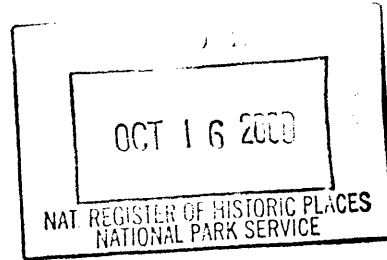


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1373



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name David City Park and Municipal Auditorium

Other names/site number BU05-069, BU05-047

2. Location

Street & number N/A

Not for publication

City or town David City

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Butler

Code 023

Zip code 68632

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Janet Summer  
Signature of certifying official

10/10/00  
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H Beall 11.15.00

Joe  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**David City Park & Municipal Auditorium**  
Name of Property

**Butler County, Nebraska**  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4		Buildings
		Sites
2		Structures
		Objects
6		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE LANDSCAPE

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE LANDSCAPE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ART MODERNE  
COLONIAL REVIVAL

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation CONCRETE  
Walls CONCRETE, STONE  
Roof ASPHALT  
Other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B Removed from its original location.
C A birthplace or a grave.
D A cemetery.
E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F A commemorative property.
G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1889

Significant Dates

1889

1905

1941

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
Previously listed in the National Register
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
Designated a National Historic Landmark
Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location for additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local Government

University

Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 85 acres

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

Table with 7 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Rows 1-4.

[X] See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Greg Miller, Preservation Historian
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office
date July 2000
street & number 1500 R Street
telephone 402.471.4775
city or town Lincoln
state NE zip code 68501

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title City of David City
street & number 402 Fifth Street
telephone 402.367.3135
city or town David City
state NE zip code 68632

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**David City Park**

Name of Property

**Butler County, Nebraska**

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

The David City Park is located in David City, the county seat of Butler County in eastern Nebraska. From its beginning in 1889 the park has expanded from its original 12 acres to more than 85 acres today. Within its boundaries are a number of architectural structures and landscape architecture features.

The David City Park is located on the south end of town and borders on Highway 15 to the west, a residential neighborhood to the north, a hospital to the east, and agricultural land to the and south. Over the years the park has increased from its original 12 acres to more than 85 acres today.

The main entrance of the park is located on its west side just off of Highway 15, which is also its western boundary. At either side of this entrance is a 20 foot concrete pylon erected as a memorial to World War I veterans. Each pylon has a relief, one depicting a soldier and the other a sailor. Immediately to the east of the entrance is an athletic field, constructed in 1940, that serves as a baseball diamond, football field, and track and field facility. In the northwest corner of the athletic field is a covered concrete amphitheater and bleachers running on the north side. The entire athletic complex was a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project.

At the far end of the athletic field is the Municipal Auditorium. Built in 1941-1943 in the Art Moderne style, the building was also a WPA project. The two-story building is constructed of concrete and steel. The main façade, which faces north, has an entrance at each side. Two sets of five-light ribbon windows arranged in a horizontal pattern are also present. The corners of the front façade are curved with a series of vertical grooves running from top to bottom. Every other groove has columns of five glass-block windows. On the east and west sides are divided light windows separated by pilasters. The rear (south) façade does not have any distinctive features. The wall surface of the building is smooth and the roof is flat. All these features are characteristic of the Art Moderne style.

The two entrances on the main façade lead to a connecting hall that runs east and west. Off of this hall are two rest rooms, an office with adjoining ticket booth at each end, three check rooms, and a telephone room. Two hallways lead into the main multi-purpose room. The lower walls are covered with glazed clay tile. The ceiling is covered with composite tiles. Rising up from the maple floor on the north side are wooden bleachers. The stage, located on the south side, opposite the bleachers and across the gym floor, is 44 by 24 feet. Stage lights are set in the front of the floor. Storage space for sets and backdrops is located above the dressing rooms. To each side of the stage are dressing rooms. The auditorium also has a full basement that can be used as a meeting room and/or dance hall. There is a walkout entrance on the south side.

Continuing east from the auditorium the winding road leads to the Schweser House. In the mid-1940s the family of George Schweser constructed a stone building designed in the Colonial Revival style demonstrating such elements as an accentuated center door and symmetrically balanced windows with double-hung sashes. This building is not used as a house, but rather as a small community center.

The next major structures eastbound along the road are the swimming pool and bathhouse. They were funded by a combination of city bonds and WPA monies. Work on the pool began in November 1935, and the facility opened on June 18, 1936. The pool is rectangular with the bathhouse constructed in a simplified Colonial Revival style featuring an accentuated center door and symmetrically balanced windows. The lobby is in the center with the men's dressing room on the north side and the women's on the south.

To the southeast of the swimming pool is an allee of trees. Although this would seem to be a design feature it is more likely the result of closing a residential street. Once the street was removed the trees remained and created the current allee design. The residential neighborhood and a hospital continue to exist just beyond the boundary of the park at this location.

As the road twists and doubles back westthrough the park it navigates around three separate lagoons that stretch the length of the park beginning south of the athletic field and continuing to the east boundary of the park. Along side most of the road that runs through the park are hundreds of small concrete posts. In addition, cast concrete light posts are spaced intermittently throughout the park along the road.

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**David City Park**

Name of Property

**Butler County, Nebraska**

County and State

**Section 7 Page 2**

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Located on the south side of the middle pond is the park's caretaker's house. The brick cottage was constructed c1940-1941. The main façade faces north with a porch covered entrance on the east end. The original roofline was altered at some time to accommodate a protruding addition with a garage below it. This house is the only residential building within the park's boundaries.

The land that constitutes the southern boundary of the park was donated free of charge provided that it be used strictly for recreational purposes. The area constituted approximately 41 acres. Given this sizeable parcel the city determined that a nine-hole golf course would be an appropriate use for the space. The course was completed in 1941.

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet

**David City Park**

Name of Property

**Butler County, Nebraska**

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

The David City Park, located in David City the county seat of Butler County, is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with Entertainment/Recreation and Politics/Government. Throughout its history, beginning in 1889, the park has been a gathering place for the people of David City and the surrounding area. Additionally, as the park developed the Works Progress Administration developed several projects within the park. The park is also significant at the local level under Criterion C for its association with Landscape Architecture and the Municipal Auditorium. Although no overall design plan seems to exist, within the park boundaries are numerous features that demonstrate deliberate planned landscape design. The period of significance begins in 1889 when the park first opened and ends in 1950 that marks the 50 year criterion. The nomination includes one district that contains four contributing buildings and three contributing structures. The buildings are the Municipal Auditorium, the bathhouse, the caretaker's house, and the Schweser House. The structures include the swimming pool, and the amphitheater and athletic field.

The history of the David City Park began in 1889 when Mrs. Phobe Miles donated 12 acres to the city for use as a park. She attached conditions that the city pay the taxes and carry out certain improvements each year. These obligations were met during the first few years. Trees were planted and a lake excavated and improved. However, during the depressed financial climate in the 1890s further conditions could not be met and the park reverted back to Mrs. Miles.

Some time later (Although no specific date is available it would seem to have occurred about 1901. ) twenty men, each paying \$100, created a Chautauqua Association and bought the original twelve acres from Mrs. Miles. The area was then used as a Chautauqua park. Chatauquas were designed to entertain guests with lectures, sermons, singing, and other such attractions. The first Chatauqua in David City was held in 1901 and continued until 1919. As with similar events throughout the country these were not just local affairs. Rather they were well advertised and widely attended. It is recorded that on some Sundays during the Chatauquas up to 30,000 people were in attendance.

In 1902 a group of citizens organized the David City Park Association and purchased the same ground from the Chautauqua Association for \$3,000. In addition buying the land the money was also used to plant trees and make other improvements. In 1905 the city passed a bond issue to buy the property from the David City Park Association. After the transfer of the land to the city the association dissolved.

As time passed additional land was added to the park through purchases and donations. Eventually, the park increased from the original 12 acres to more than 85 acres. In 1916 a portion of land that constitutes the northeast corner of the park was purchased by the city. It was not until 1935 that additional land was added. This parcel lies on the north central part of the park where the pool and bathhouse were eventually constructed. The next acquisition occurred in 1939 and became an essential portion of the park. The 1939 acquisition eventually became the main entrance, athletic field and amphitheater, and the site of the municipal auditorium. Another large addition occurred in 1940 when the Hewit family donated 41 acres for park use. This created the southern boundary of the park and was developed into a golf course. The following year the city acquired land that connected the 1916 addition and the golf course to complete the current eastern boundary. Additional parcels eventually produced the boundaries of the park being considered for this nomination.

From its inception in 1889 the original plot of ground was designed to provide a park setting. As the city continued to acquire land they also improved the park setting through landscape design and construction within the park boundaries. The first structural addition was the swimming pool and bathhouse. Constructed in 1935-1936 the project is significant for its association with the WPA that provided part of the funding along with money from city bonds.

The next important construction occurred in 1940. It included the concrete entrance, amphitheater, bleachers, and athletic field. The main entrance is composed of two 20-foot concrete pylons erected as a memorial to World War I veterans. Each pylon has a relief, one depicting a soldier and the other a sailor. Although the park developed over a period of years, as a whole these features emulate the thought and planning that went into the designed landscape. The entire athletic complex gains its significance as a WPA project and as part of the overall design of the park.

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**David City Park**  
Name of Property

**Butler County, Nebraska**  
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**Section 8 Page 2**

Built about this same period, c1940-1941, is the park's caretaker's house. It is located on the south side of the middle pond. The house does not display any distinctive characteristics. However, its rustic design makes a significant contribution to the park by blending into the pastoral landscape.

Undoubtedly the most prominent building in the park is the Municipal Auditorium. Constructed in 1941-1943, the structure is significant for its association with the WPA and as an excellent example of an Art Moderne style building. As with the pool and bathhouse the city passed a bond issue to supplement the cost of building the auditorium under the WPA program.

The two-story Art Moderne style building is constructed of concrete and steel. Features characteristic to this style that appear on the auditorium include two symmetrical entrances on the main facade. Two sets of five-light ribbon windows arranged in a horizontal pattern are also present. The corners of the front façade are curved with a series of vertical grooves running from top to bottom. Every other groove has columns of five glass-block windows. On the east and west sides are divided light windows separated by pilasters. The wall surface of the building is smooth and the roof is flat.

Another contributing architectural feature is the Schweser House. The house was donated by the George Schweser family in the mid-1940s. The stone building is designed in the Colonial Revival style demonstrating such elements as an accentuated center door and symmetrically balanced windows with double-hung sashes. This building is not a house, but rather used as a small community center.

Aside from the buildings and golf course, the park contains a number of significant landscape features. Three ponds running from west to east are located approximately in the middle of the park. Along side most of the road that runs through the park are hundreds of small concrete posts. In addition, cast concrete light posts are spaced intermittently throughout the park along the road. Finally, in the eastern portion of the park is an allee of trees.

The David City Park is a unique resource. Although there does not appear to be a formal comprehensive design the park is definitely a planned landscape. With the winding roads, man-made ponds, allee of trees, and other features there is no doubt the landscape was planned even though land was added in increments over a period of time. The parcels of land that are included in this nomination that are not fifty years old should be considered for eligibility once they reach the appropriate age. For this reason the park is eligible at the local level under Criterion C for its association with Landscape Architecture. The Municipal Auditorium is also an excellent example of Art Moderne architecture, rare in this part of Nebraska.

The park is also eligible at the local level under Criterion A for its association with Entertainment/Recreation. From its inception the park has been a gathering place for the public. The athletic field, Municipal Auditorium, lagoons, swimming pool, and the Schweser House make obvious the parks recreational purpose. From scheduled athletic events, family picnics, or simply a place to enjoy the outdoors the park had all the facilities and features that permitted these activities. Additionally, it was home to a Chatauqua for nearly twenty years.

Finally, the David City Park is significant under Criterion A for its association with Politics/Government. The athletic field facility and amphitheater, the Municipal Auditorium, and the swimming pool and bathhouse were all WPA projects. These are important features within the park. The WPA, which was a federal work relief program, helped ensure that these structures were constructed. These facilities are important examples of the role the federal government played in helping to develop the David City Park.



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**David City Park**

Name of Property

**Butler County, Nebraska**

County and State

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**Bibliography**

*Books*

Butler County, Nebraska History. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1982.

David City Centennial History Book, 1873-1973. David City, NE: Banner-Press Publishing Co., 1973.

*Newspapers*

People's Banner, David City, NE

*Unpublished Material*

Hansen, L. Jean. "A Brief History of the City Park, Swimming Pool and Auditorium, David City, Nebraska." Mimeographed. 1986.

**UTM References (continued)**

	Zone	Easting	Northing
5.	14	657200	4568050
6.	14	657200	4568170
7.	14	657320	4568170
8.	14	657320	4568050
9.	14	657930	4568050
10.	14	657600	4567990
11.	14	657600	4567180

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary line is indicated on the USGS maps.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries include all the land that retains integrity associated with the park's historic development.