villa Shopping Center, Lions Field, Community Recreational Center, commercial businesses, shops, taverns, restaurants, service garage, Cortesi Park, former Post Office, Villard Theater Building and shops, and lastly, the Great Western Depot that brought in the Sears Catalog House kits and other construction materials.

This district starts at St. Charles Road south and includes both sides of Villa Avenue to Central Boulevard, Ovaltine Court, one block east on Central Boulevard to Myrtle Avenue, Cortesi Park and its surrounding buildings, Lions Field, and one block east on Kenilworth Avenue.

The Illinois Prairie Path (former CA&E electric train right-of-way) provides a corridor that links this business district with the Ardmore Historic Landmark District. A new access path connects it to Cortesi Park, Great Western bike path, and Lions Field.

Villa Park Historic Preservation Commission — Photograph by Carol Marcus