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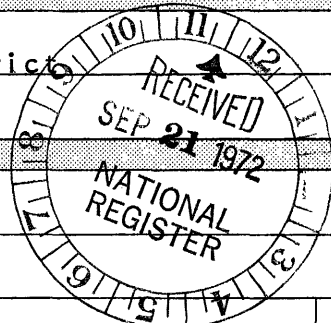
Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Kentucky	
COUNTY:	Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
	DEC 5 1972	



1. NAME

COMMON:
St. James-Belgravia Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Southern Exposition Site

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
See attached map

CITY OR TOWN:
Louisville

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21 COUNTY: Jefferson CODE: 111

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mutiple public & private

STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Louisville STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Jefferson County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
527 West Jefferson Street

CITY OR TOWN: Louisville STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Survey Of Historic Sites In Kentucky

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN: Frankfort STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: _____

COUNTY: _____

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FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Architecturally, the major significance of the houses which were built on the site of the Southern Exposition of 1883-87 is the diversity of styles, dwelling types, and scale within a limited chronological range, between the time of the first real estate development of the courts in 1891 and the adjacent streets and the First World War. These houses range from the magnificent limestone Conrad mansion, through fine brick and stucco free-standing houses with stone and terra cotta trim, early experimental examples of apartment housing, duplexes, and grouped rowhouses, to modest vernacular brick and wooden dwellings on the fringes of the area (Sixth & Hill Streets).

The earlier houses on St. James & Belgravia Courts, and along 4th Street, are mainly very large, elaborate houses turreted and ornamented, though right from the start there were examples of more sober design relying on beautifully tinted brick and chaste stone detail. The former produced a number of fantastic facades, rich in plasticity and imagination as well as craftsmanship, probably reflecting a competitive spirit among both architects (almost none of whose names has yet been traced) and patrons. The more opulent mansions and some of their smaller but no less richly ornamented imitators, combined the stylistic mannerisms of both H.H. Richardson and Richard Morris Hunt, the two great Paris-trained, American post-Civil War architects who dominated the so-called Brown Decades and Gilded Age respectively, Richardson's style, more personal and powerful in spite of his relatively short career (he died in 1885 while the Southern Exposition was still thriving) juxtaposed bold, simple and smoothly molded masses to an almost "primitive" ornamental style featuring Romanesque round arches, and naturalistic foliage often half-concealing animal heads, rough-surfaced masonry casting rich shadows and freely arranged asymmetrical openings. The Richardson type culminates in the Conrad mansion; said to have been intended to house the Governor of the Commonwealth, could the Capitol have been lured to Louisville.

The influence of Richard Morris Hunt was more eclectic, reflecting the genteel aspirations of the merchant princes of the day; he drew on a number of stylistic sources, often oscillating between the late Gothic and Early Renaissance periods in France for his great chateaux on New York's Fifth Avenue. These have been echoed without apology in many houses in the St. James area, reaching climax in the superb cluster of rowhouses on Fourth Street between Belgravia Court and Hill Street, with their sparking skyline of turrets, wrought-iron cresting and chimneys on steeply-pitched hip roofs, their highly ornamented yet severely ordered terra cotta surface ornament, and their projecting porches complemented by deeply recessed window and door openings. These fine houses combine order with imagination, individual identity with a conspicuous sense of urban relationship, providing both a uniform street wall on 4th Street and effective visual accents to turn the corners on Hill and Belgravia.

(see continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

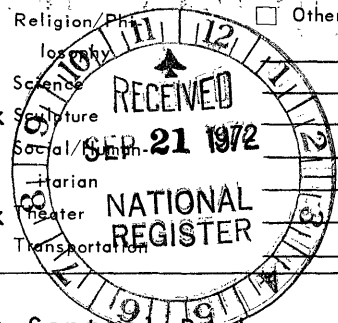
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1883-1887**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Community | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Maritime | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The St. James Court-Belgravia Court-Central Park area, a continually viable example of urban planning in the late 19th century, took its shape at the conclusion of the great Southern Exposition (1883-87). In fact, it owes much of its particular character to the Exposition, which left as part of its heritage an unusually large square block (about 23 acres of open land) in the midst of a rapidly developing residential area.

The Southern Exposition, which opened August 1, 1883, was called by Harper's Weekly (Aug. 4, 1883, "one of the most significant and most hopeful of all enterprises that have been undertaken in the New South" and the "most ambitious that has been undertaken in this country with the exception of the Centennial," (the Philadelphia exposition of 1876 that marked the 100th anniversary of American independence.)

Financed entirely by Louisville capital, the Exposition was designed to focus attention on the city, by the Falls of the Ohio and on the South, which was the principal market of its merchants and manufacturers. It was to display the progress made by the South from its nadir of defeat in the Civil War less than 20 years earlier. It was thus an important event nationally and President Chester A. Arthur felt it imperative to accept the invitation to open the Exposition.

The Exposition building itself-some 13 acres under roof-occupied most of the area between Magnolia Street on the north, Hill Street on the south, 4th Street on the east, and 6th Street on the west; the present-day area of St. James and Belgravia Courts and the surrounding housing.

In addition, Bidermann duPont, whose estate occupied the entire square block (now Central Park) north of the Exposition Site, permitted use of his grounds as an extension of the Exposition area, a place for promenading and picknicking. An art gallery and an electric railway, built by pioneer experimenter Stephen Field, also was located on Dupont's 17 acres.

(see continuation sheets)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Johnston, J. Stoddard, Memorial History Of Louisville, 1899
2. Brown, Dr. Theodore M., Old Louisville, 1961.
3. Briney, Melville, Fond Recollection, series in The Louisville Times, 1955.
4. Morgan, James D., "Louisville's New Look In The Old City: Face-lift in Belgravia-St. James Courts," Louisville Magazine, April, 1972

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38° 14' 51"	85° 45' 55"				
NE	38° 14' 50"	85° 45' 45"				
SE	38° 14' 32"	85° 45' 47"				
SW	38° 14' 31"	85° 45' 56"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approximately 24 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Professor Walter Langsam & Mrs. Harvey Sloane, Jefferson County Representatives of Kentucky Heritage Commission.

ORGANIZATION: George Yater, Editor Louisville Magazine DATE: 6-30-72

STREET AND NUMBER: 519 Belgravia Court

CITY OR TOWN: Louisville STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

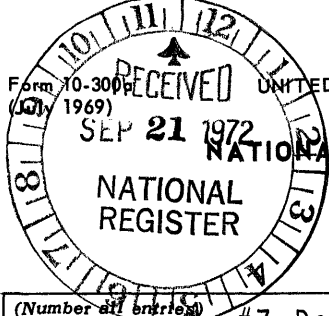
National State Local

Name: [Signature]
 Title: SLC
 Date: 9/12/72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.
[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 12/15/72
 ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register
 Date: 12-4-72

SEE INSTRUCTIONS
 NE 16/608460/423200
 SE 16/608380/423140
 SW 16/608070/423140
 NW 16/608160/423200



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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#7 Description

The more restrained of house design was reinforced toward the end of the 19th century by the influence of the Colonial Revival and the New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White. This manner, with its large plain surfaces, subtle moldings of brick and terra cotta, and regular classical detail confined to certain telling points, is especially prominent on 4th Street and the east side of St. James Court. The influence of the Chicago School of architecture, which developed out of and along with both these types at the turn of the century, is felt particularly in Belgravia and Fountain Courts and on the north side of Hill Street, where several grouped rows of houses show the predominantly horizontal lines, often emphasized by open loggias and low-pitched roofs or parapets, the selective non-classical detail and bold massing inspired by the works of Louis Sullivan and his followers in and near Chicago. The west side of St. James Court apparently includes several of the latest houses to have been built on the site of the Exposition, presumably between or replacing the ornate mansions of the earlier periods. These later residences have a cottage air, in spite of their considerable size, with their extremely low lines and masses, their arts and crafts detail of stiffened naturalistic Art Nouveau forms in woodwork and leaded glass, their stucco finish and ruddy tile roofs; suggestions of the influence of the early work of Frank Lloyd Wright may be found in these simple yet handsome houses, of which the Alice Hegan Rice house is one of the more prominent examples.

The vernacular architecture of the area ranges from the simple but elegant Bullitt-DuPont cottage, moved from the site of the present Central Park, to a number of modest dwellings along 6th Street adjacent to the Cabbage Patch Settlement House. The use of horizontal clapping is characteristic of these, with generous massing and large porches, sometimes enlivened by turrets and brickwork in imitation of their more grandiose neighbors. These houses, probably constructed by speculative builders without benefit of architects, have a certain dignity and round out the picture of domestic design in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th.

All these varied houses are marked by outstanding local craftsmanship of a quality impossible to procure today, both inside and out. From the sidewalk one notices stunning carving of stone and brick even on the curbs and stoops, wrought-and-cast-iron railings and other trim, and (especially at night) exquisitely cut and stained glass. The interiors tend to be even richer (and generally unusually well-preserved) featuring carpentry of walnut, oak, mahogany, poplar and more exotic woods of an extraordinary diversity and almost loving care of finish, lavish tile and marble mantel-pieces, and innumerable other details that lend character and warmth to the

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19th century eclectic ornament but also opportunities for the display of the talents of the individual craftsman whose rivalry would seem to have emulated, if it did not exceed, that of their patrons.

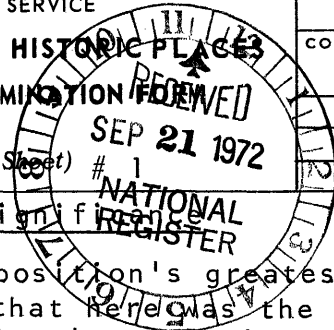
The area of the Exposition also includes two interesting churches on Magnolia Street; the large and impressive former St. Paul's Episcopal Church built at the turn of the century on the corner of 4th Street and the smaller but more inventive Stuart Robinson Memorial Church at 6th Street. The former is a typical example of a series of Indiana limestone religious structures erected downtown in Louisville and its vicinity from about 1870 until the First World War.

St. Paul's, like others of its type, combines large units of mass and plain roughcut surface on an unorthodox and complex plan, with exquisitely designed and cut Gothic-inspired detail. St. Paul's is particularly noted for the delicately-scaled "cloister" which fills out the two corners of 6th Street, providing both spatial and visual transition between the street and the interior; this church is the religious counterpart of the Conrad mission a block west of Magnolia; both provide superb corner terminals and function both as individual units and urban features.

The Stuart Robinson Church, also effectively sites on the far West corner of Magnolia, features highly varied and complex massing exaggerated by limestone foundation, buttresses, lintels and other boldly-scaled trim, against redbrick walls, this combination of materials, frequently treated for contrast rather than harmony, is also a local specialty. Here the effect is amusing and intriguing, making conspicuous a relatively small edifice. It may be noted here that another public building in the area under discussion-The Public Works in Central Park erected after the demolition of the original Robinson-DuPont mansion on the peak of the hill before 1889, is also of some architectural distinction. Although somewhat altered for its present use as Headquarters of a Model Police District, it is a striking structure consisting of several clearly defined geometrical masses picturesquely grouped with outflung pergolas along the flanking ridge. The multiple round arched openings of the smoothly stuccoed unadorned walls are precisely cut out of the surfaces and varied only by scale and rhythm; the whole complex is unified by the low slopes of the red-orange tile roofs and wide eaves. The overall effect evokes the California Mission style of the turn of the century in its most stripped and forward-looking manner, exemplified by the work of Irving Gill (considered by some a forerunner of the modern International style) The park buildings thus complete the range of style, material, and function represented by this remarkably diversified yet homogeneous area.

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(Number all entries) #8 Statement of Significance

But probably the Southern Exposition's greatest claim to historical importance lies in the fact that here was the first large-scale installation of Thomas A. Edison's newly invented incandescent light bulb. Some 4,600 individual bulbs lighted the interior of the huge Exposition building. This was only a year after Edison's Pearl Street Station, the first central electric power station in the world, had been put in operation in New York City serving 85 buildings with the new light source.

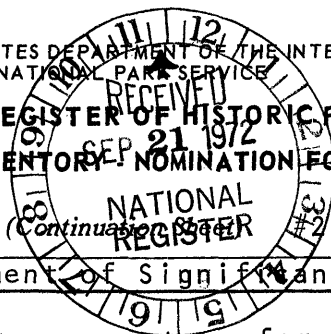
The significance of the installation was discussed by Dr. Theodore M. Brown, then professor of architectural history at the University of Louisville, in his monograph of Old Louisville (University of Louisville, 1961): "One of Edison's biographers described the Louisville system as a pioneering installation in lighting large spaces by incandescent lamps and suggested that this particular work did more to stimulate the growth of incandescent lighting than any other in the history of Edison Company. It marked also the beginning of electrical illumination of American expositions: Chicago, 1893; Buffalo, 1901; St. Louis, 1904. As late as 1890 electric lighting was considered a novelty when Sullivan's Auditorium was opened in Chicago."

A more personal account of the lighting was given by Mrs Melville Briney, a Louisville Time columnist who grew up on St. James Court and recalled her elders' accounts of the electric lights at the Exposition: "Ask anyone who was a child back in the 80's and he will tell about that breath-taking experience. For no matter how often he saw it (and families went over and over again,) the miracle was always the same. There was a quiet that covered the waiting crowds. Then an amber glow began to seep through the dusk, brightening, brightening, until what had been familiar corridors of the big barn-like building, became for him aisles of blinging light and beauty, touched with the gold of heaven." (Fond Recollection, Melville Briney, The Louisville Times, 1955.)

When the Southern Exposition opened in 1883, the area it occupied was on the outermost fringe of Louisville's southward residential development. When it closed its final season in October 1887, it was an island of open land becoming increasingly surrounded by the huge homes of the well-to-do, the homes that continue to give testimony to the opulent prosperity of Louisville's merchants and manufacturers in the final years of the 19th century.

This tract of 20-plus acres, was obviously a valuable property, ripe for development of homes of the well-to-do. Adding to its desirability was the 17 acres of the duPont estate immediately to the north, an open oasis even then called Central Park because of Mr. duPont's generosity in permitting the public to use the area as a green retreat.

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That Exposition acreage, put up for auction, would become an area of fine homes was obvious, But the fact that it took on a special character and became Louisville's first example of thoughtful urban site-planning may well be due to its situation next to Central Park.

The man responsible for steering the projected development away from the usual gridiron street pattern that surrounded it was William H. Slaughter. Since his background was in politics and insurance, one can only speculate on what influenced him to push for the imaginative planning that marks St. James & Belgravia Courts. The presence of the adjacent open space of Central Park seems likely to have been one source of influence, especially since the main entrance to St. James Court is oriented to the north, directly toward the park.

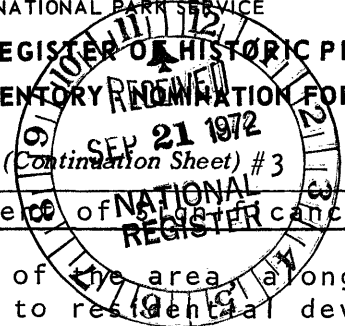
The auction of lots of the Exposition site began May 14, 1889. Mr. Slaughter was the largest initial purchaser and during the next several months also acquired other lots from other purchasers and soon had title to most of the property. A dream had evolved in his mind for a special place--a residential enclave "in the English manner--" and in June 1890 the dream took concrete form with the incorporation of the Victoria Land Company to develop the site.

The choice of the name "Victoria" for the corporation would seem to indicate that Slaughter had some inner recognition that the reign of that British queen (a reign that was to last for nearly another 12 years) marked a special period in time and that he wished to preserve its character in a special place. This sensitivity towards the Victorian Age of which he was a part is further displayed in the names he chooses for the site--St. James Court, calling up images of the grandeur of the British monarchy and empire, for the double carriageway with a wide grassy, tree-shaded mall down the middle; Belgravia Court, named for a fashionable London residential district, cutting across the south end of St. James at right angles and accessible only on foot; Victoria Place for the street (now Magnolia) that marked the southern boundary of Central Park and provided the main entrance to the double carriageway of St. James Court with its large fountain and the magnificent homes Slaughter envisioned.

Slaughter's dream turned to reality during the decade of the 1890's. The first house was erected in St. James Court in 1891 and soon others began rising both there and in Belgravia Court. By the turn of the century nearly all the lots were occupied and the few that remained soon were sold. A contemporary source calls St. James Court an area "noted for the distinct advance it has accomplished in architectural beauty in Louisville." (Memorial History Of The City Of Louisville, by J. Stoddard Johnston, 1899.

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The outer perimeter of the area along 4th, 6th, Magnolia and Hill, was also given over to residential development, providing a kind of cocoon insulating Belgravia and St. James Courts, allowing them to develop as an inner courtyard, an enclave within the urban fabric. St. James Court was deliberately narrowed to a single carriageway at its southern end at Hill Street, a visual signal that this was the back door and that St. James Court looked out to the world over the tree-studded duPont estate--which became Central Park in fact as well as name shortly after the turn of the century when it was acquired by the City of Louisville.

St. James & Belgravia Courts thus became a kind of monument the Victorian age erected to itself--a monument to its architecture, to its craftsmanship, and to the kind of urban planning of which it was capable when given the opportunity.

The two courts are also historically important in the example they set and which was copied in other parts of Louisville, though nowhere else as such as integrated whole. Belgravia Court became the model for numerous other Louisville residential rows that face not a vehicular way, but a sidewalk given over exclusively to the pedestrian. The green mall of St. James, separating the double roadway, also has been repeated in other areas of the city.

Not surprisingly, the ambience of the Courts has tended to attract creative personalities in the arts. Elizabeth Maddox Roberts, author of The Time Of Man and undoubtedly the finest novelist Kentucky has produced; Madison Cawein, Kentucky's first "poet laureate;" poet and dramatist Cale Young Rice and his wife, Alice Hegan Rice, author of Mrs. Wiggs Of The Cabbage Patch, are some of the literary figures who have lived on St. James Court. The manuscript of the recent best seller O Ye Jigs and Juleps, delightful childhood observations on life written by Mrs. K.S. Cleveland during her young girlhood in Versailles, Kentucky was found in her St. James Court home after her death and published posthumously.

In summation, the St. James-Belgravia Court-Central Park area is a site of great historic, architectural, and literary interest:

1. It is the site of the Southern Exposition, where the technological breakthrough of successful electrical lighting of interior spaces was first demonstrated on a large scale. The Exposition was also a seminal point in measuring the South's recovery from the prostration of the period immediately following the Civil War.

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(Number all entries) #8 Statement of Significance

2. It is a particularly successful example of Victorian-era site planning for urban space.
3. It has been the home of literary figures of national significance.
4. It continues to be a viable living space that has preserved its special character despite the decay of adjacent areas and thus is an example of urban planning particularly valuable in solving today's planning problems.

