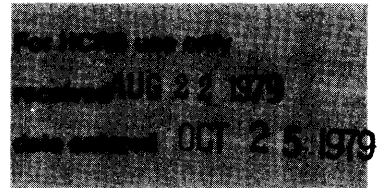


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Overton Park Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number I-40 Bounded by Poplar Avenue, E. Parkway N., N. Parkway E., and Kenilworth Street not for publication
city, town Memphis vicinity of _____ congressional district 8th

state Tennessee code 047 county Shelby code 157

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Memphis

street & number Memphis Park Commission, 2599 Avery Avenue

city, town Memphis vicinity of _____ state Tennessee

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Register

street & number Shelby County Office Building, 160 N. Main Street

city, town Memphis state Tennessee 38103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historical and Architectural Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date November 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Overton Park Historic District consists of some 342 acres of open meadow and dense forest located in mid-town Memphis. Connected to Riverside Park on the Mississippi River by a 22 mile Parkway which originally encompassed the city, Overton Park was the first component of the original Memphis Parks System of 1900. The design of the park exemplifies the most enlightened principles of late nineteenth century urban landscape architecture. It represents an outstanding example of natural conservation. In addition, it contains many buildings and structures of cultural, educational, recreational, and architectural significance.

The park is bounded on both the north and east sides by the Parkway, by Poplar Avenue on the south, and by Kenilworth Street and North McLean Boulevard on the west. Although now surrounded by medium density, mixed-use urban development, this area originally lay at the northeast corner of the city. It is significant that despite over seventy-five years of continuous use as a park, the major natural characteristics of the area have been preserved intact. This has been due to the prevailing philosophy of naturalistic landscaping by park designer George E. Kessler, continued through the years by the Memphis Park Commission. The original natural pattern of meadows and dense forest, as well as the natural topography and drainage configurations, have all been preserved for the most part, and have been allowed to determine land usage within the park. Overton Park is roughly divided into two halves by Lick Creek, which flows from south to north through the center of the park. To the west are a series of gently rolling open meadows. It is here that the majority of cultural and educational facilities are located. To the east of the creek the park is heavily wooded, laced with nature trails and an occasional picnic area. Within these 175 acres of near-virgin Oak-Hickory climax forest may be found 49 varieties of trees, including numerous 300 year old oaks, measuring over four feet in diameter and over 100 feet in height. Over 100 species of birds and 84 varieties of wild flowers are indigenous to the park.

In addition to the natural attributes of the park are the man-made aspects. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems are separated for the most part, so as to minimize the impact of the automobile on the pedestrian's enjoyment of nature. The vehicular system consists of a series of interconnected loops which follow the natural contours of the topography and afford access from the arterial streets which border the park. Since 1972, the eastern portion of the park has been closed to all vehicular traffic on weekends. The major exception to this organically designed system is a restricted access bus route which runs in a straight line across the park from east to west, separating the northern one-quarter of the park from the remainder on the south. This concrete roadway occupies an original railroad right-of-way predating the establishment of the park. It is this route which has been proposed for the controversial Interstate 40 Expressway through the park.

(continued)

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Intertwined with the vehicular circulation system is a separate network of footpaths and nature trails which wind through the forest and across the meadows, crossing Lick Creek on narrow, arched, stone bridges. Included in this pedestrian system is the nine-hole, 2400 yard golf course.

Within the park are some 54 major buildings and structures which serve a variety of recreational, cultural, and educational purposes. The majority of these are located in the open meadow areas of the west side. The main entrance to the park, located at the intersection of Kenilworth Street and Poplar Avenue, is marked by two classical limestone columns (1) crowned with eagles, erected in 1954. Immediately inside the entrance is located a memorial to long-time West Tennessee political leader E. H. Crump (2), consisting of a bronze statue on a stone base, sculpted by Donald H. DeLue in 1957. Just north of the Crump Memorial is a small concrete gazebo (3) with a wooden pergola, concrete benches, and a drinking fountain.

Further north, sited at the highest point in the park, are the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery (4) and gardens. Renaissance Revival in style, the original white Georgia marble building was designed by James Gamble Rogers, and was dedicated in 1916. This original building was modeled after the library of J.P. Morgan and closely resembles the Villa of Pope Julius III. The symmetrical west facade is distinguished by a central arched opening flanked by openings spanned by lintels. Two well-planned modern additions, in 1955 and 1973, have expanded the gallery's facilities to the east without detracting from the integrity of the original building. Around the gallery are formal landscaped gardens and a monumental terraced stairway on the west.

Across the street, on the north side of the hill, is the Memphis Open Air Theatre (5), constructed by the Works Progress Administration in 1936. The natural amphitheatre, which contains rows of wooden benches, is dominated by the large reinforced concrete orchestra shell. On either side of the shell are large, modern, metal-panelled, stage wing buildings. Immediately to the east is the modern four-story Memphis Academy of Arts (6), built in 1956, and characterized by free-standing white concrete sunbreaks, folded-plate concrete roof, open balconies, and roof terraces. Adjacent to the Academy is a twenty-five foot granite campanile, built in 1906, and later dedicated to L.B. McFarland, founder of the Memphis Park Commission (7). The tower contains a clock and chimes. Across the street to the east is part of the golf course, and further to the south is the Tudor-style

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Abe Goodman Golf Clubhouse (12), constructed in 1926 of brick, with brick terraces and tile roof.

North of the Academy of Arts are located the Formal Gardens (8), laid out in c. 1908 as a memorial to local educator Clara Conway, and the Jenny M. Higbee Memorial (9) of 1908, consisting of six marble Ionic columns arranged on a semi-circular marble base, surrounding a water fountain. Higbee was the founder of a prominent Memphis girls' school. To the north is a children's playground and a shallow, circular concrete wading pool (11), given by Duke C. Bowers in 1914. Across the road to the east is a large meadow containing baseball diamonds and football and soccer fields. On the west edge of this meadow is the powerful "Doughboy" memorial to veterans of World War I (10). Erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1926, the memorial consists of a large bronze statue of a soldier on a stone base, sculpted by Nancy C. Hahn. Across the playing fields to the east is Rainbow Lake (13), a shallow two-acre man-made pond created in c. 1910.

The eastern side of the park is dominated by dense forest. Along the far eastern edge, fronting on East Parkway, however, is located a Park Commission maintenance compound consisting of nine buildings. Largely screened from public view by the surrounding woods, the compound includes a small modern office building (48) constructed of stone and wood, a large concrete workshop building (49) built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s, several modern utility buildings, and a new complex of six glass and steel greenhouses (55). Adjacent to the compound at 215 East Parkway is an unoccupied wood frame private residence (54), c. 1920. Immediately north of the compound, also fronting on Parkway, is a modern city fire station (47), constructed of masonry with a mansard roof.

North of this fire station is a picnic area, furnished with tables and charcoal grills, and a large, open picnic pavilion (46). Framed in wood, with a raised wooden floor, the pavilion is hexagonal in plan, with a hexagonal roof and cupola.

The Memphis Zoological Garden, established in 1905, occupies the north-west corner of the park, between North Parkway and the bus route. Outside the main entrance, located on the bus route, are two wood frame bus-stop pavilions (14) with wooden benches, c. 1910-1920. The main entrance gate (15) is flanked by masonry columns surmounted by stone lions acquired from the Van Vleet residence in 1935. The oldest part of the zoo is located immediately north of the main entrance and includes the Carnivora Building (17) and the old Pachyderm House (18). Both buildings are constructed of the same stuccoed masonry, buttressed at the corners and decorated with various animal sculptures. On the

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four corners of the roof of the Carnivora Building are sculpted lions accompanied by friendly cupids. Over the main entrance of the Pachyderm House (now remodeled for use as an education building) was formerly located a marvelous sculpted elephant's head, now removed. The Carnivora Building features both interior and exterior cages arranged along both sides of a central gallery. Both buildings were designed by L.M. Weathers, architect, and were constructed in 1909. Also located in this area is a small children's amusement park (42), and the south Concession (16), which is an extensively remodeled structure probably originally dating to c. 1910, featuring a covered outdoor patio. Between the Carnivora and old Pachyderm buildings is the modern Primate House (19), constructed of rough concrete, with numerous skylights and outdoor cages. Immediately to the east are the Wolf Caves (23), which along with Bear Caves (21) and Otter Cave (22), were built by the Works Progress Administration c. 1939. Constructed of poured concrete, these caves exhibit a strong plasticity of form and include a rich variety of dens, cliffs, moats, and pools, all executed with great sculptural expression. Nearby, to the east of the Wolf Caves, is Monkey Island (24), consisting of an earth hill containing caves built of stone, and surrounded by a concrete moat. Monkey Island was also a W.P.A. project, constructed in 1936. The Flight Cage (20), which is located between the Wolf and Bear Caves, is a forty foot high, steel frame structure, cylindrical in shape. Constructed in 1935, the Flight Cage, with its clearly articulated riveted joints and flowing lines, is an extremely graceful form.

To the north of this central area, bordered by North Parkway, are a series of newer structures. These include the Tortoise (32) and Hippopotamus (31) houses, animal hospital (28), commissary (29), north restroom building (30), maintenance shop (27), east concession (25), and the hooved animal corrals (26). Further to the west, bordered by McLean Blvd. is a somewhat less densely developed area which contains several older structures. The Octagon Barn (37), so named because of its shape in plan, is built of stone, with a cupola at its top. Surrounding the barn are a series of outdoor corrals enclosed with concrete walls. Adjacent on the east are the Sea Lion and Swan Pools (35), built in 1936, using a combination of stone and concrete. Each pool forms half of the circular structure, which is divided by a stone wall into two semi-circular areas. The modern Reptile House (33), built of concrete and covered with an earth berm, is located immediately east. Nearby is the Ibex Mountain (36), which closely resembles the Bear and Wolf Caves in construction technique and was probably also built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. The Mountain consists of a series of cliffs and caves made of concrete, surrounded by a concrete moat of more recent construction. Immediately west is

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the modern west concession/restroom building (38). In the extreme northwest corner of the zoo is the recently constructed Aquarium (40). Along the far west side is an open area of rolling meadow used as a contact area for domestic animals. The superintendent's house (39), c. 1910, is a one-story cottage sheathed with both rough marble and wood siding. Directly to the northeast is the extensively remodeled Palm House (41), now used to exhibit tropical birds. In addition to partitioning the interior, the original glass roof and side walls have been replaced with a combination of metal and translucent plastic panels. Between this building and the Carnivora House (17) is a small modern zoo office building (34).

The east side of the zoo has in recent years been expanded beyond Lick Creek, formerly the eastern boundary. The new facilities in this area include a series of corrals and open areas for hooved animals (44). These corrals are enclosed by concrete moats and earth berms containing concrete dens. To the north of this area is the new Pachyderm House (43), a complex array of walled courtyards, moats, and pools arranged around the south side of the semi-circular building. Construction is of rough textured concrete. At the far eastern edge of the zoo is a new entrance gatehouse and restroom pavilion (45), also built of rough concrete. Beyond the east gate is a new landscaped parking lot with an adjacent picnic and playground area.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES CONTRIBUTING TO THE OVERTON PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT (Numbers refer to site plan.)

3. Gazebo: Concrete with wood lattice pergola and drinking fountain.
4. Brooks Memorial Art Gallery: 1916, white Georgia marble, Italian Renaissance Revival style; two later additions (1944 and 1973), landscaped gardens, monumental exterior stairs and terraces.
5. Memphis Open Air Theatre: 1936, reinforced concrete orchestra shell, wooden benches and stage; modern metal storage wings.
7. L.B. McFarland Memorial Campanile: c. 1906, twenty-five foot granite tower with clock and chimes.
8. Clara Conway Memorial Formal Gardens: c. 1908, concrete walkways.
9. Jenny M. Higbee Memorial: - 1908, six marble Ionic columns on a semi-circular marble base surrounding a drinking fountain.

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10. "Doughboy" World War I Memorial: 1926, bronze statue of soldier on stone base.
11. Wading Pool: 1914, concrete with water spray in center.
12. Abe Goodman Golf Clubhouse: 1926, brick, Tudor style, 1½ story, tile roof, brick patio.
13. Rainbow Lake: c. 1910, two-acre man-made lake.
14. Bus Pavilions: c. 1910-1920, open wood frame, hipped roofs, wooden benches.
15. Zoo Entrance Gate Posts: 1935, masonry, 10 feet in height, with carved stone lions.
17. Carnivora Building: 1909, one story, stuccoed masonry, clerestory, indoor and outdoor cages; decorative animal sculptures on exterior, including four lions with children.
18. Old Pachyderm House (Education Building): 1909, one story, stuccoed masonry.
20. Flight Cage: 1935, 40 feet high, cylindrical steel frame with wire mesh enclosure.
21. Bear Caves: c. 1939, concrete cliffs, moats, and dens.
22. Otter Cave: c. 1939, concrete caves and pool, earth berm at rear, underground viewing chamber.
23. Wolf Caves: 1939, concrete caves and moats.
24. Monkey Island: 1936, concrete moat and retaining walls, earth mound with stone caves.
35. Sea Lion/Swan Pools: c. 1936, stone and concrete pools and walls; circular; divided into two pools.
36. Ibex Mountain: c. 1939, concrete cliffs and dens; modern reinforced concrete moat and retaining walls.
37. Octagon Barn: Stone, octagonal plan with octagonal roof and cupola; concrete walled courtyards.

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39. Superintendent's House: c. 1910, one-story cottage, marble and wood frame exterior.
41. Tropical Bird House: Formerly the "Palm House", extensively remodeled with translucent plastic and corrugated metal roof panels, brick walls.
46. Picnic Pavilion: Wood frame, with wood floor, open side railings, roof lantern, hexagonal plan.
54. Private Residence (215 E. Parkway): c. 1920, 1½ story, wood frame cottage with front porch, masonry foundation walls and chimneys.

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OTHER BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES WITHIN THE OVERTON PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
(Numbers refer to Site Plan.)

1. Main Entrance Gateposts: 1954, classical style, stone with balustrades, bronze plaques and carved eagles.
2. E.H. Crump Memorial: 1957, bronze statue with stone base.
6. Memphis Academy of Arts: 1956, reinforced concrete and buff-colored brick, 3 stories; folded plate concrete roof.
19. Primate House: Modern, reinforced concrete, one-story with skylights and outdoor wire mesh cages.
25. East Concession: Modern, stone and wood frame, flat roof
26. Hooved Animal Corrals: Concrete retaining walls and open shelters with flat roofs.
27. Maintenance Shop: Modern, concrete block with pitched shingled roof.
28. Animal Hospital: Modern, one-story, brick, with flat built-up roof.
29. Commissary: Modern, one-story, painted brick and concrete block, flat roof.
30. North Restrooms: Modern, one-story brick, flat built-up roof.
31. Hippopotamus House: Modern, one-story, brick, flat built-up roof, with open gallery and concrete moats.
32. Tortoise House: Modern, one-story, brick, with open gallery and concrete walled courtyards.
33. Reptile House: Modern, reinforced concrete, one-story, covered with earth berm.
34. Office Building: Modern, one-story, masonry, with flat roof.
38. West Concession/Restrooms: Modern, one-story, concrete, with flat roof.
40. Aquarium: Modern, one-story, brick, with flat roof; brick garden walls.
42. Amusement Area: Merry-go-round, other mechanical rides for small children.

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43. New Pachyderm House: Modern, one-story, reinforced concrete, flat roof, concrete and heavy timber retaining walls and moats.
44. Hooved Animal Corrals: Modern, with concrete dens, and earth berm enclosures, concrete retaining walls.
45. East Gate/ Restrooms: Modern, reinforced concrete, one-story, with flat roof.
47. Fire Station No. 13: Modern, masonry, with composition shingle mansard roof and walls.
48. Park Commission Office Building: Modern, one-story, wood and stone, with flat built-up roof.
49. Maintenance Shop Building: c. 1935, one-story, poured concrete, with flat roof.
50. Storage Building: Modern, prefabricated metal construction, one-story.
51. Utility Building: Concrete masonry, one-story, pitched roof.
52. Garage: Modern, one-story, prefabricated metal construction.
53. Utility Building: Modern, one-story, prefabricated metal construction.
55. Greenhouses: Modern, six glass and steel frame greenhouse wings with concrete block structure in center.
56. Utility Building: Modern, one-story, concrete block and wood frame, flat roof.
57. Parking Shed: Modern, prefabricated metal, open sides.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1900-1902	Builder/Architect	Olmstead Brothers George E. Kessler
-----------------------	-----------	--------------------------	--

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Overton Park, occupying some 342 acres in the heart of Memphis, has for over seventy-five years afforded the opportunity for the city's populace to integrate the enjoyment of nature into its urban existence. Exemplifying the enlightened principles of late nineteenth century urban park design, Overton Park was the first component of the Memphis Parks System. It contains one of the world's finest urban forests, as well as numerous institutions of historic, cultural and architectural significance.

The Memphis Park Commission, established in 1900 as part of the nationwide movement to set aside park lands within the country's rapidly expanding urban areas, undertook as its first project the establishment of a new park system for the city. This effort represented the fulfillment of the desires of city founder Judge John Overton, who in 1819 laid out the first city plan. Overton's plan, which included a system of public squares and promenades, had been largely ignored during the intervening years, however, with only one of the original squares remaining. The firm of Olmstead Brothers, sons of Frederick Law Olmstead, "father of American landscape architecture", was consulted by the Park Commission regarding the new park system. The firm proposed the acquisition of two large tracts of undeveloped land, one overlooking the Mississippi River and the other a tract known as Lea Woods, located on the northeast edge of the city. To tie the two together a tree-lined parkway around the city perimeter was proposed. Regarding Lea Woods, later to become Overton Park, Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., who headed the nation's first landscape architecture program at Harvard, is reported to have exclaimed that "nowhere in America had he seen a more naturally beautiful site for a park and that New York City would give \$5 million for a virgin forest of such magnificance." In 1901 the Olmstead proposal was implemented. Lea Woods was purchased by the city for \$110,000 and was by popular referendum renamed Overton Park in honor of city founder and justice of the first Tennessee Supreme Court, John Overton. Shortly thereafter the plan was completed as land for Riverside Park and the Parkway was acquired.

To design the new park, noted landscape architect and urban planner George E. Kessler (1862-1923) of Kansas City was retained by the Park Commission. Kessler, who as a young man participated in the creation of New York's Central Park under the supervision of Frederick Law Olmstead, designed the Kansas City park system, a comprehensive city plan for Dallas, and was landscape architect for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. In 1902 landscaping began in Overton Park under Kessler's direction.

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

"'Arts in Park' Offers Concerts Free in Shell", The Press Scimitar, July 3, 1973.

"A Concrete Road Thru Overton", The Press Scimitar, March 13, 1947

(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 342

Quadrangle name Northeast Memphis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	2	28	4	10	3	8	9	36	15	10
Zone			Easting			Northing					

B

1	6	2	28	2	10	3	8	9	2	5	10	10
Zone			Easting			Northing						

C

1	6	2	27	0	4	0	3	8	9	2	7	4	0
Zone			Easting			Northing							

D

1	6	2	26	9	5	0	3	8	9	3	8	6	0
Zone			Easting			Northing							

E

Zone			Easting			Northing							

F

Zone			Easting			Northing							

G

Zone			Easting			Northing							

H

Zone			Easting			Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The southern boundary of Overton Park begins at the northeast corner of the intersection of Poplar Ave. and Kenilworth St. and runs east along the north side of Poplar Ave. approximately 3800 ft. to the northwest corner of Poplar Ave. and East Parkway N. From this point

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Williamson, Jr.

organization James F. Williamson Jr., Architect

date November 28, 1978

street & number 2004 Lincoln American Tower

telephone 901-526-2800

city or town Memphis,

state Tennessee 38103

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Herbert L. Harper

title Herbert L. Harper

Executive Director Tennessee Historical Commission

date August 15, 1979

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

date 10-25-79

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Bill [unclear]

date 10/25/79

Chief of Registrations

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Kessler's plan followed the naturalistic tradition of landscape architecture advocated by Olmstead and Vaux. The existing topography, drainage patterns, and ecological balance were all respected and altered only minimally. A hierarchy of land usage was established based upon natural characteristics, such as vegetation density and relationship to the surrounding urban context. Thus, the higher intensities of land use were concentrated in the open meadows of the western, urban side of the park, whereas the heavily wooded eastern side, at that time the edge of the city, was preserved in its natural forest condition. The park was envisaged as a carefully composed series of open meadows and dense areas, intertwined with nature trails and picnic areas. A separation of vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems was established so that roadways and footpaths intersected only infrequently. Throughout, the landscaping approach was in keeping with the informal, naturalistic tradition originated in the 18th century by the English Landscape Gardening School. This approach, which was an outgrowth of the romantic movement in English literature, emphasized the use of curving lines and irregular forms. As such it contrasted with the more formal French and Italian schools which were characterized by a rigid geometry. The English School, also known as the "Picturesque" school, valued rough, rugged landscapes, in which the efforts of the designer were intentionally concealed so as to give the appearance of an untouched, "natural" environment which had, in fact, been carefully altered to achieve functional and esthetic ends. In the United States this tradition began with the invention of the 19th century rural cemetery which was used by the public for picnics and strolling. This trend set the stage for Olmstead and Vaux who first saw the potential for the design of new open spaces defined by curving boundaries of untrimmed trees. Thus nature was seen as the raw material for purposeful manipulation and modeling.

Overton Park is also significant as an outstanding effort in the field of conservation. Ranking among the world's great urban forests, the park contains some 175 acres of near-virgin Oak-Hickory climax growth. Forty-nine varieties of trees are found in the park, the largest of which are the numerous oaks measuring over 100 feet in height, with diameters in excess of four feet, and aged over 300 years. Over 100 species of birds and 84 varieties of wild flowers are indigenous to the park.

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The park contains numerous centers of cultural, educational, and recreational activity, many of which are housed in buildings possessing architectural significance. Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, an elegant example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style, was designed by architect James Gamble Rogers of New York, and dedicated in 1916. Rogers was also architect for the Shelby County Court House. Established as a memorial to Samuel Hamilton Brooks, local wholesale grocer and president of the First National Bank, the gallery's several permanent collections include the Kress Collection of renaissance art, the McCall Collection, and a rare complete set of Doughty porcelain birds. The gallery's cultural and educational contributions to the community have been of great significance. Among the masters whose works have been exhibited are Picasso, Rembrandt, El Greco, Gainsborough, Rubens, Leonardo, Renoir, Pollack, Lipchitz, and Van Gogh.

The Memphis Open Air Theatre, constructed in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration, has for over forty years featured outdoor performances by such notable entertainers as Benny Goodman, Beverly Sills, and Marguerite Piazza, as well as local groups such as the Memphis Children's Theatre. The theatre is architecturally significant for its reinforced concrete orchestra shell and its use of the sloping hillside to form a natural amphitheatre.

The competition-winning Memphis Academy of Arts, designed by William Mann and Roy Harrover, was built in 1956. An outstanding example of contemporary architectural design, the building is distinguished by its free-standing concrete sunbreaks, folded-plate roof structure and generous roof terraces and balconies. The Academy offers a wide-ranging program of instruction on all levels in crafts and fine arts.

The nine-hole golf course, the first municipal course in the city, was opened in 1911 and each year hosts the world's largest junior golf tournament. The Tudor-style Abe Goodman Clubhouse was built in 1926.

Established in 1905 with a single bear chained to a tree, the Memphis Zoological Garden had by 1933 grown to be the fifth largest free zoo in the nation and the largest in the South. By 1976 it contained over 2000 animals. Among the oldest existing zoo buildings, built in 1909, are the Carnivora and old Pachyderm Buildings. Other early buildings include the Octagon Barn, Superintendent's House, old Palm House, and sea-lion pool. Among the most significant structures are a series of projects executed by the Works Progress Administration in the mid-1930s. These structures, all of which employed the sculptural possibilities of reinforced concrete to create a rich variety of imaginative forms, include the Bear, Wolf, and Otter Caves, Monkey Island, and the Ibex

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Mountain. Hosting over half a million visitors annually, the zoo has long played a major educational role in the community, providing vivid lessons in biology and zoology for generations of Mid-southerners.

In recent years Overton Park has attracted nationwide attention due to the controversy surrounding the proposed routing of the Interstate 40 Expressway through the park. For over twenty years, since first proposed in 1955, the completion of this segment of the highway has been blocked by the U.S. Supreme Court as well as by the rulings of a succession of U.S. Secretaries of Transportation. Leading the opposition have been local citizens dedicated to the protection of the park and such national organizations as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Sierra Club, and the National Audubon Society. In its 1971 landmark decision on the Overton Park case, the U.S. Supreme Court made its first interpretation of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. The Court found that the intent of Congress was that "the protection of park land was to be given paramount importance." This ruling directed then Secretary of Transportation John Volpe to determine whether or not all "feasible and prudent" alternatives to the park route had been considered. In light of the Court's interpretation of Section 4(f), Volpe reversed an earlier decision, thus ruling out any Federal subsidy for construction of the highway through the park. This precedent-setting court decision has since resulted in the protection of many other parks around the country and ranks among the most important decisions in the history of preservation law.

Overton Park has for over seventy-five years provided the citizens of Memphis with access to over three hundred acres of unspoiled nature in the heart of the city. It exemplifies the most enlightened principles of late nineteenth century landscape design and fulfills the original vision of the city's founders for a city park system. The park is significant for the conservation of one of the world's great urban forests. In addition, it is the home of a number of the city's most important cultural, educational and recreational institutions, many of which exhibit architectural and historical significance.

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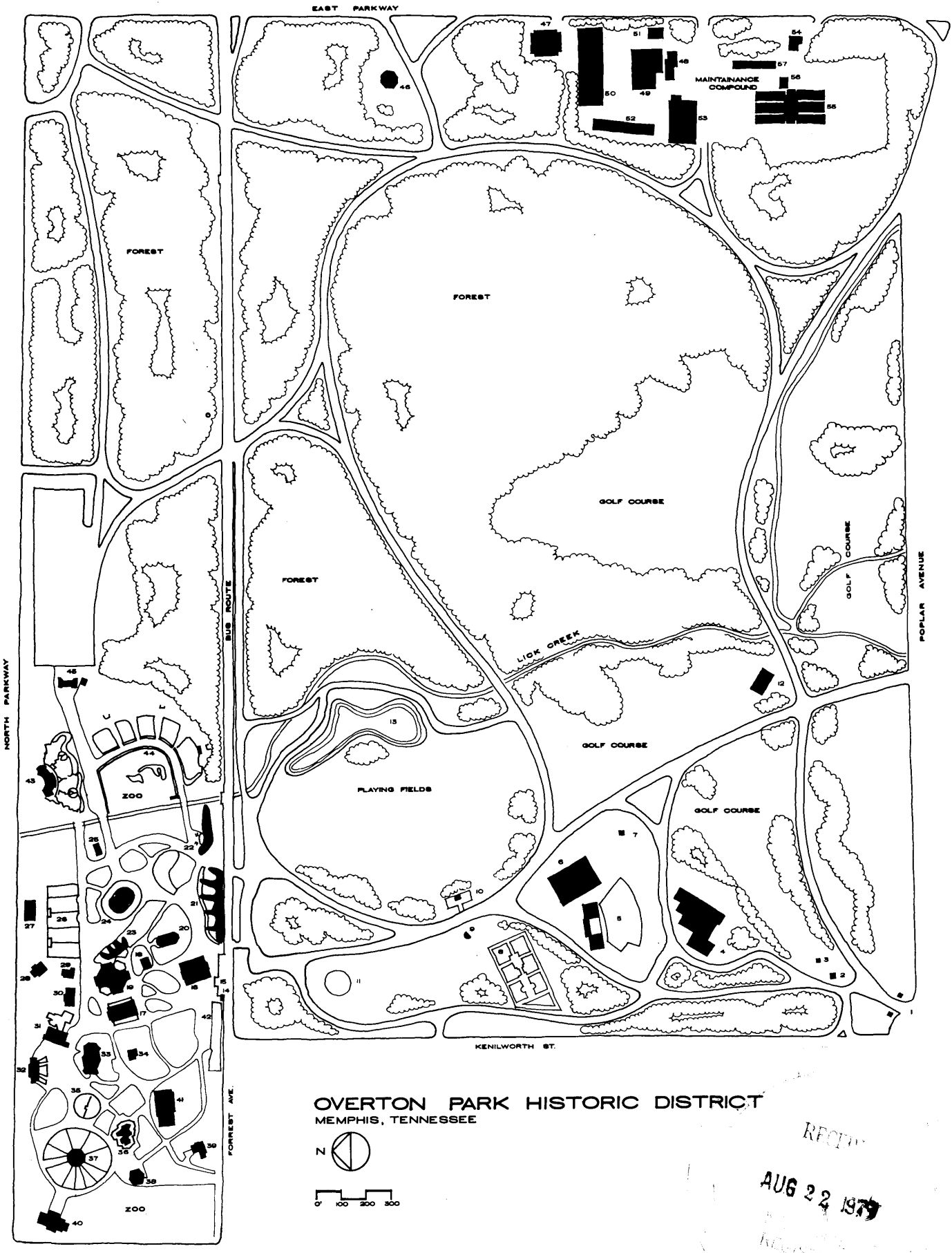
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the boundary runs north along the west side of East Parkway N. approximately 3600 ft. to the southwest corner of East Parkway N. and North Parkway E. From this point it runs west along the south side of North Parkway E. approximately 4800 ft. to the southeast corner of North Parkway E. and N. McLean Blvd. It then turns south, running 800 ft. along the east side of N. McLean Blvd. to the northeast corner of N. McLean Blvd. and Forrest Aven. From this point it runs east along the north side of Forrest Avenue approximately 750 ft. to the corner of Forrest Avenue and Kenilworth Street. It then turns south and runs approximately 2750 ft. along the east side of Kenilworth Street to the point of beginning.

The property nominated includes all the area developed as Overton Park.



OVERTON PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
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