



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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park

other names/site number Bleecker Reservoir

name of related MPDF N/A

2. Location

street & number Clinton Avenue not for publication

city or town Albany vicinity

state New York code NY county Albany code 001 zip code 12206

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Michael Polynah Deputy SHPO 2/23/2017

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Adrian Brantley 2-20-18

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
 ___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
 ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	4	buildings
1	0	sites
11	4	structures
0	0	objects
15	8	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

PUBLIC WORKS/reservoir

RECREATION / sports facility

LANDSCAPE/ park

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION/sports facility

LANDSCAPE/ park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Picturesque - Swinburne Park Landscape

Colonial Revival - Field House

MODERN MOVEMENT/

Art Moderne – Stadium Gates

Modern – Skating Rink

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation:

walls: Brick and limestone – Field House, Gates,

Comfort Station; Concrete – Skating Rink

roof: Standing-Seam Metal – Field House

other:

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park are located in the northwest section of Albany, in the city's West Hill neighborhood. The large rectangular site (just over 21 acres) is bounded on two sides by major arteries: Clinton Ave., which forms the east boundary, is one of the city's five major east-west corridors, while North Manning Blvd., which is the north boundary, is a significant north-south artery. Central Ave. (NY Rte. 5), which merges with Clinton near the west end of the stadium and park, is an important east-west route across the

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state and, further east, the location of one of the city's important shopping districts. The site is also bounded by two smaller scale streets, Second St. (west) and Ontario St. (south). A few blocks to the north, near the city boundary, is an industrial area, and a few blocks to the south are some of the city's prime residential neighborhoods. The site of Bleecker Stadium has been in continuous ownership by the City of Albany since the early 1850s, when it was acquired for development of a reservoir as part of the city's newly created public water system. The site of the park was added in two purchases in the 1860s and was apparently developed as an ornamental garden by the water commissioners shortly after acquisition. It became an official city park in 1901; the early twentieth century landscape plan described in 1913 survives today. The reservoir was decommissioned in 1932; in 1933-34 it was converted into athletic fields, known as Bleecker Stadium, under a series of New Deal work relief programs. Portions of the reservoir were incorporated into the stadium design, particularly the eighteen-foot berms encircling the fields that served as its primary enclosure. In 1938, a Colonial Revival field house was added to the stadium and park complex, and in 1967, a state of the art, artificial ice rink with a modern canopy was constructed in the park. The boundary was drawn to include the entire site acquired by the city by 1868, including the former site of the reservoir (later Bleecker Stadium) and the early public park (later Swinburne Park). The nomination includes 15 contributing features and 3 non-contributing features.

Narrative Description

Location & Setting

The park and stadium are located in a low-rise urban neighborhood, surrounded primarily by one-and-a-half- and two-story residential buildings—mostly wood-framed, freestanding, on narrow lots, and dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A two-story apartment building is located along the northern block of North Manning Blvd. facing Swinburne Park. Clinton Ave., near its intersection with Central Ave., contains small commercial buildings, many stretching through the block with primary facades on Central, and several vacant lots and parking areas. Public School 21 (Philip J. Schuyler Achievement Academy) and the Albany Fire Department No. 7, both brick structures, stand adjacent to the southeast corner of Bleecker Stadium.

Bleecker Stadium (1933-34 & later; six contributing structures; three non-contributing buildings; four non-contributing structures)

The stadium (contributing structure) occupies the south end of the rectangular site and was constructed within the entire area occupied by the former reservoir. Most of the site is surrounded by an eighteen-foot earthen berm that was broken on each site for the construction of entrance gates. Inside the berm are football and baseball fields, replacement metal bleachers adjacent to both sides of the football field and behind the baseball diamond, and several small ancillary structures, including a concrete-block concession stand (1970s; non-

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contributing building) near the Clinton Avenue entrance, a concrete-block garage (non-contributing building) near the Ontario Street entrance, and a brick utility shed (non-contributing building) behind the baseball diamond bleachers. When the athletic complex was originally laid out, it had provision for two football fields, a baseball field and a quarter mile track. The original bleachers, deep concrete benches (which seated 2,000 for football and 2,000 for baseball) built into the hillsides on either side of the football fields and surrounding the baseball diamond on two sides, were removed c2000 and replaced with four sets of aluminum bleachers (non-contributing structures). A tall announcer's booth (part of the stadium, not counted) is located on top of the berm near the Clinton Avenue entrance. An iron fence (contributing structure) with cast-stone corner posts encircles the entire Bleecker Stadium property except for the area immediately next to the field house. There is a non-historic concrete-block retaining wall (too small to count) along the northwest edge of berm.

The athletic fields are accessed through four brick and cast stone entrances with iron gates cut through the berm (four contributing structures). Three are located midway along each side of the park and serve as public access points and ticket counters. A fourth entrance faces the field house and was used by athletes. The three public entrances are all similar in design, taking the general form of stylized triumphal arches. Broad flat-arched lintels are supported on square-shaped pylons that originally contained restrooms. The latter were accessed through doors (since replaced) on the stadium side of the arch and announced with the cast-stone panels reading "Men" on the left and "Women" on the right. The corners of the side structures are embellished with projecting stone piers; the panel between the piers is ornamented with patterned brickwork and cast-stone rondels—molded with the Albany city seal on the street-facing walls and blank on the interior walls. Knee walls (angled on Clinton Avenue and Second Street entrances, stepped on Ontario Street entrance) screen the doors into the side structures and form a fence from the elevated berm. Each flat arch is topped with cast-stone coping and a flag pole with abstracted cast-stone base. The street-side face features a cast-stone panel reading "Bleecker Stadium" in stylized Art Moderne lettering, while the inside face features patterned brickwork forming a decorative frieze. The passageways through all three arches are closed with metal fences and gates.

The entrance through the berm from the field house consists of two brick retaining walls flanking an asphalt ramp leading to the athletic fields. Centered in each wall is a square structure embellished with projecting stone piers at the corners and topped with cast-stone coping and a flag pole on a cast-stone base. The entrance to the northwest structure has been enlarged for use as a utility shed. The ends of the walls terminate in smaller square structures with similar corner piers. The shortest section of wall towards the athletic fields has been replaced with a concrete knee wall (it was originally brick and featured similar detailing including projecting piers and cast-stone coping).

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Field House (1936-38; one contributing building)

The one-story, double-height field house is situated at the top of the ramp leading through the embankment from the athletic fields, sited perfectly on axis to provide a focal point through the entrance from the west. The building was constructed with a steel frame, red brick facing and Indiana limestone trim. The elevation facing the stadium features a central entrance flanked by seven bays of windows on each side. The entrance itself has a cast-stone surround with paired pilasters and a triangular pediment with denticulated cornice. The tympanum above the door is ornamented with a round window and double keystone. Above the pediment is an engaged balustrade and a plaque reading "1937." The historic six-paneled single entrance door is set within a wood frame with wide sidelights and full transom (now protected with metal mesh), separated by round piers and a molded transom bar. Leading to the entrance are cast-stone steps, patched with concrete, flanked with square piers carved with the inscription "Albany Men" and supporting metal lamp poles on battered limestone bases.

The tall flanking window bays feature cast-stone sills and lintels, with double keystone ornament. Above the windows is a frieze outlined with a raised brick border featuring three cast-stone rondels. The corner bay is set within a shallow round-arched recess with double-keystone impostes and lintels and herringbone-patterned brick spandrels (the left spandrel on the primary facade features a cast-stone plaque with the inscription "Erected by Works Progress Administration, 1936-1937, City of Albany." The windows in the corner bays feature a smaller round-arched transom. All windows are historic nine-over-nine double-hung sash with three-paned rectangular transoms, now protected with metal mesh. The building corners are ornamented with raised brick quoins. The molded pressed-metal cornice is embellished with a dentil course.

The rear elevation, facing Swinburne Park, is almost identical. The cast-stone piers flanking the stairway feature inscriptions reading "Albany Women." The narrower side elevations are also similar to the primary ones but feature smaller entrance surrounds with cast-stone quoins and voussoir-style flat lintels. Cast-stone ornament above the surround is composed of a plaque reading "Bleecker Stadium" in block lettering, a cartouche, swag, and a rondel carved with the Albany city seal. The piers flanking the northeast entrance are inscribed "Men Visitors," and the piers flanking the southwest entrance are inscribed "Women Visitors."

The exterior retains a high degree of integrity. Alterations include the loss of a balustrade along the roof, the installation of a plywood board in front of the transom above the southwest entrance, and the installation of a wood access ramp along the left side of the elevation leading to the southeast entrance, with another segment wrapping around the building corner to the southwest entrance.

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The interior plan consists of four separate locker rooms, bathrooms, and shower facilities for each team—home men, home women, visiting men, and visiting women. The locker rooms are generally arranged in the center of the building, with bathrooms located along the southeast (stadium side) exterior wall and the showers along the northwest (Swinburne Park side) wall.

The stadium-side entrance, for the home men's team, leads to a small vestibule, which features a small round-arched ticket window on the left-hand side, retaining its historic iron grille. Double wood-and-glass doors—fitted with original push bars, large double-swing hinges, and set below a glazed transom—lead to the largest interior space, stretching the width of the building to the opposite wall. A half-height, semi-permanent wall separates the men's home locker room from the rest of the space. To the right of the vestibule, a wide stair with an iron railing and gate leads to the basement. A small doorway in the right corner leads to the bathroom. A small door through the semi-permanent half-wall leads to the locker room, which features several rows of metal lockers. Another door in the back right corner of the room leads to a small corridor along the northwest exterior wall that leads to the shower facilities.

The entrance facing Swinburne Park, for the home women's team, has a similar vestibule, with a doorway to the right instead of centered on the wall opposite the entrance doors. The main locker room is long and narrow and lined with metal lockers around the perimeter. A door opposite the vestibule leads to the showers, while another door at the other end of the room leads to the bathrooms. Between these is a set of double doors leading to the visiting women's locker room. Adjacent to the vestibule, a wide stair with an iron railing and gate leads to the basement. The home women's and home men's locker rooms are connected by a narrow corridor off of which are several small offices.

The visiting men's and visiting women's facilities are mirror images of each other, located on opposite ends of the long building. Each is accessed through a vestibule similar to that leading to the home men's team. On either side of the vestibule are doors leading to the showers (accessed via a narrow corridor) and bathrooms. Opposite the vestibule a set of double doors leads to the home men's and home women's locker rooms, respectively. Next to these doors is a small stair leading to the basement. The visiting men's locker room retains its metal lockers lining the perimeter of the room. The visiting women's locker room is now used as office space and the lockers have been removed.

Nearly all of the interior spaces retain their original flooring and wall coverings. The locker rooms and other spaces have square tile floors laid in a regular grid (now painted dark grey except in the visiting women's locker room). Many of the thresholds between rooms are ornamented with a diamond pattern of the same tile. The bathrooms have smaller square tiles, laid in alternating rows, which is now either covered with a thin

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membrane or a very thick layer of paint. The walls to about head height are covered with large cream-colored glazed tiles, which are sometimes carried above door openings as a trim band. The upper walls and ceilings are painted plaster. All of the interior spaces are lit with pendant light fixtures, featuring glass globes and hanging from the double-height ceilings on long chains. Radiators are located under most of the tall windows. The interior is almost completely intact. A half-height wall was installed in the home men's locker room. Some bathroom fixtures were replaced and a few low concrete block walls were installed in the bathrooms. Most tile floors have either been painted or coated with a thin membrane, dark grey in color.

The field house is separated from Swinburne Park by an asphalt drive located on axis with the Women Visitors entrance. This is flanked by an allée of trees that includes, just south of the entrance, a specimen bald cypress tree that likely predates the creation of Bleecker Stadium or Swinburne Park.¹

Swinburne Park (c1866-1913; 1967; one contributing site, one contributing building)

Swinburne Park occupies the western half of the site. Swinburne Park is a small open park that is primarily defined by its landscape design of gently curving paths meeting nearly at the center of the park, radiating out to the four corners of the park, and creating four triangular-shaped sections of lawn. It once had additional paths running just inside the exterior edges of the park, as well as a short angled path near the western corner and a short curving path near what is now the eastern playground. The northwest wedge contains a small hill, possibly the remnant of the sand hills that once characterized the geology of this section of Albany. Trees have been planted in a somewhat irregular, Picturesque manner throughout the park except for the northwest, downward slope of the hill. Although it served as a public space with ornamental gardens as early as the 1860s, this part of the site did not become a city park until 1901. Its layout dates to Charles Downing Lay's plan of 1913, which it strongly resembles, or perhaps before, as Lay remarked that he did not see a reason to change much in its design.

The park has a few non-original features, including a playground for younger children, a water park along Second Avenue, and another playground for older children along Clinton Avenue (all too small to count). A one-story garage, originally a comfort station, built in 1938 (contributing building), at the same time as the field house, is located just south of the park's central intersection. The red brick building features cast-stone window sills and splayed lintels with cast-stone keystones, as well as stepped brick parapets with cast-stone coping. The glass-block windows have all been boarded up or covered with protective metal mesh.

¹ The New York Department of Environmental Conservation "long had a sign identifying it as the largest of its kind in New York State... *Taxodium distichum*, bald cypress is native in more southern states and planted in the north as an ornamental, the size of this specimen indicates an age greater than 100 years and a likely early planting, when more formal gardens were on these grounds." Thomas Pfeiffer, Albany City Forester, email September 27, 2016.

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Skating Rink (1967-69; one contributing building)

The skating rink is located in the northeast quadrant of the park. This long, rectangular structure (dimensions?) was built in 1967-69. The rink itself is an artificially refrigerated ice rink within an oval-shaped fiberglass enclosure. The skating arena is sheltered by a broad, flat, rectangular roof resting on massive, thick concrete beams that are supported by two rows of concrete posts running along either side of the rink. The ends of the beams extend out over the posts for a considerable distance before angling slightly upwards, creating an extra bay of sheltered space beyond the columns. While the east end of the rink is completely open, the final two bays of the west end are enclosed with a glass curtain wall, with entrance doors facing the center of the park. Space within the glass enclosed portion is heated and is furnished with lockers and benches. The entire rink is surrounded by a chain link fence to prevent unauthorized access.

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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 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.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

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.

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Recreation

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Period of Significance

C1866-c1938; 1967

Architect/Builder

Charles Downing Lay; John T. Carroll;

Allen Organization

Significant Dates

1901; 1934; 1938; 1967

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance, c1866-1938, recognizes the earliest recreational use of the park, its 1913 landscape plan, and the development of Bleecker Stadium as a sports facility in 1934-38. The skating rink, constructed in 1967, is an important example of mid-century modern design and exemplifies a significant trend in mid-century urban recreation in the 1960s.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park are significant under Criterion A in the areas of *Community Planning* and *Recreation* as an example of a site acquired by the city of Albany in the mid-19th century that was developed for a sequence of different progressive public benefit uses and for the important role it played in the city's public recreation system for more than a century and a half. The site was originally acquired and used for the development of a new reservoir when Albany established its first public water system in the 1850s. The reservoir site, which can still be understood from the surviving 18-ft-tall berms that contained it, was later redeveloped into a modern, multi-sport athletic stadium serving all of the city's high schools in the 1930s with the assistance of New Deal-era programs. Its recreational significance began with the city water commissioners' actions to develop the west portion of the site as a publicly accessible ornamental flower

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garden in the 1860s and continued through the establishment of Swinburne Park as a city park in 1901 and the design proposed by Charles Downing Lay in *Studies for Albany* in 1913. The early twentieth century plan substantially survives today. The addition of a public outdoor skating rink in the 1960s was in line with current recreational trends in neighborhood parks in that era and documents the city's continued commitment to providing adequate recreation.

The district is also significant under criterion C in the area of architecture for its distinctive intact examples of Art Moderne, Colonial Revival and Modern public architecture, each style used for one of the park's major recreational facilities during the period and each illustrating the city's full commitment to the development of a sophisticated facility for public recreation. The district is also significant in landscape architecture for Swinburne Park's intact early twentieth century landscape plan. Designers associated with this resource include architect John T. Carroll, landscape architect Charles Downing Lay, and well-known mid-twentieth-century recreational consultants Allen Organization.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

The Site and Early History

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park are located towards the top of a sandy hill west of the historic core of Albany. A Native American trail between the Hudson River and what is now Schenectady traversed the area. According to local scholars who traced this path, "the earliest discoverable reference to this route is in a colonial legislative act of 1723...[referring] to 'the road or highway which leads from the City of Albany towards Schanegtade until the first Sandy Hill...being about two miles from the said City and called the Eerste Sandberg.'"² In the early years of the Albany colony, Native American fur traders used to congregate just outside the western walls of the stockade fort. When objections were raised by European colonists, the Native Americans were forcibly relocated a few miles west of Albany to the area around what is now the stadium and park. Known as Sandberg, this settlement eventually developed its own identity and amenities such as Humphrey's Tavern, an early wayside inn on the main road to Schenectady that was originally known as the Bowery. A historian who traced the route of the original road believed that, "a hill of sand [known as Sandberg] may be that knoll in Swinburne Park."³

Bleecker Reservoir

In the early 1850s a large portion of the Sandberg area, corresponding to a portion of the current site of Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park, had been set aside by the city for use as a reservoir to supply the city's

² "The Avenue at Fingertips of Suburban Customers," *Albany Times Union*, March 30, 1952, E-10.

³ "Original Schenectady Road Believed Discovered," *Albany Times Union*, May 18, 1941.

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growing water demand. Previous to the 1850s, the city's water supply had been supplied by a private company, Albany Water Works Company, established in 1802. However, at the request of local residents, the state legislature passed a law in 1850 allowing the city to establish the Albany Water Commission and for the commission to acquire the private Albany Water Works Company. The water commission soon hired noted civil engineer William J. McAlpine to create a comprehensive plan for the city's water system, much of which was subsequently carried out.⁴ McAlpine proposed damming the Patroon Creek to form Rensselaer Lake, which became the heart of the Six-Mile Waterworks at Fuller Road and Washington Avenue (near the intersection of Interstates 87 and 90, now a city park). He also suggested several locations for a holding reservoir closer to the city, noting that "the most favorable location for the upper receiving reservoir, is found at the corner of Ontario and Patroon [Clinton] street."⁵ Upon completion of the new system, the water was conveyed via a brick conduit, four feet high and approximate four miles long, to the new reservoir (Bleecker) west of Ontario Street.⁶ Bleecker Reservoir was completed by the fall of 1851. On October 24 of that year, the valves were opened and water from Rensselaer Lake began to fill the enclosure, which held 30,000,000 gallons and was lined with 400,000 bricks and 10,000 fieldstones.⁷ Two other reservoirs were constructed by means of dams across Patroon's Creek and called Upper and Lower Tivoli Lakes. Thereafter, Rensselaer Lake supplied all of the city west of Pearl Street though Bleecker Reservoir, and Tivoli Lake supplied all that part of the city east of and including Pearl St.⁸

But as the city continued to grow at a rapid rate during the second half of the nineteenth century, by the 1870s the water commission was increasingly worried that Rensselaer Lake was no longer sufficient to keep the Bleecker Reservoir full. Instead, it determined that the most practical solution was to take water from the Hudson River. Since the river was at a lower elevation than the reservoir, a pumping station was built in 1873 at the corner of Quackenbush (now Broadway) and Montgomery Streets (the Quackenbush Pumping Station was listed on the National Register in 1983).⁹ The engines were capable of sending ten million gallons up to the Bleecker Reservoir every 24 hours. The main, which was laid under Clinton Avenue, was 30 inches in diameter and 7,723 feet long. It was completed and running by September 1875.

⁴ McAlpine had previously worked on the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, the state's canal system, and the dry dock at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

⁵ William J. McAlpine, *Report Made to the Water Commissioners of the City of Albany* (Albany, NY: H. H. Van Dyck, Printer, 1850), 45. In describing the site, McAlpine noted the "sand ridge north of Patroon street" running through the site.

⁶ *The Albany Hand-Book: A strangers' Guide and Residents' Manual* (n.p.1884), 162.

⁷ "Albany Water Works," *Daily Albany Argus* (October 27, 1851), 2.

⁸ *Albany Hand-Book*, 162.

⁹ The pumping station initially contained two steam pumps. National Register of Historic Places, Quackenbush Pumping Station, Albany Water Works, Albany, Albany County, prepared by Neil Larson with Nancy Todd, 1983.

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The problem of supply now solved, the commission turned its attention to storage. In 1878 an additional reservoir, known as the Prospect Hill Reservoir, was built just one block above Bleecker, on the four blocks between Manning Boulevard and Colby Street, from Hunter Avenue to 3rd Street (now occupied by the Bleecker Terrace apartments and Colby Park). A secondary pumping station was built on North Manning Boulevard, diagonally across from Swinburne Park, to move the water from Bleecker Reservoir across the street and up about 55 feet to Prospect Hill.¹⁰ At this point it was necessary to divide the city into three services. The new reservoir supplied the upper service, while Bleecker Reservoir supplied the middle, which stretched from Lark Street on the west to Pearl Street on the east. Between the multiple reservoirs and the several different pump houses, the city was now prepared to keep its residents supplied with water should one of the systems go down.¹¹ The new system served the city into the twentieth century, when a new, larger system was needed.

Swinburne Park

The history of Swinburne Park is closely tied to that of Bleecker Reservoir.-The city's initial purchase of the reservoir site in 1850 included only twelve acres; the reservoir filled eleven of them and the remaining acre was accorded to the keeper to cultivate for his own use. The site extended a little over 1,026 feet west on Clinton from the corner of Ontario St. Annual reports from Albany's water commissioners during the 1860s indicate that two additional parcels to the west of the reservoir (of 3 acres and 4 acres) were purchased in that decade, extending the parcel to what is now North Manning Blvd. and bringing the site to its full 21-acre size.

Water commission records also chronicle the gradual development of the city in this area, noting that the reservoir site suffered tree damage from cattle from the west Albany market in 1861 and that the layout and grading of Clinton Avenue in 1864 necessitated moving the shade trees planted in 1852. In 1865, the commissioners specifically noted their program to improve the landscaping around the reservoir site. The report stated that during the past year "thirty-five shade trees have been set out [along the sidewalk of Clinton Avenue] to replace those that were killed through transplanting and the failure to grade the carriage-way in time last year."¹² It went on to note that

The garden attached to the Reservoir, containing many rare and valuable shrubs and trees, has been much improved during the past year; and from the large and increasing number of visitors, it is evident that the efforts of the Commissioners to make these grounds attractive, have been

¹⁰ Several sections of the Prospect Hill Pumping Station are still extant, including the Second Empire-style engineer's house and the hipped-roofed engine house; however, they were excluded from the nomination because they lacked sufficient integrity.

¹¹ *The Albany Hand-Book*, 162.

¹² *Report of the Water Commissioners to the Common Council of the City of Albany Transmitting the Report of the Superintendent of the Water Works for the Year 1865*(Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co, 1866), 13.

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successful and are appreciated by the citizens.¹³

It was in the next two years that the commission expanded the site to 21 acres and the park, which occupies the western end of the district, reached its full size. In 1866, the commissioners noted that “with a small annual expenditure the grounds attached to this reservoir will, in a few years, present attractions not to be found elsewhere in the vicinity of Albany.” They continued in 1867, reporting that

The last purchase has been graded and enclosed by a picket fence; a wide carriage way, with a row of fine shade trees on either side has been laid out and properly graveled; the remainder was seeded down and is now covered with fine sward. When the beautiful plot, located on one of the finest avenues in the city, and so easy of access by the street cars, shall be properly laid out, with walks and shaded with trees, it will present attractions not to be found elsewhere in the vicinity of Albany. Already thousands of our citizens visit this reservoir, and, although the garden is small yet, its attractions richly [reward] the time spent in examine it. The verdict of every citizen who has viewed the grounds, is, that the Common Council acted wisely in authorizing their purchase.¹⁴

Later water commission reports do not mention the park, which apparently remained nameless; however, it seemed to remain open to the public. It was not yet an official city park, nor were active uses allowed (aside from the genteel lawn game of croquet).¹⁵ As reported in the local press, public access was significantly increased in 1896 when the fence around the garden was removed: “At Bleecker reservoir the portion not occupied by the reservoir proper, or garden, was surrounded by a closely set hedge...Superintendent Bailey...sees no reason why the fence should not be removed and the ground thrown open to the public for park purposes, under proper restrictions.”¹⁶ In 1901 the City of Albany—under Mayor James H. Blessing and at the request of Alderman Hughes of the 17th ward—declared the garden at Bleecker Reservoir an official city park.¹⁷ The name Swinburne Park was chosen in honor of John Swinburne, a noted Civil War physician who helped found Albany Medical College and who served briefly as mayor of Albany.

It is unclear who was actively maintaining the park at this point and/or what configuration survived from its time under the water commission’s care.¹⁸ It may have been that Swinburne Park was adopted as a city park to sanction its use as a venue for military style band concerts. The article announcing the creation of the park

¹³ *Report of the Water Commissioners*, 1865, 123.

¹⁴ *Report of the Water Commissioners*, 1867, 8-9.

¹⁵ “The flower garden...was established as a sort of attraction to the grounds. There was a croquet ground there.” “Municipal Investigations,” *Albany Times*, September 17, 1886, 1.

¹⁶ “Park at Bleecker Reservoir,” *Times Union*, February 8, 1896, 1.

¹⁷ “Mayor Approves Swinburne Park Ordinance,” *Albany Evening Journal*, August 21, 1901, 10.

¹⁸ Water commission reports from this era do not mention any landscape activity.

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noted that “it is the purpose of the residents of the seventeenth and nineteenth wards to raise money to defray the expenses of giving band concerts in the new park and in 1906 an ordinance was passed by the city formally authorizing the erection of a bandstand “long desired” by residents of the West End.¹⁹ Ornamental gardens, croquet, and band concerts were largely the province of adults. In 1908 children were finally welcomed to Swinburne Park when a playground was opened at the behest of the Albany Mother’s Club, an influential civic group that had already successfully petitioned for playground facilities in Lincoln Park.²⁰ Nevertheless, when Charles Downing Lay prepared a proposed sketch for the park in 1913, he noted that it already had a bandstand in the center and noted that he didn’t see much to change. His design does not feature the children’s park.

Charles Downing Lay

Charles Downing Lay (1877-1956), a native of Newburgh, was named for Charles Downing, a relative, who was also the older brother of famed architect and landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing. Lay graduated from Columbia University’s School of Architecture and then became the second graduate of Harvard University’s new landscape architecture program. Lay practiced landscape architecture for the next forty-five years, primarily in New York City. He served as the landscape architect for the New York City Parks Department between 1913-1914 and he had an extensive private practice. Throughout his career he wrote extensively on parks and urban planning, art and architecture. He also established *Landscape Architecture* magazine in 1910 with Henry Hubbard and Robert Wheelwright and served as editor until 1920. He was known as a practical designer who focused on revitalizing the natural landscape, but also one who valued beauty, and he prepared town planning studies for numerous communities, including Albany, New York; Erie and Butler, Pennsylvania; Nassau County, New York; and subdivision studies for Pittsfield, Massachusetts; Hewlett, New York; and Westbrook, Connecticut. He designed Frear Park, Troy; Central Park and Pleasant Valley Park in Schenectady; and Marine Park, Brooklyn.²¹ Lay’s philosophy of landscape architecture included the stipulations that there should be both more art and less nature and more thought of design and less about fancy bushes.²² Both of these can be discerned in his park designs, which seem to overlay a certain Neoclassical formality, particularly in terms of balance and proportion, over natural sites, but which also took advantage of natural settings and favored serpentine paths simply framed by allees of trees and other plantings. Lay’s plans for the city of Albany were published in a book called *Studies for Albany* (1914), written with Arnold William Brunner, architect and city planner. It contains chapters and plans for fourteen specific sites and essays on general topics, such as streets and trees. Among those spaces for which specific designs were provided were Capitol Hill, Market Place, Sheridan Park, and Lincoln Park, where he substantially influenced the landscape design that survived today. Not all of the proposed designed were developed but some were, and the book suggested that they be carried out over time.

¹⁹ “Swinburne Park to Get Band Stand,” *Albany Journal*, June 19, 1906, 1.

²⁰ The group was originally organized in 1899, and its advocacy for the Lincoln Park playground was its first major campaign.

²¹ Laurie E. Hempton, “Charles Downing Lay,” in Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson, ed., *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 221-223.

²² Hempton, 221.

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Lay's Design for Swinburne Park

Lay described Swinburne Park as small, pleasant, and much frequented. The write-up noted that band concerts took place there and that there was a band stand in the park. He noted that a new one was to be constructed in the center "at the intersection of the two diagonal paths."²³ He talked about a low wooded hill serving as a background for the new stand and observed that only a slight rearrangement of this section of the park was needed.²⁴ The classically inspired structure that he and Brunner proposed, pictured in the book, was designed for concerts, moving pictures and minor theater. It was to be flat with a sounding board rather than curved and it was classical in style. Although Lay seemed to base his design on an existing plan, the design for the paths and landscaping shown in his sketch is largely intact—particularly the gently curving paths forming an X-shape near the center of the park.²⁵ A few relatively minor differences exist between Lay's plan and the park's current condition. An exterior path running along the outside edge of the park was either never built or has been removed, as were the double row of neatly planted trees lining it. The swale, described by Brunner and Lay as a "low wooded hill," is now mostly open, while the other quadrants are more heavily planted. An elaborate new bandstand near the central intersection of the paths was completed in 1915; however, it was later replaced by the comfort station and utility building.²⁶

The park received a number of updates in the following decades. Tennis courts and a swimming pool were installed in the 1920s; but these were later removed. In 1938, in conjunction with building projects in Bleecker Stadium, a combined comfort station and utility building was erected under the WPA.²⁷ Landscaping work was also carried out by the WPA around this time and the tennis courts were rebuilt in 1939. In 1945, the Albany Post War Planning Committee proposed a larger swimming pool for the park, in part to relieve congestion at the Lincoln Park pool; however, the project remained on the books for a number of years but was ultimately never realized.²⁸ Swinburne Park remained a small neighborhood park with playground apparatus until the 1960s.

Bleecker Stadium

By the late 1920s Albany began planning a completely new water supply system centered on the new Alcove Reservoir to be built in the Town of Coeymans, nearly 20 miles southwest of the center of Albany. Laws were passed in 1928 authorizing its construction and the purchase of the site through eminent domain. Construction

²³ *Studies for Albany*, 95.

²⁴ *Studies for Albany*, 95.

²⁵It is unclear how much of the landscape Lay actually designed and how much he adapted from existing conditions. Referring to the bandstand proposed for the central intersection of the paths, the pair wrote that, "the necessary rearrangement of this portion of the park [will be] slight."

²⁶"Will Start Swinburne Park Bandstand Monday," *Albany Journal*, April 6, 1915, 1.

²⁷"Park to Have New Building," *Knickerbocker News*, October 4, 1938, 4-A.

²⁸"Plan for \$200,000 Pool Set for Postwar Group," *Knickerbocker News*, June 26, 1945, 1.

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had started by 1929, and by 1932 the new reservoir was functional enough that Bleecker Reservoir, now obsolete, could be taken permanently offline.

In the meantime, plans had been circulating as to what to do with the Bleecker property once it was no longer needed as part of the water system. As early as 1924 there were calls to close the reservoir and sell it off as buildings lots. In 1931-33 there were serious proposals to turn the site into a public market.²⁹ Eventually, the city, under the administration of Mayor John Boyd Thatcher II and at the urging of Board of Education leader Clarence Post, settled on the idea of an athletic stadium to be used primarily by Albany's school teams.

The conversion of the reservoir into a large athletic stadium was accomplished through a series of New Deal work relief programs instituted during the Great Depression. The stadium was initially planned in the fall of 1933 under the New York State Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (TERA)—a program developed in 1931 by then-governor Franklin D. Roosevelt that served as a prototype for the federal Depression relief programs that he developed as president. By the time construction began that winter, oversight had been transferred to the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the first of now-president Roosevelt's federal work relief programs. The CWA was meant to be temporary, expiring at the end of March 1934, and workers scrambled to complete the stadium before that deadline. Failing to do so, construction was temporarily halted before resuming under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA).³⁰ On April 13, 1934, "work relief activities in Albany were resumed today under the new TERA and FERA system, successor to the Civil Works plan"; furthermore, "under the new system, the Federal government's agency, known as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, pays 50 percent...the state Temporary Emergency Relief Administration pays 25 per cent, and the county or municipality...pays the balance."³¹ All told, from 500 to 1,000 people were employed on the stadium project, which cost about \$150,000, of which Albany paid only a quarter.

Construction work on the former reservoir involved draining the water, drying out the soon-to-be field, and removing a brick partition running through the center of the site. Gateways were cut through the embankment—in the middle of each of the four walls—and four gates were built within the openings. The gates facing the street resembled triumphal arches and contained restrooms for spectators, while the northwest gate on the interior of the block consisted of two retaining walls flanking a ramp leading to Swinburne Park. On the floor of the reservoir two football fields, a baseball diamond (overlapping the practice football field), and a

²⁹"Solution of Public Market Problem Due Tonight," *Albany Times Union*, October 8, 1931, 3.

³⁰New York was an early test lab for Roosevelt and his administration, who based the national FERA program on the earlier state TERA system.

³¹"Work Relief Resumed in Albany," *Albany Times Union*, April 13, 1934, 3.

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quarter-mile track were laid out. Deep concrete bleachers accommodating 2,200 people were built into the hillsides on either side of the football field, and additional seating for 2,000 surrounded the baseball Diamond.³² When it was completed, the stadium was said to be the seventh largest in the country.³³

No architect or engineer has yet been identified as responsible for the design of Bleecker Stadium; however, it is one of many stadiums that were constructed as part of New Deal work relief programs and its architect/engineer could have come from that program.³⁴ Much of the design work consisted of laying out the various athletic fields and planning the spectator entrances and accommodations. The most prominent architectural elements of the project were the brick gatehouses and the concrete bleachers, all of which were designed in a restrained Art Moderne style. The new stadium retained the name of Bleecker Stadium despite a long and involved effort by a veterans group to dedicate the facility to Ambrose J. Scully, a neighborhood blacksmith who had died in 1918.³⁵ Mayor Thatcher decided to retain the existing name, since five Bleeckers had served the city as mayor (one was actually Anthony Bleecker Banks) and that it honored a notable Albany family.³⁶ Instead, the three spectator entrances were dedicated to veterans of the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I. The official opening took place on Thanksgiving Day in 1934 with a full program of sporting contests including two long distance running events—one for adults and one for juniors, starting at city hall and ending at the stadium track—and a round-robin football tournament between local school teams. Several thousand people attended the opening events, including nine Bleecker descendants invited by the mayor himself.³⁷ The stadium was well received. E. D. Greenman, assistant director of the New York State Bureau of Municipal Information, was quoted as saying, “[the stadium] undoubtedly will go down in history as one of the outstanding achievements with relief money in the state.”³⁸

³² The built-in bleachers were later replaced

³³ “Bleecker Reservoir Being Made into Athletic Field.” *Albany Times Union*, May 16, 1934, 24.

³⁴ Under most work relief programs, the local sponsoring agency was responsible for providing construction plans. Judith A. Davidson, “Sport for the People: New York State and Work Relief 1930’s Style,” *Sport History Review* 19 (May 1988), 43. However, architect Aymar Emery II designed the conversion of the Williamsburg Reservoir into a public park for the WPA in the same period.

³⁵ Scully was in the Navy but died in Pelham Bay rather than in the war. Information about him is scarce, though his name is well known to members of the local American Legion post.

³⁶ Thatcher also claimed—perhaps erroneously—that the 1850 reservoir was named for Charles Bleecker, who didn’t serve as mayor until 1868-70. A year later, a newspaper article asserted that the stadium had been named for the late James Edward Bleecker. This seems unlikely since Thatcher clearly traced that name to Albany’s historic mayors and because the same newspaper announced that James Edward Bleecker was alive and celebrating his 88th birthday in 1935. “5,000 Petition City on Name for Stadium,” *Albany Times Union* (August 7, 1934), 4; “Nine of Late James Edward Bleecker Kin to Attend Stadium Opening,” *Albany Times-Union*, November 28, 1934, 3; “Albanian 88 Today,” *Albany Times Union*, March 18, 1935, 3.

³⁷ Proceeds from the event went to a charitable fund organized by the mayor.

³⁸ “Albany ‘Bowl’ is Completed,” *Poughkeepsie Eagle-News*, November 28, 1934, 4.

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The Field House

The initial plans for Bleecker Stadium included provisions for a sizeable field house, but its construction was pushed back several years and it was not completed until 1938.³⁹ By the time work on the field house had begun, another New Deal work relief program had supplanted the earlier programs, so it was built under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Planning for the new building—which was projected to be “a \$100,000 project which will provide work for many men during the winter months”—began in October 1936.⁴⁰ Actual construction work was apparently delayed, however, since newspaper articles announced the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone by Mayor Thatcher the following September.⁴¹

The field house—116 feet long by 60 feet wide—was designed by architect John T. Carroll, a little known architect later associated with the New York State Post-War Public Works Planning Commission and the State Hospital Planning Commission.⁴² The exterior of the building is a mainstream Colonial Revival design built of red brick with Indiana limestone trim, covering a steel frame.⁴³ The materials closely complemented the earlier gate houses (and certain details such as the rondels were nearly identical), but the overall design of the field house was more traditional. Each of the four elevations is symmetrical, embellished primarily with prominent central entrance surrounds ornamented with Classical motifs such as swags, pediments, and balustrades. The double-height windows have double keystone lintels, a typical Colonial detail, while the building corners are decorated with brick quoins and a single recessed bay with round-arched windows. A Colonial cupola stands atop the building; however, the wood railing that encircled the hipped section of the roof has been removed.

The program for the building was primarily locker rooms for athletes using the stadium—with separate facilities for Albany men, Albany women, visiting men, and visiting women. There was a clear hierarchy in the planning of these spaces. The largest locker room, with an entrance on the building’s long elevation, directly facing the stadium on axis with the ceremonial ramp to the fields, was reserved for the local men’s teams. On the opposite side of building, also with its entrance on a long elevation but facing away from the stadium, were the Albany women’s facilities. The visiting men’s and women’s locker rooms were mirror images of each other, occupying small spaces with entrances on the shorter side elevations.

³⁹An article from 1933 discussing the progress on the new stadium noted, “while the fields will be ready next year, Mr. Post is not so sure about the field house, which will be built outside the field proper. That may take a year or so, he admits.” “That Reservoir Project,” *Albany Times Union*, December 19, 1933, 18.

⁴⁰“Reservoir Job Deadline Nov. 1,” *Albany Evening News*, September 30, 1936, 3.

⁴¹“Field House Dedication,” *Albany Times Union*, July 25, 1937, A-9.

⁴² Apparently a native of Poughkeepsie, Carroll lived in Albany and later Saratoga; he seemed to do a lot of work with government planning agencies after World War II.

⁴³Construction was delayed due the difficulty of finding trained stone carvers.

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The interior was supposedly finished with bricks salvaged from the Albany Regional Market—a bit of a coincidence given the plans in 1931 to move the market to the Bleecker Reservoir site—although the upper portion of all of the walls are either plastered or parged and no brick is visible. The lower walls were covered with “porcelain glazed tile wainscoting, impervious to moisture and making for cleanliness and sanitation.”⁴⁴ Health and hygiene were emphasized through the building, with newspapers touting the modern shower facilities, antiseptic foot baths, and drinking fountains. The basement—accessible from each locker room via separate stairways—contained laundry rooms equipped with drying racks “to allow for sterilization of clothing [team uniforms].”⁴⁵ A series of bronze plaques, never installed, was planned for the main locker room depicting the athletic events “which will be carried on at the stadium field.”⁴⁶

By the fall of 1938 the building was mostly complete inside and out.⁴⁷ Once the finishing touches were completed—installing furniture such as lockers, desks and chair, as well as final landscaping—the WPA officially turned the field house over to the City of Albany in 1939.⁴⁸ Mayor Thatcher, after an hour tour of the new facility with architect Carroll and other officials, “had high praise for the field house.”⁴⁹ Bleecker Stadium continued to serve as the primary location for sporting events by all the city’s high schools, both public and private, until well into the 1980s. It was also the site of several notable mass gatherings and public events.

Swinburne Park Rink

The newest of the major resources within the district is the Swinburne Park skating rink, funding for which was authorized by the City Council in August 1967 under the administration of Mayor Erastus Corning 2nd. Designs for the rink were released in July 1968 and were part of a larger program of Albany park improvements prepared by the Allen Organization from Bennington, Vermont—a large, regional planning firm founded by F. Ellwood and Stewart Allen in 1945 specializing the recreational facilities.⁵⁰ The design called for an open-air ice rink sheltered by a large flat roof with massive concrete beams supported on large concrete piers. While the southeast end of the structure was open to the elements, at the opposite end, two bays were enclosed within a glass curtain wall containing changing rooms and other facilities.

⁴⁴“Field House Dedication.”

⁴⁵ “Field House Dedication.”

⁴⁶ “Field House Dedication.”

⁴⁷“Work Near End on Field House,” *Knickerbocker News*, September 14, 1938.

⁴⁸Initially the city was to take over in January 1939, but things were delayed and the transfer didn’t happen until early winter. Since this was after the close of the football season, the dedicatory inspection was pushed back to spring of 1940. “City to Receive New Bleecker Stadium Field House Soon After January,” *Albany Times Union*, December 24, 1938, 2-B; “Stadium House Given Albany,” *Knickerbocker News*, November 30, 1939, B-2.

⁴⁹“Mayor Lauds Field House,” *Albany Times Union*, September 14, 1938, 3.

⁵⁰“Here’s a Design to Cool Off a Hot Albany Day,” *Knickerbocker News*, July 24, 1968, 1; “Recreation Plan to Cost \$700,000,” *Knickerbocker News*, August 8, 1967, B-1.

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The rink was completed in 1969; Mayor Corning cut the ribbon during a grand opening event on October 29. It was constructed by general contractors Smith & Tierney, Inc.. The project also involved the creation of the adjacent parking lot (on the site of 1939 tennis courts that had “gone to seed”) and the paving of the dirt road connecting Second Street and Clinton Avenue through the park. The rink was partially funded through a grant from the “Next Step” outdoor recreation program of the New York State Department of Conservation.

Conclusion

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park, like all thriving urban spaces, has grown and evolved over the years. The site has been a public space for more than a century and a half, from the opening of the ornamental flower garden in the 1860s, and has seen the official dedication of Swinburne Park in 1901, the creation of its landscape design in the 1910s, the creation of Bleecker Stadium out of the old reservoir in the 1930s, and the construction of the skating rink, the last of the major resources in the complex, in the 1960s. During this time new buildings have been erected, new uses introduced, and new landscapes created. As architect Brunner, in his seminal *Studies of Albany* noted, “a city is a living organization and must grow and develop naturally,” a sentiment that perfectly captures the history of this site.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Brunner, Arnold W. and Charles Downing Lay, *Studies for Albany*. Albany, NY: Bartlett-Orr Press, 1914.

Davidson, Judith A. "Sport for the People: New York State and Work Relief 1930's Style." *Sport History Review* 19 (May 1988), 40-51.

Hopkins, G. M. *City Atlas of Albany, New York* (1876), Plate R.

Waite, Diana S., ed. *Albany Architecture: A Guide to the City*. Albany, NY: Mount Ida Press, 1993.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 21.05 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	600141	4725163
<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>	

3	18	600457	4724723
<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>	

2	18	600549	4724850
<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>	

4	18	4725029	
<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>	

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nomination boundary is depicted on the enclosed map with scale

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination boundary was drawn to include the entire site acquired by the city between 1850 and 1866 for the development of a reservoir. This site includes what are now Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park, two important components of the city's recreational system, which were developed during the period of significance within the reservoir site. The historic and current boundaries are identical.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Christopher D. Brazee, revised by Kathleen LaFrank, NY SHPO, January 2018		
organization		date	August 2016
street & number	174 4 th Street	telephone	518-279-6229
city or town	Troy	state	NY
		zip code	12180
e-mail	Chris@BrazeePhotogrpahy.com		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Name of Property: Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
City or Vicinity: Albany
County: Albany State: New York
Photographer: Christopher D. Brazee
Date Photographed: April 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
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- 001. Main (southeast) facade and Albany men's entrance to Bleecker Stadium field house, camera facing northwest.
- 002. Northwest facade and Albany women's entrance to Bleecker Stadium field house, camera facing southeast.
- 003. Northeast facade and visiting men's entrance to Bleecker Stadium field house, camera facing southwest.
- 004. Southwest facade and visiting women's entrance to Bleecker Stadium field house, camera facing northeast.
- 005. Field house interior, just inside Albany men's entrance, camera facing northeast.
- 006. Albany men's locker room, camera facing northwest.
- 007. Albany women's locker room, camera facing northwest.
- 008. Visiting men's locker room, camera facing northeast.
- 009. Visiting women's locker room, camera facing southwest.
- 010. Bleecker Stadium, entrance gate from field house looking into stadium, camera facing southeast.
- 011. Bleecker Stadium, 2nd Street entrance gate, looking out toward street, camera facing northeast.
- 012. Bleecker Stadium, Clinton Avenue entrance gate, looking in toward stadium, camera facing northeast.
- 013. Bleecker Stadium, Ontario Street entrance gate, looking in toward stadium, camera facing northwest.
- 014. Swinburne Park, camera facing east from entrance at Clinton Avenue and North Manning Boulevard.
- 015. Swinburne Park comfort station and utility building, camera facing north.
- 016. Swinburne Park skating rink, camera facing southwest.
- 017. Bleecker Stadium from southwest corner, top of berm
- 018. Bleecker Stadium from east, showing fieldhouse and 2nd St entrance gate, to the left
- 019. Swinburne Park, one of the four quadrants of the park, at N. Manning (left) and Clinton (right)
- 020. Swinburne Park, looking back toward fieldhouse (left) and showing one of the diagonal paths through the park

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

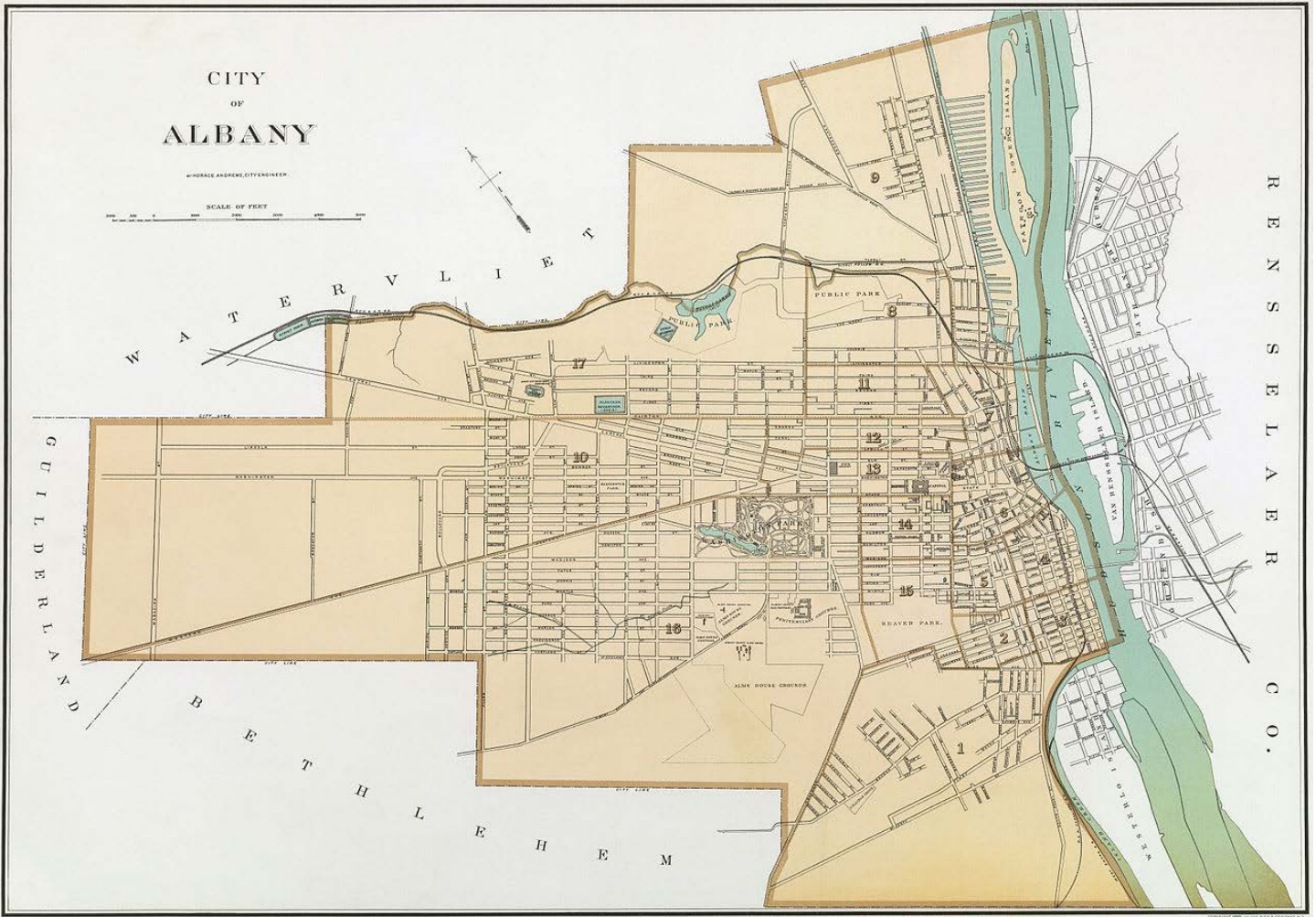
name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Bleeker Stadium and Swinburne Park
Name of Property

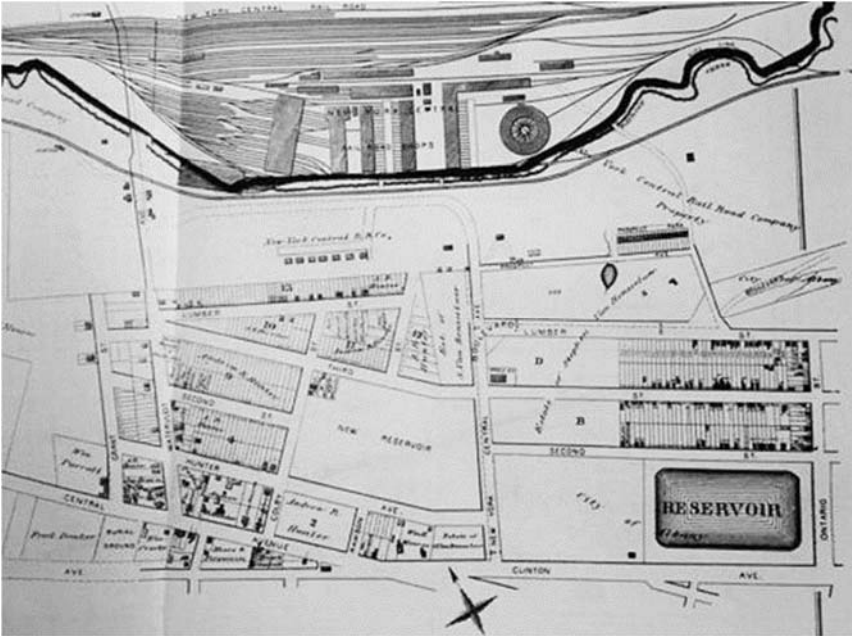
Albany, New York
County and State



City of Albany Parks and Reservoirs c1895

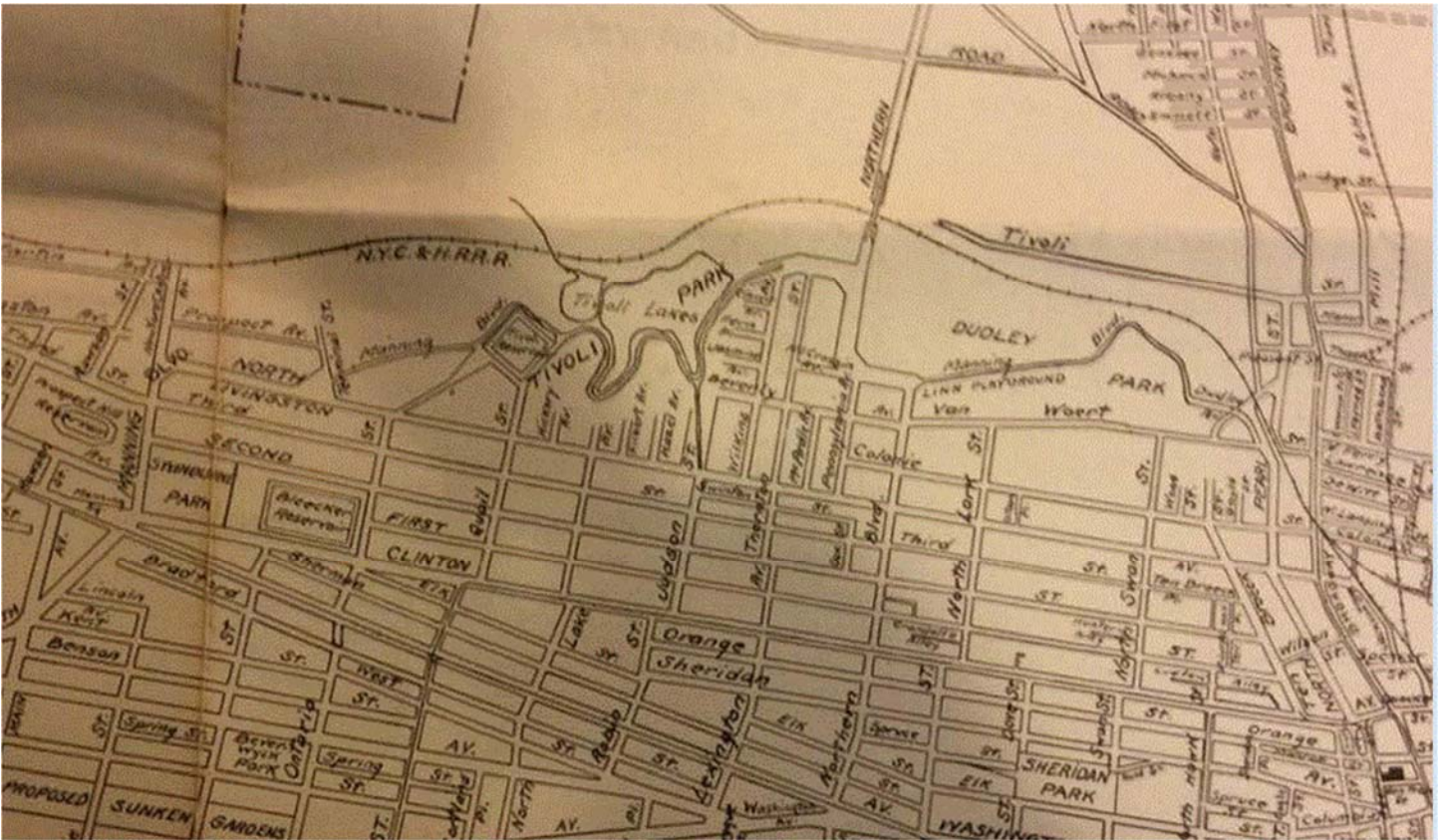
Bleeker Stadium and Swinburne Park
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Bleeker Res. & Land that would become Swinburne Park

Hopkins Atlas 1876



Bleeker Reservoir and Swinburne Park – 1913

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Bleecker Stadium shortly after completion of Field House, shows baseball diamond, c1940

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
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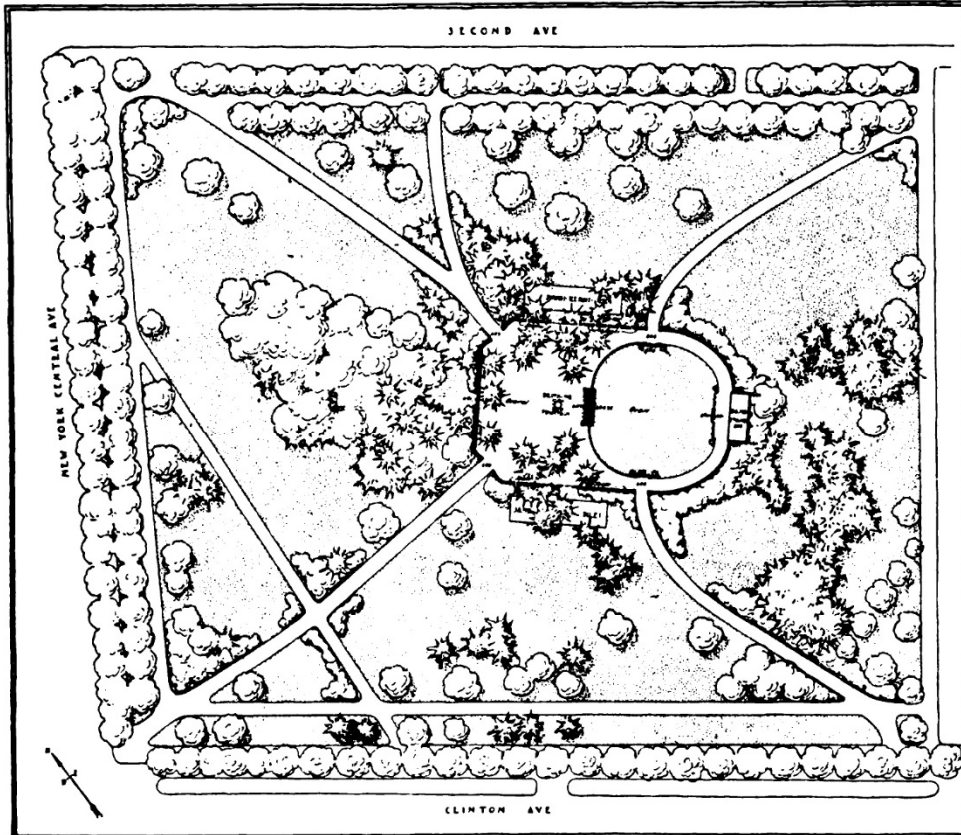


Plate 63. Sketch Plan for Open-air Theatre and Band Stand, Swinburne Park

Charles Downing Lay's sketch for Swinburne Park, From *Studies for Albany*, c1913

Bleecker Stadium & Swinburne Park

City of Albany, Albany County NY



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



National Register Listing

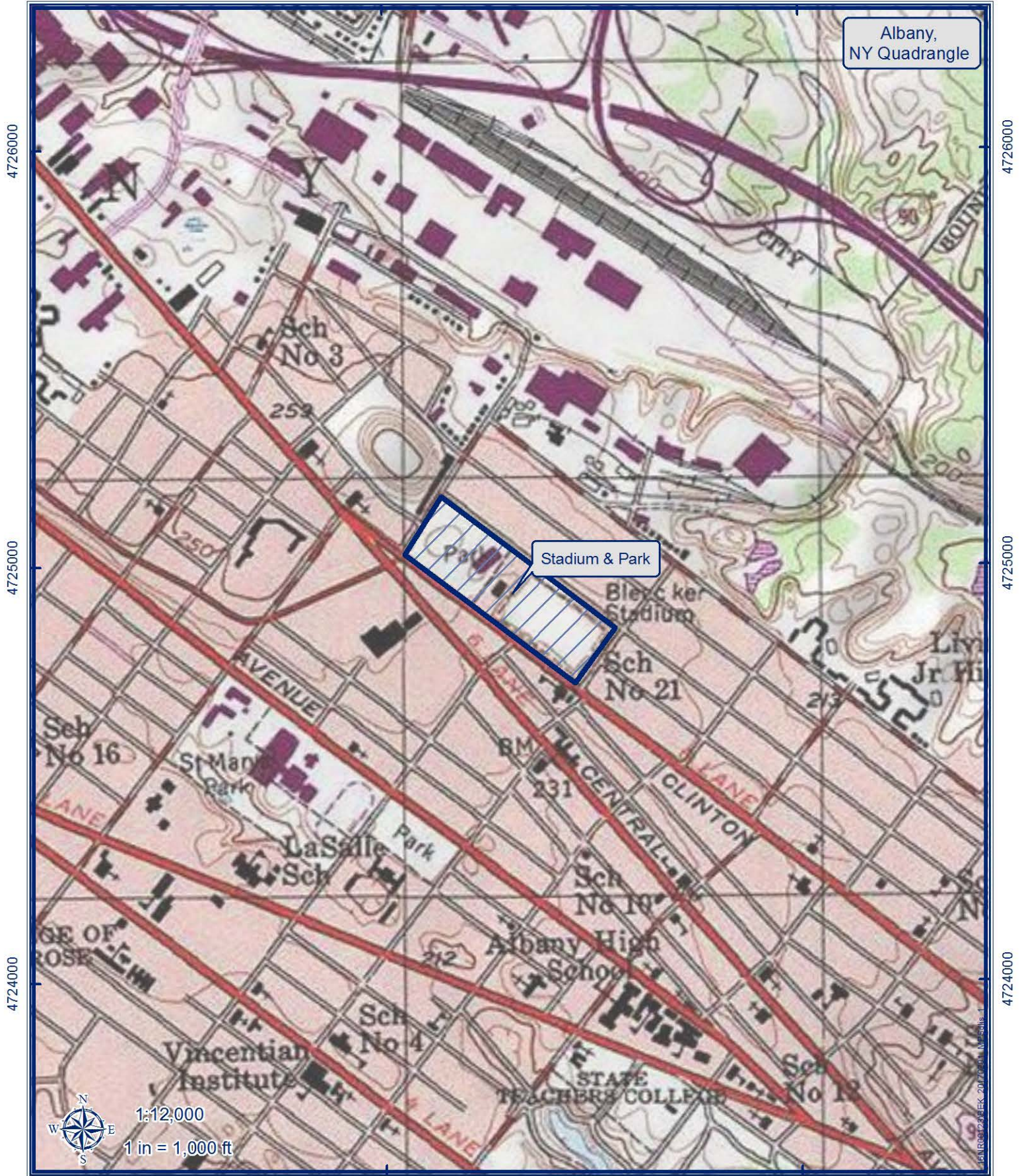


1 in = 125 ft
1:1,500



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

Division for Historic Preservation



Albany,
NY Quadrangle

Stadium & Park

1:12,000
1 in = 1,000 ft

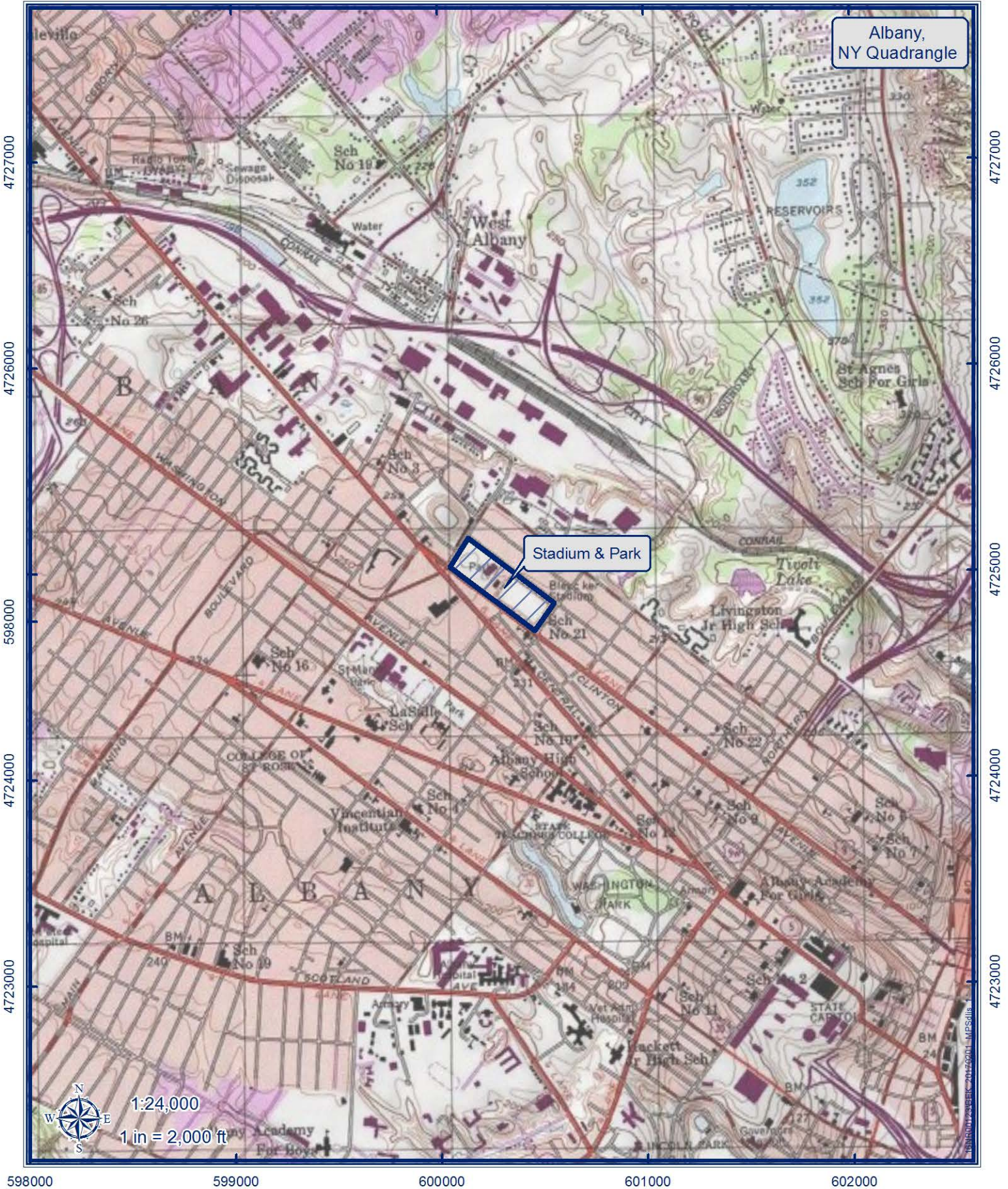
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Stadium & Park

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Albany,
NY Quadrangle



598000 599000 600000 601000 602000

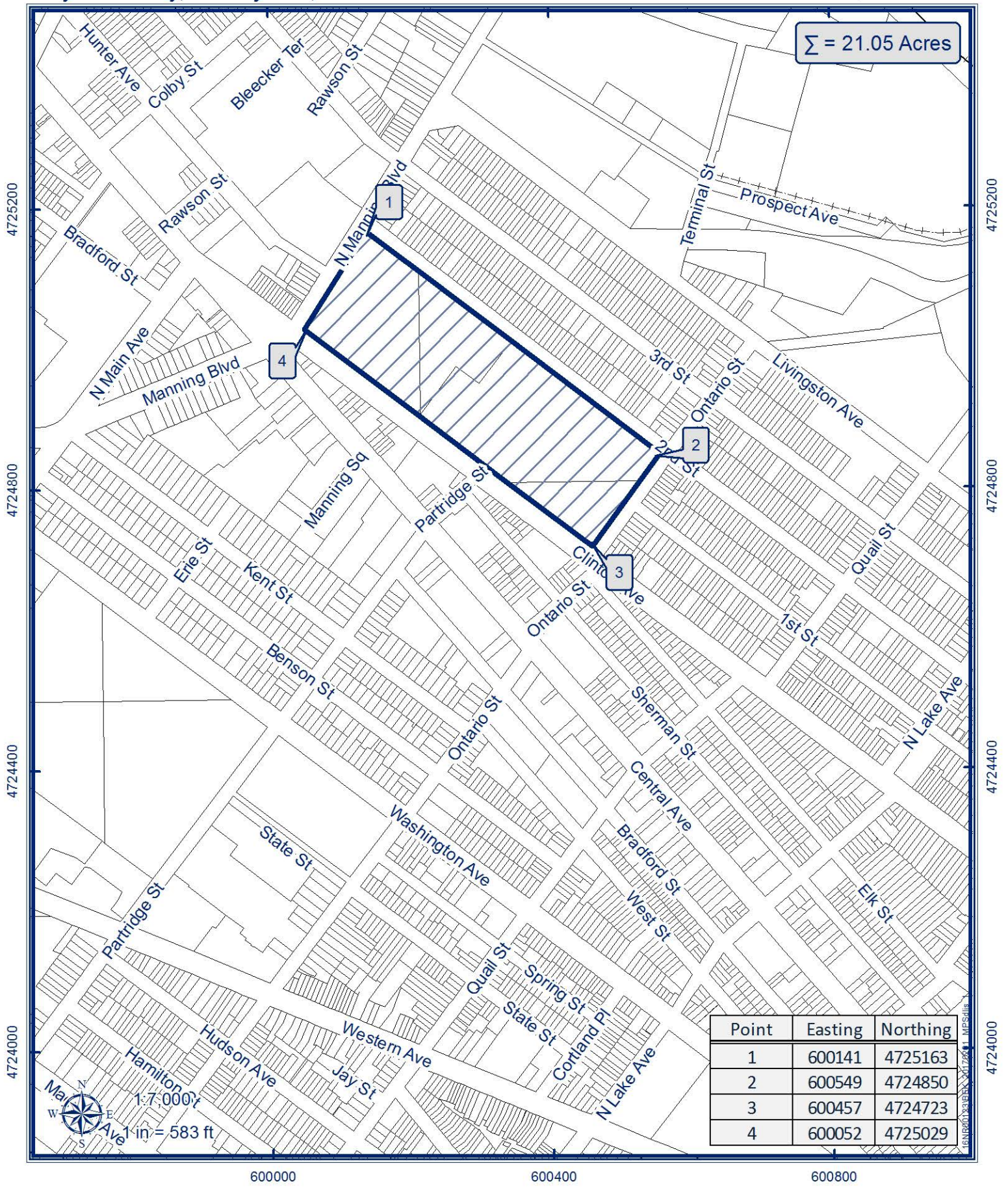
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



 Stadium & Park

 NEW YORK
STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

$\Sigma = 21.05$ Acres



Point	Easting	Northing
1	600141	4725163
2	600549	4724850
3	600457	4724723
4	600052	4725029

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter











721















TITIKIA... CITY

END
SCHOOL
SPEED
LIMIT



ALBANY 300
- 1686 - 1986 -
STILL MAKING HISTORY

SWINBURNE PARK
NAMED IN MEMORY OF
HON. JOHN SWINBURNE, M.D., MAYOR
OF ALBANY, 1882-84, ONE OF FOUR
BURGEON-TO-GENERAL ALBANY MEDICAL
COLLEGE; MEMBER OF CONGRESS.

ALBANY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ALBANY, N.Y.













National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

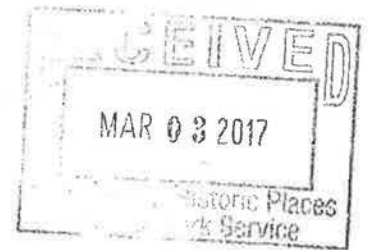
Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



24 February 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following four nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Lincoln Park, Albany County
Bleecker Stadium and Swinburn Park, Albany County
Dollar Island Camp, Hamilton County
Nelson Methodist Episcopal Church, Madison County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park

other names/site number Bleecker Reservoir

name of related MPDF N/A

2. Location

street & number Clinton Avenue

not for publication

city or town Albany

vicinity

state New York code NY county Albany code 001 zip code 12206

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Michael P. Lynch Deputy SAPO 2/23/17
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action



Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
 Name of Property

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE/
 Park & Recreation Center

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE/
 Park & Recreation Center

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Picturesque - Swinburne Park Landscape

Colonial Revival - Field House

MODERN MOVEMENT/

Art Moderne – Stadium Gates

Modern – Skating Rink

Materials

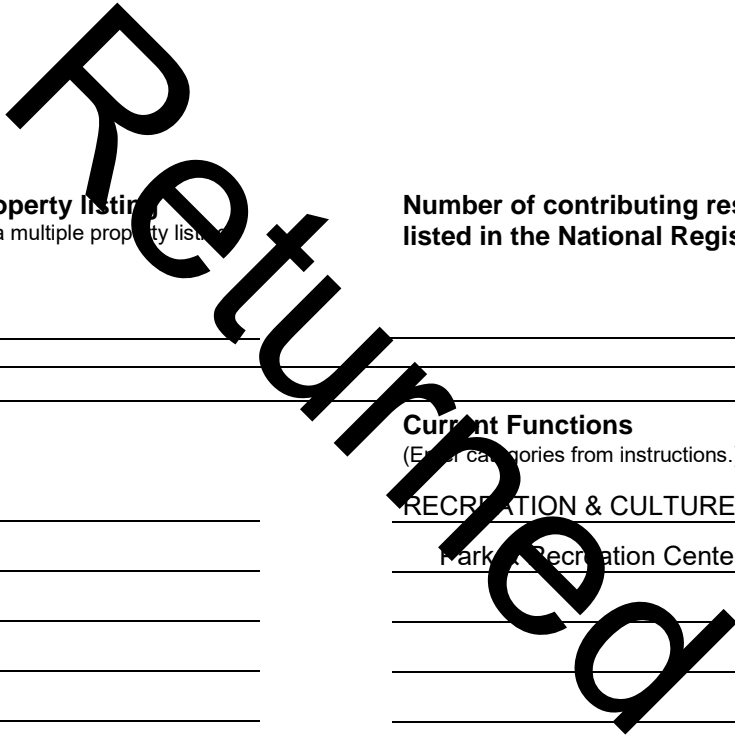
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: _____

walls: Brick and limestone – Field House, Gates,
 Comfort Station; Concrete – Skating Rink

roof: Standing-Seam Metal – Field House

other: _____



Bleeker Stadium and Swinburne Park
Name of Property

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The site of Bleeker Stadium and Swinburne Park—bounded by Second Street, Ontario Street, Clinton Avenue, and North Manning Boulevard—has been in continuous ownership by the City of Albany since at least the early 1850s, when it was opened as a reservoir as part of the city's newly-created public water system. The site is rectangular in shape, with the long axis running southeast to northwest. A portion of the reservoir grounds, occupying the northwest section, was opened as an ornamental garden as early as the 1860s and was officially dedicated as Swinburne Park in 1901. The reservoir itself, occupying the southeast section, was decommissioned in 1932; from 1933-34 it was converted into athletic fields, known as Bleeker Stadium, under a series of New Deal work relief programs. Portions of the reservoir were incorporated into the stadium design, particularly the eighteen-foot berms encircling the fields; contributing design elements include four brick gates puncturing the berm in the middle of each side, and the layout of the fields and bleachers. Construction of a field house, originally planned as part of the stadium conversion, was not completed until 1936-38 under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Contributing resources also include a comfort station built in Swinburne Park in 1938, also under the WPA, and the adjacent skating rink erected in 1967-69. The period of significance is fairly broad, encompassing the early 20th century development of Swinburne Park, the New Deal-era building programs in Bleeker Stadium, and the mid-century completion of the skating rink, reflecting the long history of public ownership and recreational use of the site.

Narrative Description

Location & Setting

The park and stadium are located in a low-rise urban neighborhood, surrounded primarily by one-and-a-half- and two-story residential buildings—mostly wood-frame, freestanding, on narrow lots, and dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A two-story apartment building is located along the northern block of North Manning Boulevard facing Swinburne Park. Clinton Avenue near its intersection with busy Central Avenue, contains small commercial buildings, many stretching through the block with primary facades on Central Avenue, and several vacant lots and parking areas. Public School 21/Philip J. Schuyler Achievement Academy and the Albany Fire Department No. 7, both brick structures, stand adjacent to the southeast corner of Bleeker Stadium.

Bleeker Stadium (1933-34 & later; contributing structure)

The stadium occupies the entire area of the former reservoir. Most of the site is surrounded by an eighteen-foot earthen berm pierced on each side by entrance gates. Inside the berm are athletic fields, bleachers adjacent to both sides of the football field and behind the baseball diamond, and several small ancillary structures including a concrete-block concession stand (built in the 1970s) near the Clinton Avenue entrance, a concrete-block garage near the Ontario Street entrance, and a brick utility shed behind the baseball diamond bleachers. A tall announcer's booth is located on top of the berm near the Clinton Avenue entrance. The northwest corner of the stadium property, outside the berm, is occupied by the field house and its approach from Clinton Avenue. An iron fence with cast-stone corner posts encircles the entire Bleeker Stadium property except for the area immediately next to the field house.

Stadium alterations: Baseball bleachers have been replaced. Non-historic concrete-block retaining wall along northwest edge of berm.

Entrances: The athletic fields are accessed through four entrances cut through the berm. Three are located along the edges of the park and serve as public access points and ticket counters. A fourth entrance faces the field house and was used by athletes.

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
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The three public entrances are all similar in design, taking the general form of a triumphal arch. The flat-arched opening is supported on square-shaped side structures that originally contained restrooms, which were accessed through doors (since replaced) on the stadium side of the arch and announced with the cast-stone panels reading "Men" on the left and "Women" on the right. The corners of the side structures are embellished with projecting stone piers; the panel between the piers is ornamented with patterned brickwork and cast-stone rondels—molded with the Albany city seal on the street-facing walls and blank on the interior walls. Knee walls (angled on Clinton Avenue and Street Street entrances, stepped on Ontario Street entrance) screen the doors into the side structures and form a fence from the elevated berm. Each flat arch is topped with cast-stone coping and a flag pole with cast-stone base. The street-side face features a cast-stone panel reading "Bleecker Stadium" in stylized Art Moderne lettering, while the inside face features patterned brickwork forming a decorative frieze. The passageways through all three arches are now closed with a metal fence and gate.

The entrance through the berm from the field house consists of two brick retaining walls flanking an asphalt ramp leading to the athletic fields. Centered in each wall is a square structure embellished with projecting stone piers at the corners and topped with cast-stone coping and a flag pole on a cast-stone base. The entrance to the northwest structure has been enlarged for use as a utility shed. The ends of the walls terminate in smaller square structures with similar corner piers. The shortest section of wall towards the athletic fields has been replaced with a concrete knee wall (it was originally brick and featured similar detailing including projecting piers and cast-stone coping).

Field House (1936-38; contributing building)

The one-story, double-height field house is situated at the top of the ramp leading through the embankment from the athletic fields, sited perfectly on axis to provide a focal point through the entrance.

The primary facade facing the stadium features a central entrance flanked by seven bays of windows on each side. The entrance itself has a cast-stone surround with paired pilasters and a triangular pediment with denticulated cornice. The tympanum above the door is ornamented with a round window and double keystone. Above the pediment is an engaged balustrade and a plaque reading "1937." The historic six-paneled single entrance door is set within a wood frame with wide sidelights and full transom (now protected with metal mesh), separated by round piers and a molded transom bar. Leading to the entrance are cast-stone steps, patched with concrete, flanked with square piers carved with the inscription "Albany Men" and supporting metal lamp poles on battered limestone bases.

The tall flanking window bays feature cast-stone sills and lintels, with double keystone ornament. Above the windows is a frieze outlined with a raised brick border featuring three cast-stone rondels. The corner bay is set within a shallow round-arched recess with double-keystone impostes and lintels, and herringbone-patterned brick spandrels (the left spandrel on the primary facade features a cast-stone plaque with the inscription "Erected by Works Progress Administration, 1936-1937, City of Albany"). The windows in the corner bays feature a smaller round-arched transom. All windows are historic nine-over-nine double-hung sash with three-paned rectangular transoms, now protected with metal mesh. The building corners are ornamented with raised brick quoins. The molded pressed-metal cornice is embellished with a dentil course.

The rear facade, facing Swinburne Park, is almost identical. The cast-stone piers flanking the stairway feature inscriptions reading "Albany Women." The narrower side facades are also similar to the primary facade, but feature a smaller entrance surround comprising cast-stone quoins and voussoir-style flat lintels. Cast-stone ornament above the surround is composed of a plaque reading "Bleecker Stadium" in block lettering, a cartouche, swag, and a rondel carved with the Albany city seal. The piers flanking the northeast entrance are inscribed "Men Visitors," and the piers flanking the southwest entrance are inscribed "Women Visitors." An asphalt drive is located on axis with the Women Visitors entrance and is flanked by an allée of trees that

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
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includes, just south of the entrance, a specimen bald cypress tree that likely predates the creation of Bleecker Stadium or Swinburne Park, when portions of the grounds were used as a formal ornamental garden.¹

Exterior alterations: Balustrade along roof has been removed. A plywood board has been installed in front of the transom above the southwest entrance, and a wood access ramp has been installed along the left side of the primary facade leading to the southeast entrance, with another segment wrapping around the building corner to the southwest entrance.

The interior plan reflects the exterior configuration, with four separate locker rooms, bathrooms, and shower facilities for each team—home men, home women, visiting men, and visiting women. The locker rooms are generally arranged in the center of the building, with bathrooms located along the southeast (stadium side) exterior wall and the showers along the northwest (Swinburne Park side) wall.

The stadium-side entrance, for the home men's team, leads to a small vestibule, which features a small round-arched ticket window on the left-hand side, retaining its historic iron grille. Double wood-and-glass doors—fitted with original push bars, large double-swing hinges, and set below a glazed transom—lead to the largest interior space stretching the width of the building to the opposite wall. A half-height, semi-permanent wall separates the men's home locker room from the rest of the space. To the right of the vestibule, a wide stair with an iron railing and gate leads to the basement; a small doorway in the right corner leads to the bathroom. A small door through the semi-permanent half wall leads to the locker room, which features several rows of metal lockers. Another door in the back right corner of the room leads to a small corridor along the northwest exterior wall that leads to the shower facilities.

The entrance facing Swinburne Park, for the home women's team, has a similar vestibule, with a doorway to the right instead of centered on the wall opposite the entrance doors. The main locker room is long and narrow, and lined with metal lockers around the perimeter. A door opposite the vestibule leads to the showers, while another door at the other end of the room leads to the bathrooms. Between these is a set of double doors leading to the visiting women's locker room. Adjacent to the vestibule, a wide stair with an iron railing and gate leads to the basement. The home women's and home men's locker rooms are connected by a narrow corridor off of which are several small offices.

The visiting men's and visiting women's facilities are mirror images of each other, located on opposite ends of the long building. Each is accessed through a vestibule similar to that leading to the home men's team. On either side of the vestibule are doors leading to the showers (accessed via a narrow corridor along) and bathrooms. Opposite the vestibule a set of double doors leads to the home men's and home women's locker rooms, respectively. Next to these doors is a small stair leading to the basement. The visiting men's locker room retains its metal lockers lining the perimeter of the room. The visiting women's locker room is now used as office space and the lockers have been removed.

Nearly all of the interior spaces preserve their original flooring and wall coverings. The locker rooms and other spaces have square tile floors laid in a regular grid (now painted dark grey except in the visiting women's locker room). Many of the thresholds between rooms are ornamented with a diamond pattern of the same tile. The bathrooms have smaller square tiles, laid in alternating rows, which is now either covered with a thin membrane or a very thick layer of paint. The walls to about head height are covered with large cream-colored glazed tiles, which are sometimes carried above door openings as a trim band. The upper walls and ceilings are painted plaster. All of the interior spaces are lit with pendant light fixtures, featuring glass globes and hanging from the double-height ceilings on long chains. Radiators are located under most of the tall windows.

¹ The New York Department of Environmental Conservation "long had a sign identifying it as the largest of its kind in New York State... *Taxodium distichum*, bald cypress is native in more southern states and planted in the north as an ornamental, the size of this specimen indicates an age greater than 100 years and a likely early planting, when more formal gardens were on these grounds." Thomas Pfeiffer, Albany City Forester, email September 27, 2016.

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
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Interior alterations: Half-height wall installed in the home men's locker room. Some bathroom fixtures replaced and a few low concrete block walls installed in the bathrooms. Most tile floors have either been painted or coated with a thin membrane, dark grey in color.

Swinburne Park (1901 & later; contributing site)

The primary feature of Swinburne Park is its landscape design. It was laid out with a pair of gently curving paths meeting nearly at the center of the park, radiating out to the four corners of the park and creating four triangle-shaped sections of lawn. It once had additional paths running just inside the exterior edges of the park, as well as a short angled path near the western corner, and a short curving path near what is now the eastern playground. The northwest wedge contains a small hill, possibly the remnant of the sand hills that once characterized the geology of this section of Albany. Trees have been planted in a somewhat irregular, Picturesque manner throughout the park except for the northwest, downward slope of the hill.

The park has a few non-original features, including a playground for younger children and a water park along Second Avenue, and another playground for older children along Clinton Avenue. A one-story garage—originally a comfort station built in 1938, at the same time as the field house—is located just south of the park's central intersection. The red brick structure features cast-stone window sills and splayed lintels with cast-stone keystones, as well as stepped brick parapets with cast-stone coping. The glass-block windows have all been boarded up or covered with protective netting.

Skating Rink (1967-69; contributing building)

The most obvious update to the park is the skating rink, built in 1967-69. This open-air concrete structure features a flat roof supported by massive concrete beams running width-wise. The roof structure rests on rows of concrete posts running along either long side of the rink. The east end of the rink is completely open; the final two bays of the west end are enclosed with a glass curtain wall, with entrance doors facing the center of the park.

In the southeast corner of the park property, adjacent to the skating rink and the Bleecker Stadium field house, is an asphalt parking lot. Unlike Bleecker Stadium, Swinburne Park is unfenced along the sidewalk.

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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 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning & Development

Architecture

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1901-69

Significant Dates

1901; 1914; 1934; 1938; 1969

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Charles Downing Lay; John T. Carroll;

Allen Organization

Period of Significance (justification)

The cited period of significance, 1901-1969, is initiated with the 1901 construction of Swinburne Park and is carried forward to 1969, the date of completion of the skating rink, which rounded out the park's physical infrastructure.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Returned

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park are significant under NRHP Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development as an example of a publically-owned site that developed as a recreational center over the course of more than a century—from the creation of an ornamental flower garden in the 1860s to the completion of the Swinburne Park skating rink in 1969, and encompassing significant periods of planning including the early 20th century layout of Swinburne Park and the New Deal-era conversion of the reservoir into Bleecker Stadium. The site is also significant under Criterion C in the areas of Landscape Architecture and Architecture for the intact landscape plan of Swinburne Park (attributed to Charles Downing Lay), the Art Moderne gates of Bleecker Stadium, the Colonial Revival field house (designed by John T. Carroll), and the Modern skating rink (planned by the Allen Organization). The period of significance has been established as the date of the official creation of Swinburne Park in 1901 through the completion of the skating rink in 1969.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

The Site and Early History

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park are located towards the top of a sandy hill west of the historic core of Albany. A Native American trail between the Hudson River and what is now Schenectady traversed the area. According to local scholars who traced this path, “the earliest discoverable reference to this route is in a colonial legislative act of 1723... [referring] to the road or highway which leads from the City of Albany towards Schanegtade until the first Sandy Hill, being about two miles from the said City and called the Eerste Sandberg.”²

In the early years of the Albany colony, Native American fur traders used to congregate just outside the western walls of the stockade fort. When objections were raised by European colonists, the Native Americans were forcibly relocated a few miles west of Albany to the area around what is now the stadium and park. Known as Sandberg, this settlement eventually developed its own identity and amenities such as Humphrey’s Tavern, an early wayside inn on the main road to Schenectady that was originally known as the Bowery. A historian who traced the route of the original road believed that, “a hill of sand [known as Sandberg] may be that knoll in Swinburne Park.”³

Bleecker Reservoir

In the early 1850s a large portion of Sandberg—encompassing four city blocks stretching from Patroon Street (Clinton Avenue) to Second Avenue from Ontario Street to New York Central Avenue (North Manning Boulevard), corresponding to the current site of Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park—had been set aside by the City for use as a reservoir to supply the city’s growing water demand. At the behest of local residents, the state legislature passed a law in 1850 allowing the city to establish the Albany Water Commission. It also authorized the newly created commission to acquire the Albany Water Works Company, a private firm that had supplied most of the city’s drinking water since its incorporation in 1802.

The Water Commission soon hired noted civil engineer William J. McAlpine to create a comprehensive plan for the city’s water system, much of which was carried out.⁴ He proposed damming the Patroon Creek to form Rensselaer Lake, which became the heart of the Six-Mile Waterworks at Fuller Road and Washington Avenue (near the intersection of Interstates 87 and 90, now a city park). He also suggested several locations for a holding reservoir closer to the city, noting, “the most favorable location for the upper receiving reservoir, is

² “The Avenue at Fingertips of Suburban Customers,” *Albany Times Union* (March 30, 1952), E-10.

³ “Original Schenectady Road Believed Discovered,” *Albany Times Union* (May 18, 1941).

⁴ McAlpine had previously worked on the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, the state’s canal system, and the dry dock at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

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found at the corner of Ontario and Patroon [Clinton] street.”⁵ Bleecker Reservoir was completed by the fall of 1851. On October 24 of that year, the valves were opened and water from Rensselaer Lake began to fill the enclosure, which was lined with 400,000 bricks and 10,000 fieldstones.⁶

Albany continued to grow at a rapid rate during the second half of the nineteenth century and by the 1870s the Water Commission was increasingly worried that Rensselaer Lake was no longer sufficient to keep the reservoir full. They determined that the most practical solution was to take water from the Hudson River. Since the river was at a lower elevation than the reservoir, a pumping station was built in 1873 at the corner of Quackenbush (now Broadway) and Montgomery Streets (the Quackenbush Pumping Station was listed on the State and National Registers in 1983).⁷

The problem of supply now solved, the Commission turned its attention to storage. In 1878 an additional reservoir, known as the Prospect Hill Reservoir, was built just above Bleecker, on the four blocks between Manning Boulevard and Colby Street, from Hunter Avenue to 3rd Street (now occupied by the Bleecker Terrace apartments and Colby Park). A secondary pumping station was built on North Manning Boulevard, diagonally across from Swinburne Park to move the water from Bleecker Reservoir across the street and up about 55 feet to Prospect Hill.⁸

The new reservoir supplied the upper service while Bleecker Reservoir supplied the middle, which stretched from Lark Street in the west to Pearl Street in the east. The lower service area by the waterfront was supplied by Tivoli Lakes.

Swinburne Park

Bleecker Reservoir occupied only about half of the site owned by the City of Albany. The northwestern section, outside the raised embankments of the reservoir, was essentially open land. At least as early as the 1860s, the area that now comprises Swinburne Park had been transformed into a formal ornamental garden. A newspaper article from the period notes that, “the gardens attached to the reservoir, containing many rare and valuable shrubs and trees, has been much improved during the past year, and from the large and increasing number of visitors, it is evident that the efforts of the Commissioners to make these grounds attractive have been successful and are appreciated by the citizens.”⁹

Although the garden was apparently open to the public, it was not yet an official city park, nor were active uses allowed (aside from the genteel lawn game of croquet).¹⁰ As reported in the local press, public access was significantly increased in 1896 when the fence around the garden was removed: “At Bleecker reservoir the portion not occupied by the reservoir proper, or garden, was surrounded by a closely set hedge...Superintendent Bailey...sees no reason why the fence should not be removed and the ground thrown open to the public for park purposes, under proper restrictions.”¹¹

⁵ William J. McAlpine, *Report Made to the Water Commissioners of the City of Albany* (Albany, NY: H. H. Van Dyck, Printer, 1850), 45. In describing the site, McAlpine noted the “sand ridge north of Patroon street” running through the site.

⁶ “Albany Water Works,” *Daily Albany Argus* (October 27, 1851), 2.

⁷ The pumping station initially contained two steam pumps. National Register of Historic Places, Quackenbush Pumping Station, Albany Water Works, Albany, Albany County, New York, National Register #90NR02817, prepared by Neil Larson with Nancy Todd, 1983.

⁸ Several sections of the Prospect Hill Pumping Station are still extant, including the Second Empire-style engineer’s house and the hipped-roofed engine house.

⁹ “Annual Report of the Water Commissioners,” *Albany Morning Express* (March 7, 1866), 1.

¹⁰ “The flower garden...was established as a sort of attraction to the grounds. There was a croquet ground there.” “Municipal Investigations,” *Albany Times* (September 17, 1886), 1.

¹¹ “Park at Bleecker Reservoir,” *Times Union* (February 8, 1896), 1.

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In 1901 the City of Albany—under Mayor James H. Blessing and at the behest of Alderman Hughes of the 17th ward—declared the garden at Bleecker Reservoir an official city park.¹² The name Swinburne Park was chosen in honor of John Swinburne, mayor of Albany from 1883-84 and a noted physician who helped found Albany Medical College.

It is unclear if any changes were made to the park at this point or if it was left in its nineteenth century configuration. It seems that the primary reason Swinburne Park was declared a park was to sanction its use as a venue for military-style band concerts. The article announcing the creation of the park noted that, “it is the purpose of the residents of the seventeenth and nineteenth wards to raise money to defray the expenses of giving band concerts in the new park and in 1906 an ordinance was passed by the city formally authorizing the erection of a bandstand “long desired” by residents of the West End.¹³

Ornamental gardens, croquet, and band concerts were largely the province of adults. In 1908 children were finally welcomed to Swinburne Park when a playground was opened at the behest of the Albany Mother’s Club, an influential civic group that already had successfully petitioned for playground facilities in Lincoln Park.¹⁴

The current appearance of Swinburne Park has been attributed to landscape architect Charles Downing Lay, working in close collaboration with architect Robert W. Brunner. In the early 1910s the pair developed a number of notable civic improvement projects in Albany, summarized in a small book, *Studies for Albany*, published in 1914.¹⁵ In this volume they noted that Swinburne Park was “one of Albany’s small parks that is pleasant and much frequented. It contains not only the usual playground accessories but the band concerts that have been given there have proved [especially] popular.”¹⁶ The illustrations that accompanied the description show that Lay’s design for the paths and landscaping is largely intact—particularly the gently curving paths forming an X-shape near the center of the park.¹⁷ A few relatively minor differences exist between the plans depicted in the *Studies* and the park’s current condition. An exterior path running along the outside edge of the park was either never built or has been removed, as were the double row of newly planted trees lining it. The swale, described by Brunner and Lay as a “low wooded hill” is now mostly open, while the other quadrants are more heavily planted. The architects also planned an elaborate new bandstand near the central intersection of the paths, completed in 1915 (later replaced by the comfort station and utility building).¹⁸ The classically-inspired structure was designed “so that it may be used not only for concerts but for moving picture shows and even minor theatrical performances.”¹⁹

The park received a number of updates in the following decades. Tennis courts and a swimming pool were installed in the 1920s (since removed). In 1938, in conjunction with building projects in Bleecker Stadium, a combined comfort station and utility building was erected under the WPA.²⁰ Landscaping work was also carried

¹²“Mayor Approves Swinburne Park Ordinance,” *Albany Evening Journal* (August 21, 1901), 10.

¹³Ibid; “Swinburne Park to Get Band Stand,” *Albany Journal* (June 19, 1906), 1.

¹⁴The group was originally organized in 1899, and its advocacy for the Lincoln Park playground was its first major campaign.

¹⁵Brunner had initially been commissioned by Mayor James B. McEwan in April 1912 to design a new termination for State Street. His master plan was the basis for architect Marcus T. Reynold’s design for the Delaware & Hudson Building (1914-18, listed individually on the National Register in 1972 and the State Register in 1980, also within the Downtown Albany Historic District listed on both State and National Registers in 1980).

¹⁶*Studies*, 95.

¹⁷It is unclear how much of the landscape Lay actually designed and how much he adapted from existing conditions. Referring to the bandstand proposed for the central intersection of the paths, the pair wrote that, “the necessary rearrangement of this portion of the park [will be] slight.”

¹⁸“Will Start Swinburne Park Bandstand Monday,” *Albany Journal* (April 6, 1915), 1.

¹⁹*Studies for Albany*, 95.

²⁰“Park to Have New Building,” *Knickerbocker News* (October 4, 1938), 4-A.

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out by the WPA around this time and the tennis courts were rebuilt in 1939. In 1945, the Albany Post War Planning Committee proposed a larger swimming pool for the park, in part to relieve congestion at the Lincoln Park pool; the project remained on the books for a number of years but was ultimately never realized.²¹

Bleecker Stadium

By the late 1920s Albany began planning a completely new water supply system centered on the new Alcove Reservoir to be built in the Town of Coeymans, nearly 20 miles southwest of the center of Albany. Laws were passed in 1928 authorizing its construction and the purchase of the site through eminent domain. Construction had started by 1929, and by 1932 the new reservoir was functional enough that Bleecker Reservoir, now obsolete, could be taken permanently offline.

In the meantime, plans had been circulating as to what to do with the Bleecker property once it was no longer needed as part of the water system. As early as 1924 there were calls to close the reservoir and sell off buildings lots. In 1931-33 there were serious proposals to turn the site into a public market.²² Eventually the city, under the administration of Mayor John Boyd Thatcher II and at the urging of Board of Education leader Clarence Post, settled on the idea of an athletic stadium to be used primarily by Albany's school teams.

The conversion of the reservoir into a fine athletic stadium was accomplished through a series of New Deal work relief programs instituted during the Great Depression. The stadium was initially planned in the fall of 1933 under the New York State Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (TERA)—a program developed in 1931 by then-governor Franklin D. Roosevelt. By the time construction had begun that winter, oversight had been transferred to the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the first of now-president Roosevelt's Federal work relief programs. The CWA was meant to be temporary, expiring at the end of March 1934, and workers scrambled to complete the stadium before that deadline. Failing to do so, construction was temporarily halted before resuming under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA).²³ On April 13, 1934, "work relief activities in Albany were resumed today under the new TERA and FERA system, successor to the Civil Works plan"; furthermore, "under the new system, the Federal government's agency, known as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, pays 50 percent...the state Temporary Emergency Relief Administration pays 25 per cent, and the county or municipality...pays the balance."²⁴ Altogether, from 500 to 1,000 people were employed on the stadium project, which cost about \$150,000 of which Albany paid only a quarter.

Construction work on the former reservoir involved draining the water, drying out the soon-to-be field, and removing a brick partition running through the center of the site. Gateways were cut through the embankment—in the middle of each of the four walls—and four gates were built within the openings. The gates facing the street resembled triumphal arches and contained restrooms for spectators, while the northwest gate on the interior of the block consisted of two retaining walls flanking a ramp leading to Swinburne Park. On the floor of the reservoir were laid out two football fields, a baseball diamond (overlapping the practice football field), and a quarter-mile track. Concrete bleachers accommodating 2,200 people were built on either side of the football field, and additional seating for 2,000 surrounded the baseball diamond (all of the bleachers, for both football and baseball, have been replaced with smaller, metal bleachers).²⁵ When it was completed, the stadium was said to be the seventh largest in the country.²⁶

²¹"Plan for \$200,000 Pool Set for Postwar Group," *Knickerbocker News* (June 26, 1945), 1.

²²"Solution of Public Market Problem Due Tonight," *Albany Times Union* (October 8, 1931), 3.

²³New York was an early test lab for Roosevelt and his administration, who based the national FERA program on their earlier state TERA system.

²⁴"Work Relief Resumed in Albany," *Albany Times Union* (April 13, 1934), 3.

²⁵"Bleecker Reservoir Being Made into Athletic Field," *Albany Times Union* (May 16, 1934), 24.

²⁶*Ibid.*

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It has not been discovered yet if an architect or landscape architect was involved in the design of Bleecker Stadium.²⁷ Much of the design work consisted of laying out the various athletic fields and planning the spectator entrances and accommodations. The most prominent architectural elements of the project were the brick gatehouses and the concrete bleachers, all of which were designed in a vernacular Art Moderne style.

The new stadium retained the name of Bleecker Stadium despite a long and involved effort by a veterans group to dedicate the facility to Ambrose J. Scully. Mayor Thatcher decided to retain the existing name since five Bleeckers had served the city as mayor (one was actually Anthony Bleecker Banks) and that it honored a notable Albany family.²⁸ Instead, the three spectator entrances were dedicated to veterans of the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I.

The official opening took place on Thanksgiving Day in 1934 with a full program of sporting contests including two long distance running events—one for adults and one for juniors, starting at City Hall and ending at the stadium track—and a round-robin football tournament between local school teams. Several thousand people attended the opening events, including some Bleecker descendants invited by the mayor himself.²⁹ The stadium was well received. E. D. Greenman, assistant director of the New York State Bureau of Municipal Information, was quoted as saying, “[the stadium] undoubtedly will go down in history as one of the outstanding achievements with relief money in the state.”³⁰

The Field House

The initial plans for Bleecker Stadium included provisions for a sizeable field house, but its construction was pushed back several years and it was not completed until 1938.³¹ By the time work on the field house had actually begun, another New Deal work relief program had supplanted the earlier programs, so it was built under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Planning for the new building—which was projected to be “a \$100,000 project which will provide work for many men during the winter months”—began in October 1936.³² Actual construction work was apparently delayed, however, since newspaper articles announced the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone by Mayor Thatcher the following September.³³

The field house—116 feet long by 60 feet wide—was designed by Albany architect John T. Carroll, a little known designer later associated with the New York State Post-War Public Works Planning Commission and the State Hospital Planning Commission. The exterior of the building is a mainstream Colonial Revival design built of red brick with Indiana limestone trim, covering a steel frame.³⁴ The materials closely complemented the earlier gate houses (and certain details such as the rondels were nearly identical), but the overall design of the field house was more traditional. Each of the four facades is symmetrical, embellished primarily with prominent

²⁷Under most work relief programs, the local sponsoring agency was responsible for providing construction plans. Davidson, 43.

²⁸Thatcher also claimed—perhaps erroneously—that the 1850 reservoir was named for Charles Bleecker, who didn’t serve as mayor until 1868-70. A year later, a newspaper article asserted that the stadium had been named for the late James Edward Bleecker. This seems unlikely since Thatcher clearly traced that name to Albany’s historic mayors, and because the same newspaper announced that James Edward Bleecker was alive and celebrating his 88th birthday in 1935. “5,000 Petition City on Name for Stadium,” *Albany Times Union* (August 7, 1934), 4; “Nine of Late James Edward Bleecker Kin to Attend Stadium Opening,” *Albany Times-Union* (November 28, 1934), 3; “Albanian 88 Today,” *Albany Times Union* (March 18, 1935), 3.

²⁹Proceeds from the event went to a charitable fund organized by the mayor.

³⁰“Albany ‘Bowl’ is Completed,” *Poughkeepsie Eagle-News* (November 28, 1934), 4.

³¹An article from 1933 discussing the progress on the new stadium noted, “while the fields will be ready next year, Mr. Post is not so sure about the field house, which will be built outside the field proper. That may take a year or so, he admits.” “That Reservoir Project,” *Albany Times Union* (December 19, 1933), 18.

³²“Reservoir Job Deadline Nov. 1,” *Albany Evening News* (September 30, 1936), 3.

³³“Field House Dedication,” *Albany Times Union* (July 25, 1937), A-9.

³⁴Construction was delayed due the difficulty of finding trained stone carvers.

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central entrance surrounds ornamented with Classical motifs such as swags, pediments, and balustrades. The double-height windows have double keystone lintels, a typical Colonial detail, while the building corners are decorated with brick quoins and a single recessed bay with round-arched windows. A Colonial cupola stands atop the building, although the wood railing that encircled the hipped section of the roof has been removed.

The program for the building was primarily as locker rooms for athletes using the stadium—with separate facilities for Albany men, Albany women, visiting men, and visiting women. There was a clear hierarchy in the planning of these spaces. The largest locker room, with an entrance on the building's long facade, directly facing the stadium on axis with the ceremonial ramp to the fields, was reserved for the local men's teams. On the opposite side of building, also with its entrance on a long facade but facing away from the stadium, were the Albany women's facilities. The visiting men's and women's locker rooms were mirror images of each other, occupying small spaces with entrances on the shorter side facades.

The interior was supposedly finished with bricks salvaged from the Albany Regional Market—a bit of a coincidence given the plans in 1931 to move the market to the Bleecker Reservoir site—although the upper portion of all of the walls are either plastered or parged and no brick is visible. The lower walls were covered with “porcelain glazed tile wainscoting, impervious to moisture and making for cleanliness and sanitation.”³⁵ Health and hygiene were emphasized throughout the building, with newspapers touting the modern shower facilities, antiseptic foot baths, and drinking fountains. The basement—accessible from each locker room could via separate stairways—contained laundry room equipped with drying racks “to allow for sterilization of clothing [team uniforms].”³⁶ A series of bronze plaques, never installed, was planned for the main locker room depicting the athletic events “which will be carried on at the stadium field.”³⁷

By the fall of 1938 the building was mostly completed inside and out.³⁸ Once the finishing touches were completed—installing furniture such as lockers, desks and chairs as well as final landscaping—the WPA officially turned the field house over to the City of Albany in 1939. Mayor Thatcher, after an hour tour of the new facility with architect Carroll and other officials, “had high praise for the field house.”⁴⁰

Swinburne Park Rink

The newest of the major buildings on the Swinburne Park and Bleecker Stadium campus is the skating rink, the funding for which was authorized by the City Council in August 1967 under the administration of Erastus Corning 2nd. Designs for the rink were released in July 1968 and were part of a larger program of Albany park improvements prepared by the Allen Organization from Bennington, Vermont—a planning firm founded by F. Ellwood and Stewart Allen in 1945 specializing the recreational facilities.⁴¹ The design called for a covered, but open-air, ice rink, which was accomplished through the use of concrete piers supporting massive concrete beams and a flat roof. The southeast end of the structure was completely open to the elements, while at the opposite side two bays of the structure were enclosed in a glass curtain wall containing changing rooms and other facilities.

³⁵“Field House Dedication.”

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸“Work Near End on Field House,” *Knickerbocker News* (September 14, 1938).

³⁹Initially the city was to take over in January 1939, but as always, things were delayed and the transfer didn't happen until early winter. Since this was after the close of the football season, the dedicatory inspection was pushed back to spring of 1940. “City to Receive New Bleecker Stadium Field House Soon After January,” *Albany Times Union* (December 24, 1938), 2-B; “Stadium House Given Albany,” *Knickerbocker News* (November 30, 1939), B-2.

⁴⁰“Mayor Lauds Field House,” *Albany Times Union* (September 14, 1938), 3.

⁴¹“Here's a Design to Cool Off a Hot Albany Day,” *Knickerbocker News* (July 24, 1968), 1; “Recreation Plan to Cost \$700,000,” *Knickerbocker News* (August 8, 1967), B-1.

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The rink was completed in 1969; Mayor Corning cut the ribbon during a grand opening event on October 29. It was constructed by general contractors Smith & Tierney, Inc.. The project also involved the creation of the adjacent parking lot (on the site of 1939 tennis courts that had “gone to seed”), and the paving of the dirt road connecting Second Street and Clinton Avenue through the park. The rink was partially funded through a grant from the “Next Step” outdoor recreation program of the State Department of Conservation. A major advocate of the rink was Sal Garufi, who also pushed for the rehabilitation of Bleecker Stadium in the 1970s and ‘80s.

Conclusion

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park, like all thriving urban spaces, has grown and evolved over the years. It has been a public space for more than a century and a half, from the opening of the ornamental flower garden in the 1860s, and has seen the official dedication of Swinburne Park in 1901, the creation of its landscape design in the 1910s, the creation of Bleecker Stadium out of the old reservoir in the 1930s, and the construction of the skating rink, the last of the major structures in the complex, in the 1960s. During this time new buildings have been erected, new uses introduced, and new landscapes created. As architect Brunner, in his seminal *Studies of Albany*, notes, “a city is a living organization and must grow and develop naturally,” a sentiment that perfectly captures the history of this site.

Returned

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
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Albany, New York
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Arnold W. Brunner and Charles Downing Lay, *Studies for Albany* (Albany, NY: Bartlett-Orr Press, 1914).
- Judith A. Davidson, "Sport for the People: New York State and Work Relief 1930's Style," *Sport History Review* 19 (May 1988), 40-51.
- G. M. Hopkins, *City atlas of Albany, New York* (1876), Plate R.
- Diana S. Waite, ed., *Albany Architecture: A Guide to the City* (Albany, NY: Mount Ida Press, 1993)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 21.05 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

<u>1</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>600141</u>	<u>4725163</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>600457</u>	<u>4724723</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing	
<u>2</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>600549</u>	<u>4724850</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>4725029</u>	
Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing	

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for this NRHP nomination is depicted on the enclosed maps, which were drawn at a scale of 1:24,000, 1:12,000 and 1:7,000. All maps are entitled "Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park, City of Albany, Albany Co., NY."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for this NRHP nomination was drawn to reflect historic conditions; it contains only that land which is historically associated with the development of the park, and includes no additional or "buffer" land.

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
Name of Property

Albany, New York
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher D. Brazee
organization _____ date August 2016
street & number 174 4th Street telephone 518-279-6229
city or town Troy state NY zip code 12180
e-mail Chris@BrazeePhotogrpahy.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)
-

Photographs:

Name of Property: Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
City or Vicinity: Albany
County: Albany State: New York
Photographer: Christopher D. Brazee
Date Photographed: April 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

001. Main (southeast) facade and Albany men's entrance to Bleecker Stadium field house, camera facing northwest.
002. Northwest facade and Albany women's entrance to Bleecker Stadium field house, camera facing southeast.
003. Northeast facade and visiting men's entrance to Bleecker Stadium field house, camera facing southwest.
004. Southwest facade and visiting women's entrance to Bleecker Stadium field house, camera facing northeast.
005. Field house interior, just inside Albany men's entrance, camera facing northeast.
006. Albany men's locker room, camera facing northwest.
007. Albany women's locker room, camera facing northwest.
008. Visiting men's locker room, camera facing northeast.
009. Visiting women's locker room, camera facing southwest.
010. Bleecker Stadium, entrance gate from field house looking into stadium, camera facing southeast.
011. Bleecker Stadium, 2nd Street entrance gate, looking out toward street, camera facing northeast.
012. Bleecker Stadium, Clinton Avenue entrance gate, looking in toward stadium, camera facing northeast.
013. Bleecker Stadium, Ontario Street entrance gate, looking in toward stadium, camera facing northwest.
014. Swinburne Park, camera facing east from entrance at Clinton Avenue and North Manning Boulevard.
015. Swinburne Park comfort station and utility building, camera facing north.
016. Swinburne Park skating rink, camera facing southwest.

Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
Name of Property

Albany, New York
County and State

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Albany
street & number 200 Henry Johnson Boulevard telephone 518-465-6066
city or town Albany state NY zip code 12210

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Returned

Albany,
NY Quadrangle

4727000

4727000

4726000

4726000

598000

4725000

4724000

4724000

4723000

4723000

598000

599000

600000

601000

602000

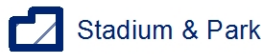
Retained

Stadium & Park



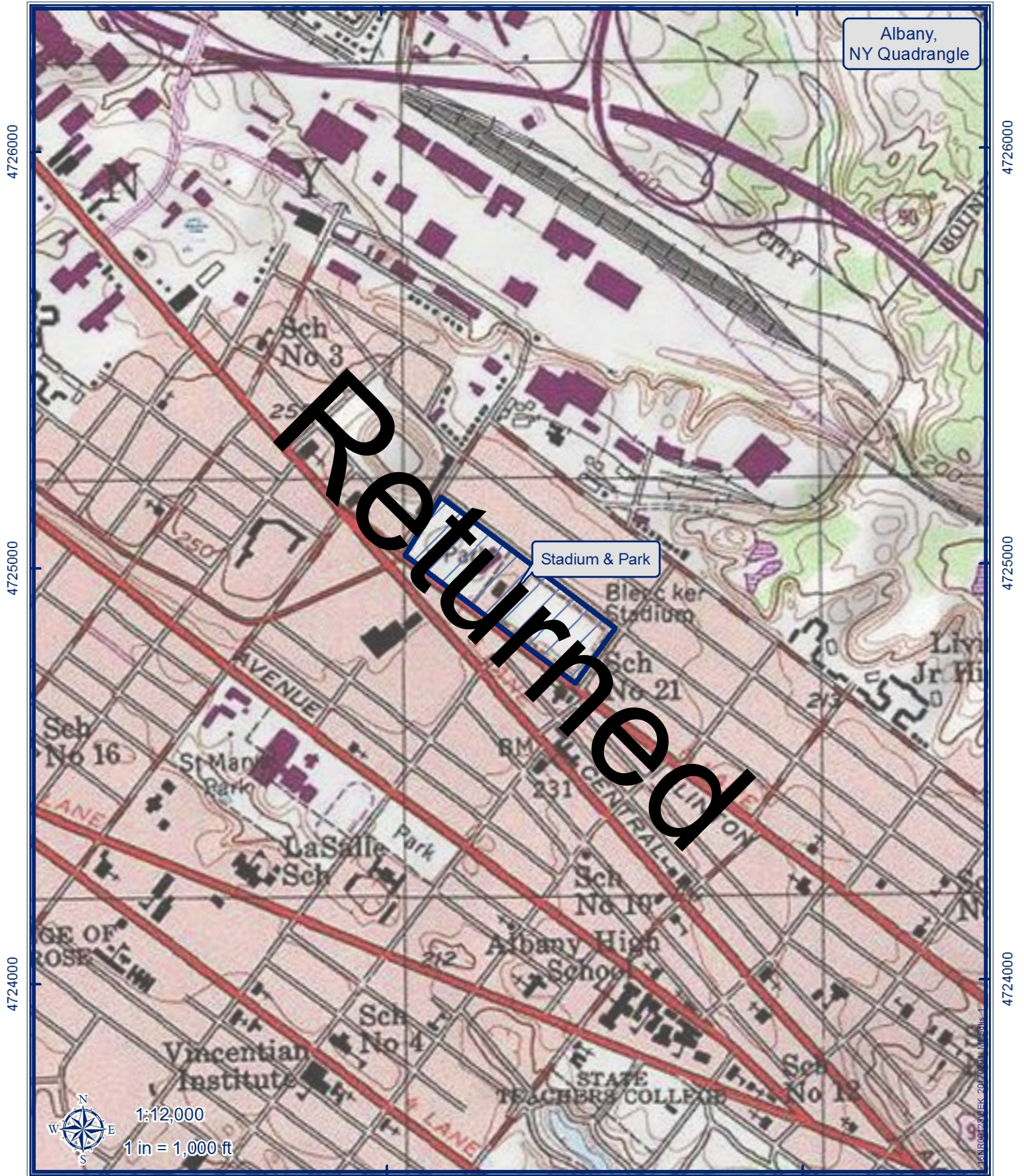
1:24,000
1 in = 2,000 ft

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Stadium & Park





Albany,
NY Quadrangle

Stadium & Park

1:12,000
1 in = 1,000 ft

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 380 760 1,520 Feet

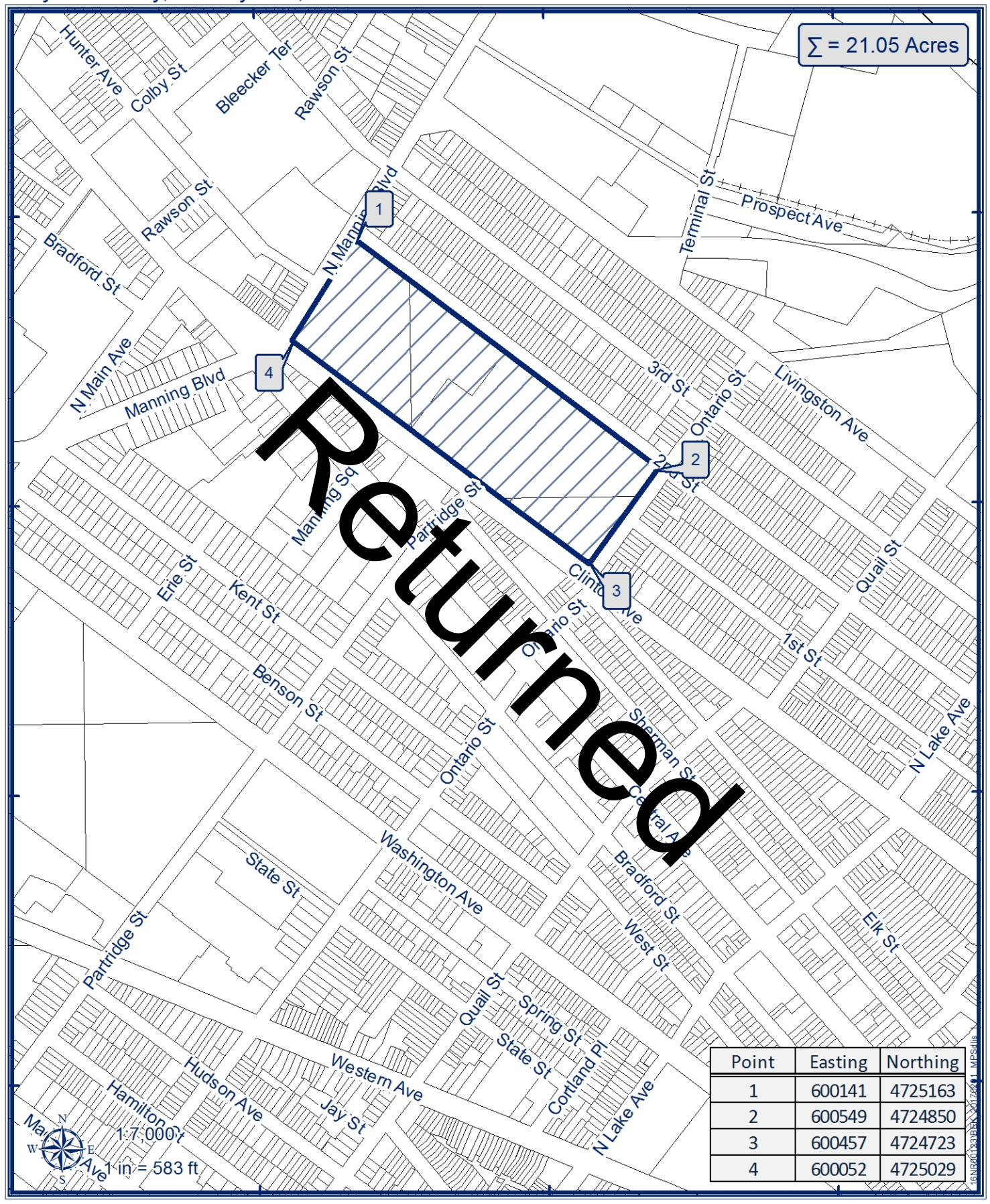
Stadium & Park

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Σ = 21.05 Acres

RETURNED

Point	Easting	Northing
1	600141	4725163
2	600549	4724850
3	600457	4724723
4	600052	4725029



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 3/3/2017 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: 4/17/2017 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 4/17/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Bleeker Stadium and Swinburn Park
Albany County, New York
April 17, 2017
SG100000889

The Bleeker Stadium and Swinburne Park in Albany, New York, is being returned for technical and substantial reasons.

Technically: In section 7 there are resources that are not fully described, in addition there is no sketch map in section 10 that reflects the contributing and non-contributing resources. For a National Register nomination to be complete the NR nomination should be sufficiently photographed to reflect section 7 and section 10.

The NR nomination did not provide a sketch map as is required of district, please review the bulletin: *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form bulletin* on sketch maps. Another bulletin that might be helpful is: *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*. Both are available on the National Register of Historic Places website.

Some of the examples found that need to be described and determined whether or not they should be counted; concrete concession stand, non-historic concrete block retaining wall, concrete garage, utility shed, replaced bleachers, young children's playground, waterpark, and older children playground

Substantially: Section 7 Site descriptions and a landscape methodology: When documenting a landscape a different methodology may be needed in section 7 to determine what is a contributing resource, what is a feature of the site, and how best to manage count. The site map, images, and descriptions function as one system within the methodology.

Begin by determining if some of the resources are too small to counted individually but do contribute to the landscape, for instance park benches or light posts are common resources within designed landscapes that are too small to count individually but are significant to the overall design of the landscape. Other resources, like garages may or may be counted because of size and visibility according to the guidance found in the NR bulletins. How these resource types should be discussed in the methodology in section 7.

Sufficient landscape images need to be provided along the images of buildings and structures to correspond with sections 7 and 10 to tell the complete story of the nomination. Sample images of small features are helpful as well.

Information does not need to be repeated in each section; if each section is connected to make one large picture.

If you have any questions please call me.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexis Abernathy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "A" and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Alexis Abernathy
National Register Reviewer
202-354-2236



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



January 11, 2018

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park
Albany, Albany County

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to re-submit the nomination for Bleecker Stadium and Swinburne Park, Albany County, to the Keeper of the National Register for listing on the National Register. In response to your comments returning this nomination to us on April 17, 2017, staff has done quite a bit of additional research on this property and substantially rewritten the nomination to include the following information:

- additional description and analysis of the site itself
- additional description and analysis of site features
- additional description and analysis of landscape features
- a new resource count
- an additional map with all features labeled
- additional historic photos, site plans and maps
- slightly revised period and areas of significance
- an expanded history and significance statement
- supplementary photos

I feel that this nomination is a substantial improvement over the one initially submitted. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Kathleen LaFrank at 518.268.2165.

Sincerely:

R. Daniel Mackay
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation and
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 1/18/2018 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: 3/5/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 2/20/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.