

### **E**nglewood

This low income community in Southwest Chicago is not for the casual visitor. You need a reason to go there. The residential streets are not very photogenic and, for a predominantly African-American neighborhood, the commercial streets are less colorful than you might hope. Most of the vintage single family houses have seen better days. Many are boarded up and occasionally, but not occasionally enough, burnt out. On my second visit to [Englewood](#), the smell of burning tires wafting in the early morning air made me wonder about the reasons for so many burnt dwellings.

However, for the hardcore curious, there is some architectural eye candy. Let's start with "[The Yale Building](#)" on 66th street. Built in 1893, this beautifully restored seven storied apartment building has some nice Victorian embellishments, not counting the senior citizens which it now accommodates. Not all of the old buildings in Englewood are as well taken care of. An example badly needing some TLC is the Classical Revival style [South Side Masonic Temple](#) on South Green Street. This 1921 building has been empty for two decades and is steadily deteriorating. It's interior rooms are decorated in a variety of styles, including Art Deco, Beaux Arts Classical, Egyptian Revival, and Islamic Revival. Let's hope someone comes to the rescue. A short walk to the North of the temple, there is another notable 1920's building in better condition: the old [Engine Company 84 fire station](#) built in 1929. Now, alas, replaced by a bigger and better facility on 59th Street.

Although the area boasts few landmark buildings, the Englewood community makes up for it by supporting a hodge-podge of churches. I don't mean church-like churches, although there are plenty of those, but un-church-like buildings advertising singular forms of Christianity, with names like "[Wards Chapel M.B. Church of God](#)", "[Spiritual Awakening Church](#)", and "[House of Prayer](#)". I found 39 Englewood churches listed on the web, that's thirteen per square mile. However, none of the three churches noted above were on the web list, so the true density of churches must be impressive indeed.

Finally, Englewood's big green space is [Hamilton Park](#). It has some beautiful old trees, space for baseball and other field sports, and a rather plain field house. I found it a little disappointing compared with other big parks in the region, but better than nothing.