

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 23 1984  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic West Park

and/or common Kelly Ingram Park

2. Location

street & number 5th Avenue No. at 16th Street NA not for publication

city, town Birmingham NA vicinity of 6th congressional district

state Alabama code 01 county Jefferson code 073

3. Classification

| Category                                 | Ownership                                  | Status  | Present Use                                |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s)     | <input type="checkbox"/> private           | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure       | <input type="checkbox"/> both              | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress             | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                  | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> educational       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object          | <input type="checkbox"/> in process        | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted              | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment     |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government        |
|  | N/A  | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial        |
|  |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> military          |
|  |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other:            |

4. Owner of Property

name City of Birmingham, Alabama

street & number 710 - North 20th Street

city, town Birmingham NA vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number 716 North 21st Street

city, town Birmingham state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1970 - present  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

---

## 7. Description

---

**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The park occupies a square block between 16th and 17th Streets and between 5th and 6th Avenues North. There are three markers in the park honoring outstanding citizens of Birmingham, namely: Osmond Kelly Ingram, Mrs. Carrie A. Tuggle, and Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher. In the park there are eight (8) pathways leading to a gazebo in the center. In addition, there are approximately 80 mature trees, four drinking fountains, twenty lights, two flag poles, one sliding board, one whirl-about, one swing set, one play bar, twelve bleachers, and six picnic tables. These improvements were made by the City of Birmingham in 1972. Prior to that time, the park served primarily as green space/recreation, lacking the various playground equipment but otherwise looking much like it does today.

# 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic    | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation                  | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture            | <input type="checkbox"/> economics                     | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> education                     | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                   | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement        | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-     | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> industry                      | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation                              |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> invention                     |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)<br>Black History |

**Specific dates** 1871 **Builder/Architect** N/A

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Kelly Ingram Park (originally West Park) is one of three public parks created in the original plan of Birmingham (1870) and consequently, is one of the few remaining physical ties to the earliest days. Only the original park and the street grid--no buildings--are left. In addition, changing land-use patterns around the park provide some important insights into the city's development history. Finally, the park is significant for its strong associations with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Located just northwest of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church (1980;NRHP), then the Birmingham demonstration headquarters, Kelly Ingram Park served as the assembly point for many major marches, demonstrations, rallies and prayer services during the Spring of 1963. Most notable were the May 2nd through May 7th demonstrations which received national media coverage. These demonstrations resulted in the desegregation of Birmingham, and the publicity surrounding the demonstrations caused the Federal Government to push for legislation which led to the 1964 Civil Rights Act outlawing segregation of public accommodations.

\* \* \* \* \*

The original Birmingham city plan, drawn in 1871, created three small public parks (West, Central and East) set within a street grid oriented to the railroad tracks that gave birth to the city. Maj. William P. Barker, a surveyor for the South and North Alabama Railroad, drew up the plan for a group of Montgomery and Jefferson County investors shortly after they bought 4,150 acres of fields and farmland in anticipation of the railroads' opening up the area's untapped mineral resources.

In the late 19th century the park was surrounded by detached houses occupied by white citizens. Most of the early Jewish community lived in the vicinity; they built the city's first synagogue across the street from the park in 1888 (Temple Emanu-El, Reform). A second synagogue (Temple Beth-El, Orthodox) was built across from the park in the early 1900s. A third synagogue was built only a block away in 1903 (Kneseth Israel). By the 1910s, however, Jews began moving out of downtown to more fashionable streetcar neighborhoods south of downtown, and gradually the area's orientation shifted to become the center of black business, religious, and social life. One of the focuses of the black community was the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church (1911, National Register of Historic Places), which stands facing the park on the north side; the 1911 structure designed by black architect Wallace A. Rayfield replaced one constructed in 1884.

In 1932 the park was renamed to honor a Birmingham fireman who was the first American sailor killed in World War I.

From April 3, 1963 through May 7th Birmingham was the location of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Project "C" - a series of marches and rallies to protest segregation in the city. Kelly Ingram Park was the assembly point for many of the major marches and demonstrations, most notably the May 2nd through 7th demonstrations during which the use of firehoses and dogs by city police was nationally televised.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Birmingham Public Library Archives.
2. Garrow, David. Personal interview by Ellen Mertins March 31, 1982.
3. Raines, Howell. My Soul Is Rested. G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York
4. White, Marjorie, ed. Downtown Birmingham: Architectural and Historical Walking Tour Guide. Birmingham, 1977.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 400' x 400'

Quadrangle name Birmingham North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 6 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 6 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 6 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

D 

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 6 |
|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

E 

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

F 

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

G 

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

H 

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

### Verbal boundary description and justification

North - 6th Avenue North

South - 5th Avenue North

East - 17th Street North

West - 16th Street North

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| N/A   |      |        |      |

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Donald E. Blankenship, Planner, & Ellen Mertins, National Register Coordinator

organization City of Birmingham, Alabama Historical Com. date March 5, 1982

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 205 261-3184

city or town Montgomery state Alabama

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

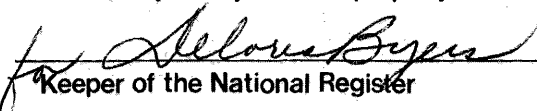
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4-17-84

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 5-24-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

The demonstrations resulted in the desegregation of Birmingham. A noted Civil Rights historian, David Garrow, said that the publicity surrounding the demonstrations focused the attention of the nation on Civil Rights as a major moral issue. Additionally, the demonstrations served as a catalyst for numerous demonstrations in smaller towns throughout the south. The vitality of this area and its strong identity with Birmingham's black community persisted until the breakdown of segregation in the 1960s.