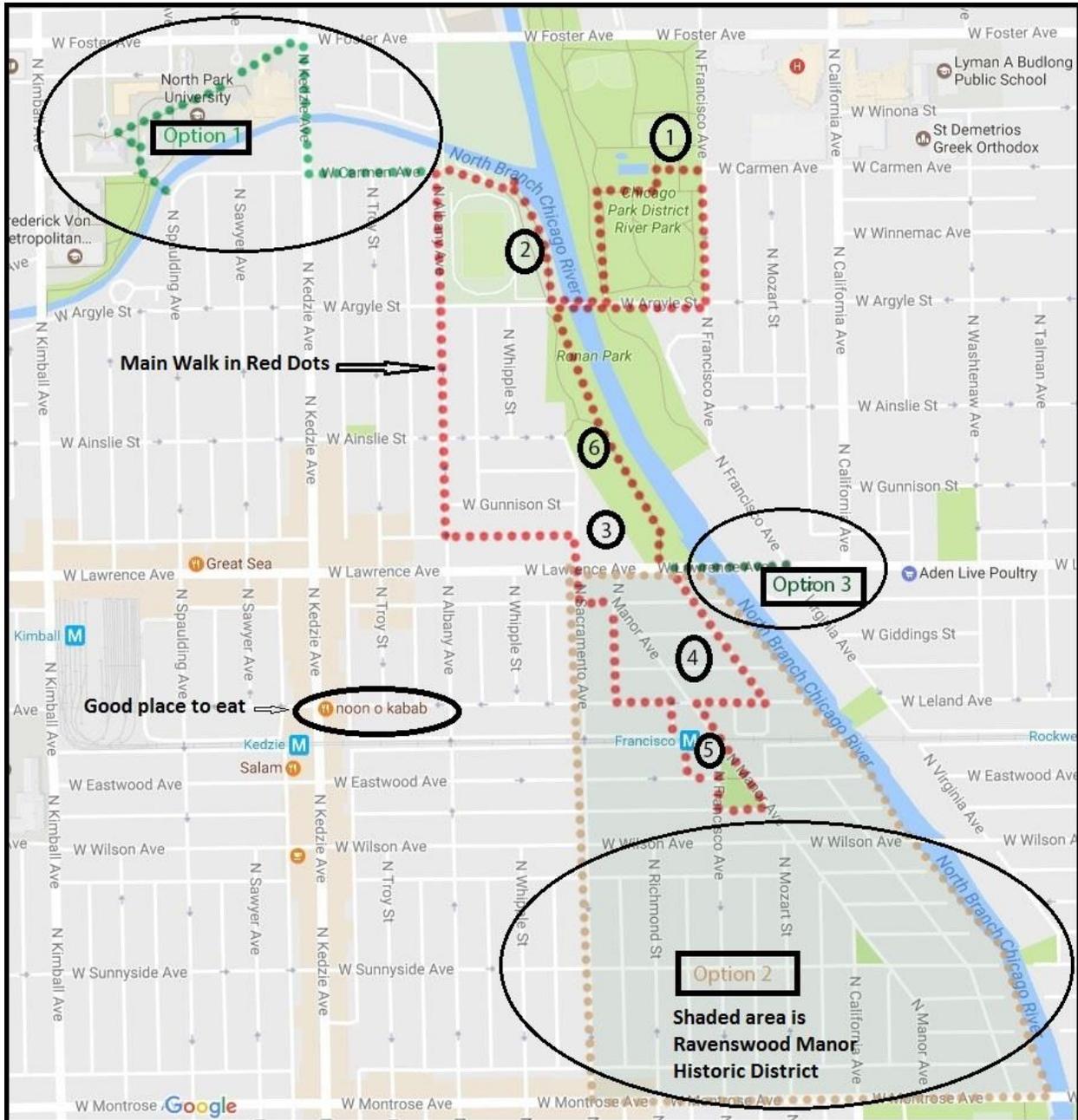


East Albany Park and Ravenswood Manor

The Walk:



This walk takes you to the very eastern part of Albany Park and even spills slightly over the border into North Park and Ravenswood. The western part of Albany Park is home to North Mayfair, another historic district, and will be the focus of another walk.

East Albany Park and Ravenswood Manor

German and Swedish immigrants initially settled the Albany Park area. After 1912, the area became home to a large number of Russian Jews and remained predominately Jewish through the 1950s. After the Second World War, many Jewish families moved north to Lincolnwood and Skokie. The suburban exodus led Albany Park into economic and social decline. In the 1970s, 70% of the commercial property along Lawrence Avenue stood vacant. Empty buildings attracted illegal drug trade, prostitution and gangs.

Relief came in 1978 when the city government, the North River Commission and the Lawrence Avenue Development Corporation cooperated to improve Albany Park's appearance and business development.

After the 1970s, Albany Park became a port of entry for immigrants from Asia and Latin America and today it is one of the most ethnically diverse zipcodes in the United States. Over 40 languages are spoken in its public schools.

(from [Encyclopedia of Chicago](#) and [Wikipedia](#))

Main Walk (marked in red dots on the map)

1. River Park 5100 N. Francisco Ave.

Chicago architect Clarence Hatzfeld designed the impressive brick fieldhouse with a three-story central section and a long wing on either end. It was constructed in 1929 to replace the original structure.

Special note: There is an interesting ***Potawatomi Village*** mural in the fieldhouse. It was donated to Potawatomi Park on the North side by 10 students who were taking Potawatomi Art Class. The painting depicts Chief Alexander Robinson, who wears an American style suit, talking with two Native Americans in tribal garb, in the midst of a bustling Potawatomi village. The son of a Scottish fur-trader father and Potawatomi mother, Chief Alexander Robinson (1787–1872) was instrumental in negotiating several early-nineteenth-century treaties between Native Americans and the United States government. In return for persuading tribal members to peacefully abandon the area, the federal government granted Robinson a two-square-mile property west of Chicago. The chief's family occupied this land for many decades. When the art students decided to paint the village scene, Robinson's granddaughter granted them permission to use the property to help create the painting. Today, the land is part of the Robinson Reserve, part of the Cook County Forest Preserve.

First displayed at Potawatomi Park, the painting was removed sometime after the demolition of the park's original field house. In 2008, after the Chicago Park District had it fully conserved, the mural was moved to the auditorium of the River Park field house.

River Park is located at the convergence of the Chicago River and canal and offers a rich wildlife habitat, excellent fishing and a canoe launch. It has a swimming pool and an interactive water playground in the summer months.

The artificial turf soccer field and running track, as well as a soft-surface playground, draw visitors from around the city. The park also features seven tennis courts and two baseball fields.

2. Dam and Waterfall: Cross the river to the west side of the park and walk north to where the river splits. You will find the only dam and waterfall in the city of the Chicago. You will see what appears to be an abandoned little path in the bushes that line the river where it turns west after the dam. It is short, but interesting.

After you've explored the park, meander over to Lawrence and Sacramento to

3. Global Gardens, 2954 W. Lawrence: This empty lot was transformed into a vibrant farm where over 100 refugee families grow vegetables. This provides refugees access to fresh vegetables as well as reconnects displaced farmers with soil and food production. They also sell their vegetables at the Horner Park Farmers Market nearby. Visitors are welcome, so walk right in and look around. In addition to seeing thriving and abundant vegetable plots, you will notice gardeners of every race and nationality. You can enter through the main entrance on Sacramento, walk through and exit at a gate in the middle of the garden on Lawrence.

4. Ravenswood Manor: Ravenswood Manor is on the National Register of Historic Places because 96% of its buildings were constructed between 1909 and 1933 and are intact today. Ravenswood Manor represents architectural trends and urban residential neighborhood development in Chicago in the early 20th century. Chicago Bungalows and American Foursquares sit alongside high end architect designed, historic revival style residences. What also makes it so charming is its location along the river. Early brochures touted it as a "Motor Boat Colony" complete with a club house for the perpetual use of its residents. Resources for a more in depth look at this area are listed in Option 2.

5. Francisco Brown Line Station, 4648 N. Francisco : This station was built in 1907 and became the impetus for the development of Ravenswood Manor. It is all original except for its doors which needed to be widened to comply with ADA requirements. Ellen Harvey's "Carpet" mosaic of hand cut marble on the ramp in and out of the station looks like an oriental carpet and it is a beautiful and welcoming transition into the community. The tracks are on grade and the station feels like a train stop in a small community. This is further enhanced by all the cute coffee and sandwich shops that sit right next to the station and patronized by commuters, residents and families.

Make your way back to Lawrence just west of the river. Cross Lawrence and enter Ronan Park. Take the wood chip path along the river and head north.

6. Ronan Park Restored in 2002, the Ronan Park includes 3 acres of naturalized river edge habitat along the North Branch of the Chicago River. A wood chip path in the park parallels the river, making Ronan Park a perfect spot for bird watching or a nature walk.

Across the river near Lawrence, you will notice a large, elegant, Art Deco building you might mistake for a fieldhouse. It is actually the North Branch Pumping station, a sewage pumping station built in 1929.

Ronan Park honors Ensign George Ronan, who died in the Fort Dearborn Massacre on August 15, 1812, when Potawatomi warriors routed the Federal forces at Chicago. Ronan was the first West Point graduate to fall in battle.

Optional Excursions:

1. North Park University, 3225 W. Foster: North Park University's roots reach back to a Minneapolis church basement in 1891, where classes in language, and business gave Swedish immigrants the education and skills they needed to prosper in America. With an offer of land in Chicago, the school moved to the North Park neighborhood just beyond the city limits.

Old Main, the first building on campus, was completed in 1894. The Georgian Revival structure housed all departments of the school, from classrooms, library, and faculty offices to sleeping quarters, gymnasium, and dining room. In the Twenties, pilots used the cupola atop Old Main as a landmark by which to locate Orchard Field (now O'Hare International Airport). The cupola was the tallest point on the city's north side.

From the beginning, North Park has expanded and adapted its educational mission to the times. At various points in its history, North Park was an academy, junior college, and four-year liberal arts college. They became a university, with a theological seminary, in 1997.

Campus facilities have been extensively renovated, including the LEED-certified Johnson Center for Science and Community Life, opened in 2014; the 2006 addition of the Helwig Recreation Center; the 2004 construction of the Holmgren Athletic Complex for football, softball, and baseball; and the 2001 construction of the Brandel Library.

We enjoyed walking this pretty and well maintained campus.

A [Map of the University](https://www.northpark.edu/) and more information can be found at their website: <https://www.northpark.edu/>

2. Ravenswood Manor Historic District: This historic district is shaded in pale green and will be interesting no matter where you roam within it. However, there are several walking tours of the district outlined on the Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association website: <http://ravenswoodmanor.com/walking-tours/>. Also there is a listing of all the homes in the historic district in the National Historic Landmark application: <http://ravenswoodmanor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/NationalRegisterHistoricDistrictApplication.pdf>

3. Cambodian Association 2831 W. Lawrence: A walk through the museum and memorial is very moving as the story of the Civil War in Cambodia, especially the Khmer Rouge Regime of 1975 – 1979, is told through multimedia displays, archives, narratives and artifacts.

Resources: [Wikipedia](#), [River Park](#), [Ronan Park](#), [Global Gardens](#), [Cambodian Association of Illinois](#)