HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Elgin boasts a wide variety of housing stock – modest cottages stand next to ornate mansions, and brick flats have been built by handsome, single-family dwellings. This diversity of architecture is associated with Elgin’s unique industrial and residential growth. In the mid-19th century, Elgin’s two major industries were watchmaking and dairy products. As a result, business owners, managers, and workers lived alongside each other in a mix of homes that today expresses Elgin’s rich historical and architectural character.

To protect our community’s heritage, the Elgin City Council and other community leaders have designated four historic districts. Gifford Park, Elgin’s first local historic district, was designated in 1981, and successfully placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The Elgin National Watch Factory Historic District, was added in 1997.

HISTORY HUBS

The three Museums serve as Stopping Points for Elgin’s NearEast BikeCHAIN Project. Maps can be picked up on site, bike racks are present, and some parking is available.

Elgin History Museum 847-742-4248
360 Park St. elginhistory.org
Open Year Round: Wed - Sat, noon - 4pm

Elgin Public Museum 847-741-6655
225 Grand Av. elginpublicmuseum.org
Open Summer: Tues - Sun, noon - 4pm
Fall/Winter/Spring: Sat & Sun, noon - 4pm

Fire Barn #5 Museum 847-697-6242
533 St. Charles St. elginfirebarnno5.com
March - December: Sat & Sun, noon - 4pm

CELL PHONE TOUR SITES: 847-686-4380 Signs located throughout Elgin’s center city describe historic significance.

Bike CHAIN Route
Fox River Trail

* Listed on the NATIONAL REGISTER