Community Area #33
Near South Side

Population: 6,828
Number of Structures: 510
Avg. Date of Construction: 1934

Significant Structures: 93

Source: 1990 Census, Harris File, CHRS

(Dots show approximate, rather than specific, locations of significant structures.)

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Near South Side

The Near South Side began as a sparsely settled tract marked by wagon trails leading south around the bend of Lake Michigan. The Henry B. Clarke House (1836) is the only survivor of this first phase of development, and the Greek Revival farmhouse is considered Chicago's oldest building. Railroad construction in the early 1850s brought industries and worker's housing to the "Patch," bounded by Michigan, Indiana, 12th, and 16th. This immigrant community was composed largely of frame shanties, noted for their cheap "balloon-frame" construction, an early Chicago architectural innovation. However, the creation of a horse-drawn streetcar line on South State in 1859, bringing easier access to downtown, encouraged wealthier residents to build homes in the area.

Following the devastation of the 1871 Fire, an enclave of grand mansions for Chicago's new industrial elite grew up near the lakefront along Prairie Avenue, between 16th and 22nd streets. The Keith (1870) and Kimball (1892) mansions in the 1800-block of Prairie are typical of this period's love of opulence, while the John Jacob Glessner House at 1800 S. Prairie marks the development of modern American architecture with its pathbreaking, fortress-like design, contributed by Boston architect H. H. Richardson. Prairie Avenue families worshiped at Second Presbyterian Church (1876; 1900) at 20th and Michigan, with its unparalleled collection of Tiffany-designed stained glass windows.

The city's rapid growth throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought massive change to the
Near South Side. Nearby railroad lines encouraged the construction of warehouses and light manufacturing. Clark and Dearborn, between Roosevelt and Cermak, became known as "the Lovee," lined with brothels and gambling dens. The community area also was home to Chicago's African-American community during the late 19th century, of which a surviving building is Quinn Chapel (1891) at 24th and Wabash.

By the 1910s, Prairie Avenue itself was in decline as residents moved to more fashionable areas, such as the Near North Side or North Shore suburbs. Michigan Avenue became known as "Automobile Row", as a string of terra-cotta ornamented automobile showrooms were built between 22nd and 26th. Other industries continued to move into the area, including the massive R.R. Donnelley-owned Lakeside Press, which occupied a mammoth printing plant at 344 E. Cermak (1912).

The 1910s and 1920s saw the development of Burnham Park, foreseen in the 1909 Plan of Chicago and the last link in Chicago's "necklace" of lakefront parks. Several of Chicago's most beloved institutions were built within the park, including the Field Museum of Natural History (1915), Soldier Field (1920), the Shedd Aquarium (1929), and the Adler Planetarium (1929).

The last fifty years have witnessed the preservation of remaining mansions along Prairie Avenue, the redevelopment of abandoned railroad land for new residential communities, including Dearborn Park and Central Station, and the creation of the burgeoning McCormick Place convention center.

The focus of the Chicago Historic Resources Survey was on buildings erected prior to 1940. Buildings and developments erected after that date generally are not included in the inventory.
Survey information for this community area was accurate at the time it was first surveyed in April 1964. For an explanation of column headings, see page III-1.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Address</th>
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<td>Y Y RD CHURCH</td>
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(Clockwise, from bottom left)
Shedd Aquarium, 1200 S. Lake Shore Dr.
Quinn Chapel, 2401 S. Wabash Av.
Platt Luggage Co., 2301 S. Prairie Av.
Hudson Motor Co., 2222 S. Michigan Av.
(Clockwise, from bottom right)
Glessner House, 1800 S. Prairie Av.
Second Presbyterian Church, 1836 S. Michigan Av.
1925 S. Michigan Av.
Illinois Automobile Club, 2400 S. Michigan Av.
Soldier Field (originally Grant Park Stadium), 425 E. McDermott Dr.
Smith Memorial Building, St. Luke's Hospital, 1431 S. Michigan Av.