



The Glory of Rail

TINLEY PARK 80TH AVENUE STATION CELEBRATES COMMUNITY'S RAIL LEGACY

BY DOUGLAS OGUREK, LEGAT ARCHITECTS

On a Saturday night, people in formal wear gather in Tinley Park's new 80th Avenue train station. They're not there to catch a train to Chicago's Loop, 35 miles to the northwest. Nor are they passing through on their way home from an enchanting downtown soiree.

Rather, the people sheltered by the station's Douglas Fir wood ceilings and warmed by its stone fireplace are there to stay. It's a wedding reception.

Whereas only a downpour could drive some people into the old 80th Avenue station, its replacement has joined its crosstown partner, the Oak Park Avenue station, as a regional destination that celebrates its village's rail history.

Tinley Park Mayor Edward J. Zabrocki said, "The facility will exceed our commuters' needs and become a source of community pride, area-wide recognition, and other advantages that benefit the entire region."

A STRONG TRACK RECORD

The train tracks that adorn Tinley Park's village logo pay tribute to the community's rich railroad history. In 1890, the community took its name from the community's first railroad master, Samuel Tinley, Sr.

Ten years ago, the village set out to build new stations that would display its respect for rail. The first, the Oak Park Avenue station, arrived in 2003. A few years later, the American Institute of Architects named that station in its "150

Great Places in Illinois" list.

Then came the next challenge: the creation of a newer, larger 80th Avenue train station. After considering twenty architecture firms for that station, Tinley Park selected Legat Architects, which also designed the village's Oak Park Avenue station.



The design of the new station had to achieve the first station's success, embody the village's values, and withstand 2,400 daily riders. Today, the new 80th Avenue station—the fourth busiest in the Metra system—stands as a sanctuary for the flustered commuter, the curious visitor, and the proud resident.

Zabrocki said, "We gave [Legat Architects] a challenge: you created a station that's probably one of the finest in the Chicago area. You are literally competing with yourself. Can you outdo yourself? I think they did."

THE GLORY OF RAIL CONTINUES ON PAGE 24

BYGONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Designer Ted Haug of Legat Architects drew inspiration from the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Architect Henry Hobson Richardson devised the style in the late nineteenth century to create a strong civic impression for facilities that play an important public role.

The fifty-foot-tall clock tower that soars over surrounding facilities creates a community focal point. Stone and brick walls with copper trim and slate roofs add muscle to the 5,600-square-foot station. A stone arch identifies the main entry, which leads to a Great Hall with a 25-foot ceiling.

The station also offers a full-service café and an Internet café. Commuters who once avoided a tiny station with concrete floors can enjoy the stone fireplace and terrazzo floors.

“The design reflects the grand era of train travel,” said Haug. “In the Great Hall, the high ceilings and openness create a monumental feel. But in the café area, there’s a more intimate, lodge-like atmosphere.”

The station offers a pedestrian underpass, three trackside warming shelters, a bicycle rack, and “kiss-and-ride” drop-off lanes for commuters. The project also includes ADA improvements, such as widening a narrow platform, and closing a one-foot gap between the platform and the trains.



Masonry proportions, detailing, and decoration reflect traditional construction methods and create a sense of solidity and monumentality.



A RICHARDSONIAN REMINDER

The design of the Tinley Park 80th Avenue station respects the “old-world charm” and traditional values of a 160-year-old community. Strong masonry masses, deep-cut windows, recessed entrances, and stone arches stay true to the Richardsonian Romanesque style that inspired it.



Project designer Ted Haug said, “The design and its classical elements create a facility durable enough to handle the daily commute, yet elegant enough to host receptions and community events.”

PATHWAY AND PLAZA

The pathway that connects the parking lot and the facility’s south entrance features a plaza named after Tinley Park’s current Village Clerk and retired Brigadier General Patrick E. Rea.

The walkway’s bricks honor individuals, and granite monuments that border the walk represent each branch of the military. The path leads to benches and a curving concrete wall embedded with bronze plaques.

RAIL MATTERS

The 80th Avenue station has transformed from an overcrowded eyesore into a source of pride. It connects its citizens to one of the nation’s economic, technological, and transportation epicenters. However, in an era of stress and constant forward movement, the station stands as a shrine to community and tranquility... a place to buy a coffee, sit outside, and watch trains and people.



To Tinley Park, rail matters. And the new 80th Avenue station is a testimony in brick and stone. Zabrocki said, “This is something that could stand for a hundred years and be a symbol of what this village represents.”

Photographs copyright Connor Steinkamp, Steinkamp Photography