

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Harriet Island Pavilion  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 75 Water Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town St. Paul N/A  vicinity  
state Minnesota code MN county Ramsey code 123 zip code 55107

### 3. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Ian R. Stewart Date 5/12/92  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Beth Boland 7/10/92  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture,

outdoor recreation

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture

outdoor recreation

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls limestone

roof Terra Cotta

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G    N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Ethnic History, Black  
Architecture

1941

1941

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Wigington, Clarence Wesley

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 

1	5	4	9	1	4	9	0	4	9	7	5	8	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property includes all of a rectangular 103' by 167' parcel of land on Harriet Island, in which the Harriet Island Pavilion (approximately 64' by 156') is centered. The 103' by 167' parcel is defined by a concrete slab that presently surrounds the building. The entire property is located within the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 6, T. 28 N, R. 22 W and is identified on USGS St. Paul East Quad.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all the property with which the building has been historically associated.

See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jacqueline Sluss

organization Thomas R. Zahn & Associates, Inc. date 16 July 1990

street & number University Club, 420 Summit Avenue telephone (612) 221-9765

city or town St. Paul state MN zip code 55107

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Harriet Island Pavilion  
St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota

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The Harriet Island Pavilion is a recreational building constructed of concrete block with a Kasota limestone veneer. The building is rendered in the restrained Moderne Style, a style often associated with the architecture of the Depression Era. The design is typical of the massive rectilinear configuration and simple low relief bay definition of that style. Constructed in 1941 by the Works Progress Administration, a federal work relief program, the building bears the earmarks of many WPA constructions, that is the use, or reuse, of native building materials and superior craftsmanship. However, the symmetrical arrangement of arcades, engaged pilasters, and single story wings which flank the central section of the building suggest an effort to incorporate Classical elements into the design.

The Harriet Island Pavilion is located on the Mississippi River in a public park adjacent to St. Paul's commercial core. Consequently, the island site affords one of the best views of the St. Paul downtown skyline. Harriet Island is the scene of a variety of social and cultural events including picnicking, music festivals, and boating, and the Pavilion is the only building on the island built expressly for use by the public.

The Pavilion is comprised of a central rectangular mass with coped gable ends flanked by single story flat roofed wings. All facades are of Kasota ashlar veneer. The wings most closely reflect the Moderne Style being rectangular boxes with stone coping and piers devoid of any ornamentation. The wood frame gable roof (reinforced by a metal truss system on the interior) is finished in red clay tiles. The red tiles compliment the orange and yellow hues of the Kasota stone. The main elevations of the central massing are defined by a symmetrical arcade of six alternating doors and projecting vertical piers. This rectilinear facade composition is repeated in the flanking wings with three recessed windows that create the illusion of piers on a flat plane.

Two pair of wood screen doors at the center of each elevation remain in use during the summer months. The remaining doorways are kept closed and covered with heavy metal clad wood protective doors. Similar wooden inserts hide the half circle fixed transoms above each door. These transoms are composed of four vertical lights of industrial reinforced translucent glass divided by wood muntins. Windows in both of the coped gable ends and in the wings are of metal sash and muntin construction and have translucent reinforced fire glass lights. The building includes a cornerstone with the initials WPA and the year 1941 carved in stone.

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The central building mass contains an open chamber flanked by a concession stand and ticket booths in the north wing and a raised stage in the south wing. Both the concession stand and the stage are framed in Syrian arches with key stones. Behind the stage area in the southwest wing are the men's and women's restrooms. In the northeast wing behind the concession stand are storage areas. The floors of the main pavilion area are finished in terrazzo. The interior stone walls feature the same smooth finish as the exterior masonry. Original carved stone benches line the walls between the arched entry doors.

The Harriet Island Pavilion remains in excellent condition. The only alterations to the building are plywood panels that have been installed over the original windows on the ground level of the north and south elevations and a protective metal cladding that has been added to the doors. Alterations to the Pavilion do not significantly diminish the original integrity of the design

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The Harriet Island Pavilion is significant under criterion C as a well preserved example of the work of Clarence Wesley Wigington, the first Black architect for the City of St. Paul. It is also significant as an important visual component in the public landscape of the City of St. Paul.

Clarence Wesley Wigington was born in 1883 in Lawrence, Kansas. As a boy in his teens, the family moved to Omaha, Nebraska where Wigington would eventually study architecture under the tutelage of Thomas R. Kimball. Kimball had received his training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and had a successful practice in Boston before moving to Omaha. Kimball hired Wigington in ca. 1902 and personally tutored him in architectural design. It was during this apprenticeship that Wigington also learned structural steel construction and drafting from Lorenz Rustad and Frank Brazee. During his work at the Kimball office, Wigington studied at the studio of T. Lawrence Wallace of the Western School of Art in Omaha. He completed it's four year program in painting, drawing, clay modeling, composition, and design. (Former teachers and friends paid half his expenses while Wigington worked out the other half himself.) Wigington accredited his registration as an architect in the State of Minnesota to the T. Lawrence Wallace of the Western School of Art.

Wigington continued his apprenticeship at the Kimball office until 1908 when he married Viola Williams and moved to Sheridan, Wyoming in search of work as an architect. Architectural design work in Sheridan proved difficult to secure, and Wigington became involved in the potato chip business to support his family. In 1910, Wigington secured a contract for three buildings on the National Religious Training School Campus (now the North Carolina State College for Negroes). Wigington returned to Omaha, where he practiced architecture until 1913 when he and his family moved to Davenport, Iowa.

Two years later, in 1915, the family moved to St. Paul where Wigington took the exam for a position with the City Architect's office. Wigington scored first in the civil service test for the position and was hired as a draftsman in August. Clarence Wesley Wigington was the first Black man to serve in this capacity in the City of St. Paul and may have been the first Black architect employed by a municipality in the United States.

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As a draftsman, and later as Chief Design Architect, Clarence Wesley Wigington drafted and designed many buildings for the City of St. Paul between 1915 and 1949. Because all designs from the City Architect's Office were stamped with the name of the City Architect, Charles A. Bassford, it was not until recent years that many of the designs became associated with Wigington. Since that time, designs that record Wigington as "architect in charge" and carry his signature have now been attributed Wigington. Wigington's association with the Harriet Island Pavilion design is further documented in a May, 1946 article in Black magazine *Eyes* that cites the Pavilion as a Wigington design. In addition, original drawings in the possession of family members include the Pavilion.

Although a complete survey of Wigington's work has not been made, the most prominent known surviving Wigington designs include the Highland Water Tower (listed on the National Register in 1976), several public schools, the Keller Golf Course Club House, the Ramsey County Boys School, the Public Safety Building, the Holman Airfield Administration Building, Fire Station No. 17, and a group of recreation buildings built in St. Paul parks. Of these designs, those that exhibit the highest degree of material and stylistic integrity are the Highland Water Tower (1928), the Harriet Island Pavilion (1941, WPA), the Holman Airfield Administration Building (1938, WPA), the Baker Park Recreation Building (1940, WPA), and the Hamline Playground Recreation Building (1938, WPA). The Harriet Island Pavilion is outstanding among these designs for its fine execution of the simple Moderne Style which is combined with subtle Classical influences. By its handsome use of native stone, and its high standard of craftsmanship it typifies the design and construction quality of WPA projects.

Except for the gable roof, the building exhibits all of the stylistic elements of the Moderne Style: symmetrical form and horizontal proportions, the division of bays within vertical piers, and the use of smooth interior and exterior finishes. The Pavilion, executed in precisely cut and skillfully laid stone veneer, is simple but elegant. The cool Moderne design is warmed by the use of a local yellow Kasota stone veneer and terra cotta roof tiles. The interior exhibits the same attention to finish as the exterior and includes precisely cut Kasota stone veneer and terrazzo floor. One of the major design elements of the exterior, the arch, is repeated in the full Syrian arches at either end of the central interior massing. The total design is highly disciplined and represents the refined architectural vocabulary of



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an exceptionally skilled Black architect.

The Harriet Island Pavilion is significant to the City of St. Paul as an important component in a public space that is integral to the center city landscape. The building is a large and visually prominent park structure located on the Mississippi River in St. Paul. It's island location makes a unique park setting in the city and affords an excellent view of the commercial core landscape. Furthermore, the Pavilion is highly visible from one of the commercial district's main thoroughfares, Kellogg Boulevard, and the residential bluffs of the historic Irvine Park neighborhood.

Harriet Island has been a recreational area for residents of St. Paul since 1900 when Dr. Julius Ohage, the city's health officer, bought Harriet Island and built public baths, ball courts, a pavilion, and other public attractions. None of these public facilities remain today. In 1919 river pollution caused the baths to be closed, and over the years the other facilities deteriorated as new forms of recreation became popular. In 1929, Dr. Ohage allowed the transferred control of the Island to the city park board and they began to make plans for a new park. The ensuing depression probably derailed those plans until the Harriet Island was built in 1941.

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Personal correspondence with Mildred Bohanon and Caroline  
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Roscoe, Robert. "Of Ice and Stone," *Preservation Matters*, Vol. 4,  
No. 5, May 1988.

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accomplishments, 1940(?), Box 332, Minnesota Historical  
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### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000821

Date Listed: 7/10/92

Harriet Island Pavilion  
Property Name

Ramsey  
County

MN  
State

#### Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland  
Signature of the Keeper

10/19/92  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Both areas of significance relate to Criterion C and not to A; therefore Criterion A should not have been checked on the form. Criterion A is deleted.

This information was verified with Susan Roth of the IA SHPO staff.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)