

OUT DL: deny laughing DMITFD: dominant minds think in parallel gutters DWTNDIR: but what the heck do I know C&G: chuckle & grin CID: crying in disgrace CUL: see you later YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR KIDS ARE SAYING ONLINE. CYO: see you online DBA: doing business as usual DL: dead link DLTBBB: don't let the bed bugs bite DIKU: do I know you? EMFBI: excuse me for butting in F2F: face to face FC: fingers crossed FISH: first in, still here FMTYEWTK: far more than you ever wanted to know FOMCI - falling off my chair laughing FTRMMH: from the bottom of my heart FIID:

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Boomerang Beverly

VILLAGE IN THE CITY | Families might leave but they often return for community

July 13, 2007

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amazed that I still have friends I met in grade school. We found that we were coming back to Beverly more and more for events with family and friends, and we decided it made sense to move here. In six weeks we found a brown brick Georgian with an attached garage on a beautiful block with a really big yard."



What's in Beverly?

Home to the Original Rainbow Cone, a praised French bistro and classic burgers, Beverly has something for everyone.

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The Murray D. Hetherington home on South Hamilton is one of many beautiful, historic homes in Beverly.

(Brian Jackson/Sun-Times)

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But the area has always attracted newcomers, like Kirk and Marcia Jones who found themselves back at square one after the purchase of an Evanston home fell through. "We saw a house in the paper, took a ride out and discovered the neighborhood," Kirk Jones said. Twenty-three years, three children and three houses later, they are still here. "It's hard to find a place like Beverly-Morgan Park where a range of affordable housing from the starter to the dream home is all here," he said.

The Reeses came back for a vintage home on a wider-than-usual city lot shaded by leafy oaks and maples. But even more important, the Reeses were drawn back to Beverly by a sense of community so strong that young families leave, but can't stay away. They come back to raise their children, and when children are grown, and it's time to retire to a warmer climate, they don't. Instead, they stay on. Beverly is home.

A diversified, middle class community on the Far Southwest Side of the city, Beverly is reminiscent of the Sauganash neighborhood on the Far Northwest Side. Part of the 19th Ward, Beverly is usually referred to as "clout-heavy" because many politicians with close ties to Mayor Daley make their homes there, including retired Cook County Assessor Tom Hynes, retired state Sen. Jeremiah Joyce and retired Cook County Sheriff Michael Sheahan.

Yes, in Beverly you'll still hear residents identify themselves by their local parish.

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 Let's get into

Only 22 minutes from downtown to 91st Street by the Metra-Rock Island railroad, the neighborhood comprises three areas -- Beverly, W Beverly and Morgan Park. Boundaries run from 87th Street to 119th Street, and from Beverly Woods to Western Avenue until 99th street where the western boundary extends to California Avenue.

Much of Beverly-Morgan Park is designated the Ridge Historic District. The work of architects found here include Frank Lloyd Wright and Walter Burley Griffin, noted for their Prairie Style of architecture; Harry Hale Waterman, who designed the "honeymoon" cottage for his wife and Murray D. Hetherington, whose Cotswold cottage is built of hewn stone.

"Unlike other Chicago neighborhoods, property values here never went into decline. We've never had to deal with gentrification and all the turmoil that carries for families, so residents have deep ties to their schools, churches, businesses and community," said Melody Camp, interim executive director and president of the Beverly Area Planning Association, a nonprofit alliance of neighborhood civic and business associations.

Home renovations are frequent but teardowns are rare, so people are paying a lot of attention to a new Axis Properties and Northern Real Group development of 10 condos with indoor parking and 28 town houses with attached garages and private yards that are being built just east of the Metra Rock Island line at 103rd and Wood Street.

Seniors who want to stay close to family and friends without the burden of caring for a home have reserved 85 percent of the independent living apartments at Smith Village, a \$125 million development at 112th Place and Western Avenue.

The continuing care retirement community will have 152 1- and 2-bedroom apartments for independent seniors, 82 assisted living/memory support centers, 102 skilled nursing beds and two guest suites. Smith Village is designed to provide seniors with a continuum of lifestyle health care and housing options on the same campus as they age. The first residents are expected to move into the independent living apartments this fall, and an estimated 50 new homes in the neighborhood are expected to come up for sale.

New development

As shopping patterns changed, the retail district declined along 95th Street and along Western Avenue. Vacant stores, empty lots and faded facades gave the neighborhood a worn look. Residents complained about a lack of restaurants and retailers. They'd like to see an Old Navy Gap or Trader Joe's.

"Limited retail space and retail parking are hurdles for retailers, BAPA's Camp said. "But the redevelopment of the corner of 103rd and Western Avenue, where the Beverly Bank & Trust and a Walgreens store have gone up, has revitalized an eyesore," she said.

The 103rd Street retail strip from Longwood to Wood Avenue is book-ended by a Starbucks and World Folk Music, a music venue. "Revitalization began with the investment of city dollars for renovation of the streetscape," said Ald. Ginger Rugai (19th).

"Starbucks brings residents out to enjoy a summer evening," Camp said. And indeed, the Starbucks has become both starting and ending point for the Beverly Bike Club, whose members start and end their evening rides there every Thursday.

Neighborhood retail development is usually a very slow undertaking. It takes time to assemble the land -- especially when landowners are hesitant -- to attract retail and to complete construction. Retailers tend to shy away from urban neighborhoods when there are nearby

suburban neighborhoods that are easy to get into, said Andrew Mooney, senior program director of LISC/Chicago, a nonprofit that works with local commercial development corporations. "Beverly is a stronger set of retail and certainly a stronger market than it has been in the past," he said.

"There is roughly \$160 million in new development under way in Beverly," Rugai said.

Construction has begun at five sites: a new fire station, a new Beverly branch library, Smith Village retirement community at 112th Place and Western Avenue, Beverly Place condos and town houses on 103rd Street and 23,000 feet of new retail space on the southeast corner of 95th and Western Avenue, developed by V-Land Corp. Zifkin Realty and Development has plans to develop the northeast corner of 95th and Western as well. Together the two retail spaces will form a gateway to area shopping.

Zifkin has already proven the Beverly market with the construction of the Shops of Beverly in 2005, Mooney said. Fully leased within three months of opening, its tenants include Panera Bread, Chipotle, EB Games, Chase, Nextel, Cold Stone Creamery, Accelerated Rehab and Score Educational Testing. The center at 95th and Oakley won the Chicago Neighborhood Development Award for a for-profit project.

That retail development -- like so many in urban areas -- faced challenges.

"Beverly is a gem of a neighborhood, but there is a stigma against the South Side, that includes a racial bias, that keeps retailers from even considering locating there," said Todd Cabanban, principal of Zifkin Realty & Development.

"Every single one of the tenants first told me 'no' when I approached them about the Shops of Beverly," he said. "But when we got people in the car -- for a 15-minute drive through North Beverly and other parts of the neighborhood -- they were shocked at the quality of the housing. It was refreshing to see the look in their eyes," he added.

"[Finally] when Coldstone Creamery first opened, it was a top store, beating out its stores in downtown Naperville and Lincoln Park," he said.

Schools

Respected schools are found in Beverly-Morgan Park. Annie Keller Regional Gifted Center in nearby Mount Greenwood is the top elementary school in the state based on 2006 Illinois Standards of Achievement Test. Well-regarded Roman Catholic elementary schools include Christ the King, St. Barnabas, St. John Fisher, St. Cajetan and St. Walter. Private schools include Morgan Park Academy, Plaid Academic Ridge Academy and Council Oaks Montessori.

The Chicago Public Schools implemented the first authorized International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program here in 2002. All sixth-grade students in five elementary schools -- Kellogg, Sutherland, Clissold, Barnard and Esmond -- enroll in the program, which emphasizes high-level learning, communication skills and global awareness, including French or Spanish instruction.

Qualified students continue the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Morgan Park High School and graduate with an internationally recognized degree.

"My daughter, Becky, was in the first graduating class of the International Baccalaureate Program in 2002," said Peggy Goddard, Local School Council Community Representative for Morgan Park High School. "It truly was an excellent academic experience for her. "

Goddard says other selective enrollment programs at Morgan Park High School -- the 7th-12th Grade Academic Center -- offer students qualify an accelerated curriculum: These are the World Language and International Studies programs.

Serious overcrowding at Morgan Park High School has contributed to security problems that concern residents. They'd like to see Chica Public School officials and the Chicago Police Department pay more attention to security issues.

Maureen Cullen is a Chicago-based free-lance writer

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