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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

APR 17 2006

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 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 any 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 Stark Park  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

bounded on e. by N. River Rd., on s. by Park Ave.,  
street & number w. by Merrimack River not for publication n/a  
city or town Manchester vicinity n/a  
state New Hampshire code NH county Hillsborough code 011 zip code 03104

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Wanda Ray Wilton DSHPO May 2, 2006  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government  
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

4. National Park Service Certification

I, Edson H. Beall hereby certify that this property is: 6.14.06  
✓ entered in the National Register       
     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):

=====  
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
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

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

  N/A  

=====  
6. Function or Use  
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:   LANDSCAPE   Sub:   park  

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:   LANDSCAPE   Sub:   park  

=====  
7. Description  
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

  N/A  

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation   N/A    
roof   N/A    
walls   N/A    
  
other   N/A  

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

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Description**

Stark Park encompasses thirty acres of land in the north end of Manchester, bounded on the east by River Road, on the south by Park Avenue, on the west by the Merrimack River, and on the north by the former State Industrial School (now the Youth Development Center). The land was once the site of the Stark Family farm. The topography of the thirty-acre, rectangular parcel of land slopes down from the east toward the Merrimack River. The western portion of the land is largely wooded while the eastern half consists of lawn dotted with shade trees and shrubs and overlaid by a circuitous system of roadways. Located at the geographic center of the park is the Stark burial ground which includes Revolutionary War hero, General John Stark's gravesite. Other site features include the equestrian statue of General Stark, installed in 1948, several cannons, a monument and flagpole.

The resources within the park are described in greater detail below.

**1. Circulation System, 1893+. Contributing site.**

As designed, serpentine roadways led carriages from Stark Park's entrances on River Road across lawns, through woodlands, past springs and finally to the river and an "outlook" to western hills. The original vehicular entrances to the park off River Road still survive. An additional vehicular entrance was later added at the south end of the park, at the end of Park Avenue. Approximately one-half of the original road network has been preserved, in the eastern half of the park, above the Stark burial ground. As designed the roads are carefully graded below the lawns so they appear invisible from River Road. The original roadway has been paved over although the edge stones survive underneath and are visible in some areas.

Shifts in use and maintenance levels in recent years have resulted in some changes to the park's appearance. In the western part of the park the roads and pedestrian paths are unmaintained. Stark Park was originally characterized by open vistas to the Merrimack River and distant hills. Many of these views have become blocked by regrowth over the years. The colonnade of elm trees which lined River Road died off due to Dutch elm disease, an epidemic which decimated New Hampshire's elm trees in the twentieth century. Originally there were more numerous rhododendrons and mountain laurels. Today, dense, wooded areas cover approximately one-half of the parkland. The eastern half of the park is turf, dotted with deciduous and coniferous trees and mature shrubs.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Description (continued)**

**2. Stark Burial Ground, 1822/1829/1896. Contributing site.**

The Stark Family burial ground is located near the geographic center of the park. The oldest monument in the burial ground is a granite obelisk erected by the Stark family in 1829 some seven years after the General was buried here. To the southeast of the obelisk is a granite monument installed in 1896 and based loosely on the design of a sarcophagus. Classically-inspired details include the Ionic corner columns and the urn which originally capped the marker. Raised letters reading "Stark" appear on the front of the plinth and inscribed on the die are the names, birth and death dates of the Stark family members beginning with the father and mother of General Stark and continuing to the third generation. There are approximately twenty-four small rectangular stones mounted on the ground for the various family members. These replaced the more numerous above-ground stone markers visible in earlier views.

The 36' x 50' lot is enclosed by granite curbing installed in 1896. Atop the corner posts and the two posts flanking the two entrance steps on the east side are polished spheres of Quincy granite, fifteen inches in diameter. The two front posts are inscribed with a stylized "S". Just inside the entrance are two polished granite planters/bowls resting on circular pedestals.

In 1913 four concrete posts with low pyramidal caps and an iron fence were constructed surrounding the plot to keep vandals out. The iron spicket panels are attached to a concrete base and a concrete sidewalk three feet wide extends from the granite curbing to the outer fence. Some spalling of the concrete is evident.

**3. General Stark equestrian statue, 1948. Contributing object.**

This bronze statue depicts General John Stark Statue in Revolutionary War uniform and on horseback raising his right arm above and behind his head holding a sword. The statue stands eighteen and a half feet high and is set on a nine foot granite pedestal. On the east face are the words "Major General John Stark". The west side bears the inscription "Tonight our flag floats over yonder hill or Molly Stark sleeps a widow". The north inscription reads "Live free or die. Death is not the worst of evils".

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Description (continued)**

The inscription on the south side says: "This monument is the gift of Gen. Charles H. Bartlett to the City of Manchester Dedicated 1948".

Mounted at the base on the south side is a bronze plaque detailing the members of the Stark Monument Committee, 1944-1948. The bronze casting bears the name of the sculptor, Richard H. Recchia, copyright 1947, and the company which cast it, Roman Bronze Works, Inc.

**4. Cannons, c.1812 (installed 1896). Contributing objects.**

Located near the River Road entrance, these four Dahlgren cannons date to the war of 1812 and were installed in the park in 1896. They came from the Charlestown, Massachusetts naval shipyard. The mounts for the cannons were manufactured in the machine shop of Manchester's Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. The cannons rest on concrete pads. The four cannons are arranged in an arc, facing west. Behind the cannons are two pyramids of cannonballs. Originally there were four pyramids with a total of 212 cannonballs but two have been lost over the years due to vandalism.

**5. Flagpole, 1930. Contributing object.**

Behind the cannons and cannonballs is a 50' steel flagpole erected in 1930, replacing an earlier wooden one.

**6. Colonnade Monument, 1897. Contributing object.**

Mounted on the ground, this granite slab commemorates the colonnade of elm trees presented to the City of Manchester by the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) in 1897. The inscription reads "National Colonnade presented to the City of Manchester by Posts 3 and 94, Grand Army of the Republic, Dept. of New Hampshire, July 4, 1897". The American elm trees were planted along the north, east and south borders of the park. The thirteen trees on the east boundary represented the original thirteen states, including New Hampshire. The elm trees have unfortunately died out, casualties of Dutch elm disease.

8. Statement of Significance

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

- X 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.
X 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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
X C a birthplace or a 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)

A: Social History
C: Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance 1892-1956

Significant Dates 1892
1948

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder N/A

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- prelim. 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

- x State Historic Preservation Office
Federal agency
University
Other State agency
Local government
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 30

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing		
	1	19	298325E	4765490N	3	19	298840E	4765260N
	2	19	298830E	4765550N	4	19	298440E	4765220N

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.)

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Mausolf, Preservation Consultant

organization Friends of Stark Park date March 2006

street & number 6 Field Pond Drive telephone 781-779-1574

city or town Reading state MA zip code 01867

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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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Manchester Parks & Recreation Dept.

street & number 625 Mammoth Road telephone (603) 624-6565

city or town Manchester state NH zip code 03104

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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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance**

Stark Park in Manchester, New Hampshire is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, Social History, and under Criterion C, Landscape Architecture. The property also qualifies under Criteria Consideration C: Birthplaces and Graves, as a lasting memorial to Revolutionary War hero, General John Stark. Despite the loss of some historic features the park retains the essential features of its original design. Stark Park retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The period of significance for the property is 1892-1956 reflecting its continuous use as a park and the fifty-year cut-off of the National Register. The property is significant on the local level.

Under the category of Social History, the development of Stark Park is representative of various significant late 19<sup>th</sup> century events and trends. The park exemplifies the commitment of late 19<sup>th</sup> century American communities to create public parks for the refreshment and health of its citizens. Yet Stark Park was more than just a respite from urban life. Interwoven in the history and development of the park are numerous themes including commemoration and patriotism in addition to the function of promoting an aesthetic and healthy environment. The centerpiece of the park is and was the gravesite of New Hampshire's foremost Revolutionary War hero, General John Stark. Patriotic fervor increased in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century due to events such as the country's Centennial Celebration in 1876. The idea of creating a park at Stark's gravesite would likely not have occurred without the strong encouragement of local veterans eager to pay homage to patriotic ideals. The installation of the Stark Statue in 1948 demonstrates the continuation of these cultural values in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Stark Park is also significant under the category of Landscape Architecture. The park opened in 1893 making it, along with Derryfield Park, one of the first citywide public parks in Manchester. It quickly became one of the City's jewels. Designed by a pair of landscape designers from Boston, Stark Park's design was typical of the "Victorian" parks built throughout the country at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and included serpentine carriage ways, meandering trails, a mixture of lawns, woodlands and plantings, springs and vistas. There was a summerhouse for visitors and ornamental trees and shrubs filled the park with color and texture. In comparison to Derryfield Park, Stark Park has seen few additions and continues to serve a more passive use in keeping with the original design intent.



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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

**Historic Background**

What would later become Stark Park was originally part of the Stark Family Farm, a tract of approximately 800 acres owned by Archibald Stark (1689-1750), father of Gen. John Stark, in what is now the northern end of Manchester. General Stark was buried here in 1822, near a maple tree that he had planted thirteen years before he died. He reportedly enjoyed watching canal boats passing up and down the Merrimack River from the spot and thus selected it for his burying place.<sup>1</sup> In 1829, on the anniversary of the battle of Bennington, the Stark family erected an obelisk of Concord granite to mark the grave. It is said to have been hewed by inmates at the state prison in Concord. On January 14, 1876 Augustus and Elizabeth Stark, brother and sister and great-grandchildren of Gen. Stark, deeded the City about two acres of land on which the burying ground was located. The conveyance required the City to enclose the cemetery and to reserve a burial place for five additional family members.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of creating a public park at Stark's burial site originated with a group of local veterans, members of the Louis Bell Post, No. 3, G.A.R., on Memorial Day in 1886. In May 1889 a committee was established to secure acreage for the park. Acting on behalf of Manchester's citizens were ex-Gov. Person C. Cheney, ex-Gov. Frederick Smyth, industrialist Aretas Blood, Col. George C. Gilmore and Joseph Rowell while the local G.A.R. post was represented by Edwin P. Richardson, Capt. Cornelius W. Strain, Capt. Geo. H. Hubbard, Capt. Samuel Piper and Abner Sanborn. The following May a petition was presented to the City encouraging the purchase of the land and was subsequently adopted unanimously by the city government and ratified by the voters.<sup>3</sup> On January 3, 1891 Lizzie Stark and her brother Augustus H. Stark deeded the remaining twenty-eight acres of land that became the park to the City for the sum of \$8,000. The conveyances required that the City maintain the land as a public park, that it not erect any buildings on the premises other than those appropriate to the park and that the City expend an average of \$300 each year for the care and improvement of the park. Miss Stark also asked that the stone wall on the west side of River Road as well as the maple tree on the west side of

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<sup>1</sup> "Stark Park: Many Improvements Going On – Monument Completed". Unidentified Manchester newspaper, May 23, 1896. [Manchester Historic Association files].

<sup>2</sup> "A Visit to Stark Park", *Amoskeag Bulletin*, date unknown. [Manchester Historic Association files].

<sup>3</sup> "Historic Stark Park: National Colonnade of Memorial Trees Presented to the City", *Mirror and American*, July 6, 1897.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

the road be retained. The stone wall was built by some of General Stark's soldiers who had contracted smallpox at Ticonderoga and were sent by the General to his farm to recuperate. The men were nursed back to health by Mrs. Stark and their exercise on the farm included the construction of the stone wall.<sup>4</sup>

An article appearing in the *Manchester Union* on August 6, 1891 provides a description of the land prior to improvements, declaring "a finer place for a park could not be imagined."<sup>5</sup> The eastern part of the land was described as smooth and clean while in the north and northwest there was a fine grove. Three springs were located near the graves. A less complimentary newspaper account described the initial condition of the park as "wild land overgrown with bushes and small saplings".<sup>6</sup>

In 1891 Joseph B. Sawyer, C.E. was retained to make a survey of the land. A contour map was prepared locating trees on the property, many of which were alders and birches indicative of the evolution of the land from its former use as an agricultural field. The map was sent to William Doogue, superintendent of public parks in Boston. Doogue was to prepare a plan showing proposed walks and drives.<sup>7</sup> Although Doogue visited Manchester in August 1891 with two competent engineers, it is not clear whether he ever prepared a plan.<sup>8</sup>

In 1892 the City of Manchester paid \$1,000 to Morton & Quimby, landscape gardeners of Boston, for a design of the park.<sup>9</sup> The plan, a copy of which appeared in the 1893 City Report, showed the Stark burial ground at the geographic center of the park, surrounded by a stone wall with two sets of steps on the western side of the burial ground allowing visitors to descend into the lower section of the park. Serpentine roadways were depicted running throughout the land. The proposed plan also included a band stand, summer house, depot and outlook. Trees edged all sides of the park although the core of the park contained fewer trees with masses designed to emphasize the system of roads and paths.

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<sup>4</sup> "Historic Ground", *The Manchester Union*, August 6, 1891.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "Around Stark's Grave." Publication unknown, 1895? [Manchester Historic Association files.

<sup>7</sup> City of Manchester Annual Report, 1891.

<sup>8</sup> "Historic Ground", *The Manchester Union*, August 6, 1891.

<sup>9</sup> City of Manchester Annual Report, 1892.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Work began on the park in the spring of 1893. The list of expenditures included dynamite cartridges and fuses suggesting some substantial alteration of the terrain. One hundred tons of Salem stone dust was ordered, the same material used on the paths and roadways of the Boston parks. All of the roadbeds and walks were prepared by removing the soil and spreading 289 loads of crushed stone on the sand foundation, adding the Salem stone dust as a binder.<sup>10</sup> The first avenue built was that leading to the burial ground. The remainder of the land was grassed over.

Stark Park was officially dedicated on June 17, 1893 with “one of the grandest civic and military processions that has ever been seen in New Hampshire” extending up Elm Street and terminating at the park.<sup>11</sup> Members of the Amoskeag Veterans as well as groups in Worcester and Hartford were present, uniformed in Revolutionary War garb. The “Molly Stark” cannon, captured at the battle of Bennington by General Stark offered a welcoming thirteen gun salute. An oration by General Charles H. Bartlett followed. Thousands attended the dedication despite heavy rain.

Over the next several years the City continued to make improvements to the park. Before the land could be graded, wild growth was cut, the roots dug out and the ground broken up. Approximately thirty-five men and four double teams worked on Stark Park during the seasons from 1893 to 1895. Roadways throughout the park were extended and paved. In 1893 there were 1,035 feet of paved gutters, eighteen inches in width, lining the roadways. The total width of each roadway including the gutters was 19 feet. In 1895 another 1200 feet of macadam was built and about 400 feet of underdrain was installed. A spring within the park was cleaned and 150 rhododendrons were planted in the grove as well as 100 mountain laurel plants.<sup>12</sup> Sixty trees, mostly spruce, were replanted from the adjacent Industrial School land, set out on the north and south sides of the park. Iron seats were set out for the use of park visitors. Some eight hundred flowering shrubs were set out in Stark Park in 1896, as well as seven hundred feet of railing to guard the steep banks of roads.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> City of Manchester Annual Report, 1893.

<sup>11</sup> *Dedication of Stark Park by the City of Manchester, N.H.: Oration by Gen. Chas. H. Bartlett*, June 17, 1893. Manchester, NH: John B. Clarke Co., 1893, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> City of Manchester Annual Report, 1893.

<sup>13</sup> City of Manchester Annual Report, 1897.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

There were also many private donations to the park. Mrs. A.M. Eastman presented a vase fountain, six feet high and six feet in diameter. Commissioner George Stearns donated a large number of trees and a summer house was erected in his honor in the southeastern section of the park. The wooden, gable-roofed structure was open on all sides and the door to the summerhouse faced the Stark burial ground. Additional trees on the north and south borders and in the cemetery lot were given by Superintendent Ray of the Industrial School and by Miss Elizabeth Stark<sup>14</sup>

In 1896 the Stark heirs made various improvements to the Stark family plot. Near the left center of the lot a new urn-topped monument was erected. Designed after the style of a sarcophagus, the monument was made of granite from Troy, New Hampshire. Raised letters reading "Stark" appear on the front of the plinth and inscribed on the die are the names, birth and death dates of Stark family members from the father and mother of General Stark to the third generation. At the same time the 36' x 50' lot was enclosed by massive curbing of Manchester granite with polished spheres of Quincy granite, fifteen inches in diameter, surmounting the posts at each corner and the two posts near the entrance. The work was done by R.P. Stevens & Co. of Manchester at a cost of about \$2,500.<sup>15</sup>

As part of Manchester's Centennial Celebration in 1896 four Dalghren cannons used in the War of 1812 and four large pyramids totaling 212 cannonballs (now there are only two pyramids) were placed near the eastern end of the Park, secured from storage at the Charlestown navy yard through the efforts of Congressman Sulloway and Mayor William C. Clarke.<sup>16</sup> The mounts for the cannons were manufactured in the machine shop of Manchester's Amoskeag Manufacturing Company.<sup>17</sup> Also in 1896 the City had a tool shed built at the park.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "Around Stark's Grave", 1895?

<sup>15</sup> "Stark Park: Many Improvements Going On – New Monument Completed." Unidentified Manchester newspaper, May 23, 1896.

<sup>16</sup> "Captured by Gen. John Stark: British Gun to be Placed Near the Old Hero's Grave." Publication and date unknown. [Manchester Historic Association files].

<sup>17</sup> "A Visit to Stark Park", *Amoskeag Bulletin*, date unknown.

<sup>18</sup> City of Manchester Annual Report, 1896.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

On July 4, 1897 Manchester's Grand Army veterans presented the city with an impressive colonnade of native American elm trees. Forty-five trees, representing the forty-five states then in the union, were laid out for one-half mile around the park's borders. The trees were set fifty feet apart and placed twenty-five feet inside the park border. The thirteen trees along the east border represented the original thirteen states, beginning with New Hampshire at the southeast corner and ending with Georgia at the northeast corner. The other trees on the north and south sides represented newer states.

Each tree had a metal tag engraved with the name of a state and the date of its admission to the union. An engraved stone tablet commemorated the establishment of the National Colonnade.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to its recreational opportunities, the park also fulfilled practical requirements. In the late 1800s the City raised hay in the park, to be used at the City stables. The City Report in that year noted the need for a building to store the hay but it does not appear that this project was ever undertaken. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century brought smaller improvements to the park. In 1902 the road around the Stark burial ground was completed. The following year, the City added 1,600 feet of cobble gutters alongside park roads and repaired roadways. In 1904 the road leading into Stark Park was named "Revolution Avenue" in honor of the efforts of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Sugar maple trees were planted along both sides. The year 1905 saw the construction of a new wooden bridge over the brook in the lower park. Fifty to eighty rose bushes were also planted as well as flower beds.

By 1913 the Stark burial plot was experiencing significant vandalism. There were reports of cannonballs being rolled down the hill, large pieces of granite were being broken off the monuments and the large granite spheres in the Stark burial ground had been rolled down the hill toward the river. Prodded by a complaint by Mrs. Edith Stark, widow of Augustus Stark, the City erected a locked iron fence around the entire burial lot in 1913 to discourage vandals and souvenir seekers. Four concrete posts were erected outside the plot and an eight-foot iron fence was built.<sup>20</sup> In 1914 the last remaining Stark family member in the area, Miss Elizabeth Stark, died. In 1915 funds were appropriated to bring

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<sup>19</sup> "Historic Stark Park: National Colonnade of Memorial Trees Presented to the City", *Mirror and American*, July 6, 1897.

<sup>20</sup> "City Putting Up Fence About Grave of Stark", *Manchester Mirror*, November 28, 1913.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance**

water into the park. After World War I forty-seven trees were planted in Stark Park in honor of the city's war dead. Each tree had a bronze band carrying the name of the soldier in whose memory it was planted. During the ceremony an airplane from the First Corps area circled the park, dropping flowers on the memorials.<sup>21</sup> A new 50' steel flagpole was erected in 1930, replacing the old wooden one.

In 1948 the City erected one of the Park's most significant features, the equestrian statue of General John Stark. The statue was made possible by the bequest of Charles H. Bartlett who died on January 25, 1900. A successful lawyer and public servant, Bartlett (1833-1900) was a great admirer and student of the life of General John Stark. He also served as Mayor of Manchester from 1872-1873 and as Commander of the Amoskeag Veterans, a famous social and military organization of Manchester. He obtained his title in 1891 when he was appointed judge advocate general on the staff of Governor Tuttle. General Bartlett had one son, who died young, and one daughter, Carrie Bartlett Anderson.<sup>22</sup>

Bartlett's will authorized the City of Manchester, after his daughter's death, to sell his interest in the Tewksbury Block on the west side of Elm Street and use to proceeds to erect an equestrian statue of Stark. After Mrs. Anderson's death in 1939 the City of Manchester continued to own the Tewksbury Block until May 1, 1944 when the property was sold and the proceeds were made available to fulfill Bartlett's request (Info on Charles Bartlett). In 1944 Mayor Josephat Benoit headed a committee to commission a memorial. The committee was assisted by Boston architect, Frank H. Colony and Professor J. Selmer Larsen of M.I.T. The City held a competition and eighty-four sculptors indicated an interest in competing. Five were invited to make sketch models. The winner, Richard Recchia of Rockport, Massachusetts, received \$12,000 to create the piece. It took Recchia 2 ½ years to complete the twenty-eight foot statue. He first modeled the statue in clay and then had a plaster cast made. The Roman Bronze Works of New York City took seven months to cast the statue into five tons of bronze. The statue was trucked from New York to Manchester in two pieces and was welded together in Stark Park.<sup>23</sup> It was dedicated on September 12, 1948 in front of a crowd of more than 2,000 people.

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<sup>21</sup> "Trees Planted as Memorials to 47 War Dead of City." *Manchester Union*, May 20, 1922.

<sup>22</sup> "A Sketch of the Life of Charles H. Bartlett", author and date unknown. [Manchester City Library].

<sup>23</sup> "New Hampshire Public Sculpture", unpublished report, 1980. [New Hampshire Historical Society].

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Recchia's design for the Stark statue is quite similar to the statue of General Pulaski completed by Lucien Gosselin several years earlier and located in Manchester's Pulaski Park. In both the general rises in the saddle, brandishing a sword in his right hand and guiding the horse with his left. In place of Gosselin's elegant cavalry horse, Recchia puts emphasis on the physical strength of the animal and depicts the animal with bulging muscles.<sup>24</sup>

Richard Henry Recchia (1885-1983) was born in Quincy, Massachusetts in 1885, the son of Francesco Recchia of Verona, Italy, an expert marble carver.<sup>25</sup> Richard Recchia was also an illustrator and painted murals but was primarily known for his abstract sculptures. After studying in the U.S. Recchia was sent to Europe by famed sculptors Daniel Chester French and Bela Pratt to study abroad.<sup>26</sup> After a year in Paris, Recchia served as Pratt's assistant. Bela Lyon Pratt (1867-1917) was an accomplished numismatist in the Beaux-Art tradition. In 1913 Recchia was asked to design an entablature relief panel for the Evans Wing at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The twenty-four foot bas reliefs of Architecture were carved on the western façade of the MFA. In 1915 Recchia won top prizes at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition.<sup>27</sup> He was a National Academician, a member of the National Sculpture Society, a charter member of the Guild of Boston Artists, the founder of the Boston Society of Sculptors and exhibited both in the U.S. and abroad. Recchia was responsible for memorials to Massachusetts Governors Oliver Ames and Curtis Guild and had works at Brown, Harvard and Purdue Universities as well as in many public buildings, museums and private collections.<sup>28</sup> He was also one of a group of celebrated sculptors who lived and worked on Cape Ann, north of Boston.<sup>29</sup>

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century funds for park maintenance diminished and the park declined. In 1969 vandals tore loose one of the three remaining piles of cannonballs. The balls had been fixed on a concrete base with welded rods. The following year, the sword which topped the statue was bent by vandals and in 1983 the 100 lb. urn atop the Stark

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> "Richard Recchia creates a heroic statue of General John Stark", *American Artist*, v. 14, June 1950, p. 54.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Steven Law, "Sculptors of Cape Ann", *American Art Review*, vol. IX, no. 5, Sept. – Oct. 1997.

<sup>28</sup> *American Artist*.

<sup>29</sup> Law.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance**

Monument was stolen by someone jumping the iron fence surrounding the burial ground. The City ceased caring for the western half of the property, blocking access to the roads and abandoning the springs and woodlands. In 1992 citizens raised the funds to duplicate Stark's ceremonial sword. The bronze replacement was cast at the Hebert Foundry and Machine Co. in Laconia.<sup>30</sup> In 2004 a group of forward-thinking citizens joined forces to create the Friends of Stark Park with a mission to develop, revitalize, maintain and protect the heritage and recreational use of Stark Park as an historic asset of the City of Manchester. In 2005 Martha Lyon prepared a Preservation Master Plan for the park. The listing of Stark Park on the National Register of Historic Places is just one of the Friends' current projects. Plans to supplant declining plantings, replace missing trees, restore the roadways in the western half of the park and open views to the Merrimack River will bring the park closer to its original plan and appearance in coming years.

Manchester has a unique history of providing attractive scenery and recreational spaces for its residents. Today, the City boasts over 1,200 acres of recreational space including downtown parks, city-wide parks, neighborhood parks, school parks, and the river park system. The tradition began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of five public squares in the city by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company as part of their plan for the center city. The squares were later deeded to the City of Manchester. The first square, Concord Square (later Victory Park), originally contained 4 5/8 acres when it was laid out in 1839. It was followed by the establishment of Merrimack Square (later Merrimack Common), the largest of the squares at 5 7/8 acres later in the year. Both Concord and Merrimack Squares included a small, picturesque body of water and were reserved for the public's use and enjoyment. The other squares – Tremont Square (later Pulaski Park), Hanover Square (later Bronstein Park), and Park Square (later Kalivas Park) were developed slightly later. Although designed for recreation, the five squares soon acquired a utilitarian purpose and reservoirs were established on the squares. Later, fearful of the spread of disease these water features were removed.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> "Stark Sword Replacement to be Dedicated Today", *Union Leader*, Oct. 24, 1992.

<sup>31</sup> Susan J. Burns, "The Amoskeag Squares of Manchester, New Hampshire". M.S. Thesis, University of Connecticut, 1985.



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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the City sought to provide additional public parks for the refreshment and health of its citizens. Elsewhere in the state, in 1888 the City of Concord hired Charles Eliot to design White Park, considered New Hampshire's first large urban park planned with full commitment to picturesque naturalism.<sup>32</sup> In Manchester, Derryfield and Stark Parks represented the first citywide, designed parks to be created by the City. The 68-acre Derryfield Park was established off Bridge Street in 1890 on land set apart from the city farm. The land for Stark Park was acquired in 1891, the park was designed in 1892 and opened to the public in 1893. With the addition of Stark Park, by 1896 Manchester had a hundred acres devoted to commons and parks.<sup>33</sup> Over the next twenty years this acreage doubled and by 1916 there were 207 acres of parks and commons in the built-up section of the city.<sup>34</sup>

After World War I, the recreational and scenic advantages of the parks and commons were the objects of renewed appreciation and many of the lands were improved and beautified, including the commissioning of various monuments. In the years that followed, many more open spaces and types of facilities were added to the City's inventory of parks and recreation areas including Crystal Lake, Gill Stadium, indoor ice arenas, school parks and neighborhood parks. The 111-acre Derryfield Country Club was established in 1932 and is one of only three municipally-owned golf courses in the state.

By the 1960s the original Amoskeag squares were increasingly being put to non-recreational uses and compromised by various intrusions including parking lots and buildings. The recreation philosophy changed as well and parks, even those which were initially created on the basis of a landscape of scenic value, became more user-oriented with the addition of pools, playground equipment, playing fields and other amenities. Manchester's other late 19<sup>th</sup> century park, Derryfield Park, was continually revamped to serve many uses and purposes. From its beginnings as a vast rolling lawn looking west over the city, Derryfield adapted to changing needs. The Weston Observatory was built here in 1897 and other additions over the years included a ski slope, reservoir, ballfields and playgrounds. In contrast, over the same period, Stark Park saw no significant additions or intrusions that would detract from the original design intent.

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<sup>32</sup> National Register Nomination for White Park, Concord, listed 1982.

<sup>33</sup> *The Mirror's Pictorial Manchester, 1846-1896*. Manchester: 1896, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Burns, p. 2.

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**Stark Park**  
**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**Verbal boundary description**

Stark Park is bounded on the east by North River Road and on the west by the Merrimack River. The northern bound is the former State Industrial School property and the southern bound is Park Avenue.

**Verbal boundary justification**

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with Stark Park.

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**Hillsborough County, New Hampshire**

**List of Photos**

The following applies to all photographs:

Name of Photographer: Lisa Mausolf

Date of Photograph: January 2006

Location of Negatives: Lisa Mausolf, Reading, Massachusetts

Photograph 1: View of Stark Burial Ground (Resource #2), looking west.

Photograph 2: View of General Stark Equestrian Statue (#3), looking northeast.

Photograph 3: View of Stark Park looking west toward General Stark Statue (#3).

Photograph 4: View of Stark Park looking northwest.

Photograph 5: View looking northwest with Cannons (#4) in foreground and Stark Statue (#3) visible in distance at left.

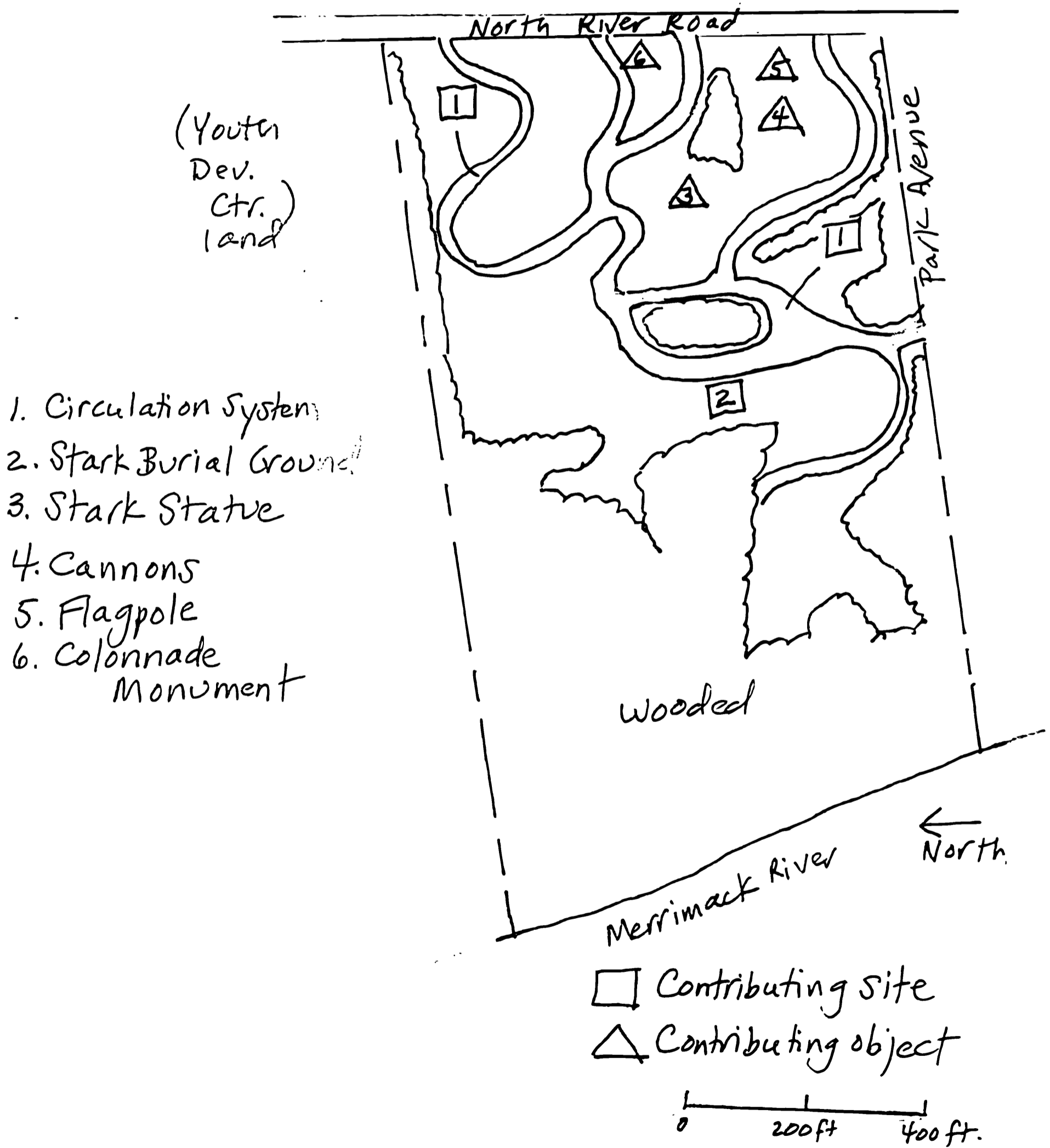
Photograph 6: View of Stark Park looking west.

Photograph 7: View of Colonnade Monument.

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