

1253

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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 an 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 Root River Parkway

other names/site number

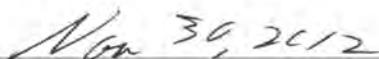
2. Location

street & number	Located between West Layton Avenue and South 76 <sup>th</sup> Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Greendale, Greenfield, Hales Corners, Franklin	N/A	vicinity
state	Wisconsin	code	WI
county	Milwaukee	code	079
zip code			53129, 53130, 53132, 53220

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide X locally. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title

  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

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 commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Root River Parkway | Milwaukee | Wisconsin  
Name of Property | County and State

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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.  
See continuation sheet.  
☐ removed from the National  
Register  
☐ other, (explain: )

*Edson H. Beall*

1-29-13

*for*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

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

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

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

	private		building(s)		contributing		noncontributing
X	public-local	X	district		14		7 buildings
	public-State		structure		4		0 sites
	public-Federal		site		16		12 structures
			object		3		0 objects
					37		19 total

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

Milwaukee County Parkway System

**Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National Register**

0

#### 6. Function or Use

##### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related (vehicular)

LANDSCAPE/Park

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Work of Art

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation

##### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related (vehicular)

LANDSCAPE/Park

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Work of Art

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation

#### 7. Description

##### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: RUSTIC

##### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation STONE, CONCRETE

walls STONE, WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other

#### Narrative Description

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

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Root River Parkway  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

**Introduction and general setting**

The Root River Parkway (Parkway) is a historic district located along the southwest portion of the outer loop of two concentric and connected oval-shaped chains of parkways that were first conceived in 1923. Known as the "Emerald Necklace," the loop twice encircles Milwaukee County, comprising a significant portion of the Milwaukee County Park and Parkway System. The portion of the Parkway covered by this nomination is located in the southwest corner of Milwaukee County, in the villages of Hales Corners and Greendale and the cities of Franklin and Greenfield. It was designed to connect the Underwood Creek Parkway to the north with Whitnall Park and Oak Creek Parkway in the south. The Parkway is comprised of land along the Root River roughly between Greenfield Park and Loomis Road. However, Greenfield Park and the portion of the Parkway between the park and Oklahoma Avenue, as well as the portion between South 76<sup>th</sup> Street and Loomis Road, are not included within the Parkway boundaries under this nomination. These portions of the Parkway lack the distinctive features that define the overall parkway system aesthetic.<sup>1</sup> The attached *Milwaukee Parks and Parkways* map shows the overall location of the Parkway.

The Root River originates in the City of New Berlin in northeastern Waukesha County and winds its way in a southeasterly direction through Milwaukee County suburbs, including West Allis, Greenfield, Greendale, Hales Corners, and Franklin. It then continues south and southeasterly into Racine County, where it empties into Lake Michigan. The segment of the Parkway covered in this nomination, bound by West Layton Avenue and South 76<sup>th</sup> Street, includes Whitnall Park, which is comprised of the Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum (Botanical Gardens), Whitnall Golf Course, and the buildings of the Wehr Nature Center complex. The Parkway includes 56 resources: 37 contributing and 19 noncontributing. Twenty-one buildings are located within the Parkway. The road, 16 vehicular bridges, two volleyball courts, two culverts, dam, pedestrian bridge, silo, fireplace, gazebo, amphitheater, and bird blind are counted as structures. Three statues located within the Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum are counted as objects. The Parkway and its landscape features, Whitnall Park, the Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, and Whitnall Golf Course, are counted as four contributing sites. Features of the Parkway landscape include the Root River, landscaping, lagoons, modern playgrounds, picnic areas, a concrete drainage canal, signage, and lighting. Landscape features of Whitnall Park include the Root River, Tess Creek, Whitnall Creek, Whitnall Lake and earthen pedestrian footpaths, a modern playground, landscaping, and signage. Landscape features of the Boerner Botanical Gardens include landscaping, gardens, small non-permanent storage sheds, pedestrian footpaths, reflecting pools, and signage. Landscape features of the Whitnall Golf Course include the golf greens, landscaping, pedestrian bridges, and signage. Noncontributing resources within the Parkway are categorized based on recent construction dates outside of the Parkway's period of significance, which is 1931 to 1960.

<sup>1</sup> The Parkway boundaries were determined during a site visit with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff in April 2010. During the site visit, it was determined that Greenfield Park may be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under the Milwaukee County Parkway System Multiple Property Document.

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The following resources identified within the Parkway boundaries have been designated as historic landmarks by the Milwaukee County Historical Society.<sup>2</sup>

- Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum – designation 1977
- Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) repair shop in Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum – designation 1996
- Reflecting pool statuary and garden statuary in Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum – designation 1997
- CCC bridges in Whitnall Park – designation 2001

The Parkway described in this nomination begins at West Layton Avenue in the City of Greenfield and follows the Root River Parkway Drive (Drive) along with the Root River as it meanders southeasterly towards Lake Michigan. The Parkway terminates at South 76<sup>th</sup> Street in the City of Franklin. Major roads that intersect the Parkway include West Forest Home Avenue/State Trunk Highway (STH) 24, West Grange Avenue, South 84<sup>th</sup> Street, South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street, and South 76<sup>th</sup> Street. Whitnall Park, the Botanical Gardens, and Whitnall Golf Course are located within the Parkway near its southern terminus. The Parkway extends through nearly level terrain and gently rolling hills covered by a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs interspersed with pockets of flat open spaces. Areas along the Root River tend to have shrubby undergrowth interspersed with mix-aged woods that obscure the view of the river. Wider open spaces and mowed grassy areas between the Drive and river are designated as picnic areas, fields for athletic activities, and modern playgrounds. A majority of the two-lane asphalt Drive between West Layton Avenue and West Forest Home Avenue/STH 24 does not feature curb and gutter, while the remainder of the Parkway between West Forest Home Avenue/STH 24 and South 76<sup>th</sup> Street is flanked by curb and gutter. The Drive throughout the Parkway was graded to maintain the natural appearance of the surrounding topography. Travelers within the Parkway and Whitnall Park are guided by Milwaukee County Parkway signage as the Drive winds across the landscape. A portion of the Drive at the northern terminus is lined with pendant lights that hang from simple wood utility poles. A list of contributing and noncontributing resources contained within the Parkway is included below.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Milwaukee County Historical Society, *Milwaukee County Historic Landmarks*, [http://www.milwaukeehistory.net/historic\\_landmarks/index.html](http://www.milwaukeehistory.net/historic_landmarks/index.html).

<sup>3</sup> Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) bridge identification numbers are included when known.



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Root River Parkway	c.1931 Contributing Site
Root River Parkway Drive	Contributing Structure
<b>West Layton Avenue to West Forest Home Avenue</b>	
Culvert carrying Parkway Drive	c.1937 Contributing Structure
West Forest Home Avenue Bridge (B-40-159)	c.1963 Noncontributing Structure
<b>West Forest Home Avenue to West Grange Avenue</b>	
Bridge (P-40-566) connecting both sides of Parkway Drive	1935 Contributing Structure
Picnic Shelter with Restroom	c.1950 Contributing Building
Pedestrian Bridge	c.1990 Noncontributing Structure
Volleyball Court	c.1990 Noncontributing Structure
Bridge (B-40-604) carrying South 84 <sup>th</sup> Street	1991 Noncontributing Structure
Bridge carrying Parkway Drive	c.1937 Contributing Structure
Bridge (B-40-519) carrying West Grange Avenue	1979 Noncontributing Structure
<b>Grange Avenue to South 76<sup>th</sup> Street</b>	
Bridge carrying the Parkway Drive	c.1937 Contributing Structure
Picnic Shelter with Restroom	c.1950 Contributing Building
Culvert carrying Parkway Drive (near intersection with South 76 <sup>th</sup> Street)	c.1937 Contributing Structure
Bridge (B-40-717) carrying Parkway Drive	2006 Noncontributing Structure
Volleyball Court	c.2000 Noncontributing Structure
Picnic Shelter with Restroom	c.1940 Contributing Building
Bridge (B-40-031) Whitnall Park Creek	c.2000 Noncontributing Structure
Bridge (B-40-594) carrying South 92 <sup>nd</sup> Street (north) Whitnall Park Creek	1990 Noncontributing Structure
Bridge (B-40-650) carrying South 92 <sup>nd</sup> Street (south) Tess Corners Creek	c.1994 Noncontributing Structure
<b>Whitnall Park</b>	1933 Contributing Site
Bridge (P-40-721) carrying Whitnall Park Drive (south of College Avenue) over Tess Corners Creek	c.1934 Contributing Structure
Bridge (P-40-713) carrying Whitnall Park Drive over Tess Corners Creek (north of College Avenue)	c.1934 Contributing Structure

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Bridge (P-40-565) carrying Whitnall Park Drive (near USH 45)	1933 Contributing Structure
Bridge (P-40-564) carrying Whitnall Park Drive (near USH 45)	1933 Contributing Structure
Bridge carrying Whitnall Park Drive (west of north College Avenue)	c.1933 Contributing Structure
Bridge carrying Whitnall Park Drive (near Picnic Areas 8&6)	c.1934 Contributing Structure
Dam	c.1933 Contributing Structure
Picnic Shelter (associated with Picnic Area 8)	c.1940 Contributing Building
<b>Former Agriculture complex (Whitnall Park)</b>	
Gambrel barn	c.1900 Contributing Building
Silo	c.1900 Contributing Structure
Storage shed	c.1900 Contributing Building
Brick fireplace	c.1900 Contributing Structure
<b>Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum</b>	
CCC Repair Shop	c.1933 Contributing Building; restored in 1986
Service Building	c.1936 Contributing Building
Education and Visitor Center	2002 Noncontributing Building
Admissions Booth	c.2000 Noncontributing Building
Garden House	c.1935 Contributing Building
Statue	c.1936 Contributing Object
Statue	c.1936 Contributing Object
Statue	c.1936 Contributing Object
Gazebo	c.1935 Contributing Structure
Shelter House with Restroom Facilities	c.1950 Contributing Building
<b>Wehr Nature Center</b>	
Wehr Nature Center Building	c.1974 Noncontributing Building
Wehr Outdoor Amphitheater	c.1980 Noncontributing Structure
Storage Shed	c.1980 Noncontributing Building
Storage Shed	c.1980 Noncontributing Building
Storage Shed	c.1980 Noncontributing Building
Bird Blind	c.1980 Noncontributing Structure
Storage Building	c.1980 Noncontributing Building

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<b>Whitnall Golf Course</b>	1931 Contributing Site
Service/Maintenance Building	1933 Contributing Building
Garage	c.1960 Contributing Building
Clubhouse	1936 Contributing Building
Gambrel Barn (southwest corner of golf course)	c.1900 Contributing Building

The following text describes the Parkway in greater detail in segments beginning at the Parkway's northern terminus.

***West Layton Avenue to West Forest Home Avenue/STH 24 (Maps 1 and 2)***

The north end of the Parkway begins at West Layton Avenue, which coincides with Interstate 43 (I-43). Land in this segment of the Parkway was acquired between 1931 and 1934 through land donations.<sup>4</sup> This portion of the Parkway is nearly level with dense plantings of mix-aged deciduous trees and shrubby undergrowth that obscure the river. Land between the Drive and the river is comprised of mowed grassy areas interspersed with mature tree growth. A Parkway Drive follows along each side of the river. Aside from a small segment at the intersection with West Layton Avenue, the Parkway drive lacks curb and gutter. The Drive on the north side of the river begins at the intersection with West Layton Avenue, while the Drive on the south side begins at an intersection with a residential street southeast of West Layton Avenue. The north Drive features simple wood utility poles with pendant lights and a c.1937 fieldstone culvert (contributing) with a rounded arch parapet.

Residential properties front the north side of the Drive; however, they are located outside the Parkway boundary. The Drive located south of the Root River features a mowed field with moveable soccer goal posts at the northern terminus. An apartment complex and four residential properties on the south side of the river near the intersection with West Forest Home/STH 24 fronting the Drive are located outside the Parkway boundary. A 1963, single-span, concrete rigid-frame bridge (B-40-159, noncontributing) carrying West Forest Home Avenue/STH 24 over the Root River is located at the southern terminus of this segment. The bridge was modified in 1976 and again in 1989.

***West Forest Home Avenue/STH 24 to West Grange Avenue (Maps 2 and 3)***

Land in this segment of the Parkway was also acquired through land donations between 1932 and 1934. The Drive continues on both sides of the river as it meanders across the landscape. According to 1936 aerial photographs, this segment of the Parkway along with the roads in Whitnall Park were the first elements covered by this nomination to be constructed. The Drive in this segment is flanked by curb and gutter. The terrain is

<sup>4</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 90; Milwaukee County Park Commission, *Root Creek Parkway*, 1 January 1938, n.p.

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relatively level; however, the view of the river is obscured by dense coverage of mix-aged deciduous trees and scrubby undergrowth. Vegetation between the river and the Drive includes asymmetrical groupings of mature deciduous trees, which creates pockets of open grassy and shaded areas. A 1935, single-span, steel girder bridge with a concrete deck (P-40-566, contributing) connects the north and south sides of the Drive at the north end of the segment. Open spaces along this portion of the Parkway are designated as Picnic Areas 3A, 3B, and 4 and feature groupings of several picnic tables and one centrally located c.1950 picnic shelter with restroom facilities (contributing). The building has an intersecting gable roof with overhanging eaves and decorative beams. The picnic shelter is comprised of a concrete pad and square wood posts, which support the gable roof. The restroom facilities are rectangular in plan, clad in narrow vertical brick, and rest on a concrete block foundation. Windows have been covered with wood. A c.1990 (noncontributing) pedestrian truss bridge spans the river and connects to earthen footpaths on the south side of the river, which lead to a c.1990 volleyball court (noncontributing) and modern playground. A 1991, two-span, concrete slab bridge (B-40-604, noncontributing) carries South 84<sup>th</sup> Street over the Root River. From here, the Drive on the south side of the river terminates and the Drive on the north side continues to follow the river. The topography is fairly level and vegetation consists of mix-aged trees and scrubby undergrowth and mowed open grassy areas. A soccer field with moveable goal posts is located on the south side of the Drive. A modern concrete drainage channel extends from the north and drains into the Root River. A c.1937, single-span, fieldstone bridge (contributing) carrying the Drive spans the drainage channel. A 1979, two-span, concrete girder bridge (B-40-519, noncontributing) carries West Grange Avenue over the Root River at the southern edge of this segment of the Parkway.

***West Grange Avenue to South 76<sup>th</sup> Street (Maps 3, 4 and 6)***

This portion of the Parkway was established by a transfer of federal land in 1937, which connected the Parkway and Whitnall Park at West College Avenue. Immediately after the acquisition, the CCC began grading and constructing roads, building vehicular bridges, and planting trees within this segment. This portion of the Parkway features nearly level terrain and gently rolling hills that are dominated by dense wooded areas of mix-aged trees and scrubby undergrowth and pockets of irregular shaped mowed open grassy areas. An asymmetrical lagoon is located on the east side of the Drive. A c.1937 fieldstone bridge (contributing) carries the Drive over a tributary of the Root River that flows from the lagoon. Further to the south, Parkview Road intersects with the Drive to provide access to a residential area to the east of the Parkway. Picnic Area 2 is setback from the west side of the Drive and features a paved parking area, modern playground, c.1950 picnic shelter with restroom facilities (contributing), and open field used for soccer. The picnic shelter has a T-shaped plan with a shelter for picnic tables and restroom facilities sheathed in board and batten siding. It has a gable roof with overhanging eaves supported by decorative wood brackets.



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At an intersection south of Picnic Area 2 the Drive divides, providing access to Whitnall Park to the west and continuing south along the Root River with the Parkway. Following the Drive to the south, the roadway follows along the east side of the river as it passes through mowed open grassy areas interspersed with a mixture of mature deciduous and coniferous trees. Here, the Parkway boundary coincides with the southern edge of the Root River as it winds across the landscape.<sup>5</sup> A large open grassy area located between the Drive and a bend in the river serves as a practice golf area. From here, the Drive curves to the northeast, where it is carried over a small branch of the Root River by a c.1937 single span fieldstone culvert (contributing). The Drive continues to the northeast where it intersects with South 76<sup>th</sup> Street, which is the southern terminus of the Parkway boundary. The bridge carrying South 76<sup>th</sup> Street over the Root River is not included within the Parkway boundary.

At the intersection located south of Picnic Area 2, a portion of the Drive turns west, providing access to Whitnall Park. A 2006 single span bridge (B-40-717, noncontributing) with fieldstone veneer carries the Drive over the Root River. A large mowed open grassy area interspersed with mixed-aged tree growth creates a comfortable setting for Picnic Areas 1 and 1A on the south side of the Drive. The picnic areas features a paved parking area, modern playground, c.1990 volleyball court (noncontributing), and c.1940 picnic shelter with restroom facilities (contributing), and several picnic tables. The picnic shelter has a T-shaped plan with a shelter for picnic tables and restroom facilities sheathed in board and batten siding. It has a gable roof with overhanging eaves supported by decorative wood brackets.

A c.2000 single-span bridge (B-40-031, noncontributing) clad in fieldstone veneer spanning a branch of the Root River is located west of the picnic areas near the intersection with South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street. Two single span concrete slab bridges (B-40-594 and B-40-650, noncontributing) are located on the north and south sides of the intersection with South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street. The bridges were constructed c.1990 and c.1994, respectively. At the intersection with 92<sup>nd</sup> Street the Drive becomes West College Avenue, which divides Whitnall Park into two halves: north and south.

***Whitnall Park (Maps 4, 5, 7 and 8)***

Whitnall Park is roughly bound by West Grange Avenue on the north, South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street on the east, and West Rawson Avenue on the south. The western boundary of the Park coincides with the parcel line delineating county-owned land. All of Whitnall Park is encompassed within the Parkway boundary. Whitnall Park was established in 1929 and is the largest park within the Milwaukee County Park and Parkway System, encompassing 612 acres. In 1933, the CCC built roads, constructed Whitnall Lake (map 7) south of West

<sup>5</sup> Extraneous county-owned land south of the Root River was not historically associated with the Parkway and is not currently used for recreation purposes.



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College Avenue,<sup>6</sup> and graded three islands in the lake. In addition, the CCC constructed a reinforced concrete dam faced with a fieldstone veneer and improved the channel at the north end of the lake. This portion of the Parkway has rolling topography and vegetation, which includes a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees arranged in asymmetrical groupings to create clearings and shaded areas that were planted by the CCC. Two small lagoons and Whitnall Creek are located north of West College Avenue and several earthen pedestrian footpaths and commemorative and memorial signs are located throughout the park.

Boerner Drive (map 4) travels north from West College Avenue across the landscape past a farm remnant associated with the park and terminates at the Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum in the northeast corner of Whitnall Park. Whitnall Park Drive winds through the remainder of the park connecting picnic areas and a modern playground in the west with the Wehr Nature Center (map 7) and Whitnall Golf Course (maps 7 and 8) on the south side of West College Avenue and terminating at the intersection with US Highway (US) 45. A scenic overlook with a paved parking area located south of West College Avenue is situated on a hill overlooking Whitnall Lake, which features a c.1933 concrete dam/waterfall (contributing) to the northeast. The Wehr Nature Center is located on the west side of Whitnall Lake and Whitnall Golf Course is located to the south. Earthen trails wind around the lake connecting the overlook and the Wehr Nature Center. Tess Corners Creek flows through the golf course and drains into Whitnall Lake.

Six vehicular bridges are located throughout Whitnall Park. Two c.1934, single-span, reinforced concrete slab bridges (P-40-721 and P-40-713, contributing, map 7) with stone abutments and simple timber railing carry Whitnall Park Drive over Tess Corners Creek. Two concrete deck arch bridges with rustic fieldstone veneer (P-40-565 and P-40-564, contributing, map 5) constructed in 1933 carry Whitnall Park Drive over Whitnall Creek. A c.1933, single-span, arch bridge with rustic fieldstone veneer (contributing) carries the Whitnall Park Drive over Whitnall Creek and one c.1934, single-span, concrete slab bridge (contributing) with fieldstone veneer carries Whitnall Park Drive over Whitnall Creek.

Picnic Areas 5, 6, 7, and 8 (map 5) are located southwest of the Botanical Gardens in Whitnall Park. A large paved parking area centrally located between the picnic areas provides parking for visitors. Picnic Areas 5 and 6 are located on the north side of Whitnall Park Drive adjacent to a modern playground. The picnic areas feature groupings of picnic tables situated throughout large mowed open grassy areas that are interspersed with mix-aged deciduous trees. Picnic Area 7 is located on the south side of Whitnall Park Drive across from Picnic Area 5. Picnic Area 7 is an asymmetrical mowed open grassy area that is surrounded by mix-aged deciduous trees. Picnic Area 8 is located west of Picnic Area 6 and features a c.1940 picnic shelter with restroom (contributing) and several picnic tables. The shelter has a T-shaped plan with cross gable roof covered with wood shake shingles. It is clad in a combination of wood clapboard siding and fieldstone veneer.

<sup>6</sup> South Root River Parkway Drive becomes West College Avenue west of Whitnall Park Road.

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Remnants of a former c.1900 farmstead are located along the east side of Boerner Drive north of West College Avenue (map 4). Aerial photographs from 1936 show a farmhouse, barn, silo, and other outbuildings at this location that were incorporated into the park design. Subsequent aerial photographs from 1956, 1963, and 1995 show the gambrel barn with raised concrete block foundation (contributing), concrete silo with cap (contributing), and frame storage shed with gable roof (contributing) as being extant. A c.1900 standing brick fireplace (contributing) is also associated with these agricultural outbuildings.

*Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum (Botanical Garden) (Maps 4 and 5)*

The Botanical Garden (contributing site) is located at the northeast corner of Whitnall Park. The Botanical Garden was designed by Alfred L. Boerner to be reminiscent of a typical English country garden.<sup>7</sup> Although Boerner began purchasing the land for the Botanical Garden in the 1920s, the gardens were not created until 1933 and not open to the public until 1939. The original Botanical Garden featured annual, perennial, rock, rose, and peony gardens. Subsequent additions to the gardens include the trial garden in 1950, herb garden in 1953, bog walk in 1966, and the daylily path and shrub rose collection in 1972. Visitors walk through the gardens using gravel footpaths and paved walkways. Reflective pools, fountains, and a pergola are located throughout the gardens and are considered part of the landscape.

Visitors of the Botanical Garden park in large paved parking area is located east of the Botanical Gardens that is accessed by Boerner Drive or South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street. A c.1933 vernacular side gable building (contributing) sheathed in board and batten wood is located on the south side of the parking lot. The original building was designed for temporary use by the CCC as a repair shop and was originally covered with tar paper siding before it was restored in 1986.<sup>8</sup> A c.1936 service building (contributing) is located at the northeast corner of the parking lot. The building has an irregular plan with a gable roof covered with slate shingles. It is clad in a combination of board and batten siding and fieldstone, which is obscured by foliage growing on the walls. The Botanical Garden is accessed via the education and visitor center (noncontributing) located west of the parking area. Constructed in 2002, the two-story building has a fieldstone exterior and reflects the design aesthetics of Whitnall Park and the overall Parkway. Access to the Botanical Gardens is also available via Whitnall Park Drive, which is partially gated to restrict vehicular access. Visitors may also access the gardens at the c.2000 gable admission booth (noncontributing) located on the south side of Whitnall Park Drive across from the education and visitor center.

The grounds of the Botanical Gardens also feature the garden house (contributing) located west of the admissions booth. This one-and-one-half-story side gable building was constructed by workers from the Works

<sup>7</sup> Milwaukee County Parks Office, *Boerner Botanical Gardens*, brochure c.2010, n.p.

<sup>8</sup> Milwaukee County Parks Office, n.p.

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Progress Administration (WPA) between 1935 and 1941. The building is clad in fieldstone and has a wood shingle roof and multi-light windows. The building was designed by George Spintl.<sup>9</sup> The garden house served as the administration building with offices, program space, and gift shop until the education and visitor center was constructed in 2002. The gardens are located south of two c.1936 sculptures of a boy and girl (contributing) designed by WPA artist Jeff Greer and a c.1935 gazebo (contributing). The perennial garden is located west of the annual garden and features a reflective pool with a c.1936 sculpture of a mother with her children (contributing) designed by WPA artist George Adams Dietrich. The rose garden is located to the west of the perennial garden and features a pergola. The herb and heirloom gardens are located south of the perennial garden. A c.1950 shelter house with restroom facilities and concessions (contributing) is located south of the heirloom garden. The building has an irregular plan and is clad in a combination of fieldstone and vinyl siding and resembles the garden house. The shrub mall and rock garden are located to the south of the annual garden. The rock garden was designed to incorporate remnants of a former quarry located in Whitnall Park. The daylily path and bog walk are located south of the shelter house. Several small, non-permanent storage sheds are also located with the site; these are not included in the count. An arboretum comprised of lilac, spruce, pine, fir, junipers, arborvitae, yews, and magnolia trees surrounds the Botanical Gardens.

*Wehr Nature Center Complex (Map 7)*

The Wehr Nature Center Complex is located on the south side of West College Avenue on the west side of Whitnall Lake and accessed by Nature Center Drive. The area served by the nature center currently consists of 220 acres of land with over five miles of trails connecting visitors with a variety of natural landscapes such as Woodland, Wetland, Prairie, Oak Savanna, and Whitnall Lake.<sup>10</sup> The Wehr Nature Center Complex consists of a c.1974 Visitor and Education Center with multiple additions (noncontributing), c.1980 outdoor amphitheater (noncontributing), three frame gable c.1980 storage sheds (noncontributing), c.1980 bird blind (noncontributing), and a c.1980 concrete block storage building (noncontributing). Features of the landscape include modern small ancillary buildings, several earthen and wooden pedestrian trails, piers, and interpretive signage. While the nature center trails and emphasis on ecosystem landscapes reflects a change in the original design of the park, its broader historical use as a natural area remains unchanged.

*Whitnall Park Golf Course (Maps 7 and 8)*

The Whitnall Park Golf Course (contributing) is located in the southern part of Whitnall Park south of Whitnall Lake. The 18-hole golf course designed by George Hansen opened to the public in 1932. As a designed landscape, the golf course features rolling topography, water hazards, sand traps, and planned groupings of deciduous trees and shrubs. In 1933, the CCC created a parking area east of the golf course for patrons and

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<sup>9</sup> Milwaukee County Parks Office, n.p.

<sup>10</sup> Friends of Wehr. "About Friends of Wehr." <<http://www.friendsofwehr.org/fow-about.html>>.

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built a service building along South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street (contributing). The one-story service building and associated service yard is located near the intersection with West Hawthorne Lane. The building has a rectangular plan and side gable roof with exposed rafters, and is sheathed in fieldstone. In addition, the building has gable dormers on the north elevation, three overhead garage doors on the south elevation, and multi-light windows. In c. 1960 a three-bay garage (noncontributing) was constructed to the south of the original building.

A clubhouse (contributing) was added to the property in 1936 and is located on the southwest side of Whitnall Park Drive near the intersection with South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street. It was designed by George Spinti, who also designed the garden house in the Botanical Garden. The clubhouse is irregular in plan and sits on a hill overlooking Whitnall Lake. The building is sheathed in a combination of fieldstone, wood shake shingle, and clapboard, and the gable roof is covered with wood shingles. A deck was added to the north elevation of the clubhouse in 2005. A c. 1900 gambrel barn (contributing) with raised fieldstone foundation and board and batten siding is located in the southwest corner of the golf course near West Rawson Avenue. The barn is a remnant of a former farmstead that was acquired for the development of the golf course and is currently used for storage.

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- ☒ **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.
- ☒ **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 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1931-1960

**Significant Dates**

1931

1932

1939

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Boerner, Alfred

Spinti, George

Hansen, George

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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



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**Statement of Significance**

The Root River Parkway, including the associated Whitnall Park, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, and the Whitnall Park Golf Course, meets National Register *Criterion A: Community Planning and Development* and *Criterion C: Landscape Architecture* at the local level of significance. The Parkway and Parks are significant as components of the Milwaukee County Parkway System, which was largely constructed under Depression-era federal work relief efforts. The Root River Parkway was designed as a component of a large chain of parkways that encircled Milwaukee County, connecting park units, including Whitnall Park, the Boerner Botanical Gardens, and the Whitnall Park Golf Course, throughout the county. It is largely intact and the original design intention of the parkway plan is clearly visible. The period of significance extends from 1931, when implementation of Whitnall Park Golf Course began, to 1960, which coincides with the end period established by the multiple property document.

The Root River Parkway is one of nine parkways established between 1923 and 1960 addressed in the Multiple Property Document (MPD), "The Milwaukee County Parkway System." As such, the Parkway is linked to the historic contexts of "Community Planning and Development in Milwaukee County, 1933-1942;" "Federal Work Relief Programs in Milwaukee County, 1933-1942;" and "Landscape Architecture in the Milwaukee County Parkway System, 1923-1960" as outlined in the MPD. In particular, the Root River Parkway has a rich history associated with the federal work relief programs of the Depression era, as it was implemented with labor from five separate programs.

***History of the Milwaukee County Parkway System***

Charles B. Whitnall's tentative study in 1923 for the Milwaukee County Parkway System illustrated the planned site of the Root River Parkway within the context of a series of parkways in metropolitan Milwaukee. The individual parkways would follow the Milwaukee, Menomonee, Kinnickinnic, and Root rivers; Honey, Lincoln, Oak, and Underwood creeks; and the Lake Michigan shoreline, thus resulting in two "necklaces of green" encircling the county.<sup>11</sup> The Root River Parkway was designed to connect the Underwood Creek Parkway in the north, via Greenfield Park, with Whitnall Park and the Oak Creek Parkway in the south. Although part of the broader county-wide plan from the earliest iteration, plans for the Root River Parkway were not published until 1928, with land acquisition for the first segment of the parkway extending south from Greenfield Park to

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<sup>11</sup> See plans in Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *The First Plans for a Parkway System for Milwaukee County: Illustrations from First Annual Report* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, 1924), n.p.

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Oklahoma Avenue occurring the following year.<sup>12</sup> Prior to the Parkway's land acquisition, this area of Milwaukee County was primarily agricultural, and extant barns and farmstead remnants in Whitnall Park and the Whitnall Park Golf Course convey this earlier history. Notably, the farmstead remnants in Whitnall Park were considered during the landscape design process, and the Parkway Drive was deliberately designed to retain the farmstead in the viewshed.

Whitnall conceived of the Milwaukee County Parkway System as an escape for the average person from the congestion and pollution of the city. His intention was to "preserve or conserve the bounties of nature for the benefit of the people."<sup>13</sup> In addition to this social benefit, other pragmatic benefits ultimately justified the creation of the Parkway System. Flooding, having long been a concern along the rivers flowing through Milwaukee, could be addressed by creating the Parkway along flood plains, and utilizing trees and river alterations to reduce the risk for floods could lessen the severity of flooding and prevent unwitting builders from placing structures in harm's way. While Whitnall provided the concept and motivation to create the Parkway System, Alfred Boerner provided the designs. Boerner served as landscape architect in the Milwaukee Regional Planning Department from 1926 through 1952, and in that time he implemented the plans proposed by Whitnall in a manner that was sensitive to existing topography and natural features, utilizing water as a focal point in many of his designs.<sup>14</sup>

The alignment of the Parkway System along the county's rivers and creeks was also advantageous economically, as was argued thoroughly in the 1924 and 1925 annual reports of the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department. Whitnall's assertions regarding the benefits of parkways to public health and recreation were intangible, but the impact of green space on adjacent property values was measureable. In the *Second Annual Report*, using comparisons from similar cities, the County Park Commission provided a clear correlation between green space and higher property values and asserted that "the Park commission and the county Board would be entirely justified in the construction of the parkway system solely because of its effects upon public health, recreation, and general welfare. With the added financial benefits derived from the county parks and

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<sup>12</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Annual Report for the year 1928* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, 1929), 36; Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department and Milwaukee County Park Commission, *Biennial Report for the years 1931-1932*, (Milwaukee: Court House, 1933), 22. This segment of the Parkway is located outside boundary discussed in this nomination because it does not convey the sense and feel embodied by the other segments of the Root River Parkway.

<sup>13</sup> Charles B. Whitnall, "Report on the Milwaukee Metropolitan Park Commission," (Milwaukee, Wis.: n.p., n.d.), 8.

<sup>14</sup> Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Milwaukee County Parkway System*, (Washington, D.C.: National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Park Service, 2008), E-17.

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parkways, the parkway system will become the dominant factor in the development of metropolitan Milwaukee."<sup>15</sup>

***Development of the Root River Parkway and the Impact of Work Relief Efforts***

In 1929, the Milwaukee County Park Commission established Whitnall Park, a major park within the Root River Parkway that was, and remains, the largest park unit in the Milwaukee County Parkway System. Whitnall Park was created at the behest of Charles Whitnall, who frequently took walks in the area and felt that it would be the "Gem" of the County Parkway System.<sup>16</sup> Acreage donations from businesses and citizens between 1932 and 1934 extended the Parkway along the Root River from Layton Avenue to West Grange Avenue, on the northern half of the Parkway segment covered in this nomination. In 1937, the United States Government's greenbelt community, the Village of Greendale, transferred 534 acres to the Root River Parkway, which included the southern half of the Parkway segment included in this nomination, from West Grange Avenue to just south of Loomis Road.<sup>17</sup>

As was the case with the majority of the parkway system, Depression-era work relief programs were crucial to the development of the Root River Parkway and Whitnall Park. With \$21.7 million expended in the Milwaukee County Park system between 1931 and 1941, these programs provided a massive workforce and advanced park development 10 to 15 years ahead of original planning.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, work relief efforts are perhaps most pronounced in the Root River Parkway, which provides ample evidence of the labor that enabled the development of the county-wide parkway system. The activities of five distinct work-relief programs that operated within the Parkway are discussed in more detail below.

***Department of Outdoor Relief***

While the first section of the Parkway was acquired in 1929, it was not until the county provided work relief funding that any development began. To provide relief for those left unemployed by the Great Depression, on April 14, 1931, the County Board of Supervisors authorized \$100,000 to be expended by the Park Commission

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<sup>15</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Second Annual Report*, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department: 1925), 24.

<sup>16</sup> "From One Man's Dream Sprouted Whitnall Park," *Milwaukee Journal*, 28 July 1949, 8; Milwaukee County Park Commission, *Whitnall Park Development*, 1 January 1941, n.p.

<sup>17</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 100; Milwaukee County Park Commission, *Root Creek Parkway*, n.p.

<sup>18</sup> Milwaukee county Park Commission and the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 65-66; Milwaukee County Park Commission and the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Quadrennial Report for the Years 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936*, (Milwaukee: Court House, 1937), 16.

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to fund the Department of Outdoor Relief (DOR) for the purpose of employing those in need of relief. Although only active until 1933, the DOR was responsible for the first flood risk reduction in the early portion of the Root River Parkway, extending from Greenfield Park to Oklahoma Avenue. The initial work consisted of grading and planting the river banks, widening and deepening sections of the waterway, and adding retaining walls.<sup>19</sup>

*Civilian Conservation Corps*

The advent of federal work relief programs brought a flurry of activity to the Milwaukee County Parkway System. Between 1933 and 1938, the CCC established four camps in Milwaukee parkways, including one in Whitnall Park, one in Estabrook Park, and two in the Honey Creek Parkway. The Whitnall Park camp was the sole facility to serve throughout the period of CCC operation and was the source of significant progress in the Root River Parkway and Whitnall Park.<sup>20</sup> A single repair shop building in Whitnall Park (5879 South 92nd Street) continues to mark the presence of the Whitnall Park CCC camp.<sup>21</sup> In 1935, the CCC dredged the Root River bed to a greater depth, relocated part of its channel, created a lagoon in Whitnall Park, planted over 500 trees, and graded the roadway along the river.<sup>22</sup>

The federal project responsible for creating the Village of Greendale transferred 534 acres of land to the County Park system in 1937, connecting the Root River Parkway with Whitnall Park. The CCC began work on this land immediately, grading the area, constructing roads, erecting vehicular bridges, and completing landscaping. By 1938 over 4.3 miles of Parkway were open to the public.<sup>23</sup>

*National Youth Administration*

The National Youth Administration (NYA) was active in the county's park and parkway system from 1935 to 1937. Generally assigned to maintenance work, the workers cultivated shrub beds, planted trees, mowed lawns, and performed other related tasks within the Root River Parkway and Whitnall Park. The NYA utilized a large crew to construct benches, signs, and boats, and to help repair and maintain buildings. Aside from this

<sup>19</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department and Milwaukee County Park Commission, *Biennial Report for the years 1931-1932*, 22. Although this was the first work completed in the Root River Parkway, this segment of parkway is located outside of the boundaries addressed in this nomination.

<sup>20</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department and Milwaukee County Park Commission, *Biennial Report for the years 1931-1932*, 69.

<sup>21</sup> "Milwaukee County Historical Society," *Milwaukee County Historic Landmarks*, <[http://www.milwaukeehistory.net/historic\\_landmarks/landmarks\\_HalesCorners.html](http://www.milwaukeehistory.net/historic_landmarks/landmarks_HalesCorners.html)>.

<sup>22</sup> Milwaukee County Parks Office, *Superintendents Report 1935*, ([Milwaukee]: N.p., [1936]), 4; M.F. Linnan, *Bi Monthly Progress Report for Months of October and November*.

<sup>23</sup> Milwaukee County Parks Office. *Superintendents Report 1935*, ([Milwaukee]: N.p., [1936]), 70.



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maintenance related-work, the NYA also sought to make a contribution to the Milwaukee community and the parkways by erecting and operating a camp for "under privileged negro children" in the Root River Parkway for two seasons in conjunction with the Milwaukee Urban League.<sup>24</sup>

*Works Progress Administration and Civil Works Administration*

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civil Works Administration (CWA) operated solely in Whitnall Park and are discussed below in the section on associated parks.

***Post-Work Relief Program Era***

Work on the Parkway and associated parks continued through the 1940s and primarily involved drainage and roadway work.<sup>25</sup> By 1959, additional facilities had been installed in the Parkway and Whitnall Park, including archery ranges, badminton courts, a baseball practice field, bridle paths, and outdoor fireplaces.<sup>26</sup> Although the original plan to connect the Parkway with the Oak Creek Parkway was not realized as a part of the federal work relief implementation efforts, the Milwaukee County Board found renewed interest in 1967 when the scenic drive concept was again adopted to address flooding issues along the Root River. The County commissioned a study that recommended the purchase of property along the flood plain and the creation of a scenic drive through the Root River Valley; however, zoning and other issues delayed the program and it was eventually abandoned.<sup>27</sup>

***Associated Parks***

*Whitnall Park*

The County acquired land for Whitnall Park between 1929 and 1933, and by 1936 it encompassed 612 acres. Much of the land was farmland, including acreage with farmstead structures that were incorporated into the design of the park and parkway. The park was first mentioned in the 1931-1932 *Biennial Report*.<sup>28</sup> Contained within the park are an arboretum, garden, golf course, and nature center, which will be addressed separately. As with the Root River Parkway, Whitnall Park was primarily developed by work relief labor in the 1930s. CCC

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<sup>24</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 72. The exact location of the camp within Whitnall Park is unidentified.

<sup>25</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 70, 113-115.

<sup>26</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission, *1959 Annual Report*, ([Milwaukee:] n.p., 1960), 1-13.

<sup>27</sup> "Idle Bridge A Sorry Tale," *Milwaukee Journal*, 25 September 1980, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department and Milwaukee County Park Commission, *Biennial Report for the Years 1931-1932*, 13-18.



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laborers, who resided in a camp in Whitnall Park, completed an impressive amount of work in a very short period. Starting in 1933, the CCC laid roads, excavated 120,000 cubic yards of earth to construct the 15-acre Whitnall Lake, created three islands within the lake, constructed a reinforced concrete dam faced with fieldstone, improved the channel of a Whitnall Park Creek north of the lake, and constructed a fieldstone veneered concrete bridge with a rustic wood railing.<sup>29</sup> The CCC was also responsible for planting hundreds of trees and shrubs on the Whitnall Lake's three islands in 1935.<sup>30</sup>

Other work relief programs at work within the park during this time include the CWA, which consolidated all of the overhead electrical service lines into a central underground system in 1934. In addition to removing unsightly lines from the landscape, this new configuration delivered power at a cost 70 to 80 percent cheaper than before, providing the county with a significant savings.<sup>31</sup> The WPA operated within the park between 1935 and 1941, and in that time constructed service buildings and updated the roads.<sup>32</sup>

By 1936, Whitnall Park featured a baseball diamond, four horseshoe courses, a picnic station, a skating area, an 18-hole par 73 golf course and clubhouse, 1.5 miles of hiking trails, service buildings, comfort stations, and lagoons.<sup>33</sup> Development continued the following year with the installation of a sprinkler system, construction of a shelter, and wall around the gardens and road, as well as planting of additional trees and shrubs.<sup>34</sup>

The following decades saw the creation of new roadways and ancillary buildings, including the erection of two steel frame Quonset buildings in 1947 (nonextant) and a new restroom and comfort station building in the picnic area in 1950.<sup>35</sup> In 1953, Whitnall Park Drive was graded between South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street and Park Drive opposite the arboretum to accommodate the increased patronage of the park.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Quadrennial Report for the Years 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936*, 64.

<sup>30</sup> M.F. Linnan, *Bi Monthly Progress Report for Months of October and November*.

<sup>31</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Quadrennial Report for the Years 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936*, 16.

<sup>32</sup> C. Beernink, "Annual Report 1940, Summary W.P.A. Project No. 8670," in *Reports Made at the 1940 Annual Fall Round-up Luncheon Meeting*.

<sup>33</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Quadrennial Report for the Years 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936*, 26, 35.

<sup>34</sup> Milwaukee County WPA Site File, Record 4D-1106, 10 March 1937.

<sup>35</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Quadrennial Report for the Years 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936*, 117.

<sup>36</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission, *1953 Annual Report of the Activities of Milwaukee County Park Commission*, (Milwaukee: [Milwaukee County Park Commission] 1954), 45.

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*Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum*

The Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum (Botanical Gardens) is located in the northeast corner of Whitnall Park and has remained a popular attraction since its opening in 1939. The botanical garden was designed by Milwaukee County Landscape Architect, Alfred L. Boerner, to be reminiscent of a typical English country garden. Although Boerner arrived in Milwaukee County shortly after the county parkway system had been conceived, many of his designs made the system a reality. Boerner's landscape designs were sensitive to existing topography and natural features of the site, and in most designs he used water as the primary focal point. Within the botanical gardens, Boerner provided a fountain as a focal point, surrounded by perennial and annual malls that provided vistas to the south and west. Although Boerner began purchasing land for the Botanical Garden in the 1920s, implementation did not begin until 1933 and the gardens opened to the public six years later. The original Botanical Garden featured annual, perennial, rock, rose, and peony gardens. Subsequent additions included the 1950 trial garden, the 1953 herb garden, the 1966 bog walk, and the 1972 daylily walk and shrub rose collection.<sup>37</sup>

Like Whitnall Park and the Whitnall Park Golf Course, the Botanical Garden and arboretum were developed with the use of work relief laborers. In 1933, laborers from the Whitnall Park-based CCC camp graded a chain of three lagoons in the gardens. The lower two lagoons also featured a fieldstone-faced concrete dam. In addition, CCC laborers graded and graveled a drive through the arboretum and constructed a temporary building (nonextant).<sup>38</sup>

The WPA also contributed to the development of the Botanical Gardens. Between 1935 and 1941, the WPA constructed the administration building for the gardens; planned and developed the rock garden, which was converted from an extant farmstead gravel pit; installed a sprinkler system; laid a storm sewer; constructed a sub-basement for the pump installation; and constructed the parking area.<sup>39</sup> The one-and-one-half-story administration building was designed by George Spinti to resemble a "typical Wisconsin farm house style with fieldstone walls and hand split shingles." This building featured a timbered lecture room with stone fireplace, a projection room, a laboratory, a record room, and restrooms. The building served administrative purposes until

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<sup>37</sup> Milwaukee County Parks, *Boerner Botanical Gardens Brochure*, [2010], n.p.; "Milwaukee County, 'Tour,'" *Tour of Boerner Botanical Gardens* <<http://county.milwaukee.gov/Tour10499.htm>>.

<sup>38</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Quadrennial Report for the Years 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 64*.

<sup>39</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 68; Beemink, "Annual Report 1940, Summary W.P.A. Project No. 8670," in *Reports Made at the 1940 Annual Fall Round-up Luncheon Meeting*.

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the education and visitor center opened in 2002.<sup>40</sup> In addition to the architecture, WPA sculptors, in conjunction with Milwaukee's Layton School of Art, created statuary throughout the gardens. This included the Jeff Greer-designed sculpture of a boy and girl, located in the annual garden, and the George Adams Dietrich-designed sculpture of a mother and two sons, located in the perennial garden. The mother and two sons sculpture was created from local stone cut in the Currie Park quarry, and installed in the northernmost perennial border in 1938.<sup>41</sup>

Officially opened to the public in 1939, the annual attendance at the Botanical Gardens was 100,000 by 1940. In that year, a large number of new plants were added, including an enlargement of the lilac group to 250 main varieties. The rose garden saw growth in the form of 1,500 new plants, and a collection of tree peonies was given by Mr. Charles Hammersley in memoriam to his wife.<sup>42</sup>

By 1950, the arboretum covered an area approximately equal to one-third of the total acreage of Whitnall Park, and attendance at the Botanical Gardens numbered 500,000 visitors per year. The gardens were divided into separate units of floral groups and exhibited a widely regarded collection of perennial types.<sup>43</sup> As the popularity of the arboretum and gardens grew during the first decade of service, the demand for larger facilities increased. To meet the need, a new shelter house was constructed c.1950 to provide additional restroom and concession space. In addition, the botanical gardens expanded to include a 0.75-acre herb and medicinal garden in 1953, and traffic congestion resulted in a new entrance road east of the gardens at 92<sup>nd</sup> Street.<sup>44</sup> Beginning in 1958 the botanical garden has served as one of 23 official U.S. test gardens for the American Rose Selections, thus emphasizing the importance of the garden in national horticulture. The botanical gardens and arboretum continue to be a popular destination today, with multiple programs for children and members of the community.

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<sup>40</sup> Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Quadrennial Report for the Years 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936*, 64; Milwaukee County Parks, *Boerner Botanical Gardens Brochure*, n.p.

<sup>41</sup> Milwaukee County, "Annual Garden," *Tour of Boerner Botanical Gardens*, <<http://county.milwaukee.gov/AnnualGarden10501.htm>>; Milwaukee County, "Perennial Borders," *Tour of Boerner Botanical Gardens*, <<http://county.milwaukee.gov/PerennialBorders10502.htm>>.

<sup>42</sup> A.L. Boerner, "Whitnall Park," in *Reports Made at the 1940 Annual Fall Round-up Luncheon Meeting*, 49.

<sup>43</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 45-46.

<sup>44</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission, *1952 Annual Report of the Activities of Milwaukee County Park Commission*, 11; Milwaukee County Park Commission, *1953 Annual Report of the Activities of Milwaukee County Park Commission*, 14.

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*Whitnall Park Golf Course*

The Whitnall Park Golf Course was one of the first implemented components of the larger Whitnall Park landscape, and it opened to golfers in 1932 after the DOR completed grading the 18-hole course in 1931 in preparation for spring planting.<sup>45</sup> Prior to its landscaping as a golf course, this land was occupied by a farmstead and, as was typical within the county park system, the extant barn was retained and used as golf course storage. The course was designed by George Hansen at the request of local golf enthusiasts who knew him from his work in Racine and other county golf courses. Hansen was hired by the Milwaukee County Park Commission as a golf manager in 1919 and eventually he became the first park superintendent in 1926.<sup>46</sup> During his 31-year tenure with Milwaukee County, Hansen also designed the Grant Park Golf Course (1920), the Greenfield Park Golf Course (1923), the Currie Park Golf Course (1927), and the Brown Deer Park Golf Course (1929).

The CCC added to the Whitnall Park Golf Course soon after its opening, grading and graveling a parking station for golfers and erecting a service building in 1933.<sup>47</sup> The WPA also contributed to the golf course, constructing a clubhouse in 1936.<sup>48</sup> The clubhouse was designed by George Spinti, who also designed the garden house in the botanical garden. It features a combination of woodshake shingle and clapboard siding and fieldstone veneer. The clubhouse was popular with other patrons besides golfers, and by 1940 several social groups made use of the facility for card parties, luncheons, and dinners. A large lounge in the basement was useful for card games, and the dining room upstairs featured a fireplace, large bay window looking out over the lagoon, and a fully equipped refectory.<sup>49</sup>

Notable upgrades to the golf course occurred between 1954 and 1955 when the first and tenth tees were reconstructed and a new road was graded from the Park Drive southerly and westerly, crossing College Avenue.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 66.

<sup>46</sup> Laurie M. Albano, *Images of America: Milwaukee County Parks*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 71.

<sup>47</sup> M.F. Linnan, *Bi Monthly Progress Report for Months of October and November*, Parks Department, *Whitnall Park Development*, Milwaukee County Parks Department, Whitnall Park binder, n.d.

<sup>48</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and the Milwaukee County Regional Planning Board, *Quadredecennial Report: 1937-1950 Inclusive*, 68.

<sup>49</sup> William Fishor, "Whitnall Golf Course Clubhouse," in *Reports Made at the 1940 Annual Fall Round-up Luncheon Meeting*, 1940, 37.

<sup>50</sup> Fishor, "Whitnall Golf Course Clubhouse," 39.



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Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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*Wehr Nature Center Complex*

Milwaukee County established the Wehr Nature Center Complex, a 220-acre natural area with various landscapes and a visitor center and amphitheater, located south side of West College Avenue adjacent to the west side of Whitnall Lake. Although the buildings and structures associated with the complex were constructed after the period of significance, land associated with the nature center complex was included within the Whitnall Park boundary by 1936.<sup>51</sup> Prior to formal development of the Wehr Nature Center Complex, the land that became Whitnall Park was a combination of pasture land and wooded lots.<sup>52</sup> Aside from a few earthen trails adjacent to the west bank of Whitnall Lake, the land currently associated with the nature center was undeveloped.<sup>53</sup> By the mid-1960s a prairie restoration plan was implemented on land currently associated with the nature center. While it is unclear when the other natural areas were developed, plans for the nature center were in place by 1968.<sup>54</sup> The nature center complex is currently comprised of numerous wildlife habitats including prairie, woodlands, wetlands, and oak savanna; over five miles of pedestrian trails linking the natural communities; interpretive signage; a c. 1974 visitor and education center; and a c. 1980 outdoor amphitheater.

***Rustic Architecture in the Root River Parkway***

The Root River Parkway Historic District is a good representative example of a designed landscape property type. In particular, the Parkway is unified throughout the Drive and associated parks through the use of a rustic design aesthetic that is applied to the Parkway's buildings, bridges, and culverts.

Rustic architecture emerged from a tradition of domestic and resort architecture in rugged and scenic places such as the coast of Maine, the Adirondacks of New York, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Sierra Madre of California, and was characterized by the use of natural, local materials and handcrafted finishes. As the idea of developing nature and wilderness for personal pleasure extended throughout America, an increasing number of public parks, at the local, state, and national levels, adopted the rustic style of architecture for numerous park structures.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission and Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department, *Quadrennial Report 1933-1934-1935-1936* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Court House, 1937), 35.

<sup>52</sup> County Park Tour Tips, "County Park Tour Tip: 'Go to Southwest Area': Gardens in Whitnall are Always Popular; Greenfield Has Many Points of Interest," ([Milwaukee, Wis.]: The Journal Company, January 1958), 6.

<sup>53</sup> Go Milwaukee County, "Milwaukee County Land Information Office's Interactive Mapping Service," <http://county.milwaukee.gov/LandInformationProgr23113/LIOInteractiveMapping.htm> accessed 1 August 2011.

<sup>54</sup> Milwaukee County Park Commission, 1968-1969 Biennial Report, ([Milwaukee, Wis.]: Park Commission), 15.

<sup>55</sup> Linda F. McClelland, "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks," (National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, August 1995), E: 27.



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In the case of the Root River Parkway, much of the rustic design aesthetic was the result of CCC and WPA labor work during the Depression era, which utilized local materials such as timber and fieldstone to build bridges, picnic shelters, and comfort stations. Examples of Rustic architecture within the Parkway include a c.1935 picnic shelter in Whitnall Park with wood clapboard and fieldstone siding; the fieldstone Garden House in the Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, built between 1935 and 1941; and the 1936 Whitnall Park Golf Course Clubhouse, which features wood shake shingle and clapboard siding and fieldstone veneer. Additionally, WPA workers installed fieldstone-faced bridges throughout the Parkway, which reflect the tenets of rustic design through their use of natural, local materials and handcrafted finishes.

***Integrity***

The segment of Parkway addressed in this nomination roughly follows the original plans published for the Parkway. However, the Parkway does not connect with the Oak Creek Parkway at the south, as was originally planned. Additionally, the segment of Parkway extending north of this segment towards Greenfield Park was not fully implemented and does not best reflect the tenets of Milwaukee County's Parkway design. As a result, this northern portion was excluded from the nomination.

Several bridges over the Root River have recently been replaced with modern spans, and modern recreational facilities, such as volleyball courts, have been installed. Due to the scale of the intrusions relative to the size of the Parkway district as a whole, the addition of c.1990-c.2000 sports courts and fields throughout the Parkway do not detract from the integrity of the Parkway district. The addition of active recreational facilities throughout the Parkway ensures that the parkway land continues to serve the recreational and athletic needs of the adjacent community. Although the land associated with the Wehr Nature Center Complex was acquired within the period of significance, the associated buildings and structures were constructed between c.1974 and c.2010. While the 220 acres of land currently associated with the nature center complex did not originally feature the extensive trail network or ecological landscapes currently present, the overall landscape is consistent with the original intent of the park, providing visitors the opportunity to experience nature. The establishment of the nature center complex occurred after the period of significance; therefore, the buildings and structures associated with the complex are outside the period of significance of the Root River Parkway. Land currently associated with the complex was included as part of the original park design and represents the evolution of the park as a natural greenspace within an urbanized area.

Although the Parkway has been altered, it is still able to convey its original intention as a component within the overall county-wide system of parkways. The major features that contribute to the overall significance of the Historic District are still present, including the river, parkway drive, adjacent parkway land, Whitnall Park, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, Whitnall Park Golf Course, natural setting, and rustic architecture.

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**Conclusion**

The Root River Parkway Historic District meets National Register *Criterion A: Community Planning and Development* as a significant component in the Milwaukee County Parkway System, which was implemented with federal aid work relief. In accordance with the registration requirements of the *Milwaukee County Parkway System MPD*, the Parkway is associated with the overall parkway system as it was designed, developed, and managed by the Milwaukee County Park Commission between 1923 and 1960. Moreover, the Parkway has a direct and illustrated association with Whitnall's original vision for a county-wide parkway system; it was identified in Whitnall's 1923 map for a parkway system and plans were provided in the County's 1931-1932 *Biennial Report*.

Additionally, the Root River Parkway Historic District reflects the aims of the Milwaukee County Park Commissioners who advocated developing a parkway system to relieve urban congestion, provide a hygienic landscape, provide outdoor recreational spaces, increase adjacent property values, and control flood-prone watersheds. The Parkway also maintains a very strong association with federal-aid work relief in Milwaukee County as much of the Parkway's implementation occurred under the umbrella of federal work-relief efforts. The Root River Parkway retains strong integrity of location, design, setting, association, and feeling. Alterations to the Parkway, including the addition of modern recreational facilities and bridges, ensure that the Parkway will continue to function into the twenty-first century.

The Root River Parkway Historic District also meets National Register *Criterion C: Landscape Architecture* as a good representative example of a designed landscape property type. In accordance with the registration requirements of the *Milwaukee County Parkway System MPD*, the Parkway is unified through the use of a rustic design aesthetic, including the use of natural, local materials, and handcrafted masonry finishes, which are applied to the Parkway's picnic and comfort stations, garden house, culverts, and bridges. Despite slight alterations to the Parkway, it continues to demonstrate the design intent of parkway planning and development in Milwaukee County. As stated in the *Milwaukee County Parkway System MPD's* registration requirements, it is not necessary for an eligible parkway to look exactly like its original design as long as it retains a significant amount of its characteristic features to make its historic character clearly recognizable. The Root River Parkway includes a circulation system, vegetation, watershed feature, buildings, and bridges. These characteristic features contribute to the Parkway's ability to serve as a good representative example of its period of design and construction and its landscape type. The Parkway continues to link park and golf course units along its path, including the associated Whitnall Park and Whitnall Park Golf Course.

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Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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***Archaeological Potential***

The area adjacent to the Root River that became the Root River Parkway was utilized by Native Americans for thousands of years. In addition to habitation areas, human skeletal remains were encountered during WPA work within the Parkway. There is no surface indication of these sites; however, subsurface remnants, including human remains, may still be present throughout the Parkway. Cultural material associated with a Historic Euro-American homestead, including remnants of structures, may also be located within the Parkway boundary. Extensive archaeological investigations were conducted at the site in 1989.<sup>56</sup> As a result, land at the site was heavily disturbed. All of the previously identified archaeological resources are associated with timeframes that are outside the period of significance for the Root River Parkway. The archaeological resources were not included in the count of contributing and noncontributing resources for this nomination. The Root River Parkway is eligible under National Register *Criterion A: Community Planning and Development*. Although archaeological sites are located within the Parkway boundary, research was not undertaken to determine the relation of these sites to parkway planning and design.

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<sup>56</sup> Goldstein, Lynne, Elizabeth D. Benchley, and Jennifer Kolb, 1989, *The Southeastern Wisconsin Archaeology Program: 1988-9*.

Root River Parkway	Milwaukee	Wisconsin
Name of Property	County and State	

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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

### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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 of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- ☒ Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1093.34 acres

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

A	16	415040	4756702
	Zone	Easting	Northing
B	16	417794	4755076
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	16	417722	4752949
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	16	416034	4751790
	Zone	Easting	Northing

☒ 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	Christine Long, Emily Pettis, and Shannon Dolan		
organization	Mead & Hunt, Inc.	date	December 2010
street & number	6501 Watts Road	telephone	608-273-6380
city or town	Madison	state	WI
		zip code	53719



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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The historic boundary surrounding the Root River Parkway Historic District is an irregular polygon that is shown on the attached historic boundary maps. The boundary follows the Root River Parkway Drive from the intersection with West Layton Avenue to South 76<sup>th</sup> Street. The historic boundary includes the Root River, the Drive, Whitnall Park, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, Whitnall Golf Course, Wehr Nature Center, and county-owned park space along the corridor.

**Boundary Justification**

The historic boundary was defined to include property historically associated with the Root River Parkway, Whitnall Park, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, and Whitnall Golf Course, and property owned by Milwaukee County, including the Wehr Nature Center. The limits of county-owned parcels and the back edge of pavement along the Drive and adjacent roads were used to define the historic boundary.

Although the Root River Parkway extends north of West Layton Avenue, the county-owned parcels do not reflect the original design intent of the parkway and the curvilinear Drive is not consistent. In addition, the intersection with I-43 and West Layton Avenue severs the northern portion from the central core of the Parkway and serves as the northern terminus. In addition, the Root River Parkway extends further south, beyond South 76<sup>th</sup> Street. However, the segment between South 76<sup>th</sup> Street and West Loomis Road does not reflect the designed landscape of the overall Parkway and county-owned parcels further east are modern acquisitions that do not relate to the original Root River Parkway design intent.

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

E	16	414421	4751398
	Zone	Easting	Northing
F	16	414402	4756702
	Zone	Easting	Northing



Root River Parkway	Milwaukee	Wisconsin
Name of Property	County and State	

### 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 SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	
organization	date
street & number	telephone
city or town	zip code

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine 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 (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including 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 Reduction Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Name of Property:** *Root River Parkway*  
**City or Vicinity:** *City of Milwaukee*  
**County:** *Milwaukee County*  
**State:** *WI*  
**Name of Photographer:** *Mead & Hunt, Inc.*  
**Date of Photographs:** *April 2010, July 2010, October 2010*  
**Location of Original Digital Files:** *Mead & Hunt, Inc., 6501 Watts Road, Madison, WI 53719*  
**Number of Photographs:** *52*

*Photograph 1 of 52*

Root River Parkway Drive near West Layton Avenue  
View facing southeast

*Photograph 2 of 52*

Culvert carrying Root River Parkway Drive  
View facing southeast

*Photograph 3 of 52*

Root River Parkway Drive between West Layton Avenue and West Forest Home Avenue  
View facing southeast

*Photograph 4 of 52*

Bridge B-40-159, West Forest Home Avenue over Root River  
View facing northwest

*Photograph 5 of 52*

Root River Parkway Drive near West Forest Home Avenue  
View facing east

*Photograph 6 of 52*

Bridge P-40-566, Connecting both sides of the Root River Parkway Drive over Root River  
View facing west

*Photograph 7 of 52*

Picnic Shelter with Restroom  
View facing northwest

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*Photograph 8 of 52*  
Pedestrian Bridge  
View facing northwest

*Photograph 9 of 52*  
Volleyball Court  
View facing east

*Photograph 10 of 52*  
Bridge B-40-604, West Forest Home Avenue over Root River  
View facing northeast

*Photograph 11 of 52*  
Bridge carrying Root River Parkway Drive over Root River  
View facing south

*Photograph 12 of 52*  
Bridge B-40-519, West Grange Avenue over Root River  
View facing south

*Photograph 13 of 52*  
Bridge carrying Root River Parkway Drive over Root River  
View facing southeast

*Photograph 14 of 52*  
Picnic Shelter with Restroom  
View facing west

*Photograph 15 of 52*  
Culvert carrying Root River Parkway Drive  
View facing northwest

*Photograph 16 of 52*  
Bridge B-40-717, Root River Parkway Drive over Root River  
View facing east

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*Photograph 17 of 52*

Picnic Shelter with Restroom

View facing south

*Photograph 18 of 52*

Bridge B-40-031, Root River Parkway Drive over Root River

View facing west

*Photograph 19 of 52*

Bridge B-40-594, South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street over Root River

View facing south

*Photograph 20 of 52*

Bridge B-40-650, South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street over Tess Corners Creek

View facing east

*Photograph 21 of 52*

Bridge P-40-721, Whitnall Park Drive over Tess Corners Creek

View facing southwest

*Photograph 22 of 52*

Bridge P-40-713, Whitnall Park Drive over Whitnall Park Creek, Whitnall Park

View facing east

*Photograph 23 of 52*

Bridge P-40-565, Whitnall Park Drive near USH 45, Whitnall Park

View facing southwest

*Photograph 24 of 52*

Bridge P-40-564, Whitnall Park Drive near USH 45, Whitnall Park

View facing northeast

*Photograph 25 of 52*

Bridge carrying Whitnall Park Drive near College Avenue, Whitnall Park

View facing southwest



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*Photograph 26 of 52*

Bridge carrying Whitnall Park Drive near Picnic Area 8 and 6, Whitnall Park  
View facing east

*Photograph 27 of 52*

Dam at north end of Whitnall Lake, Whitnall Park  
View facing southwest

*Photograph 28 of 52*

Picnic Shelter associated with Picnic Area 8, Whitnall Park  
View facing northeast

*Photograph 29 of 52*

Gambrel Barn and Silo, Whitnall Park  
View facing south

*Photograph 30 of 52*

Storage Shed, Whitnall Park  
View facing east

*Photograph 31 of 52*

Fireplace, Whitnall Park  
View facing east

*Photograph 32 of 52*

CCC Repair Shop, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing south

*Photograph 33 of 52*

Service Building, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing southeast

*Photograph 34 of 52*

Education and Visitor Center, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing west

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*Photograph 35 of 52*

Admissions Boot, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing southwest

*Photograph 36 of 52*

Garden House, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing northeast

*Photograph 37 of 52*

Sculpture Mother with Children, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing north

*Photograph 38 of 52*

Sculpture Little Girl, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing east

*Photograph 39 of 52*

Sculpture Little Boy in Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing east

*Photograph 40 of 52*

Gazebo, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing south

*Photograph 41 of 52*

Shelter House with Restroom Facilities, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing southwest

*Photograph 42 of 52*

Overview of Rose Garden, Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing east

*Photograph 43 of 52*

Overview of Boerner Botanical Gardens and Arboretum  
View facing west

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*Photograph 44 of 52*

Overview of Wehr Nature Center Building, Wehr Nature Center  
View facing north

*Photograph 45 of 52*

Outdoor Amphitheater, Wehr Nature Center  
View facing southwest

*Photograph 46 of 52*

Storage Sheds, Wehr Nature Center  
View facing northeast

*Photograph 47 of 52*

Bird Blind, Wehr Nature Center  
View facing southeast

*Photograph 48 of 52*

Storage Building, Wehr Nature Center  
View facing southwest

*Photograph 49 of 52*

Overview of Whitnall Golf Course  
View facing west

*Photograph 50 of 52*

Service/Maintenance Building and Garage, Whitnall Golf Course  
View facing southwest

*Photograph 51 of 52*

Clubhouse, Whitnall Golf Course  
View facing northwest

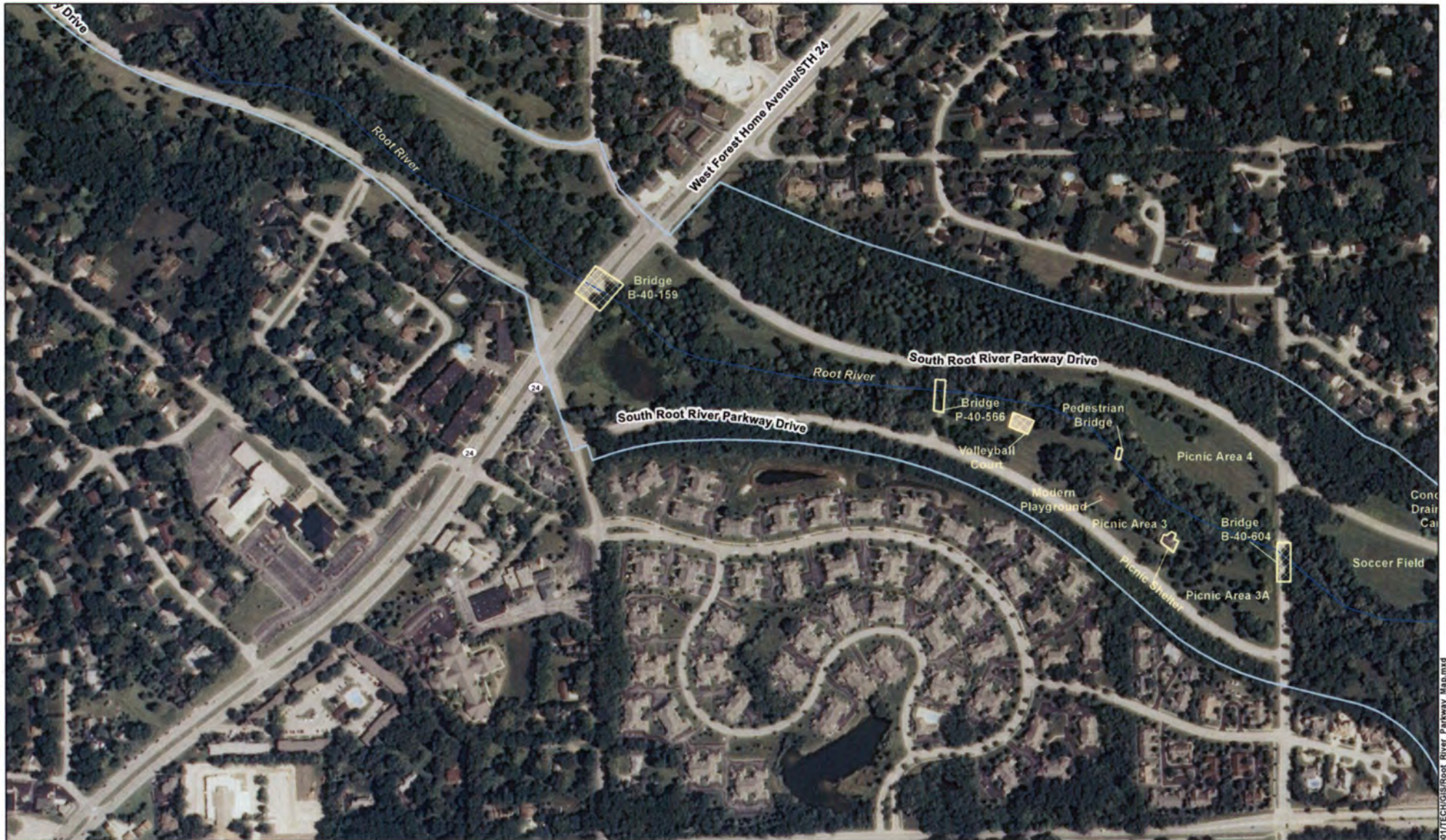
*Photograph 52 of 52*

Gambrel Barn, Whitnall Golf Course  
View facing southwest

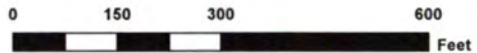






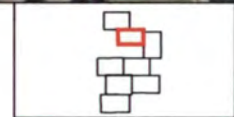


**Root River Parkway**  
 Historic Boundary Map  
 Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
 Map 2 of 8  
 Orthophoto: 2009  
 UTM Coordinates: Zone 16, Nad 27



**Map Key**

- Historic Boundary
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing

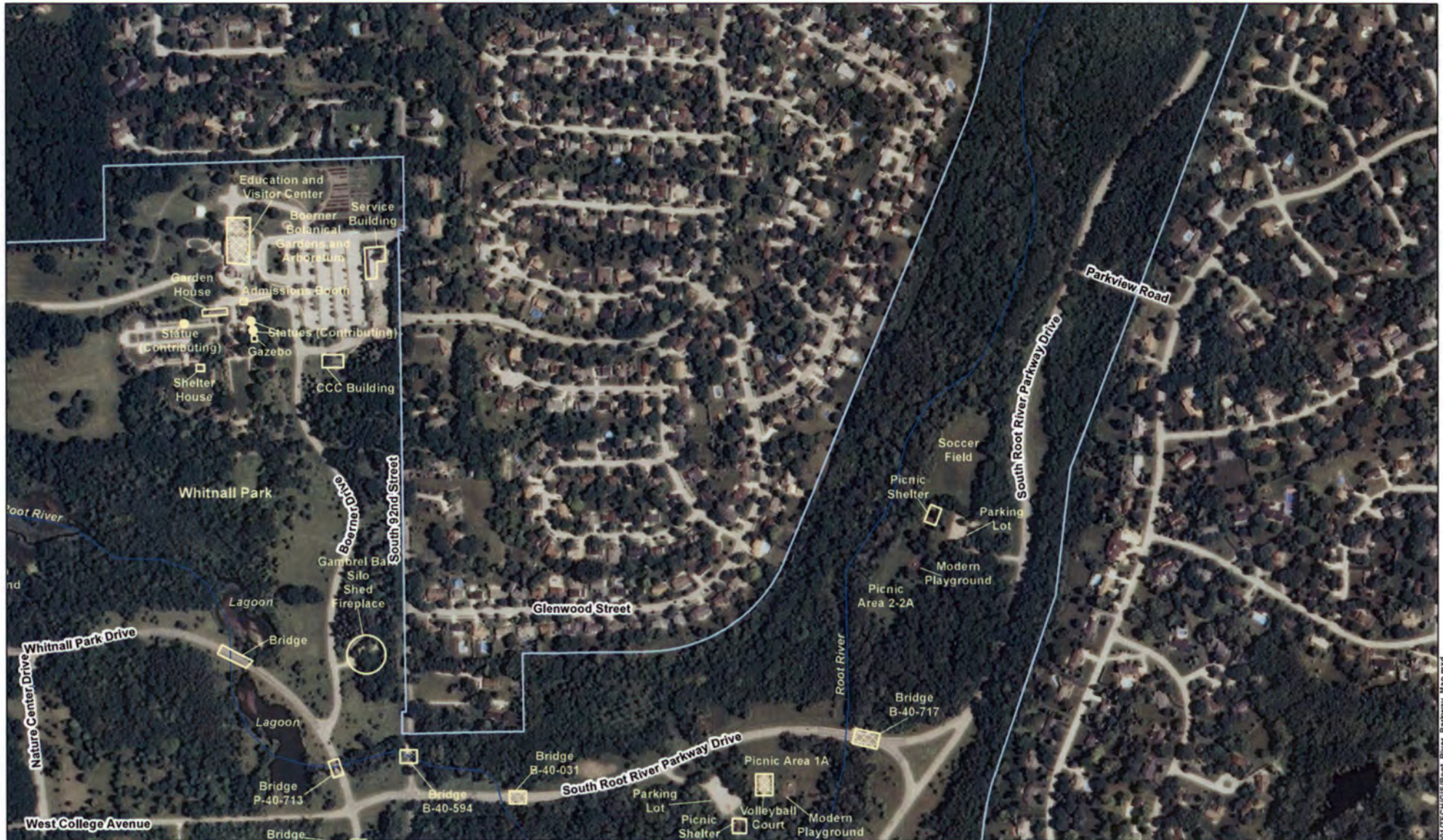


**Mead  
& Hunt**

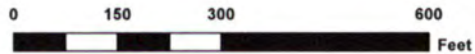








**Root River Parkway**  
 Historic Boundary Map  
 Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
 Map 4 of 8  
 Orthophoto: 2009  
 UTM Coordinates: Zone 16, Nad 27



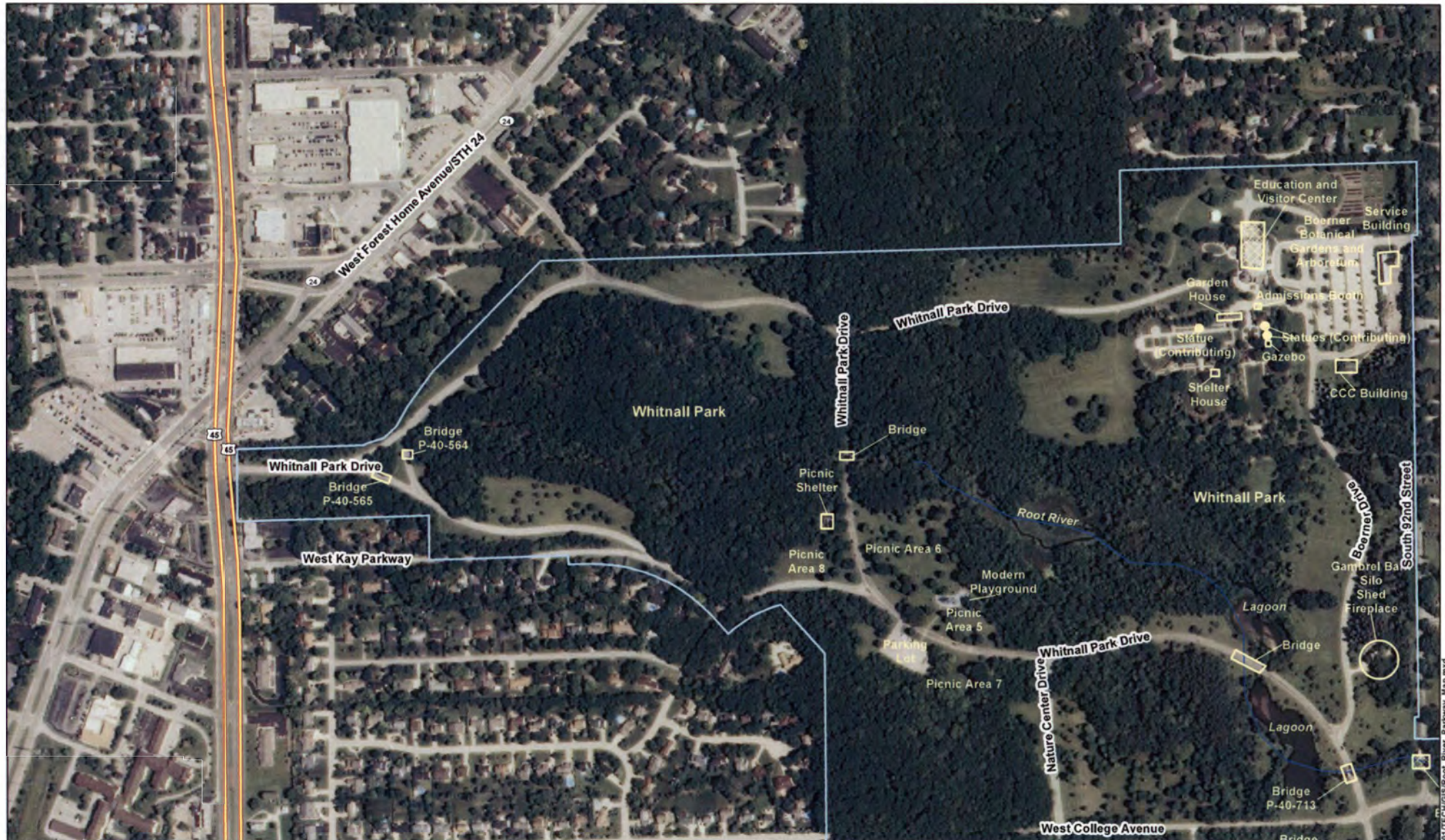
**Map Key**

- Historic Boundary
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing

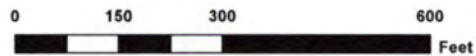


**Mead  
& Hunt**



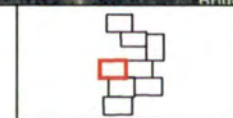


**Root River Parkway**  
 Historic Boundary Map  
 Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
 Map 5 of 8  
 Orthophoto: 2009  
 UTM Coordinates: Zone 16, Nad 27



**Map Key**

- Historic Boundary
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing

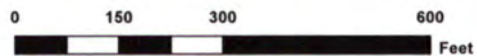


**Mead & Hunt**





**Root River Parkway**  
 Historic Boundary Map  
 Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
 Map 6 of 8  
 Orthophoto: 2009  
 UTM Coordinates: Zone 16, Nad 27



**Map Key**

- Historic Boundary
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing



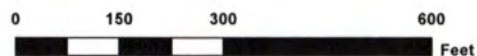
**Mead  
& Hunt**

X:\07154-00-00031\TC\CH\Root\_River\_Parkway\_Map.mxd  
 Orthophoto: http://maps.milwaukee-county.org/gis/services





**Root River Parkway**  
 Historic Boundary Map  
 Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
 Map 7 of 8  
 Orthophoto: 2009  
 UTM Coordinates: Zone 16, Nad 27



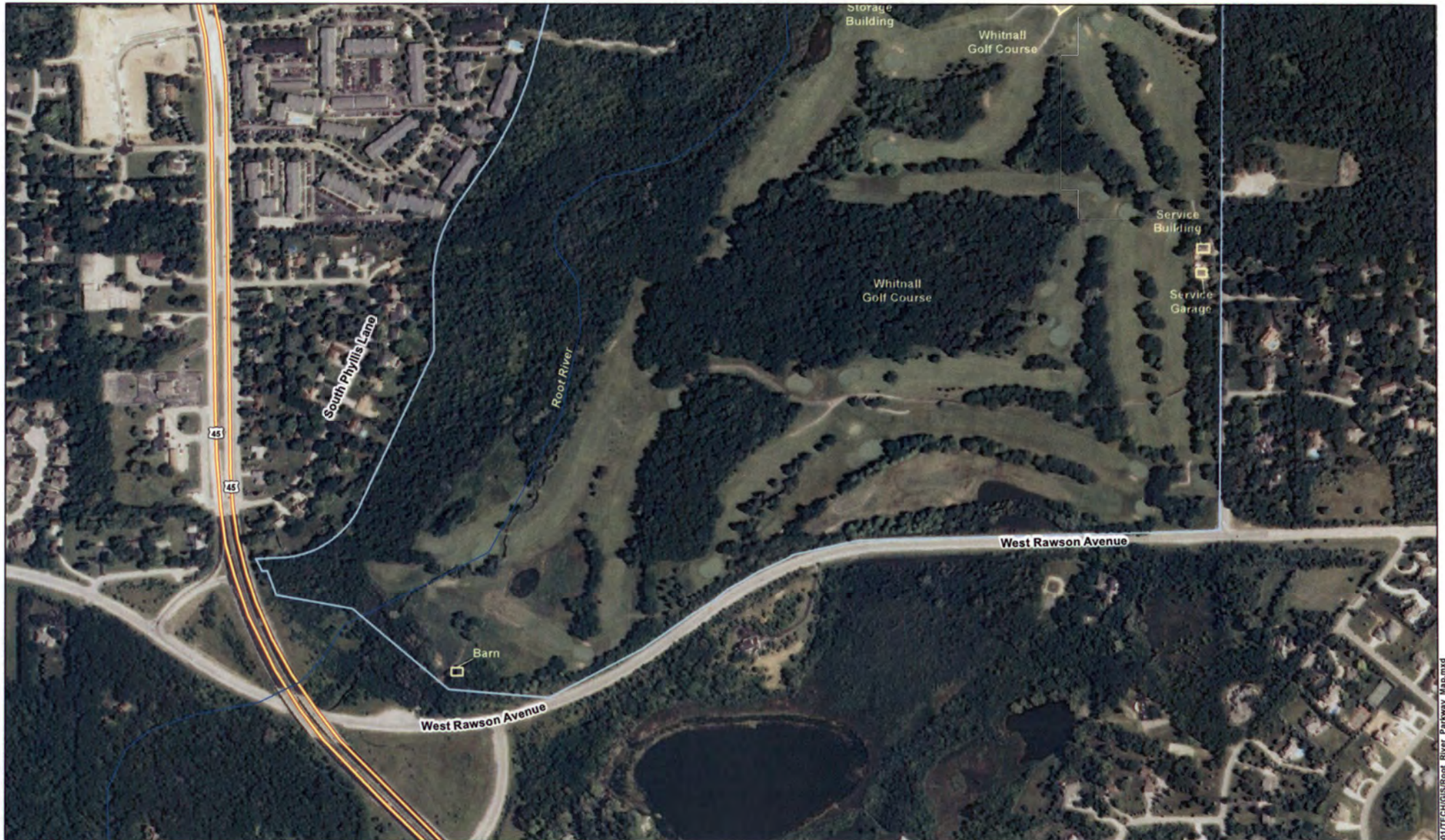
**Map Key**

- Historic Boundary
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing

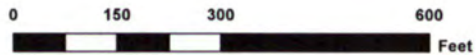


**Mead  
& Hunt**



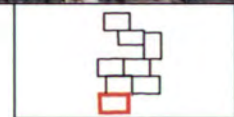


**Root River Parkway**  
 Historic Boundary Map  
 Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
 Map 8 of 8  
 Orthophoto: 2009  
 UTM Coordinates: Zone 16, Nad 27



**Map Key**

- Historic Boundary
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing



**Mead  
& Hunt**

X:\07134-00-0001\TECH\GIS\Root\_River\_Parkway\_Map.mxd  
 Orthophoto: http://maps.milwaukeecounty.org/gis/services

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Root River Parkway  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Milwaukee County Parkway System MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WISCONSIN, Milwaukee

DATE RECEIVED: 12/14/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/14/13  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/29/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/30/13  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12001253

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1.29.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Root River Parkway Drive  
View facing southeast

1 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 46+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Culvert carrying Parkway Drive  
view facing southeast

photo 2 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 44+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Root River Parkway Drive  
View facing southeast  
photo 3 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 41+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Bridge (B-40-159) carrying West Forest Home Avenue over Root  
River

View facing northwest

photo 4 of 52 832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 15+

dalgreen 04630

12-01-10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Root River Parkway Drive between West Forest Home Avenue  
and West Grange Avenue  
View Facing east

photo 5 of 52 832980002 <2329494..001.jpg> 23+







Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge (P-40-500) connecting both sides of the Parkway Drive  
View facing west  
photo 6 of 52

832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 17+



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Picnic Shelter with restroom  
view facing northwest  
photo 7 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 30+

Watergreens 04830 <> 12/01/10







Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Pedestrian Bridge over the Root River  
view facing northwest  
photo 8 of 52

832980002 <2329494..001.jpg> 27+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Volleyball Court  
View facing east  
photo 91F52

832980002 <2329494..001.jpg> 26+

Walsgreens 84838 < 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Bridge (B-40-604) carrying South 84th Street over the Root  
River

View facing northeast

photo 10 of 52

832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 19+



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Bridge carrying Root River Parkway Drive over the Root River  
view facing south

photo 11 of 52 280362002 <2370329..001.jp9> 3/4







Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Bridge (B-40-519) carrying West Grange Avenue over the  
Root River

View facing south

Photo 12 of 52

832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 22+

01/01/2000 14:38 01 12/01/20



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge carrying the Root River Parkway Drive over the  
Root River  
view facing southeast  
photo 13 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 61/108+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10







Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Picnic shelter with restroom  
View facing west  
photo 14 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 60+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Culvert carrying the Root River Parkway Drive (near the  
intersection with South 76th Street)  
View facing northwest  
photo 15 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 48+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge (B-40-717) carrying Root River Parkway Drive over the Root  
River  
view facing east  
photo 16 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 50+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Picnic shelter with restroom  
view facing south  
photo 17 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 52+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge (B-40-031) carry the Root River Parkway Drive  
over Whitnall Park Creek

View facing west

photo 18 of 52 832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 53+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge (B-40-594) carrying South 92<sup>nd</sup> Street (north)  
over Whitnall Park Creek  
View facing south  
photo 19 of 52 832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 58+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10







Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge (B-40-050) carrying South 92nd Street (South)  
over Tess Corners Creek  
View facing east  
photo 20 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 56+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge (P-40-721) carrying Whitnall Park Drive over Tess  
Corners Creek  
View facing east  
photo 24 of 52

832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 2+

Waterseens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge (P-40-713) carrying Whitnall Park Drive over  
Whitnall Park Creek  
View facing east  
photo 22 of 52

832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 3+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Bridge (P-40-505) carrying Whitnall Park Drive (near USH 45)  
view facing southwest  
photo 23 of 52

832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 12+

Walgreens 84838 (1) 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bridge (P-40-564) carrying Whitnall Park Drive (near  
USH 45)  
view facing northeast  
photo 24 of 52 832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 13+

Waters: 04830 (1) 12/81/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Bridge carrying Whitnall Park Drive (west of College Avenue)  
view facing southwest

photo 25 of 52 832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 5+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10







Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Bridge carrying Whitnall Park Drive (near Picnic Areas 2  
and 6)

View facing east

photo 26 of 52 832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 10+

Walscreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Dam at north end of Whitnall Lake  
View facing southwest

photo 27 of 52 280362002 (2370329..001.jpg) 1/4

Waterways 04830 12/02/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Picnic Shelter (associated with Picnic area 8)  
view facing northeast  
photo 28 of 52

832980002 <2329439..001.jpg> 7+

Walsreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Gambrel Barn and silo  
view facing east  
photo 29 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jp9> 103/108+

Watermark 84838 © 10/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Storage shed  
View facing south  
photo 30 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 107/108+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

fire place  
view facing east

photo 31 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 105/108+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



CCC  
BUILDING



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
CCC Repair Shop  
View facing south  
photo 32 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jp9> 77/108+

Walgreens 04030 < 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Service Building-Boerner Botanical Gardens  
View facing southeast  
photo of 33 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 91/108+

Waterfront 84830 < 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Education and Visitor Center - Boerner Botanical Garden  
view facing west  
photo 34 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 93/108+

Watermark: 040320 65 12-01-10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Admission's Booth - Boerner Botanical Gardens  
View facing southwest  
photo 35 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 89/108+

Walgreens 04830 < 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Garden House - Boerner Botanical Gardens  
view facing northeast  
photo 36 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 97/108+





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Mother with Children Sculpture Boerner Botanical Garden  
view facing north  
photo 37 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 95/108+

10/1/2000 10:00:00 12/20/2000





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Sculpture Little Girl-Boerner Botanical Gardens  
View facing east  
photo 38 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 101/108+

Watermark 04830 0 12/30/18



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Sculpture Little Boy - Boerner Botanical Gardens  
View facing east  
photo 39 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 100/108+





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Gazebo - Boerner Botanical Gardens  
View facing south  
photo: 40 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 87/108+

Walgreens 84830 <> 12/01/10







Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Shelter House with Restroom Facilities- Boerner Botanical  
Gardens

View facing southwest  
photo 44 of 52

032980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 85/108+

Walsgreens 04830 0 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Overview of Rose Garden - Boerner Botanical Gardens  
view facing east  
photo 42 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 81/108+

Waisreeds 84838 17/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Boerner Botanical Gardens-overview  
view facing west  
photo 43 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 76/108+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
overview - Wehr Nature Center Building  
view facing north  
photo 44 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 40+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Wehr outdoor amphitheater  
View facing south west  
photo 45 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 32+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Storage Buildings - Wehr Nature Center  
view facing northeast  
photo 46 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 36+

Walsgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic Building  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Bird Blind- Wehr Nature Center  
View Facing southeast  
photo 47 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 34+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Storage Building - Wehr Nature Center  
View facing southwest  
photo 48 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 38+

Walsreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River ParkLuxay Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
overview Whitnall Golf course  
view facing west  
photo 49 of 52

832980002 (2329495..001.jpg) 66/108+

Walgreens 04830 (>) 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Overview of service/maintenance building and garage -  
Whitnall Golf Course  
View facing southwest  
832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 67/108+  
photo 50 of 52

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10



Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Whitnall Golf Course Club house  
View facing northwest  
Photo 51 of 52

832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 64/108+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10





Root River Parkway Historic District  
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin  
Gambrel Barn (Southwest corner of Whitnall Golf Course)  
view facing southwest

photo 52 of 502 832980002 <2329495..001.jpg> 74/108+

Walgreens 04830 <> 12/01/10

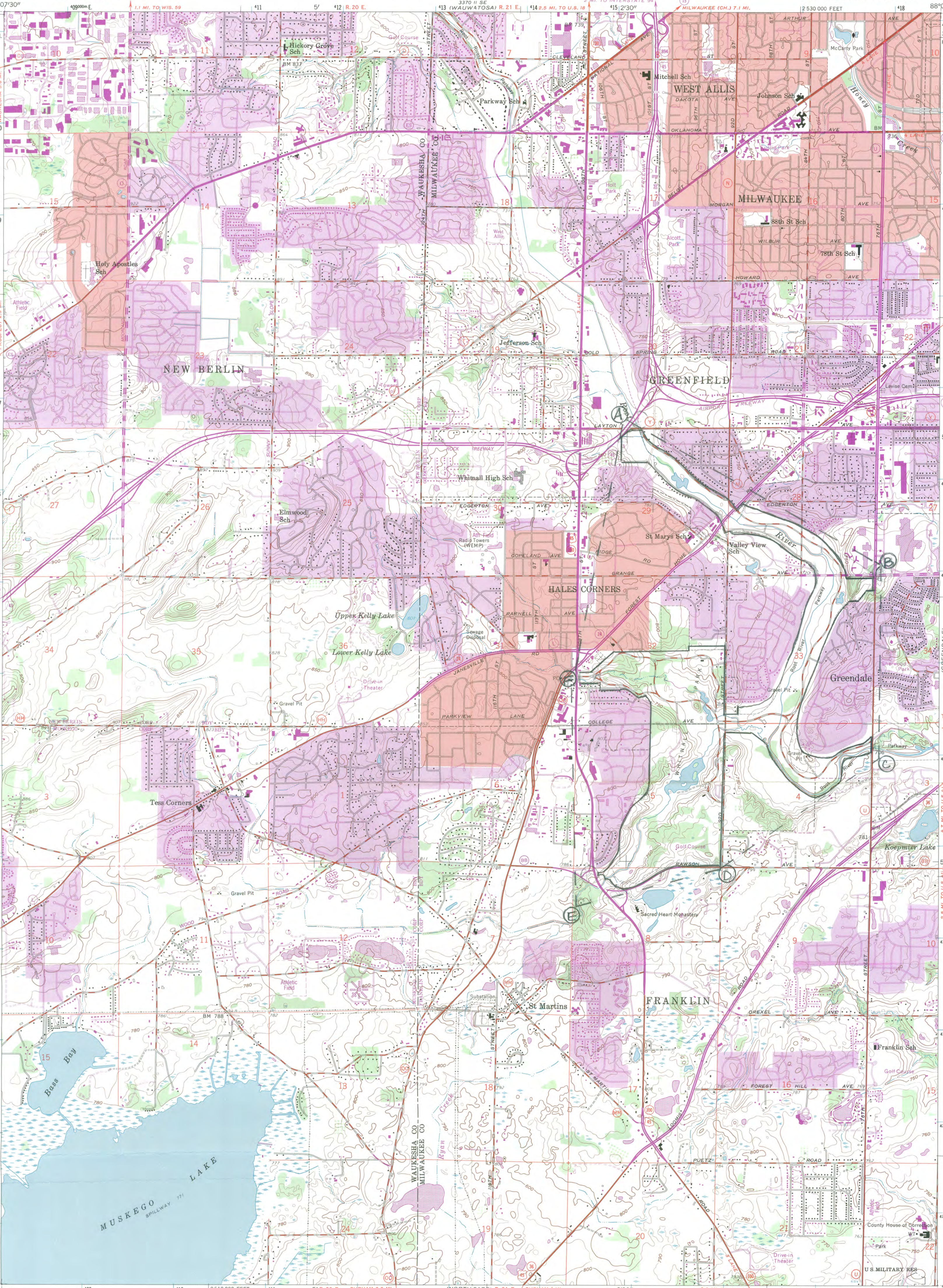


RECEIVED  
APR 28 2011  
DIV HIST PRES

Root River  
Parkway  
MILWAUKEE Co., WISCONSIN

- ① Zone 16  
4756702 N  
415040 E
- ② Zone 16  
4755076 N  
417794 E
- ③ Zone 16  
4752949 N  
417722 E
- ④ Zone 16  
4751790 N  
416034 E
- ⑤ Zone 16  
4751398 N  
414421 E
- ⑥ Zone 16  
4756702 N  
414402 E

— Historic  
Boundary  
--- UTM Boundary



Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1959.

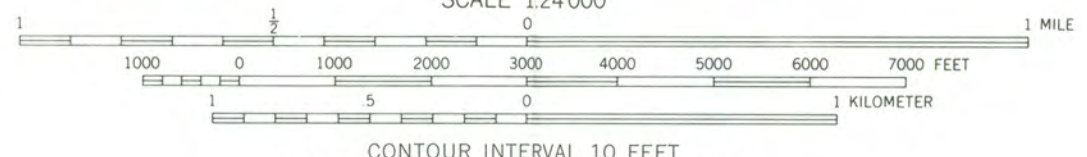
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue 1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

HALES CORNERS, WIS.

NE/4 HALES CORNERS 15' QUADRANGLE  
42088-H1-TF-024

1959  
REVISED 1994  
DMA 3369 I NE-SERIES V861

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of Wisconsin agencies from aerial photographs taken 1992 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1994

Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours



# Village of Hales Corners

5635 S. New Berlin Road  
Hales Corners, Wisconsin 53130  
Telephone (414) 529-6161  
Fax (414) 529-6179



April 11, 2011

RECEIVED

APR 15 2011

DIV HIST PRES

Mary D. Georgeff  
Survey & Registration Associate  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
816 State Street, Room 305  
Madison, WI 53706

Re: National Register of Historic Places Nomination – Root River Parkway

Dear Ms. Georgeff,

The Village of Hales Corners Historic Preservation Commission would like extend its support of the nomination of the Root River Parkway to the National Register of Historic Places. The Root River Parkway is not only historically significant to the Milwaukee County Parkway System and a notable representation of Depression-era federal work relief efforts but an important historical asset to the Village.

The Village takes great pride that sections of the Root River Parkway and Whitnall Park as well as the Boerner Botanical Gardens are located within our community. A listing on the National Register of Historic Places would further affirm the importance of the Root River Parkway to the Village and surrounding communities and further protect this historical and natural resource for future generations.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Zepecki". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Zepecki  
Chair, Historic Preservation Commission

cc: Village Board of Trustees  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Michael F. Weber, Village Administrator

RECEIVED

APR 15 2011

DIV HIST PASS



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Daina Penkiunas

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this 30th day of November 2012,  
for nomination of the Root River Parkway to the National Register of Historic  
Places:

- 1 Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Documentation Form
- 52 Photograph(s)
- 2 CD(s) with electronic images
- 1 Original USGS map(s)
- 1 Piece(s) of correspondence
- 8 Sketch map(s) in black and white on white bond paper. These same  
maps are also printed in color on bond paper. See "Other" note below.
- 8 Other: 8½" x 11" color maps of Root River Parkway  
[Note: These eight maps are printed on bond paper. The  
features of the Parkway may be easier to note on these color  
printouts of the maps.]

COMMENTS:

Please insure that this nomination is reviewed  
This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67  
The enclosed owner objection(s) do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_  
constitute a majority of property owners.  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_