

Community Area #62

## West Elsdon

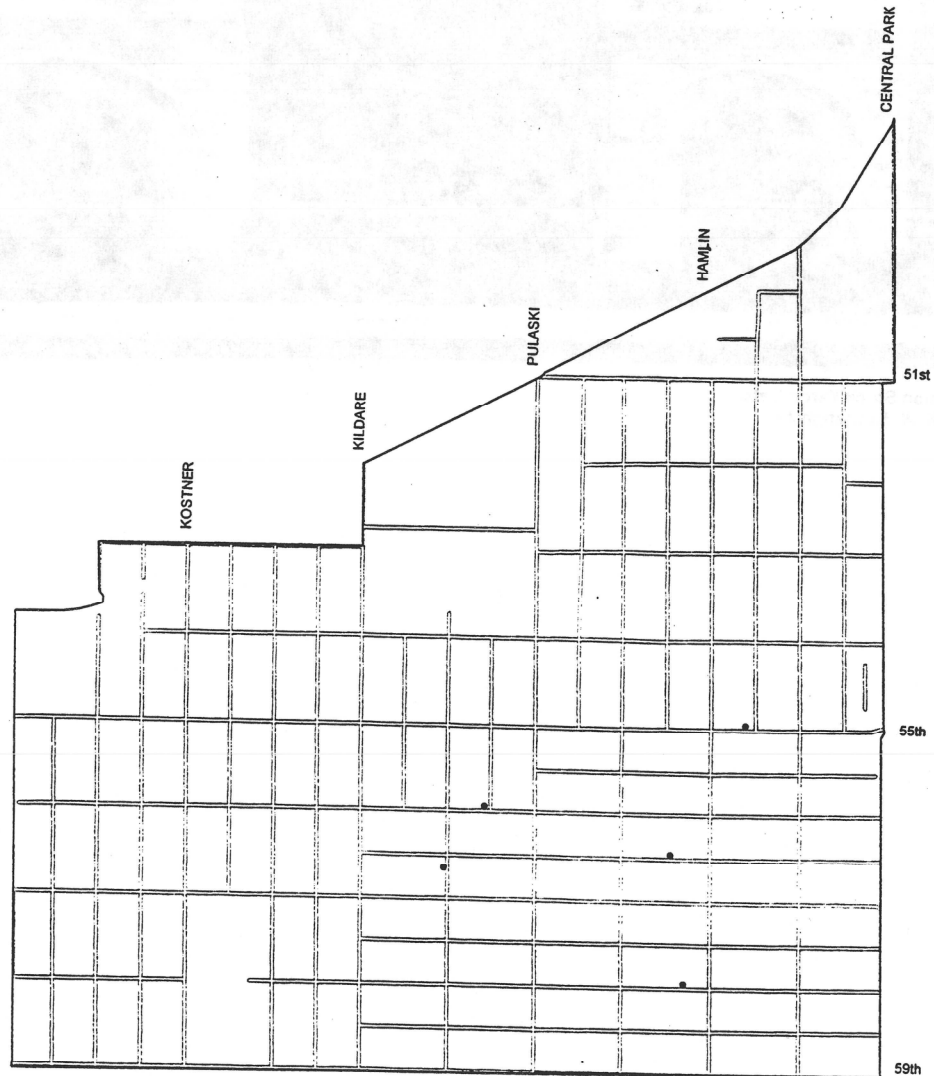
Population: 12,266

Number of Structures: 4,094

Avg. Date of Construction: 1950

**Significant Structures: 5**

Source: 1990 Census, Harris File, CHRS



(Dots show approximate, rather than specific, locations of significant structures.)  
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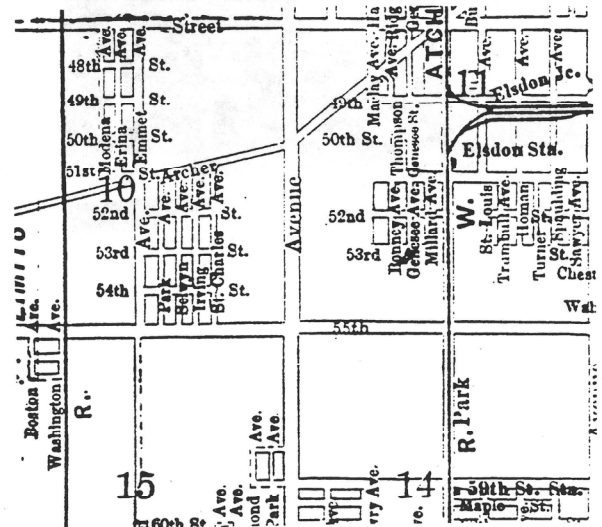
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This community area, which was undeveloped prairie and farmland before 1870, takes its name from a small railroad settlement called Elsdon that developed at 51st Street and Kedzie Avenue (within Community Area # 63 - Gage Park) in the 1880s when the Grand Trunk railroad, running north-south along Central Park Avenue, was built through the area. West of the Grand Trunk, the first subdivision in West Elsdon took place in 1885 from 55th to 59th, west to Pulaski. Poor transportation to the downtown Chicago meant that only about 16 frame houses had been built when the community was annexed by Chicago in 1889 as part of the larger annexation of the Town of Lake, of which West Elsdon was part. A home at 3740 W. 55th is representative of buildings from this early period.

Growth remained slow through the turn of the century, with only about 70 structures, mostly frame houses, built between 51st and 59th streets west of the Grand Trunk railroad by 1905. New railroads spurred some growth, including new industries in nearby Clearing, but settlement of West Elsdon was still limited by poor transportation and limited public improvements.

The Grand Trunk line began offering suburban service at 51st, 55th and 59th streets in the 1910s, and the general citywide building boom of the 1920s saw the total number of buildings in West Elsdon exceed 500. The new buildings were largely brick homes and two-flats, attracting residents who worked in the nearby Clearing, Central and Kenwood industrial districts. Only a few streets were paved and transportation was still poor. A single family home at 3842 W. 56th Place, designed by T. Russ, Jr., remains from the period, as does the Tudor Revival-style Ferdinand W. Peck School at 3822 W. 58th (1925).



An 1890s map of West Elsdon

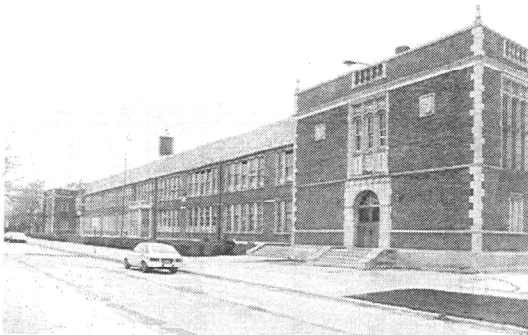
3740 W. 55th St.





3842 W. 56th Pl.

Ferdinand W. Peck School  
3822 W. 58th St.



The depression years of the 1930s saw very little growth in the community, but the streamlined, modern Art Deco style of the era can be found in West Elsdon in the Lourdes High School at 4034 W. 56th (1935) and rectory at 5646 S. Karlov.

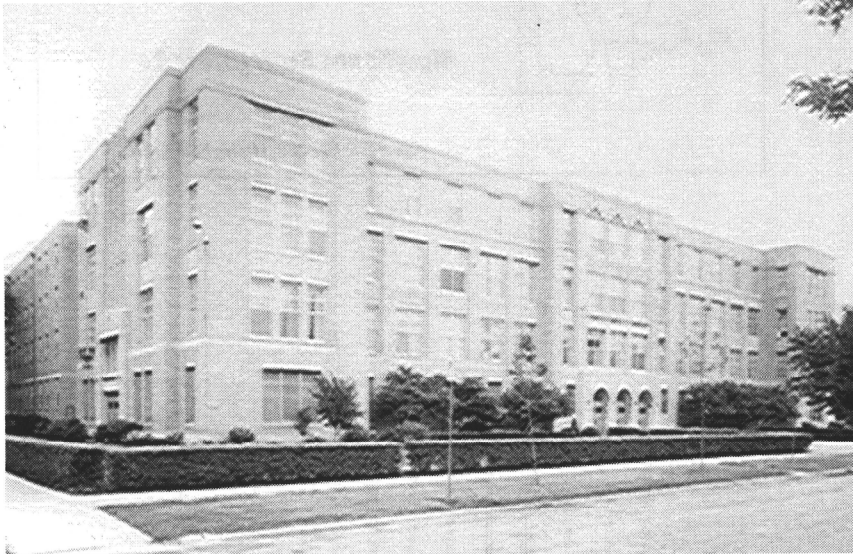
It was with the onset of World War II that West Elsdon finally experienced its boom period of development. The continued growth of nearby industries, the postwar housing shortage, and the rise of automobile transportation combined to promote the construction of thousands of homes and apartments. A commercial district evolved on Pulaski Road, and while little industry located within the community, many of the homes were built for workers in nearby industries. The majority of West Elsdon's residential units have been built since 1950.

*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.*

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West Elsdon

Address	Date	Architect	Building Style	Survey		Building Code Type	PIN	Form #
				LM	IS			
3740 W 55 ST	1880s			N	N	OR SFR	1911330044	622615001
3842 W 56 PL	1920s	RUSS JR., T.		N	N	OR SFR	1914109031	622307001
4034 W 56 ST	1935	SANDEL, MONROE R	ART DECO	N	N	OR SCHOOL	1915213023	621329001
3822 W 58 ST	1925	CHRISTENSEN, JOH	TUDOR REV	N	N	OR SCHOOL	1914121001	622307002
5646 S KARLOV AV	1930s		ART DECO	N	N	OR REL MISC	1915214015	621329002



Lourdes High School  
4034 W. 56th St.

5646 S. Karlov Av.



Survey information for this community area was accurate at the time it was first surveyed in September 1984.  
For an explanation of column headings, see page III-1.