Form No. 10-306 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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STATE

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME HISTORIC 6.5 Jacob /Riis/ Park Historic District (Gateway NRA) AND/OR COMMON Jacob Riis Park LOCATION STREET & NUMBER NOT FOR PUBLICATION Rockaway Beach Boulevard CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CITY, TOWN o chaver, Print KICINITY OF Now Yor COUNTY CODE CODE STATE New York 36 Oueens 81 CLASSIFICATION CATEGORY OWNERSHIP **PRESENT USE** STATUS XDISTRICT XPUBLIC X.OCCUPIEDMUSEUM -AGRICULTURE BUILDING(S) -PRIVATE __COMMERCIAL **圣**PARK ___STRUCTURE BOTH WORK IN PROGRESS _EDUCATIONAL -PRIVATE RESIDENCE ___SITE PUBLIC ACQUISITION ACCESSIBLE __ENTERTAINMENT ___RELIGIOUS OBJECT __IN PROCESS X.YES: RESTRICTED ___GOVERNMENT __SCIENTIFIC BEING CONSIDEREDYES: UNRESTRICTED _INDUSTRIAL _TRANSPORTATIONMILITARY ---OTHER: __NO AGENCY REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable) National Park Service, North Atlantic Regional Office STREET & NUMBER 15 State Street CITY, TOWN STATE Boston VICINITY OF Mass LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION 5 COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Queens County Courthouse STREET & NUMBER 45th Avenue CITY, TOWN STATE New York New York **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS** TITLE Tony W. Wrenn, "General History of the Jamaica Bay, Breezy Point, and Staten Island Units." GATE DATE ___FEDERAL ____STATE ___COUNTY __LOCAL 9/31/75 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS NAR

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7 DESCRIPTION

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EXCELLEN¶ ϪGOOD FAIR	DETERIORATED RUINS UNEXPOSED	UNALTERED	- <u>x</u> ORIGINAL S MOVED	SITE DATE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jacob Riis Park Historic District comprises three significant recreational buildings constructed between 1932-1937. These buildings are the core structures of Jacob Riis Park, now a unit of Gateway National Recreation Area, Queens County, New York. Jacob Riis Park (220 acres) occupies a mile-long section of the Rockaway Peninsula. Aside from swimming and sunbathing, the park provides other recreational activities such as fishing, hiking, boating, limited biking, and playing fields.

The Bathing Pavilion (HS 606), a massive structure commonly known as the Bathhouse, is a roughly T-shaped brick masonry building which consists of a rectangular, singlestory unit built in 1932 and enlarged by a long two-story addition on the south built in 1936-37. The earlier section is composed of a rectangular open court enclosed by high brick walls on the north, east, and west, and by the two-story addition on the south. In the center of the north wall there is a single-story projection which provides the entrance to the bathhouse and also houses bathhouse facilities. Its front is faced with a long arcade supported by corinthian pillars and topped with two octagonal turrets. Within the arcade there are pairs of double doors topped with fanlight transoms and separated by booths which provide entry into the vestibule of the locker area. This projection is covered with an asphalt shingled gable roof. The locker area, which is not covered, is divided into a women's area on the west and a men's area on the east. There are 10,000 simple wooden cabanas in this inner court. Passageways lead from each of these areas out onto the promenade through the southern addition. There are two identical single-story, rectangular brick buildings located on the southeast and southwest corners of this inner court. The eastern building houses a garage; and the western contains office space. The architects for this portion of the bathhouse were Stoughton and Plonck. In 1936 and 1937 the bathhouse was enlarged by the New York City Department of Parks. Clinton Lloyd was the chief of architectural design and Aymar Embury, II, was the architectural consultant for the Marine Parkway projects. The ocean side of the bathhouse is a long, two-story brick structure with concrete trim dominated by two octagonal four-story towers. The central area, projecting between the two towers, consists of an arcade supported by round concrete columns. Above the arcade is a rectangular concrete bay with rounded corners, a flat roof, and glass block windows, which contains a restaurant. On either side of this central projection, there are four rectangular, single-story projecting bays. The inner bays provide access to the locker courts; the outer bays contain the umbrella and deck chair concessions. There are symmetrical stairways on either side of these projections which lead up to a sun deck. Extending to the east and west of the central area, there are symmetrical two-story wings with gable roofs which terminate in square wings with hip roofs. The end wings contain refreshment bars on the ground level. The windows at the second story level are all glass The concession booths and the refreshment bars are indicated by steel-lettered block. signs mounted above the windows.

The two Central Mall Buildings (HS603 and 604), constructed in 1936-37, are twin brick and tile masonry buildings with concrete trim which face each other across the southern end of the mall. Both buildings consist of a square, two-story block (flanked by onestory wings) connected to a rectangular, single story wing to the south by a single

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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	1952-1957		<u>New York City</u>	<u>Department</u> of Parks

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings which comprise the Historic District--especially the Bathhouse--are excellent examples of recreational architecture of the early 1930's. They are the central structures in a fine example of public park design and community planning during the 1920's and 1930's. Also, Jacob Riis Park was completed through the Work Progress Administration, a Federal relief program of the Roosevelt Administration during the Depression. Therefore, it is associated with this important social and government program.

The Main Bathhouse is a good example of Art Deco design adapted to architecture. The Art Deco style, characterized by streamlined geometric shapes and occasional polychrome patterns, was particularly concentrated in New York City. The grounds at Jacob Riis were extensively landscaped to include ample recreational facilities among a setting of about 20,000 trees and 50,000 shrubs. Julius Burgevin, the landscape architect, included plantings of Japanese black pines, sea holly, bayberry, beach plum, as well as beach grass in his landscaping. The buildings and grounds, which have survived relatively unaltered since 1937, remain good examples of prevalent aesthetic design during the 1930's.

Although the development of the District as a city planned park begins in the early 1920's, the historical significance of the District derives from the implementation and construction of the park during the 1930's. Labor costs were funded through the Works Progress Administration. WPA projects in New York, including the nation's largest project, LaGuardia Airport, provided temporary relief for the city's unemployed.

As well as the district's association with a major innovation in public policy, the district is also associated with Robert Moses, the influential New York City Commissioner of Parks. In 1936, under Moses's direction, the bathhouse was enlarged, a mall was constructed, two semicircular buildings housing concessions and other facilities were erected, and new recreational facilities were added. A sixty-two acre parking lot located north of the bathhouse, was completed. With a 14,000 car capacity, it was the largest in the world at the time. Nearby the new Marine Parkway Bridge, another Moses project, was finished giving a new access route to the seashore park.

Jacob Riis Park officially opened on July 3, 1937. It was maintained by the City of New York until 1972 when the park was acquired by the National Park Service with the creation of the Gateway National Recreation Area.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Guide Series: <u>New York City Guide</u> (New York, Random House, 1939)

Wrenn, Tony: <u>General History of the Jamaica Bay, Breezy Point and Staten</u> <u>Island Units</u>. Gateway National Recreation Area, New York, NY (n.p., 1975).

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE two

story, semicircular wing. The northern sections have full, recessed porticoes supported by concrete columns. The semicircular wings have seven doorways with sliding steel doors separated by brick piers. Both buildings have flat concrete roofs, concrete cornices and concrete floors. The eastern building houses a cafeteria and the western building contains offices, restrooms and a small bathhouse.

Although the other small buildings in the park--maintenance shops, refreshment stands, boiler room, golf course concession stand and electrical hut--are part of the Jacob Riis Park, they do not add significance to the Historic District.

, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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FOR NPS USE ONLY OCT 1 6 1980 RECEIVED DATE ENTERED JUN 1 7 1981

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1937 DESIGN OF RIIS PARK PARKING LOT



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GATEWAY NATIONAL RECREATION AREA NEW YORK / NEW JERSEY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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