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**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 Columbia Park Band Shell
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 201 West Arnold Street N/A not for publication
city or town Marshfield N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Wood code 141 zip code 54449

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Michael Thomas, SHPO 7/18/08
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

Columbia Park Band Shell

Wood

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:)

Patricia Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

9/3/2008
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)
 district
 structure
 site
 object

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

contributing noncontributing
0 buildings
sites
structures
objects
0 total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other STONE

Narrative Description

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

Columbia Park Band Shell
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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)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1931-1958

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Felhofer, Frank A.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Columbia Park Band Shell
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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

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

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

1	<u>15</u>	<u>723960</u>	<u>4949980</u>	3	_____		
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____			4	_____		
	Zone	Easting	Northing		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	Timothy F. Hegglund /Consultant for the Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee	date	September 1, 2007
organization		telephone	608-795-2650
street & number	6391 Hillsandwoods Rd.	zip code	53560
city or town	Mazomanie	state	WI

Columbia Park Band Shell

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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	Mayor	date	September 1, 2007
organization	City of Marshfield	telephone	715-384-2919
street & number	630 S. Central Avenue	zip code	54449
city or town	Marshfield	state	Wisconsin

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 Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1

Columbia Park Band Shell
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

Description

Marshfield's highly intact, brick-clad, Art Deco style Columbia Park Band Shell was built in 1931 by the City of Marshfield as a replacement for a smaller wooden band stand that had been built in Columbia Park in 1903 and demolished in 1927. Plans for a new music facility for the park had been drawn up by Marshfield contractor Clarence E. Jackson by 1929, but the much larger Neo-Classical Revival style wooden band shell that he proposed proved to be too expensive to build at that time. By 1931, however, the desire to restore free summer entertainment to the citizens of the city and the need to alleviate local unemployment caused by the Great Depression convinced the Marshfield City Council to once again consider the construction of a new music facility in the park. Fortunately, revised plans that had been drawn up in the interim for a new Art Deco style brick band shell proved to be affordable after a local brick company offered the City the necessary brick at a greatly reduced price. By the summer of 1932, the new band shell was in operation and it has continued to host both musical and non-musical events ever since. Consequently, the Columbia Park Band Shell is believed to be locally significant and eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A (History) because of its important historic and ongoing association with the theme of Entertainment and Recreation in Marshfield and this significance is further enhanced by the largely intact state of the band shell and by its Art Deco design.

Columbia Park comprises a full city block that is bounded by N. Walnut Ave. to the west, W. Arnold St. to the south, N. Chestnut Ave. to the east, and W. Blodgett St. to the north, and this block is located one block to the northwest of the intersection that is formed by the east-west-running Veteran's Parkway and the north-south running Central Avenue, the latter of which are the two principal thoroughfares in the city of Marshfield.¹ This block had been donated to the then village of Marshfield by Samuel Marsh in 1875 for use as a park, but with the exception of the planting of a few trees, nothing more was done to develop this flat block, which was originally known as Northside City Park, until the late 1880s or early 1890s, when two tree-lined walkways were laid out that extended from the northwest corner of the block to the southeast corner, and from the northeast corner to the southwest corner.² Additional changes were made between 1893 and 1898, when a 120-foot-tall steel standpipe (non-extant) was constructed at the place where the two walkways crossed, and again in 1903, when a Late Victorian Style circular plan wooden band stand (non-extant) was built to the east of the standpipe, this band stand being the first structure in the park that was devoted to public entertainment.

¹ The 2000 population of the city of Marshfield was 18,800.

² "Bird's Eye View of Marshfield, Wisconsin." Milwaukee: C. J. Pauli, 1891. Trees were also planted around the entire perimeter of the block at this time.

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Columbia Park Band Shell
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Northside City Park continued to be Marshfield's only municipal park until 1906, when the land on the southern edge of the city that is now known as Wildwood Park began to be developed, but the central location of Northside Park ensured that it would continue to be heavily used, and band concerts held there in the summer months were especially popular events.³ In 1927, however, the 1903 band stand was condemned by the City and demolished and a temporary wooden platform was erected in its place. In 1930, the standpipe in the park was also finally dismantled. Fortunately, the demolition of the standpipe proved to be fortuitous because the standpipe's location in the exact center of the park and its considerable height and bulk had made the satisfactory placement of any other structure in the park difficult and it had also made it difficult to arrange adequate seating around the original band stand. With the standpipe out of the way, it became possible to reconfigure the park, and the subsequent decisions that were made in this regard had a direct effect on the location and setting of the park's new band shell.

The first decision that the City made was to remove the park's northeast-southwest walkway. This had the effect of opening up the park and it also made it possible to create a much larger seating area in front of the new band shell, whose location was moved from the east side to the west side of the park. The revised park plan that resulted from these changes is still intact today. Although many of the original trees in the park are now gone, they have been replaced with new ones, and the park itself, with its well-tended, mown lawns, provides a peaceful setting for the band shell, which is still in regular use for summer concerts.

Exterior

The Columbia Park Band Shell itself is rectilinear in plan and measures 50-feet-wide by 25-feet-deep by 26-feet-tall. This structure rests on a four-foot-tall poured concrete foundation that acts as a podium for the rest of the band shell, and this foundation's wall projects several inches out from the wall surface above and its upper edge is beveled. The walls that rest on this foundation are clad in courses of reddish brown and dark brown bricks that are laid in common bond, and they are crowned by tall parapets on three sides that hide the gently sloping asphalt shed roof that shelters the entire structure.⁴ In addition, all four elevations of the band shell are enframed by massive, slightly projecting six-foot-wide pilasters that comprise the corners of the structure, and these pilasters also have slightly projecting four-foot-tall bases that are actually part of the poured concrete foundation wall.

Almost all of the band shell's ornamentation is confined to the pilasters that make up its corners.

³ The name of Northside City Park was changed to Columbia Park on August 5, 1915.

⁴ This roof drains into gutters that are placed along the west edge of the roof, which is the rear elevation of the band shell.

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Columbia Park Band Shell
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Covering much of the face of each pilaster is a large rectilinear panel that is comprised of ten courses of soldier bricks.⁵ This panel is then enframed by a course comprised of both header and rowlock bricks and the rest of the face of the pilaster is clad in bricks laid in common bond, save only for the bottommost course, which again is comprised of rowlock bricks. Crowning each pilaster is a concrete or dressed stone capital of modern design, and placed directly above on the parapet wall is a rectilinear stone or concrete panel whose border is composed of a repeated chevron pattern band and whose face is decorated with a drum and a pair of crossed horns.

The symmetrically designed fifty-foot-wide principal façade of the band shell faces east into the park and most of this façade consists of the 38-foot-wide proscenium arch that contains the band shell's stage. This three-centered arch is flanked on both sides by the six-foot-wide corner pilasters described above, whose four-foot-tall bases are part of the band shell's concrete foundation walls. In this case, however, these two bases project out another four feet beyond the face of the façade and flank that portion of the band shell's foundation wall that acts as the stage's apron. This apron bows outward slightly, which permits the edge of the stage to extend beyond the face of the façade, and in its center is another, smaller section that projects out still further and upon which is placed a date stone bearing the year "1931."

Historic photos of the band shell show that the original surface of the spandrels that flank the proscenium arch was stuccoed. These photos also show that the wall surface between the corner pilasters was crowned by a concrete or stone-clad parapet wall that featured two end panels having surfaces comprised of vertical reeding, and these panels flanked a much broader center panel whose face was comprised of five equal-width horizontal bands. Today, however, both these spandrels and the parapet wall above have been resurfaced in aluminum clapboard siding, this being the only important alteration that has been made to the band shell.

The symmetrically designed north-facing side elevation of the band shell is 25-feet-wide, and its main wall surface is one-bay-wide and it is flanked on both sides by the slightly projecting six-foot-wide pilasters that are described above. The foundation wall in between the two bases of these pilasters is interrupted by two four-foot-tall, poured concrete wing walls that are placed at right-angles to the main foundation wall and which flank a flight of seven poured concrete steps that lead up to the centered, rectilinear door opening that is located in the first story of the elevation. This opening leads into the backstage area behind the shell and it originally contained a single five-panel wooden door but now contains a painted metal door. Placed just above it is an almost equal size rectilinear, window-like

⁵ The two center courses of this panel are composed of dark brown brick, the other eight alternate between courses of dark brown and reddish brown bricks.

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Columbia Park Band Shell
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opening having a concrete or dressed stone sill, and historic photos show that this opening has always contained the same metal ventilating louvers that it still contains today.

The main wall surface of the west-facing, fifty-foot-wide rear elevation of the band shell is enframed by the same slightly projecting six-foot-wide pilasters that are described above and it is also symmetrical in design and is four-bays-wide. The first and fourth bays both have openings in their first and second stories, the lower opening in each bay being a door that is partially cut into the foundation wall. These openings each contain a painted metal door that is accessed by ascending a flight of three poured concrete steps and they provide entrances to men's and women's restrooms that are located inside the band shell. A window opening of almost identical size that has either a stone or concrete sill is placed in the second story of both of these bays, but both of these openings are now filled with wooden boards. The second and third bays, meanwhile, both contain a small, nearly square window opening that contains a six-light window, and these windows help provide illumination to the bathrooms inside.

The south-facing 25-foot-wide side elevation of the band shell is identical to the north-facing side elevation described above and it too is one-bay-wide and its main wall surface is also enframed by six-foot-wide corner pilasters.

Interior

The rear of the interior of the band shell structure contains the two restrooms and also storage space that holds risers that the performers use, and other associated items. Most of the interior, however, consists of the band shell itself, which is made of wood and was constructed within the larger space that shelters it. The lower portion of this band shell has a 180° curved rear wall that is made of spruce boards laid vertically while the curved upper portion of the wall is made of spruce and redwood boards that are laid horizontally and which form a partial half dome. The ceiling of the shell is plastered and has now been painted sky blue and decorated with clouds, while the floor of the shell is part of the larger floor that also serves the band shell's storage areas and it is made of wooden boards.

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Columbia Park Band Shell
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

Significance

The Art Deco style Columbia Park Band Shell was built in 1931 and it is a very intact example of a type of structure that could once be found in many communities in Wisconsin and in other states as well. The Band Shell is located three blocks northwest of the Marshfield Central Avenue Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1993, and it was first identified by the Marshfield Intensive Architectural Survey that was undertaken in 2004-2005 as a resource having local significance under National Register (NR) Criterion A.⁶ Research was undertaken to assess this potential utilizing the NR significance area of Entertainment/Recreation, this area being complemented by the Performing Arts and Motion Pictures subsection of the Recreation and Entertainment Theme study unit that was identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP).⁷ The results of this research are detailed below and appears to support the listing of this structure in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) using Criterion A. The period of significance begins with the completion of the band shell in 1931 and continues to the end of the fifty year period in 1958.

The Columbia Park Band Shell is believed to be of local historic significance under NRHP Criterion A because it is an excellent example of the kind of self-funded relief projects that cities like Marshfield sponsored in the early years of the Great Depression to help their own citizens before nationwide relief projects funded by the Federal government were developed. The construction of the Band Shell was intended to provide jobs for unemployed men in the city, while the concerts it hosted were intended to provide free entertainment for the citizenry as a whole and especially for those who could no longer afford any other form of public entertainment. Band shells themselves are of historic significance as a resource type that is closely associated with outdoor public entertainment and Marshfield's example is an excellent, largely intact one that also represents the evolution of this resource type from the earlier bandstands of the Victorian period such as the previous structure in Columbia Park, to the more technologically sophisticated band shells that succeeded them. Examples of both types can still be found in cities throughout Wisconsin and two of them are already listed in the NRHP: the Village Park Bandstand in Menomonee Falls (NRHP 9/21/1988); and the Owen Park Bandshell in Eau Claire (NRHP 9/2/2003), both of which were funded in part by the Federal government's WPA program.⁸

⁶ Hegglund, Timothy F. *City of Marshfield Intensive Survey*. Marshfield: 2005. Copy on file at the Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

⁷ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. The Recreation and Entertainment Study Unit is still being written at this time.

⁸ The computerized AHI database of the State of Wisconsin's Division of Historic Preservation lists 37 examples of both types throughout the state.

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Columbia Park Band Shell
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

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History

A detailed history of the city of Marshfield and its built resources is embodied in the City of Marshfield Intensive Survey Report, printed in 2005. In addition, a vastly more detailed history of the city and its historic inhabitants was published in two volumes in 1997 and 2000.⁹ Consequently, the historic context that follows deals primarily with the history of the district itself and with the immediate surrounding area.

Like so many other later nineteenth century Wisconsin communities, the city of Marshfield owes its existence to its proximity to transportation routes, which in this case was the Wisconsin Central Railroad. The land that is now Marshfield was originally part of the holdings of the railroad, which was headquartered in the city of Menasha in the Fox River Valley, and which had received an enormous grant of land from the federal government at the end of the Civil War in return for building a rail line across the state from the city of Portage northwest to the city of Ashland on the shore of Lake Superior and on to Superior. The decision to establish a depot in the vicinity of what is now Marshfield was based on the fact that Marshfield is located in almost the exact center of the state and was, in 1871, also located halfway between Steven Point and the village of Colby, which was to be the north end of the first completed leg of this line. This central position favored the creation of a supply depot for the railroad at the Marshfield location and it was made still more attractive by the fact that land in this vicinity was flat and heavily forested, thereby lessening the cost of the construction of the line and also raising the possibility that the railroad could make a profit from both the sale and the shipping of this timber.

In order to establish this supply depot, the railroad contracted with Louis Rivers of Necedah to build and operate a hotel at the Marshfield location on free land provided by the Fox River Lumber Co. Rivers and his family arrived at the site in 1872 and had a small but serviceable log hotel in operation by the time the train tracks arrived later that year.

The first leg of track built in the proposed 250-mile route stretched from Menasha to Stevens Point in 1871. The following year saw another length from Stevens Point to Colby. The importance of this development was twofold. First, it provided traffic for the future Marshfield with the more populated and economically active portion of the state; from Steven Point south and east. The rail links brought migrants and markets within reach of the logging frontier that

⁹ Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *The Marshfield Story: Vol. 1, Piecing Together Our Past; Vol. 2, Windows to Our Past*. Marshfield: Marshfield History Project: 1997 and 2000.

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Columbia Park Band Shell
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

was Marshfield. If there were to be any reason for consistent activity in the wilderness, then there had to be a supply of labor and demand for the goods produced.

Second, the connections to Lake Superior proceeded slowly after the initial settlement of Marshfield and its transformation into a permanent manufacturing site. This lag coincided with the increasing demand for lumber (at both the local and national level) and provided the transportation route to reach into the north woods and then bring it back to Marshfield for processing. By the time this had happened, Marshfield was not only a regular stop on the Wisconsin Central's Chicago schedule, but had begun to attract the attention of other roads who took advantage of the city's central location and built through the town as well.¹⁰

Marshfield was one of the first important communities in the northern part of the state that owed its existence entirely to the coming of the railroad. Older communities such as Stevens Point owed their existence to their location on waterways that could be used to transport logs from the state's forests to the mills where they were to be processed. Marshfield had no such natural advantage but the coming of the railroad made such a location unnecessary.

Marshfield was first platted in 1875 after John J. Marsh and J. P. Buck, an agent of the Fox and Wisconsin Improvement Co., hired N. M. Edwards to survey their land in 1874 and produce a plat for a village on the site. The city block that is now known as Columbia Park was a direct product of this survey.

The oldest park in the city is the 2.5 acre Columbia Park. This area was donated to the city for park purposes through the estate of Samuel Marsh on November 27, 1875 and appears on the original "Village of Marshfield" plat recorded two months earlier. Samuel Marsh owned the Green Bay and Mississippi Improvement Company which was originally owned by John Marsh, the man for whom the city is named. The site was known as Northside Park until formally named Columbia Park on August 5, 1915.¹¹

The earliest known view of this park was produced in 1883, the same year that Marshfield was incorporated as a city. This was the 1883 *Bird's Eye View of Marshfield*, which shows that by that date little if anything had been done to improve the park.¹² Northside Park is located one block north

¹⁰ Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹² "Bird's Eye View of Marshfield, Wisconsin." Madison: J. J. Stoner, 1883.

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Columbia Park Band Shell
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of the city's first railroad tracks and two blocks west of Central Avenue, the city's principal commercial thoroughfare, and the area immediately surrounding the park then consisted of a residential neighborhood whose principal feature was the St. John's Roman Catholic Church complex that occupies the entire block opposite the park on W. Blodgett St. The first church of this complex had been built in 1881 (it was replaced by the present church in 1894) and it is believed that the construction of the church at this location was largely due to the setting that the park across the street made possible. It is also more than likely that the presence of the church also influenced the subsequent development of the park.

During this period, Marshfield was growing by leaps and bounds. In 1883, Marshfield was incorporated as a city, by 1884 the population stood at 2000, and by 1885 the population had reached 2500. The physical size of the city was also expanding as a consequence and new plats had added C, D and E streets north of the railroad corridor, sixth and seventh streets to the south of it, Pine and Oak streets to the west of Central Avenue, and Vine and Ash streets to the east. By this time too, certain areas of the city had developed specific usages. North, and especially South Central Avenue had become the retail center of the city, with shops stretching from South Depot Street as far south as Fourth Street. Industry and related businesses were concentrated along the rail corridor on both north and south Railroad and Depot streets and the railroad depot was also located here as well. All the land situated between W. Depot St., S. Chestnut Ave., and W. Third St. was given over to the various Upham Manufacturing Co. mills and lumberyards, and a similar situation existed on the land east of Maple St. and north of N. Railroad Street, which was largely given over to the factory and lumberyard of the Marshfield Stave Co. The blocks surrounding these areas were given over to residential construction, which at this time consisted almost entirely of small frame construction vernacular form buildings.

The growth that the Upham Manufacturing Co.'s activities, in particular, generated and the changes they brought with them transformed the city. Growth was steady until the June 27, 1887, when a spark from a passing train ignited a fire in the lumberyard associated with Upham's sawmill. Within a few hours, the fire had destroyed not only the entire Upham establishment but also the entire commercial district of the city that was located on both sides of South Central Avenue and numerous nearby houses as well. Fortunately for the future of the city, though, the Upham Co. decided to rebuild its factories and mills the day after the fire. Had it not, Marshfield's subsequent story would have been very different.

The rebuilding happened with amazing speed. By October of 1887, the population of the city had grown to 2500, and by 1891, to 4000. Looking at the Sanborn-Perris fire insurance maps for Marshfield printed in October 1887 and November 1891, one can also see that much rebuilding had already been completed

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Columbia Park Band Shell
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by late 1887, and by 1891, Central Avenue had been largely rebuilt. Another event that would have a great affect on the built environment of Marshfield occurred in November 1890, when a second railroad arrived in the city. This was the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Ohio Railroad, whose new tracks entered Marshfield from the southwest and crossed the 600 block of S. Central Ave. before ending at the depot grounds located on the east side of this block. With the coming of a second railroad, freight traffic through Marshfield increased even more and the new railroad also led to the creation of a second factory district located adjacent to the tracks in the first two blocks of W. Ninth Street.

All of this growth also had an effect on the park as well. By 1891, the new *Bird's Eye View of Marshfield* published in that year showed that the park had been landscaped by that time and that two tree-lined walkways had been laid out that extended from the northwest corner of the block to the southeast corner, and from the northeast corner to the southwest corner, and trees had also been planted around the perimeter of the block as well.¹³

By 1898, the population of Marshfield had climbed to 5800 and as Marshfield grew, the economic base of the city changed as well. Until 1900, Marshfield's prosperity was based largely on its location near the places where timber was harvested and the city's manufacturing establishments were centered on this industry. As the forests began to recede, however, much of what had once been forestland was converted into farmland and agriculture began to play an ever-increasing role in the local economy. Granaries and feed mills began to be built along the railroad corridor, a brewery was established, and commercial establishments that catered to the needs of the farmer began to appear. So too did manufacturing establishments devoted to the processing of food products such as cheese and eggs, and all of these new establishments needed workers.

Some of the changes that this growth had generated in the city were visible in the Northside Park as well. Between 1891 and 1903, the city built a 120-foot-tall steel standpipe in the exact center of the park in order to pressurize the city's water supply. In addition, the city had established a park committee to oversee Northside Park, which was then the only park in the city, and it had also decided to build a bandstand in the park as well.

The band stand at the park, now nearing completion, is attractive in design and will prove quite an ornament to the park. It is oval-shaped with the floor six feet above the ground. It has been suggested that the park committee plant ivy or some other fast-growing climbing vine around

¹³ "Bird's Eye View of Marshfield, Wisconsin." Milwaukee: C. J. Pauli, 1891.

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the base of the stand pipe and in a few years thirty to fifty feet of the unsightly pipe will be a mass of green foliage.¹⁴

Part of the impetus for the creation of the bandstand was the need for a place where the citizens of Marshfield could hear the city's increasingly well known 135th Medical Regiment Band.

Prior to 1895 a few bandsmen who loved to play would meet occasionally in the old city hall for rehearsals, but they had no real organization. Then, in that year, they heard of a man by the name of A. P. Adams, the proprietor of a small music store in Neillsville, who was willing to direct and instruct the Marshfield band if a job could be found for him here. The bandsmen went to work and secured a position for him in the Marshfield schools and formed the Badger State Band under his baton. It performed for four years as a civic band.

During the time of the post-Spanish War demobilization there was a competition among a great many state bands for selection as the Second Regiment Band. Marshfield's musicians triumphed, taking up their guard status in 1899 with Adams as director and Fred W. Kohl as drum major. The Badger State Band was officially named the Second Regiment Band of the Wisconsin National Guard. Bands from Marshfield at this time began performing as part of the military and would continue to do so for the next 62 years.¹⁵

As a military band, the members were trained in first aid work and when their regiment was called up for service in World War I they served as stretcher-carriers between the front line and the battalion aid station.

During the time the band engaged in service in the World war, the members left behind maintained their organization ... and handled all Liberty Loan drives, parades, and concerts. From then on until 1926 the band was a civilian community band and gave a series of 12 open air concerts each summer.

In May, 1926, came an opportunity to again secure a designation in the Wisconsin National Guard, and on June 1, 1926, the entire band was mustered into state service and designated the 135th Medical Regiment Band.¹⁶

¹⁴ *The Marshfield News*. June 11, 1903, p. 5. Pictures of this bandstand can be found in: Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 166, and Vol. 2, p. 314.

¹⁵ Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 181-183.

¹⁶ *Marshfield News-Herald*. "History of Marshfield's Band Dates Back to 1899." February 7, 1929, p. 3

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The band's summer concert series in the now renamed Columbia Park was an instant success but by 1926 the park's 1903 bandstand was nearing the end of its useful life.

Condemned as unsafe, the band stand in Columbia Park, which has served the city for many years, is believed to be doomed to destruction. Acting under the advice of the city engineer, who issued the order that the band stand was unsound, the 135th Medical Corp band abandoned its use last night and played its weekly concert on the park lawn. Future concerts will likewise be held on the lawn until other accommodations are provided.

The city engineer in his next report will inform the common council of the unstableness of the band stand. The stand is thought to be in such condition that would be futile to reinforce it for continued use. In all probability some action will be started to gain the council's approval for building a new stand of an entirely different type to replace the condemned structure.¹⁷

A solution in the form of the building of a temporary platform for the band was quickly rushed through the city council, but the opportunity that the loss of the old bandstand created was also recognized.

The city engineer notified the council that the bandstand in the Columbia Park, inspected and found unsafe, had been closed for further use. He recommended that the stand be razed and substituted with a new structure

As the bandstand cannot be used, and as playing on the ground is unsatisfactory to both the band and the listening public, the regimental band, in a communication to the council, asked for suitable accommodations for the band during band concerts. The recommendation of the board of public works that a temporary platform be erected in place of the bandstand was accepted, it to serve until the council is in a position to put up a stand that will be a credit to the city. A brief discussion revealed that the city authorities have elaborate band stand plans in mind, relating one of a substantial character with modern conveniences including restrooms for ladies and gentlemen.¹⁸

Just exactly what these elaborate band stand plans were is not known, but like most civic endeavors, action on the construction of a new facility for the band was not immediately forthcoming and nothing

¹⁷ *Marshfield Daily News*. June 25, 1927, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Marshfield Daily News*. "City Engineer Condemns Band Stand At Park." July 6, 1927, p. 5.

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further was done until early in 1929, when news about plans for a new facility appeared in the local newspapers.

A shell-shaped interior designed to create an effective dissemination of musical tones, will be a feature of the new band stand which the city council has ordered for construction in Columbia Park, according to G. A. Krasin, architect, in whose office the plans for the new stand are being drafted.

The Council plans to have the stand constructed near the center of the park with the front facing southeast. The dimensions of the stand will be 28x58 feet with a height of 32 feet. It will be a frame structure of classic architectural design, and will accommodate 60 musicians. Four elevations of eight inches each will afford all players an unobstructed view of the band director.

The foundation of the stand will be of concrete and the roof will be constructed with composition material. At the rear of the band stand there will be an entrance way leading to bathrooms and store rooms beneath the structure.¹⁹

Soon after this announcement was made, the city advertised for bids and the winning bid was announced just two months later.

Clarence Jackson, Marshfield, was the successful bidder for the job to construct the new city bandstand which will be located in Columbia park, Northside. His bid was \$4,850. The bids, numbering two, were opened at a meeting of the board of public works Monday. The other bid, submitted by F. E. Felhofer, was \$5,583.

The site for the stand, which is to face Chestnut Street, was staked out today. It is at a point about 15 feet east of the standpipe. The intention of the contractor is to begin construction as soon as possible after the contract has been signed.²⁰

All was not well, however, because the bidding process was reopened after objections arose to certain undisclosed features of Krasin's plan.

¹⁹ *Marshfield News-Herald*. "Plans Being Drafted For New Band Stand." February 16, 1929, p. 3.

²⁰ *Marshfield Daily News*. "Bids on Bandstand Received By Board." May 7, 1929, p. 1.

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The new band stand, for the construction of which bids were advertised for the second time recently, will have accommodations for a band of 60 pieces, according to Clarence Jackson, designer of the structure. In the first proceedings for the erection of the stand opposition developed against certain features of the specifications with the result that the attempt to build failed. Subsequently, the council voted to re-advertise for bids.

Both plans and specifications have since been revised. Under the revision the objectionable features have been eliminated, the architect stated. The changes in the plan are of a minor nature. According to the plans, the interior of the band quarters will be shell-shaped, a feature that is said to make for a better dissemination of the music. The opening is arched, 17 feet high at the highest point in the arch, and 39 feet wide.

The dimensions of the structure, which will face east and be of frame construction, will be 51-feet wide, 25 feet in depth, and 26 feet high from the grade line. It will be on a concrete foundation, finished outside in stained shingles, and roofed with composition materials. The front floor line will be about three feet and four inches above the grade line.

The space back of the rostrum will be divided into storage quarters and two restrooms. Entrances to the restrooms will be in the west wall, while the entrances to the rostrum will be at the north and south sides through the storage quarters. Other details of the plans call for two windows in each of the sides and six windows in the west wall.²¹

How different Jackson's plan was from the one proposed by Krasin is not known. The amount of time that was available for Jackson to create an entirely new plan (two months) seems a little tight and the general arrangement of the two structures appears to have been very similar. Fortunately, the original blueprints for Jackson's band stand are still in the City's possession and these show that his design was also classically derived and featured paired pilasters on all four corners of the structure. Unfortunately, the timing of the presentation of the new plans occurred just a few months before the Wall Street crash and nothing further was done for another two years, by which time much had changed in Marshfield and in the rest of the country. By 1931, the national economic climate notwithstanding, the City was once again ready to advertise for bids for a new bandstand.

Plans for a new bandstand in Columbia park which were made some time ago are to be revised and the Board of Public Works is to advertise for bids for the erection of the bandstand which

²¹ *Marshfield Daily News*. "Architect Explains New Band Stand Design." July 16, 1929, p. 5.

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is definitely expected to get under way before the opening of the band concert season. The specifications for the bandstand as they will be revised will call for an expenditure of about \$3,000, almost half as much as the original plans called for. Members of the city council at the monthly meeting last evening agreed that the new bandstand should be erected this year.²²

This action was applauded the next day in an editorial in the local newspaper.

Members of the city council by authorizing the construction of a new bandstand in Columbia Park can feel proud of the fact that their action will be generously endorsed by Marshfield citizens. The announcement is particularly interesting inasmuch as it expresses the council's desire to see the project completed before the 1931 concert season begins.

Few cities in Wisconsin, if any, are quite as fortunate as Marshfield in possessing a musical organization like the 135th Medical Regiment band to provide outdoor concerts. But ever since the entertainment became popular here the city has been handicapped in not having a place where these concerts could be presented to the entire satisfaction of the audience and the band members themselves. Since there was nothing in the construction of the old bandstand in Columbia park to reflect the sound of instruments, band officials were compelled to limit programs to marches and such selections as required considerable volumes of sound. Oftimes the effect of some excellent composition was lost completely because of the inability of the audience to hear the rendering of a soft passage of music.

City officials were not aware of these conditions but wisely chose to defer action for a new bandstand until the old water reservoir in Columbia Park, always an obstruction to many listeners at concerts, could be removed. The new stand is expected to be of a type that will overcome all objections to bandstands that served Marshfield's needs in former years, and will occupy a position of advantage to all listeners.

The hundreds of people who listen to the series of outdoor concerts each summer is evidence enough of the community' appreciation for this type of entertainment. That this expression of appreciation will increase when a new bandstand makes better concerts possible goes without saying.²³

²² *Marshfield News-Herald*. "City Will Erect New Bandstand." February 4, 1931, p. 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, "A New Bandstand." February 5, 1931, p. 6.

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Within a month, a new bid for the work had been accepted and finally work was about to proceed. In the interim, however, a quite different band shell design had been produced, one that kept the dimensions and plan of the earlier ones, but which substituted brick for wood and wood shingles, and an Art Deco design for a Neo-Classical Revival style one. The identity of the author of the new design has not been discovered.

The long sought and promised bandstand for Columbia park began to take the form of reality when the council voted at the meeting last evening to accept a bid of F. A. Felhofer to erect a brick bandstand according to the plans made by the city council at a cost of \$4,779.

It was announced by Alderman Finucane that the Marshfield Brick company had offered to sell the brick used in the stand for \$10 a thousand providing the city hauls it to location. This is estimated to reduce the cost of the stand about \$500 under the bid price.

Building will begin as soon as arrangements are made for employment and materials obtained. The building of the stand at this time, according to Alderman Sheff, chairman of the board of public works will also be an aid to unemployment and depression inasmuch as local help will be employed, and the contract in the hands of a local man.²⁴

The resulting structure proved more of a success than anyone could have imagined, but it was a success that was also partly due to the hard times that then prevailed.

Monday evening the 135th Medical regiment band played its first public concert of the season in the new shell at Columbia park—and, conservative estimates say, 3,000 men, women and children, in arms and otherwise, listened with rapt attention to a program that consisted largely of martial music, but was nevertheless interspersed with light, popular features and one heavier number, the overture, “Barber of Seville.” That is something. That is an indication of something that should be highly gratifying not only to the members of the band and its congenial director, A. J. Rasmussen, but to the city fathers especially.

It means that the money spent for the erection of the shell at the park was by no means in vain. It means, too, that the people of Marshfield and vicinity enjoy wholesome music, it means, further, that Marshfield community people will have a place to which they can take their guests

²⁴ *Marshfield News-Herald*. “City Will Have New Bandstand.” March 4, 1931, p. 1.

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with a feeling of pride—and it means, last but by no means least, that the concerts are filling a real need in the hearts and minds of citizens.

And it is certain they are filling a real want especially at this time. There are families who, because of the continued stress in the economic world, cannot permit themselves anything in the way of entertainment because of the costs. In the free concerts Marshfield has an opportunity for doing a real community good. Men, women and children cannot live on bread alone. The band concerts where all meet on an equal basis furnishes something besides bread, but nevertheless, decidedly necessary. Cheering music is a wonderful tonic to the soul that is downcast. At no time since the inauguration of the free concerts are they as needed as now.²⁵

The new band shell was not just a concert venue; its location and its design made it an obvious place to hold large public meetings of all kinds when the weather was warm enough. One such meeting occurred later in 1932 when farmers in Wisconsin joined others across the nation who were threatening to strike if the prices paid for their produce did not rise.

Fully 6,000 farmers, gathered in front of the bandstand in Columbia park today, listened seriously to leaders in the Farmer's Holiday movement and applauded wildly when speakers vividly brought out points of vital financial interest to the farmer. The crowd waxed more and more enthusiastic as speakers favoring the holiday followed each other on the platform and urged farmers to organize, to strike, and to withhold their products from the market until prices rise to the cost of production.²⁶

Most events associated with the Columbia Park Band Shell have been much less emotional, however, and programs of summer band concerts in the park continue to the present day.

On summer evenings in Marshfield, music lovers gather in Columbia Park, across from St. John's Church. Some bring lawn chairs, some sit on blankets, and some sit on the benches arranged in rows. They arrive on foot, in cars and by bicycle. They show up even when it looks like it may rain, with umbrellas to protect them from the occasional sprinkles that fall. They are observing a tradition that has been practiced in Marshfield for over 100 years, summer band concerts in the park.²⁷

²⁵ *Marshfield News-Herald*. "Hail To The Band." June 1, 1932, p. 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, "Farmers Consider Strike Proposal." September 3, 1932, p. 1.

²⁷ Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 181

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Consequently, it is believed that the Columbia Park Band Shell is eligible at the local level for listing in the NRHP under NR Criterion A (history) because it has played a significant role in the history of public entertainment in Marshfield. More than most Wisconsin cities, Marshfield has had a long tradition of band music that began in 1895 and which continues to the present day. The Columbia Park Band Shell has been the summer home of this important local activity since it was first built in 1931 and as a result, it has gradually become the resource in the city that is most closely associated with summer musical entertainment. In addition, the band shell also represents the efforts that the City of Marshfield made to alleviate the effects that the Great Depression was having on its citizens. Part of the rationale for building the band shell in the depths of the Depression, at a time when many other uses could have been found for the money that was being expended, was to provide jobs for men who were then unemployed. Another, less tangible, but no less deeply felt goal was to bring free public entertainment to those who could not otherwise afford any. The members of the city council and others in the city recognized that for many at that time, even the smallest expenditure for entertainment had to be measured against paying for more fundamental needs, and they believed that providing a place where entertainment was free could also provide a lift for those who were struggling just to get by.

Architecture

The Columbia Park Band Shell was identified by the Marshfield Intensive Survey as one of the resources in Marshfield that is most worthy of listing in the NRHP. Although it is being nominated to the NRHP under Criterion A for its local historic significance, the band shell is also a good representative example of this particular resource type as well.

Band shells evolved from earlier structures called bandstands. Bandstands are essentially raised outdoor platforms that are roofed and whose primary purpose is to provide shelter for bands or orchestras who are performing outdoor concerts. The earliest examples of this type of structure probably date from the eighteenth century when the first large public pleasure gardens were being developed in the capitals of Europe such as the Vauxhall Gardens in London, but bandstands really came into their own in the nineteenth century and especially in England and the United States, where the new vogue for brass bands that developed in the last half of the century also coincided with the first great period of public park construction in both countries. This, it must be remembered, was still a time when all entertainment was live, so if one wanted to hear music, one had to go to where it was being performed. Consequently, free band concerts in public parks became an incredibly popular form of public entertainment in the nineteenth century and this led to the construction of innumerable small and large structures designed to house the bands and other musical groups. Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century almost any urban public park in Wisconsin worthy of the name could boast of having a bandstand of its own.

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Most bandstands were situated in public parks, although some large resort hotels also had bandstands of their own in the nineteenth century. Most of these nineteenth and twentieth century bandstands are circular or oval in plan, although some are semi-circular, and their designs range from simple gazebo-like structures made out of wood or, less frequently, cast iron, to much more elaborate ones, the wealth and size of the community being the principal determinant.

The advantage of these circular plans was that the sounds they produced were omnidirectional and that the seating for both the members of the audience and for the performers themselves could be flexible and arranged as needed. The disadvantage, as was noted in the editorial quoted earlier on p. 10 (Section 8), is that bandstands were not designed to focus the sound that was produced within them, so that greater volume had to be produced if the sound was to carry any distance, a consideration that limited the types and quality of the music that could be played in the days before electric amplification became possible.

The band shell concept utilized the findings of the new field of acoustics that had been initially been applied to the design of indoor theaters and transferred them to performances held outdoors. The key to this was the creation of the shell itself, which had a concave, nearly hemispherical back that served as a sounding board that focused sound in a unidirectional manner. Such shells could be built inside a conventional-appearing building or the shells could become structures of their own if built out of a suitable weatherproof material such as concrete, such as the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, California. Both types are encountered in Wisconsin, the one in Columbia Park in Marshfield being a fine example of the former, and the most impressive example of the latter being the outstanding Art Deco style Blatz Temple of Music located in Washington Park in Milwaukee, which was designed by Fitzhugh Scott and built in 1938 at a cost of \$100,000.

Band shells, by their very nature, were better able to produce a focused sound and this greatly improved the listening experience for the audience. The tradeoff, if such it be, was that the location of the audience seating had to be fixed for the benefits of the shell to be realized.

Marshfield's Columbia Park band shell was built in 1931 and while the identity of the designer of the structure is not certain, the design itself made sparing but effective use of the Art Deco style that was then popular. Actual Art Deco style ornamentation is limited to the chevron bands that encircle the decorative stone panels that are located in the parapet wall above each of the pilasters corner that form the corners of the structure. Unfortunately, the later resurfacing of portions of the main facade with aluminum siding have obscured design details that originally gave the building a more obvious Art Deco appearance.

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The following contemporary newspaper article gives a good description of both the construction and design of the band shell as it neared completion.

Indications assumed from the progress already made in the construction of Marshfield's new band shell in Columbia park show that it will be in readiness in ample time for the first concert of the year on Decoration Day. There are but three days of brick work left to be done on the building, after which will follow the building of the shell formation on the inside which will provide the acoustics. The shell is made of redwood and spruce in two sections running parallel, one inside the other, about 16 inches apart.

The new band stand is of brick and concrete construction with a four-ply built-up asphalt roof. The width of the concert stage at the front is 39 feet, the maximum depth 21 feet, curving in a 180 degree arch to the front. It is expected to comfortably allow a concert by 60 musicians. As in theatrical circles, up stage is at the rear, the platform having a noticeable slant to the front so as not to obstruct the view of those in the audience who are close to the stage.

A concrete foundation four feet in height upon which brick work is constructed shows off the dark brick in a most handsome manner. The brick is laid horizontally except for panels in the pilasters where the bricks are vertical, making decorative vertical panels at each corner.

At the top of the band stand are to be laid a row of white stones around the entire stand, with a stone at both sides of each corner engraved with a musical emblem in the form of two heraldic trumpets crossed in front of a drum. Storage rooms are to be built on both the north and south sides of the band stand behind the shell, with entrance from the exterior leading through at each side, and the rear. Space is being left so that at some future time lavatories may be provided in the band stand building.

Considerable work is being done in filling in with dirt which is to be seeded and landscaped, providing admirable surroundings for Marshfield's new out-of-door music concert stage.²⁸

When the restoration work on the band shell that the City is proposing to do is completed, the Columbia Park Band Shell will once again have the appearance it had when the above account was written and audiences at the summer band concerts will once again be able to see it as its designer intended.

²⁸ *Marshfield News-Herald*. "Band Stand Will Be Ready For First Concert In May." April 18, 1931, p. 5.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Columbia Park occupies the whole of Block N, First Addition to the City of Marshfield. The Columbia Park Band Shell is centered on the westerly half of this block and the boundaries associated with it for the purposes of this nomination consists of a rectangle measuring 183-feet-long by 106-feet-wide that comprise the middle one-third of the westerly half of said Block N. The west boundary line of this rectangle corresponds to the east curbline of N. Walnut St. and the SW corner of said rectangle corresponds to a point on this curbline that lies approximately 106-feet N of the SW corner of Block N. The line then continues N along said E curbline for a distance of 106-feet, then turns 90° and continues E a distance of 183-feet to the NE corner of said rectangle, this corner also being a point that is located on the N-S centerline of said Block N. The line then turns 90° and continues S along said centerline for 106-feet to the SE corner of said rectangle, then turns 90° and continues W 183-feet until reaching the POB. These boundaries enclose the band shell itself and approximately .42 acre.

Boundary Justification:

Columbia Park has occupied the whole of Block N since the First Addition was first platted. The portion of land that surrounds the Band Shell, as described above, encloses all the land that is most directly associated with the Band Shell and includes that which is believed to be necessary to protect the Band Shell's setting, but it does not include the entire 2.5-acre block.

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Items a-d are the same for photos 1 - 6.

Photo 1

- a) Columbia Park Band Shell
- b) Marshfield, Wood County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, November 26, 2006
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) General View, View looking W
- f) Photo 1 of 6

Photo 2

- e) Main Facade, View looking NW
- f) Photo 2 of 6

Photo 3

- e) SW-facing Side Elevation, View looking NE
- f) Photo 3 of 6

Photo 4

- e) NW-facing Rear Elevation, View looking SE
- f) Photo 4 of 6

Photo 5

- e) NE-facing Side Elevation, View looking SW
- f) Photo 5 of 6

Photo 6

- e) Three-Quarter View, View looking SW
- f) Photo 6 of 6