Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
The New York Botanical Gardens

AND/OR COMMON
The New York Botanical Gardens

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Intersection of Southern and Bedford Park Boulevards __NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
New York __ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
23

STATE
New York

CODE
36

COUNTY
Bronx

CODE
5

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
X DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	X AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	X PARK
__STRUCTURE	X BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

City of New York - owner

NAME
New York Botanical Garden, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER
The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park

CITY, TOWN
New York __ VICINITY OF

STATE
New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Bronx County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
The Bronx, New York

STATE
New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic American Buildings Survey, "Lorillard Snuff Mill"

DATE
1936, 1956 __FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Library of Congress Annex, Division of Prints and Photos

CITY, TOWN
Washington

STATE
D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED (minor)	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The 230-acre Garden is a scenic area of rolling country. Through it runs the Bronx River with its dramatic 75-foot gorge. Among its many notable features are the 40-acre virgin hemlock forest of unimpaired integrity that preserves the scene as it was at the time of the first white settlement in that area, the Pinetum of over 200 specimens of evergreens, the Rose Garden having 80 species and 400 cultivars of roses, and the exceedingly attractive 1-acre Thompson Rock Garden.

The Italian Renaissance museum building, designed by Robert W. Gibson, is well maintained, its 308-foot front facade unchanged since its construction. It has been criticized for not being an artistic success, particularly because of a story above the main cornice producing a high-shouldered effect. However, the imposing facade and the landscaping, highlighted by the superb Fountain of Life, created by Carl Tefft in 1905, presents a pleasing design. Modern additions have been made at one end and at the rear of the building, but the average visitor does not see these. Vandals have done some damage to the Tefft fountain, but it still conveys the strength and beauty that once impressed Augustus St. Gaudens.

The 512-foot long glass conservatory, with its 80-foot high central dome, is essentially unchanged since it too was designed by Robert W. Gibson. Some of the original tracery, particularly at the entrances, has been removed and the design modified over the years. It is presently closed for renovations. Between it and the museum building a third large structure, the microbiological laboratory, was constructed in 1956. Too large to be unobtrusive, this building nevertheless fits its setting well.

The land set aside for the Garden included the former estate of Peter Lorillard, who accumulated a fortune in the tobacco industry. Although the palatial residence burned in 1923, three of the estate's buildings still stand. The gatehouse is unused today, its windows being boarded up. The maintenance staff now uses the former stables for work space and tool storage. The snuff mill, erected in 1840, has been restored structurally, with steel beams added to its interior; and the ground floor has been converted into a cafeteria for visitor use.

The integrity of the buildings and the grounds is extremely good. Despite the evolution of an active program the appearance of the Garden is still essentially that of its youth. New buildings will be added and new programs will be undertaken, but the guiding principle of its directors has been and is to preserve both the appearance and the spirit that its founders instilled.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	X SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	X EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900- & 20th	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1896, established BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Established in 1896, The New York Botanical Garden, at the intersection of Southern and Bedford Park Boulevards, rapidly became one of the leading botanical gardens of the world. Its early growth was due to the energetic leadership of its first director, Nathaniel Lord Britton, supported by the Torrey Botanical Club. The Garden has developed one of the world's largest herbariums, three million specimens; research laboratories stressing ecology, plant geography, plant physiology, and systematic botany; the Western Hemisphere's largest botanical library; an educational program ranging from children's gardening classes to graduate training; and conservatories having two acres under glass. Its programs in research, publishing, and education have become internationally recognized.

The 230-acre Garden is a scenic area of rolling country through which runs the Bronx River. Notable features that date from the inception of the Botanical Garden are: the 40-acre virgin hemlock forest and the original conservatory and museum building.

History

In 1888 Professor and Mrs. Nathaniel Lord Britton presented an illustrated lecture to the Torrey Botanical Club on the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, London, England, where they had been recent visitors. The Brittons urged that a similar botanical garden be established in New York, there being only one major garden in the United States, the Missouri Botanical Garden (Shaw's Garden) established in 1859 in St. Louis.

Stimulated by the Brittons' lecture, the Torrey Botanical Club enlisted the support of prominent New Yorkers to solicit subscriptions. In April 1891, Governor David B. Hill signed a bill providing for the establishment of a botanical garden in Bronx Park, and by 1897 the Board of Managers had raised sufficient funds to begin work. Some opposition arose over the choice of the site because of the fear that such an institution would interfere with the natural beauty of the area. However, plans went ahead. In 1896, Professor Britton had become its first director and four years later the museum building and the conservatory opened their doors to the public. Today, the garden is a privately endowed, nonprofit corporation; the city of New York funds the maintenance costs.

From the beginning, The New York Botanical Garden has fulfilled the requirements of its Act of Incorporation. In the field of research it has been outstandingly active. The herbarium, a basic research tool, began with Columbia College's gift of the Torrey herbarium and the acquisition of the August Jaeger herbarium of mosses. Staff taxonomists collected specimens in North, Central, and South America, including the arctic regions. Today the herbarium contains more than three million specimens making it the largest in the Western Hemisphere and one of the leading herbariums in the world. In

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

E. D. Merrill, Biographical Memoir of Nathaniel Lord Britton (National Academy of Sciences, Washington, 1938).

Harris E. Starr, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, XXI, Supplement One (New York, 1944).

William C. Steere, "Elizabeth Gertrude Britton (nee Knight)," MS, 10 pp.

E. N. Thompson, "The New York Botanical Garden, New York," National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings Special Report, March 27, 1967.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 230 acres

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	18	595450	4525000
B	18	595460	4523000
C	18	594000	4523000
D	18	594000	4525000

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached continuation sheet - item 10.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION — DATE

National Park Service, Historic Sites Survey — 1/22/76

STREET & NUMBER — TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN — STATE

Washington — D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE — DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 10/12/83

ATTEST: — DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

the collection are more than 5,000 specimens discovered and named by staff taxonomists.

The Garden, emphasizing pure research over applied, but not excluding the latter, has achieved prominence in various fields of research. It is particularly outstanding in systematic botany, wherein Britton was a leader in developing and gaining support for the superior "American" code of botanical nomenclature over the international system. During the past 70 years, the Garden has published more works in this field than has any other institution. Extensive research is also carried on in plant physiology, plant pathology, paleobotany, and ecology. In applied research the Garden has discovered the process for "puffing" rice, seedless grapes, antibiotics, and a fast-growing poplar for reforestation.

Closely associated with the herbariums and the laboratories is the botanical library. Starting with 2,500 volumes, the library tripled its size in 1899 when Columbia College donated its 5,000-volume botanical collection. Enriched by donations and purchases of rare European and Far Eastern botanical works and growing through a steady acquisition program, the library today is the largest botanical library under one roof in the Western Hemisphere. It presently contains 70,000 bound volumes and more than 300,000 manuscripts and printed documents. Its collections include botanical works dating from the 18th century and correspondence of such famed scientists as Charles Darwin. Scholars from all over North America and overseas, privately engaged or in government service, have long regarded it as a lodestone for botanical studies. Through extensive inter-library loans its riches have been made available on an international basis.

Since its beginning, The New York Botanical Garden has fulfilled its role in "instruction of the people." Its directors and members of its staff have composed a large part of Columbia's Department of Botany and the Garden is responsible for the training of students seeking advanced degrees in botany. In more recent years, graduate students of Fordham and Rutgers have also been accepted into this program. Also, postgraduate students pursue their research here. The Garden began early a series of free lectures that has developed into a wide scope of instruction for teachers, children, and adults, including a two-year course in botany, practical and landscape gardening, nature walks, and gardening classes for children. Few, if any, similar institutions have provided so comprehensive an educational program that provides for all groups from elementary school children to postgraduate students.

The large museum, occupying the entire main floor of the museum building, is devoted solely to botany. Within seven years after the building was open, a comprehensive exhibition on economic botany was fully developed for the instruction of students and general visitors. Among the exhibits were foods, fibers, drugs, and woods. Later, the museum evolved into two major exhibitions: Economic and Food Plants, and Plant Families, there being today 65 exhibits.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

The glass conservatory occupies one acre of ground. It is the largest conservatory for public display in the United States. Its 15 compartments provide a wide range of climatic conditions in which grow a variety of plant families, including the famous 90-foot palms, orchids, ferns, tropical and desert plants. This extensive collection, like the herbarium and the library, contributes greatly to the superlative research and educational programs as well as to visitor enjoyment. Another acre of hothouses is used for propagation of plants.

In addition to publishing the largest number of manuals on plant identification, the Garden is unsurpassed by similar institutions in the world in its publication of articles, periodicals, and books on botany. It is the publisher of a large number of esteemed periodicals such as Mycologia, Brittonia, Economic Botany, Addisonia, and The Garden Journal of the New York Botanical Garden. The value of its 70 years of significant contribution to scientific literature is illustrated by the current publication of Dr. H. W. Rickett's five-volume work, Wild Flowers of the United States, "the first definitive work on wild flowers" to appear in the United States.

The New York Botanical Garden is an active growing institution. Its already significant achievements will increase in the future. Concerned with the world population explosion and prospects of food shortages, its researchers are active in projects involving ecology, radiation effects, utilization of fungi and algae for producing protein, and many more. The institution's Master Plan calls for the enlargement of the museum building by the addition of wings, which will provide additional space for education and exhibit programs, a floral conservatory of unique design, and a visitor center for the orientation of the public.

Impressive in its parts--the largest herbarium and botanical library in the Nation, the extensive educational, publishing, and research programs--The New York Botanical Garden, in the span of 70 years, has built upon the programs instituted by its first director to become the largest and most significant of the botanical gardens in the United States.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

Verbal Boundary Description

The landmark boundaries are coterminus with the present Botanical Garden boundaries. Beginning at the intersection of the eastern curb of Southern Boulevard and the northern curb of Fordham Road, proceed north along said curb of Southern Boulevard to its termination in the east-west access road to the Bronx River Parkway. Thence continue east along the southern curb of said access road and then south still following said curb as it merges with the western curb of the Bronx River Parkway. Continue south along said curb of the parkway to its juncture with the western curb of the access road running into Fordham Road. The boundary follows said curb of the access road to its merger with the northern curb of Fordham Road and continues west along said curb of Fordham Road to the point of origin.

These boundaries enclose the New York Botanical Gardens, while excluding the post-historic highways and those portions of Bronx Park which are not in use by the Botanical Gardens.