

Your Place 12 Section 8 Chicago Tribune, Friday, November 12, 1993 WC

Apartments

Where to look • What to rent • How to bargain



Photo for the Tribune by Tim Boyle
Sharon Bakos parks outside in a village-owned lot right next to her Oak Park apartment building for \$99 every three months.



Tribune photo by Carl Wagner
Car valet Keith Strong washes a car at River Plaza's heated indoor garage, where apartment residents pay \$155 a month for a reserved parking spot. The car washes cost extra.

Between the lines

A parking guide for your automobile

By Karen Schwartz
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

When searching for a perfect apartment, you'll likely consider price, security, convenience and amenities. The same should hold true in hunting for a home for your car.

And just as you'll find in looking for an apartment, those variables are, well, variable. So, we've checked out the offerings in different neighborhoods to help you better know what your choices are, what they'll cost and where they're available.

Parking venues range from heated indoor garages—valet or self-park—to open, unguarded lots. And there are several rungs on the ladder from bottom to top.

If you've chosen a luxury apartment in a glittering high-rise, parking might be first-class as well.

And heated indoor parking may be worth the price this winter: There'll be no scraping of windshields or shivering in a frozen car, waiting for the heater to work.

"If you need your car to get to work, a garage space might be worth the extra money," says George Griparis of Apartment Express, a Lisle-based company that maintains a database of furnished and unfurnished apartments in the city and suburbs. That extra money can run more than \$150 a

month in some city high-rises.

Your finances, however, may dictate that you park your car in a less costly space, maybe in a nearby open lot or in an outdoor space right outside your building. Some buildings offer two levels of parking—indoor and outdoor—with prices reflecting the difference in shelter.

But this brings up another factor—perhaps the most important: security.

If you opt for a less expensive parking space in an open lot or in a neighbor's garage, will you feel safe walking from your car to your apartment late at night? "It's important to find parking that's well-lit, something near your building so that you don't have a long walk from your car to your apartment," says Griparis.

And those security concerns extend to the vehicle itself. After all, you're trying to protect the car—if not from the elements, then

from potential thieves and vandals. Ask yourself: Is the lot guarded? What access does the public have to it? Even indoors, spaces may be open to non-residents. How does this affect security? Is the lot open or is there entry-card access?

Even in a guarded, heated indoor garage there are choices to make. Valet parking brings your car directly to you, so you don't have to venture into the recesses of a deserted garage. However, it can be a hassle to have to hand over your car to an attendant or wait for one—especially if you're going to be in and out several times that day.

Self-park is the alternative. But if your spot isn't assigned you may have to search out a space even though you're paying for one.

Important aside: Before you decide on any
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Parking

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parking lot or garage, make sure the spaces are wide and long enough to accommodate your vehicle.

To help you make up your mind about parking options, we've taken a spin around the city and suburbs and sampled what various buildings and lots have to offer.

Parking is important, even in neighborhoods where most residents can walk to their jobs. In the Burnham Park neighborhood south of the Loop, on-street parking spaces and, in-door garage spaces are limited, so many residents "are forced to use the open lots," says Anne Fornshell, assistant director of the Burnham Park Planning Board.

The lots, most of which are self-park, allow parking for area residents and the general public; in many cases attendants are on duty until mid-evening. Costs vary, but monthly fees charged for open lot parking—often \$100 a month or less—tend to be lower than those charged at covered facilities.

Farther south, prospective renters of the Windermere House apartments often inquire about off-street parking accommodations because of the scarcity of on-street parking in Hyde Park, according to Helen Clarke,

manager of the apartments at 1642 E. 56th St.

The building offers tenants (no visitor parking is allowed) two types of parking, both of which are self-park. Indoor parking accommodations, which provide protection from the elements, are available; residents pay \$85 a month to park in an assigned space in the building's indoor, non-heated garage. Assigned, outdoor spaces are also available for \$65 a month in the open parking lot located just above the indoor garage. Though there are no attendants on duty, security cameras are positioned in the entire parking facility.

Some indoor garages are heated and may offer extra services to users, thus upping the cost of parking. The 24-hour indoor heated garage at Printers Square apartments, 700 S. Federal St., is the only indoor heated garage facility in the Burnham Park neighborhood, according to Fornshell. The monthly rate for residents and non-residents is \$140.

Valet service is also offered at River Plaza's indoor heated garage at 405 N. Wabash Ave. Residents and non-residents can also pay \$10 to have their cars washed. Reserved parking costs \$190 a month for non-residents and \$155 for residents. Unreserved parking for both residents and non-residents is \$130 a month.

Plentiful free parking is a condition associated with suburban

living. But it's not true everywhere. Some communities ban on-street overnight parking.

For example, Oak Park bans on-street overnight parking in many sections of the village. As a result, many apartment dwellers have to spend a fair amount of time finding a permanent place to park. A small number of residents park behind their apartment buildings, and others pay for parking wherever it is available: in a village-owned lot or in a neighbor's garage.

Apartment dweller Sharon Bakos is one Oak Park resident fortunate enough to find parking in a lot adjacent to her apartment building; in fact, such parking arrangements are what sold her on the apartment.

Bakos pays the village \$99 every three months for a sticker that enables her to park 24 hours a day in a village-owned lot right next to her building. Though ideally she'd prefer covered parking to keep the snow off her car, for now she feels lucky to have found parking so close to where she lives.

People who live in the Mansions of Mount Shire apartments in northwest suburban Arlington Heights can choose from several parking arrangements. Tenants of the "Mansions" can park free in a well-lit lot adjacent to the apartments or can pay \$75 a month for their own non-heated garage, complete with garage-door opener.

Those who live in the "Mount Shire" apartments can also park at no cost in a well-lit outdoor parking lot or, for \$55 a month, in a non-heated multi-car garage (five cars per garage), which is adjacent to their apartments.

Then there are renters like La Vaughn Jones, a Ravenswood resident, who currently parks his car on the street and wouldn't have it any other way. Jones lives on Paulina Street, which has a large number of apartments so that "after 8 or 9 p.m., it's difficult to find a parking space."

To remedy the situation, Jones frequently parks his car the next street over, on Hermitage Avenue, which has a lot of single-family homes and garages for homeowners. Or he finds a space on nearby Sunnyside Avenue, where it's harder to find parking because of the large number of three-flat apartments, but much easier than on Paulina.

As for future living arrangements, Jones makes it clear he'll probably choose not to live in a congested area such as Wrigleyville or Lincoln Park, where parking spaces are much harder to come by. What about living in an apartment building that has indoor parking? "Possibly," says Jones, "but I have an objection to having \$75 to \$100 slapped on my rent for the privilege of parking in some building's facility."

A rental handbook

The 1993 edition of the Tenant-Landlord Handbook is being offered by the Chicago Council of Lawyers, the Fund for Justice and the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago.

Written by a joint committee of the council and foundation, the handbook details the rights and obligations of tenants and landlords within the City of Chicago. It covers such topics as oral and written leases; housing discrimination; and terminating the landlord-tenant relationship.

The same organizations are offering a Legal Services Directory of free and low-cost legal services.

In addition to addresses and phone numbers, the directory includes information about office hours, clientele served, fees, whether walk-ins are accepted, and types of services provided by each agency.

The cost of the Tenant-Landlord Handbook is \$11.95; the Legal Services Directory is available for \$5.

To order either or both publications, send a check or money order made out to the Fund for Justice to One Quincy Court Building, 220 S. State St., Suite 800, Chicago, Ill. 60604. Attention: Publications sales.

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