

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| STATE: | Minnesota |
| COUNTY: | Ramsey |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY DATE | NOV 19 1974 |

1. NAME

COMMON: Como Park Conservatory

AND/OR HISTORIC: Como Park Conservatory

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Como Park

CITY OR TOWN: St. Saint Paul

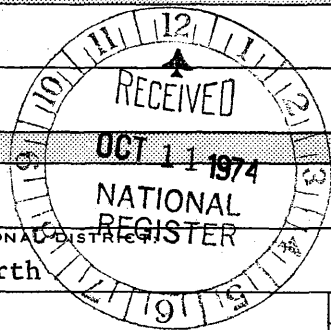
STATE: Minnesota

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Fourth

COUNTY: Ramsey

CODE: 22

CODE: 123



3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Saint Paul

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

CITY OR TOWN: Saint Paul

STATE: Minnesota

CODE: 22

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Registrar of Deeds -- Ramsey County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

CITY OR TOWN: Saint Paul

STATE: Minnesota

CODE: 22

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Statewide Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1974 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Minnesota Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER: Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY OR TOWN: St. Paul

STATE: Minnesota

CODE: 22

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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DATE: _____

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Erection of the present Como Park Conservatory began in 1914 in accordance with designs and specifications prepared by Park Superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer and the King Construction Company of North Tonawanda, New York. The structure was completed the following year and has since retained its original configuration. A program of careful maintenance has insured that this configuration will be preserved for the future.

The structural complex of the conservatory assumes the shape of a "T" in plan. At the axis is the large domed palm room which measures 100 feet in diameter and sixty-four and one-half feet in height. To either side (north and south) are wings 105 feet in length and forty-six feet in width. These wings were originally planned to function as a show house and a room for aquatic plants. Today the north wing houses tropical trees and plants and the south wing is devoted to sunken gardens.

To the rear (west) of the palm room are three growing houses which are linked at the west end to a service building. Each growing house is 105 feet long and twenty-six feet wide; the service building measures thirty feet by 105 feet. Only two of the growing houses are used for this purpose today: The center house (which provides direct linkage between the palm room and the service building) is now devoted to ferns and is open for exhibition. Cold frames, seven growing houses, and hot-beds have been added to meet the needs for additional growing space.

The structural system is typical of the iron/steel truss construction used in conservatories and exhibition halls of the second half of the nineteenth century. The trusses support a rib structure into which the glass is fitted. Both straight and curved glass is used in the palm room and north and south wings. Dominating the palm room dome is a secondary dome and cupola. This room and flanking wings both employ an extensive amount of curvilinear elements.

The heating plant abuts the service building. This provides radiant hot-water heat to all sections of the conservatory complex. All portions included, the ground area of the Como Park Conservatory covers approximately three acres. Facilities exist for propagating over 100,000 plants each year. The present day value of the Conservatory is estimated at two million dollars.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Concerned by the dilapidated condition of the nine original greenhouses at Como Park, the Board of Park Commissioners met on 19 May 1913 to consider future construction of a new adequate and permanent horticultural facility. The Board set aside the sum of \$50.00 which was awarded to Superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer for "getting out a set of general plans for the contemplated erection of new greenhouses in Como Park". Three months later, on 13 August, Nussbaumer presented the Park Board with plans for a new range of greenhouses "sufficient for the need of the department for the next fifty years". The site chosen was that on which the nine dilapidated greenhouses were located. These were to be taken down and a temporary shelter erected to protect the valuable collection of ornamental and stock plants.

Also in 1913 a bond issue of \$280,000 was authorized for improvements in certain Saint Paul parks and parkways; this issue provided funds for the planned conservatory. Bids were submitted by contractors and construction companies, but were rejected at an October 1913 meeting of the Park Board. New bids were called for and the Board's annual report of 1914 stated: "A small beginning in the way of foundation work and grading the site was made. The contract for the building was let on January 16, 1914, to the King Construction Company of New York for the sum of \$58,825.00. The new conservatory will cover ground space 300 feet by 200 feet when completed as planned and will be second to none in both size and appointments to any in the country."

Upon completion in 1915, a number of large plantings which are on display today were planted from the original ornamental and stock plants from the old greenhouses. Among these are the huge-blooming Turner mums which were exhibited at the first Chrysanthemum Show in 1915, and are too large to grow commercially; hence they would be extinct if they had not been perpetuated. Through the years the Como Conservatory has grown in reputation and renown. Members of the Conservatory staff, in addition to responsibility for all floral plantings in the city parks and parkways, has managed to add to the stature of its reputation for outstanding flowers and plant displays.

It is the intention of the Park Board to perpetuate the Conservatory's reputation and preserve the present structure. The United Improvement Bond Issue of 1953 provided \$150,000 for a Conservatory and Greenhouse rehabilitation and improvement program. This program was completed in 1961, and has insured the future of this historic Minnesota structure.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

St. Paul Board of Park Commissioners Annual Reports 1913, 1914, 1915
City of Saint Paul: Como Park 1873-1973, Ann Kelley
 Interview with Robert V. Schweitz, Supervisor of Floriculture, Como Park
 Conservatory
 King Construction Company, Catalog #52, North Tonawanda, New York

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 N4980760

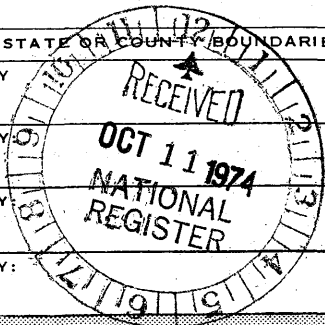
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|---|-----------|---------|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |
| NW | 0 . . | 0 . . | | 44 | 08 | 54 |
| NE | 0 . . | 0 . . | | 93 | 09 | 04 |
| SE | 0 . . | 0 . . | | | | |
| SW | 0 . . | 0 . . | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **3 acres**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Charles W. Nelson, Supervisor, Historic Sites Survey and Planning**

ORGANIZATION: **Minnesota Historical Society** DATE: **20 August 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Building 25, Fort Snelling**

CITY OR TOWN: **Saint Paul** STATE: **Minnesota** CODE: **22**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name: Russell W. Fridley
 Russell W. Fridley, Director

Title: Minnesota Historical Society

Date: October 7, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Arthur H. Hays
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 11/19/74

ATTEST:

Charles H. Hays
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 11.19.74