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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gardencourt Historic District

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 1010 Alta Vista Road

not for publication

city, town Louisville

vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Jefferson code 111 zip code 40207

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Louisville and Jefferson Co. Ky. Multiple Property Listing

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

David L. Morgan  
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan, State Historic Preservation Officer Date 10-11-88

State or Federal agency and bureau NA

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

Signature of commenting or other official NA Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Patrick Andrews 12/1/88  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling  
DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure  
AGRICULTURE/Substance/Horticultural facility  
LANDSCAPE/Garden

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Work in progress**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Beaux Arts  
Late 19th and early 20th Century  
American Movements  
 Other: Adamesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
 walls Brick  
 roof Slate  
 other n/a

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Gardencourt Historic District (Gardencourt) is situated in the eastern portion of Louisville in a quiet residential neighborhood named Alta Vista. It encompasses three buildings within 14.9 acre designed historic landscape site. The estate is sited on a hill overlooking Cherokee Park (National Register listed, 1982). The irregularly shaped property, which retains the original lot boundaries as delineated on the Alta Vista Subdivision Plat in 1900, is bounded by Alta Vista Road to the northeast. The Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary campus to the south and southeast, Cherokee Park to the west and Alta Vista Circle to the north (a circa 1975 subdivision) (see site map). Gardencourt consists of two resource types, designed historic landscape features and high style Domestic structures. The property contains the following buildings: The primary residence, a carriage house, and a gardener's cottage/greenhouse, all of which contribute. Four designed landscape features are on the property: these include the pergola garden, rose garden and terrace garden which contribute, and the entry court garden which does not contribute. The property contains two contributing structures: the original roadway and additions and the entry gates flanking brick walls (see resource map).

**DOMESTIC COMPLEX**

Three domestic buildings are situated on the Gardencourt property. The mansion is located atop a hillside near the center of the lot. The two service buildings, the carriage house and greenhouse, are situated across the main road from one another near the northernmost corner of the lot.

The Gardencourt mansion (photo 1-5,9,11,13,17-20) is a two-and-one-half story residence of brick with stone trim designed in the Beaux Arts style. It rests on a stone foundation. In plan, the Gardencourt residence is composed of a large rectangular main building block to whose northwest side is attached a narrower rectangular main building block which forms an "L". The "L" has been filled in with a single story brick auditorium and entrance addition that was added by the University of Louisville in 1962 (see "Main House: First Floor Plan").

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Caron's Louisville Directory, 1900-1930.

City of Louisville Archives. Olmsted Plan File. 1988.

Interview with Ken Guzowski, Preservation Consultant.  
June 1, 1988

Interview with Mrs. John Clay. June 1, 1988.

Kramer, Carl. Frederick Law Olmsted and His Louisville Legacy.  
Louisville Community Design Center: Louisville, 1988.

Louisville Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts  
Commission. National Register File. Louisville, 1988.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): n/a  
 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:  
 State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Specify repository:

University of Louisville Archives  
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 14.9 Acres

UTM References

A 

16	614570	4233120
Zone	Easting	Northing

  
C 

16	615190	4232740
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B 

16	615190	4233115
Zone	Easting	Northing

  
D 

16	614570	4232750
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n/a  See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes all of City of Louisville Block  
74C, Lots 3 & 7.

n/a  See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The property being nominated includes the area historically associated  
with the property as it was platted in 1900 as part of the Alta Vista  
Subdivision. Since 1900 the dimensions of the property have not changed.

n/a  See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Joanne Weeter, Research Coordinator  
organization Louisville Landmarks Commission date August 12, 1988  
street & number 609 W. Jefferson Street telephone (502) 895-1520  
city or town Louisville, KY 40202 state Kentucky zip code 40202

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G n/a

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape Architecture

Architecture

Period of Significance

1906-1933

Significant Dates

1906

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Gardencourt, the residence of Lucie Underwood Norton, Martha A. (Mattie) Norton and Mrs. Minnie Norton Caldwell, is locally significant under criterion C for its high design aesthetics. It is an excellent representative of the Country Estate property type in the Suburban Development context for Jefferson County. The property features a designed historic landscape conceived by the nationally recognized landscape architecture firm of The Olmsted Brothers. It includes a Beaux Arts style residence, the only known local example designed by the Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, and two Adamesque revival style ancillary buildings presumed designed by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge.

Lucie Underwood Norton (1859-1937), Martha A. (Mattie) Norton (1853-1911) were among the wealthy granddaughters of William Norton (1781-1858), a successful regional manufacturer of hand tools, and the daughters of George W. Norton (1814-1889), who made his fortune as a Russelville storekeeper and banker and later as a Louisville banker.

The Norton sisters, who completed construction of their Beaux Arts style residence in 1906, chose to build on a large lot in the newly formed Olmsted Brothers-designed subdivision of Alta Vista. They purchased a hillside parcel which fronted along Cherokee Park adjacent to the property and residence widely known as Norton Hall (demolished 1962) which was owned by their brother, George W. Norton Jr. and his wife Margaret Muldoon Norton. Alta Vista, which literally means high view, was platted in 1900 by J.B. McFerran, an educator and land speculator. It was among a number of suburban real estate developments that sought the amenities afforded by Louisville's park system designed by The Olmsteds. Gardencourt is located adjacent to Cherokee Park, the eastern-most of the three major Olmsted-designed parks.

See continuation sheet

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LANDSCAPE/Unoccupied land  
LANDSCAPE/Natural features

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A single story columned porch, similar to the porch on the principal facade, is sited on the southeast side of Gardencourt. Its three bay divisions are delineated by simple stone columns which support an entablature. Both above the entablature and between each column is a stone balustrade. Metal framed multi-light windows were added on the inside of the portico around 1962, creating a sun room that can be used throughout the year.

The primary facade of Gardencourt is its southeast side. That elevation is symmetrical with three principal building masses with a total of seven bay divisions. The two outer blocks project forward slightly.

The principal feature of the main facade is a single-story stone portico which rests upon a series of steps. Four sets of square and cylindrical columns are grouped in threes across the front and support an entablature topped by a balustrade. The entablature has triglyphs above each column and is lined with dentils. Centered above the porch and marking the entrance is a curved segmental, broken pediment adorned with dentils and rosettes.

Three sets of double doors with multiple lights and transoms are protected by the portico, and lead to the building's interior. They are set within a stone faced wall and have dog-eared door surrounds. A skylight centered in the middle of the portico's roof, allows natural light into the interior through the center doorway.

Directly above the columned portico, on the second floors are two twelve-over-twelve-light windows which flank a central window. This central window has multiple lights and is framed by a stone-faced Gibbs surround. Directly above and breaking the cornice line is a stone-face, multi-light wall dormer, topped by a pediment. Stone bas relief carving fills the pediment, and brackets support it. This wall dormer is, in turn, flanked by multi-light oval-shaped dormer windows with copper roofs.

Flanking this central block are two identical blocks which have two twelve-over-twelve windows on each of the two floors. Stone embellishments on this portion include quoins at the corners, keystones above each window, stone bas relief medallions between the second floor windows and a string-course separating the first and second floors. A wall dormer, identical to the example in the central portion of Gardencourt, but without carving in its pediment, caps this portion of the structure. The cornice is lined with extended rafter eaves.

The secondary facades of the Gardencourt mansion repeat much of the same architectural details found on the columned front. Each face has more or less evenly spaced multi-light windows with keystones on each of the two floors. The stone stringcourse on the primary facade continues between the first and second floors of the secondary facades as well. The roof dormers on the sides, however, are segmentally arched except along the inside of the "L" where they are alternately segmentally arched, pedimented, or oval in shape.

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A single story portico, located off the main block of the house (photos 9, 11, & 19) on the southeast side of the structure, is constructed of stone. It has simple Doric columns with a balustrade railing on the ground level and another at the roof line. The cornice has triglyphs and metopes above each column. The porch was enclosed circa 1940 with metal-framed multi-light windows to create a sun porch.

As originally designed, Gardencourt has a large walled entry court area (photos 4 & 5) located on the inside of the "L" shaped building in which cars were parked. A one-story entrance vestibule, which is now enclosed by a multi-light glass wall and doors, is composed of stone columns flanked by square pilasters faced against brick corner piers. The stone entablature which tops this portion, has triglyphs and metopes above each of the cylindrical columns, is lined with a dentil molding, and is topped by a stone balustrade. A rectangular shaped 1962 auditorium addition now takes up about 50% of the original entry court area. This one-story stone-faced structure abuts the entrance vestibule and the southwest inside wall of the "L". It has two circa 1962 glass-light entrance doors that are topped by rectangular transoms with an implied fan light window within the transom. The entablature is stone.

The rear service area of Gardencourt forms the northeast facade of the building (photos 2 & 3). This portion of the lot drops away, making the end of the service wing two stories with a basement. At the ground level is an access door (not original), above which is a wide stone stringcourse. The first floor is entered by ascending an "L" shaped brick stair. A multi-light door topped by a transom and two nine-over-nine windows fenestrate this level. The second floor has an open porch supported by square wooden columns. A segmentally arched roof dormer is located just above the bracketed cornice. Brick quoins define the corners of this service wing. To the left is a brick retaining wall which originally just went half way up to the first floor level. When the 1962 auditorium addition was built, the brick wall was extended up a full story and was capped by a stone coping. To the left of this is the back side of a small columned pergola and to the left an open air, three-sided laundry-drying area.

Gardencourt's original slate roof, which was replaced in 1988, has a total of six tall brick chimneys; two are at either end of the main block and one is at the ridge of the hipped roof. The sixth is on the east side of the narrower "L".

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In plan, Gardencourt is divided into an entertainment wing and a service wing. Together, they form an "L" shape. The entertainment wing is the broader wing of the two and has, on the ground floor, a grand hall (photo 18) which serves as circulation corridor to the three large reception rooms. These reception rooms include the library, drawing room & parlor (photo 20). The service wing has a long hall that leads to the pantry, kitchen and storage area. The halls in both wings are situated on the inside of the "L". A grand stair (photo 17) leads from the first floor to the second. Gardencourt's second floor room arrangement is almost identical to the first floor's except the rooms are used as bedrooms. The third floor, which originally was used for storage and by the servants as sleeping rooms, is still intact.

Overall, Gardencourt's primary structure retains a high degree of architectural integrity. Although it has been undermaintained through the years, both the interior and exterior appear much the same as they did when the building was completed in 1906. The auditorium addition, added in 1962, was sited on one of the secondary facades of the building and blends well with the existing structure.

Gardencourt's two-story brick carriage house (photo 21-25, 28 & 30) built circa 1906 is a compound, five-part plan building in which the central block is connected to its two side dependencies by hyphens. The use of brick as a construction material echoes the use of brick on the main house. The symmetrically arranged primary facade has, at the center, a large, one-and-one-half story entrance. Although it originally had casement style doors, it has been filled in with wood siding, an eight-over-eight window on the ground floor and a large four-part multi-light window above the ground level. The archway, which is embellished by brick voussoirs and keystones, is topped by a bracket used for hoisting hay, and is flanked by brick cartouches in bas relief. A gabled roof tops this portion. The side dependencies also have gabled roofs but have different fenestrations. To the south is a single eight-over-eight window topped by another eight-over-eight opening at the second floor level. The north dependency has three nearly square six-light windows set high up on the first floor and topped on the second floor by another eight-over-eight window. The slate carriage house roof has hipped roofed dormers and six-over-six multi-light windows. The building has a total of four chimneys. A one-story western-sided rear-garage addition that is slightly offset from the main block was added circa 1962. It has four window bays along the rear and three on either side. Each window is eight-over-eight. A hipped roof tops this portion.



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The carriage house's interior, originally accessible through the carriage house doors, leads to a large room with a two-story loft area ceiling clearance. A central hall which runs the width of the structure serves as a traffic corridor and leads to compartmentalized rooms on both sides.

The circa 1906 gardener's cottage (photos 26, 27 & 29) originally an office, is a small, one-room, rectangular structure resting upon a concrete foundation. This stuccoed building is entered on the short side through a single panelled door which is flanked by multiple side lights and topped by a fully arched fanlight transom. The gabled door hood is supported by pairs of stylized, curvilinear brackets. Two six-over-one windows are located on each of the two secondary facades. The south-west side has additional shorter six-over-one windows. A single stuccoed chimney rises from the building's gabled roof. It has no significant interior details. Attached to the gardener's cottage is a one-story greenhouse with low stucco side walls, which are topped by a window wall and a glass roof that forms a "T". A temporary glass, wood, and fiber-glass rectangular addition with a gabled roof was added to the "T" circa 1960. The Olmsted maintenance philosophy was perpetuated by the construction of the greenhouse. The gardener's cottage and the attached greenhouse addition are architecturally intact and contribute to the Gardencourt district.

The pastoral and formal elements of Gardencourt's landscape provide a suitable backdrop for the grand primary residence and its ancillary structure (photos 27 & 28).

DESIGN LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects from Brookline, Massachusetts, conceived Gardencourt's landscape to follow these design principles: An element of privacy, i.e., the separation of public and private space; Transitional areas that offer surprise to the viewers; Formality; Boundary definition. Olmsted used heavily planted edges, and often designed enclosed areas; The use of native species; A maintenance philosophy; Finally, the design of the grounds reflects the design of the building. This can be seen in brick work patterns in fences, garden walls, etc. These principles, in evidence throughout the Gardencourt landscape, are addressed in the text along with the description of each landscaped area. The Olmsted style of landscape is based on nineteenth century English landscape designs. The Olmsted firm assessed the naturally occurring contours of the hillside terrain and developed a geomorphic concept whereby the existing trees, hills and valleys were integrated into a landscape design (see circa 1928 aerial photo).

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The four formally designed gardens on the Gardencourt site are the terrace garden, the pergola garden, and rose garden, and the entry court garden. The pergola garden, which is adjacent to the Gardencourt residence, features formally arranged, symmetrical planting beds and is axially aligned with the portico of the main house. The rose garden, which was a later circa 1920's addition, is in turn axially aligned with the end pavillions in the pergola garden. These formal gardens, evoke a feeling of conservatism and order and are contained within what would appear to be naturally occurring park-like, pastoral setting (photos 1, 4-16, 27 & 28).

The Gardencourt property is more or less level to the east and slopes down on the north, south, and west sides (photo 16). It contains many trees throughout, with a heavier concentration of trees and shrubs along the service road adjacent to the property's northeast boundary, along the boundary adjacent to Cherokee Park, to the southeast in the middle of the lot boundary closest to the formal rose garden, and along the terrace wall in front of the main residence. This heavy concentration of trees between the public and private spaces acts as a barrier to sight and sound and is common within the work of the Olmsted firm.

Gardencourt's curvilinear road system, provides access to the residence and outbuildings from Alta Vista Road and to Cherokee Park. The main entrance (photo 23) is situated at the northern most corner of the lot and is marked by brick piers and iron gates. This main road runs north-south between the carriage house and the greenhouse and then gently arcs westward toward the Gardencourt residence and its original entry court area. Around 1947, another road was added to the existing road near the front of the main house to provide adequate circulation and parking. Together the added road and a portion of the main road form an irregular oval. A service road connects the carriage house with Cherokee Park to the southwest and separates the estate owner's domain from that of the employee's. Midway along the northwest lot line it crosses over into the park. Near the juncture of the main road and the service road, a secondary service road extends in a southwesterly direction to the rear service area of the Gardencourt residence. The entire road system, despite the 1947 road and parking area addition, retains a high degree of design integrity and is a contributing element to the landscape. The curvilinear quality of the road system adds a relaxing element to the property's park-like setting.

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The three original, formally designed gardens, which include the terrace garden the pergola garden, and the entry court garden, are all clearly delineated by brick walls of varying heights. The uniform construction material adds to the cohesiveness of these formal gardens when viewed in relation to the brick residence. The walls also serve to separate these formally designed garden spaces from the larger, more pastoral, design landscape elements.

The terrace garden (photo 1,9 & 11) is defined by a brick retaining wall which forms an incomplete rectangle around the main residence. The terrace serves as a visual pedestal for the mansion. The wall encloses a flat grassy area that is well suited for formal entertaining. It is void of any plantings now but originally had small corner planters and perhaps statuary or urns at its southeast and southwest corners.

Adjacent to the terrace, to the southeast, is the rectangular sunken pergola garden (see photos 7-10, "planting plan and planting list for a formal garden", and historic circa 1933 photo). Access between the two is provided by centered stone steps that are flanked by brick piers and pyramidal yews. The pergola garden is enclosed along the northeast by a fourteen-foot-long brick wall and by a low retaining wall to the southwest. The northwest boarder is formed by a retaining wall which defines one side of the terrace garden. To the southeast, two corner pavilions, which flank a semi-circular wall, enclose the space.

Along the northeast wall is a pergola which covers a raised brick walk. The wooden framed roof of the pergola, where wisteria grows, is supported by evenly spaced doric columns made of stone. The semi-circular southeast garden wall, with its wooden trellis resting atop brick piers, is lined in front with a row of evergreens and is flanked by two identical raised end pavilions which reflect the architectural details of the primary residence. Each pavilion is square in plan and has brick piers at each corner which are flanked by stone columns. The piers and columns support a wooden entablature adorned with triglyphs and metopes. A pyramidal roof caps the structure. Between these end pavilions is a sunken, circular reflecting pool which has at its center a stone pedestal adorned with swags, it is currently in poor condition. Circulation through the garden is facilitated by a rectangular brick pathway system. As originally conceived, additional brick paths divided the planting space into quarters. Each of the interior brick walks was flanked by low planting beds. The flowers grown included iris, creeping phlox, peonies, day lilies and plants that thrive easily in Louisville's climate and soil (see planting list). Each was planted in a symmetrical arrangement which added to the formality of the garden. The interior pathways were removed circa 1947 and currently only the interior planting beds remain. A raised pedestal and urn are still intact at the center of the lawn.

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The formally designed rose garden is located south of the primary residence and the pergola garden. It was added between 1928 and 1933, and has as its focal point a circular tile-faced reflecting pool (photos 12, 14, & 15 and 3 historic circa 1933 photos). The area around the pool is level and is enclosed by a keyhole-shaped retaining wall. Up the incline from the reflecting pool are three level terraces. Each terrace level is marked by a low retaining wall and stone steps. This rose garden, which is axially aligned with the end pavilions of the pergola garden, originally had low planting beds around the perimeters of all the walks and retaining walls, in which different varieties of roses were grown. Arched trellises upon which more roses grew, served as entryways for each level. Currently, no roses are grown. The dense planting located between the pergola garden and the rose garden follows the Olmsted design tenet of using a transitional element, in this case plantings, to offer surprise to the viewer. Despite the fact that the rose garden was a later addition, its design was based on the Olmsted design traditions of formality and use of native species. Because it was conceived based on Olmstedian principles, for the purpose of this nomination it is considered a contributing landscape element.

A fourth formally planted area is the original entry court (photos 4-6). It no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its original design characteristics. This portion, which is situated on the inside of the "L" of the main residence, is entered from the main road through an iron gate. It is enclosed on three sides by a high brick wall. It originally had low planting beds on all sides and a seating area with a stone bench framed by a trellis centered on the northeast wall. Although the seating area, walls, and approximately half of the planting beds are intact, the paved area, which was previously used for cars, has been filled in with the 1962 auditorium addition and the ground has been partially filled in with dirt and seeded with grass. Since it no longer resembles its original configuration, it is designated as non-contributing.

The gardens on the Gardencourt estate, while displaying varying degrees of landscape integrity, convey a sense of the nineteenth century estate design tradition. Many of the annual and biannual plantings have not survived and many of the perennials have been lost due to lack of maintenance and neglect. However, the majority of the fixed landscape elements, such as walks, retaining walls, reflective pools and statuary remain and reflect and idea of the original design intent.

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SHEPLEY, RUTAN & COLLIDGE-

Mansion (Carriage House & Gardener's Cottage/Greenhouse-attributed)

OLMSTED BROTHERS-Landscape

BUILDERS-unknown

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Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) was the successful designer of parks, gardens, and estate landscapes in Louisville and throughout the country during the later half of the nineteenth century. In 1881 he laid out Louisville's Park system (National Register 1982) and simultaneously introduced the citizenry to the area to his philosophies on landscape architecture. Olmsted's sons, who were also landscape architects, carried on their father's design tradition after his death in 1903. During the first several decades of the twentieth century the Olmsteds were involved in plans for more than 150 privately commissioned Louisville area projects.

All local properties known to have been executed by the Olmsted firm located within the city limits are Roseheight/The Allen R. Hite Estate, Barnard Hall/Louis Seelbach Estate, (JFEH 14) Rostrevor/Mrs. Ross Todd Estate, Sunnyview/Frank Fehr Estate, Alloway House/Andrew Cowan Estate (JFEF 3037), Frederick M. Sackett Estate (Demolished), and Altagate Mansion/William S. Speed Estate. County Olmsted designed properties include Cobble Court/The Garnett Cook Estate (JF548), The Pirtle/Baguie Estate (JF543), The John Bates House/P.L. Atherton Estate (JF534), Box Hill/The Wyman E. Chess Estate (JF533), The George Garvin Brown Estate (JF 569), and The Sherley Mansion/Isaac W. Bernheim Estate (JF643).

The properties listed above which are accompanied by site numbers have been surveyed but not extensively in relation to their landscape design. However, the on-going research currently being conducted by the Louisville Community Design Center is likely to yield, in the near future, more site specific information on these designed historic estate landscapes.

Of the known Olmsted designed estate landscapes in the City of Louisville, only Gardencourt retains its site integrity, thereby making it a highly valuable example of the Olmsted firm's work. Few in the county retain landscape integrity. In both areas, loss of site integrity was primarily because the landscape and especially the gardens were under-maintained or altered. This was sometimes because estate owners were unaware of the fact that their property had an Olmsted-influenced landscape design. In other instances, lot subdivisions obliterated the grounds surrounding these estates.

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The landscape design of Gardencourt is attributed to the Olmsteds based on a document entitled "landscape planting plans for a formal garden" which dates from 1906 and was drawn for Mrs. (Minnie Norton) W. B. Caldwell. The planting plan and its subsequent execution is verified by a circa 1922 aerial photograph of the property which clearly shows that the pergola, pavilions, walkways, and plantings of the Pergola Garden followed the Olmsted firm's plans. The Olmsted Brothers design for Gardencourt includes three formally designed gardens: the terrace garden, the pergola garden and the entry court garden. All are set within the larger pastoral landscape setting.

Based on photographic documentation, the rose garden was a later addition to the Gardencourt property that dates from between 1922 and 1933. The existence of correspondence between the Norton sisters and the Olmsteds from between 1902 and 1927 as indicated on the National Association of Olmsted Parks' Master List of Design Projects by the Olmsted Firm: 1857-1950 lends credibility to the assertion that the Olmsteds designed the rose garden as well. However, until further research is conducted this association remains tentative. Nonetheless, Gardencourt's association with the work of the Olmsteds is very significant. In the local context it stands as one of the best representations of the firm's work in domestic settings. Its high integrity of designed landscape features documented by the existing drawings are unusual in the local area, and so form a valuable resource.

The Norton sisters chose the Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge to design their Beaux Arts style mansion. George F. Shepley, Charles H. Rutan, and Charles A. Coolidge formed a partnership in Boston in 1886 after each met while working for H.H. Richardson. The architects were primarily recognized as designers of commercial, collegiate, civic, and residential structures. Gardencourt is the only known local example of their work.

Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge's design for Gardencourt is a text book example of Beaux Arts architecture. This opulent style, exemplified at Gardencourt by its grand porticos, was felt by the Norton sisters to be a suitable medium to display their tastes and values. The opulent parlor, dining room, library and grand entrance hall, with their rich wood details and plaster moldings, served social functions and displayed the works of art the sisters had amassed from their travels abroad. It is a rare local example of the Beaux Arts style and displays remarkable architectural integrity despite a later 1962 addition and poor maintenance in recent years.

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A small number of commercial and civic examples of Beaux Arts style architecture were built in Louisville around the turn of the century. Only two residential examples are extant in Louisville. The Ferguson Mansion (Old Louisville National Register District 1975), a noted urban example of that style, was completed in 1905. The Seelbach Mansion/Barnard Hall (JFEC14) is the only example comparable to Gardencourt of the country estate property type in the suburban development context. It was built in 1914 and is located about a mile from Gardencourt in the Alta Vista Subdivision. Although Barnard Hall and the accompanying carriage house are architecturally intact, their site has been severely compromised by encroaching suburban residential developments.

No original plans for the Gardencourt carriage house were found which indicated the architect and date of construction. Because of the high quality of design and materials it is possible that the Adamesque style carriage house is based on plans drawn by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge. The architect or designer for the circa 1906 Adamesque style greenhouse is undocumented as well.

While living at Gardencourt the three Norton Sisters were very active in civic and religious affairs. Their interest in the Children's Free Hospital was seen in Minnie's service as a board member and short term board president and Lucie's tenure on the board after Minnie's death in 1911. Martha was chairman of the Frontier Nursing Association, a charter member and treasurer of the Young Women's Christian Association in Louisville and was instrumental in preserving the Ford Mansion at Second and Broadway in Louisville as that organization's headquarters. Both Lucie and Martha continued the family's strong ties to the Baptist Theological Seminary, which was at that time the largest Baptist seminary in the world. The remaining sisters, together with their brother George Washington Norton, Jr., gave \$100,000 dollars to that organization to move the seminary from its downtown location at First and Broadway to its present location on Lexington Road in the east end. In gratitude for their contribution, the Seminary's Norton Hall was named in honor of the family. After Lucie died in 1937, Mattie continued to live at the family home until her death in 1946.

No provisions had been made in Mattie's will for the disposal of Gardencourt. Her executors acknowledged the wishes she had expressed before her death by giving Gardencourt to the University of Louisville for its School of Music. The University gratefully accepted the gift and assumed occupancy of Gardencourt in 1947. In 1962, the Emily Davidson Recital Hall addition, named after an internationally prominent singer from Louisville, was built based on the design by William Wright Crandell.



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In April 1987 Gardencourt was put up for public auction by the University, whose officials felt it was too far away from U. Of L.'s main campus. Helen Combs purchased the site and in June, 1987, sold it to the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. The Presbyterians, after careful study, are currently renovating the Gardencourt residence and the carriage house for use as a conference center. Their intention is to retain the design integrity of the existing building and grounds while adapting it to the functional needs fo the seminary. No major structural or cosmetic changes are anticipated.

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Continuation Sheet**

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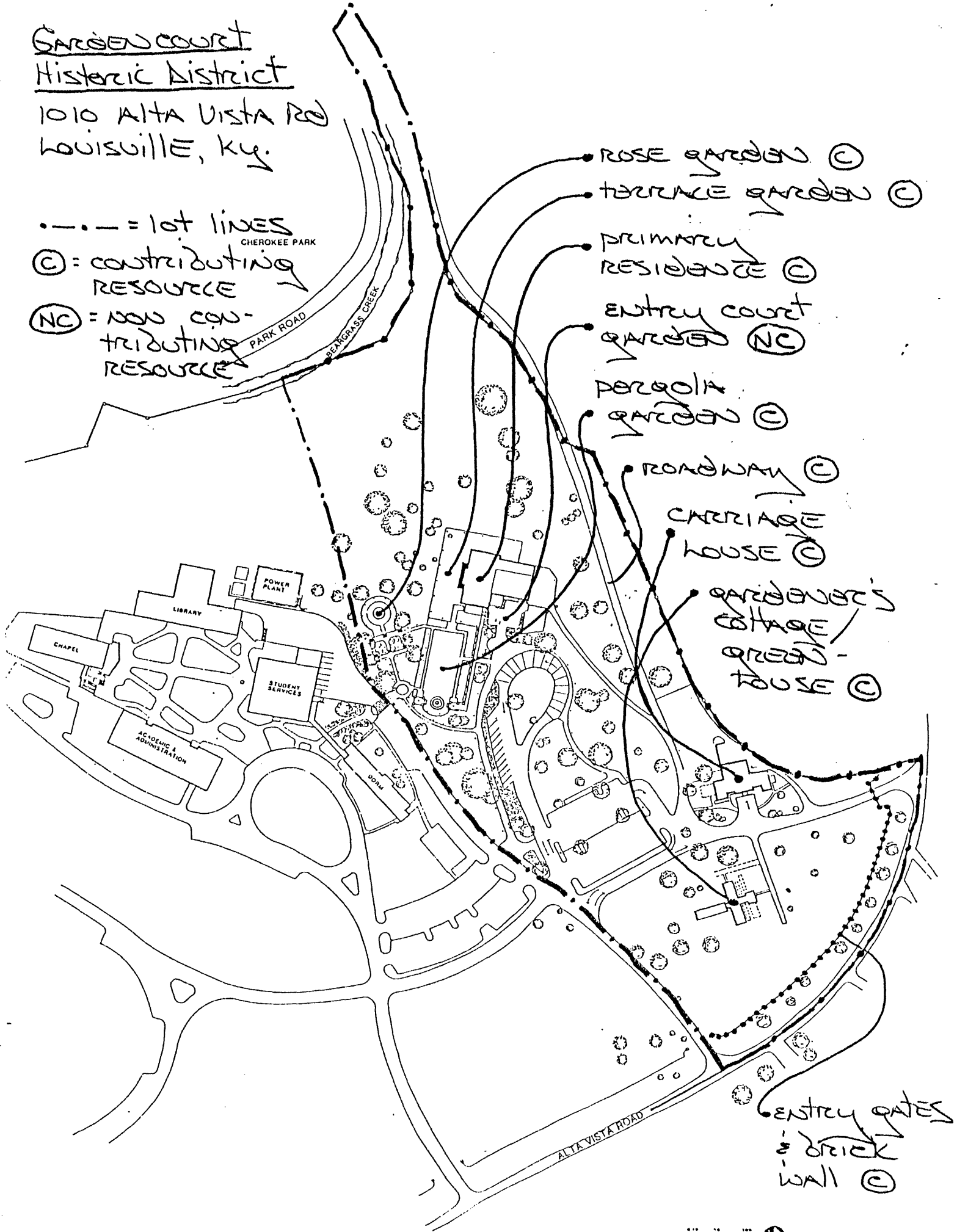
GARDEN COURT  
Historic District

1010 ALTA VISTA ROAD  
LOUISVILLE, KY.

--- = lot lines  
CHEROKEE PARK

⊙ = CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE

⊙ = NON CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE



ROSE GARDEN ⊙  
TERRACE GARDEN ⊙

PRIMARY RESIDENCE ⊙

ENTRY COURT GARDEN ⊙

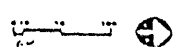
PERGOLA GARDEN ⊙

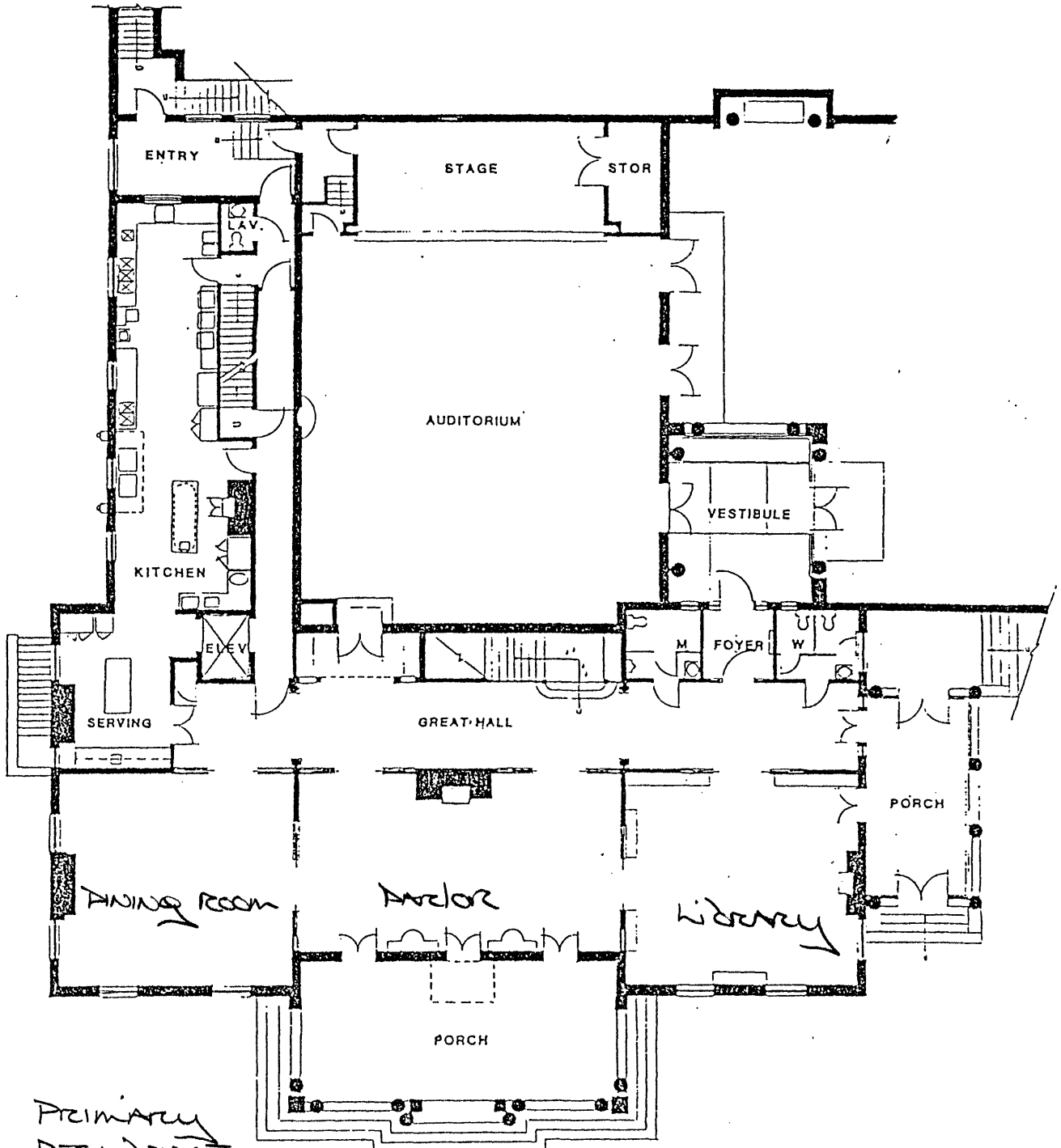
ROADWAY ⊙

CARRIAGE HOUSE ⊙

GARIBOLDI'S COTTAGE ⊙

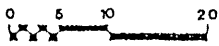
ENTRY GATES ⊙  
BRICK WALL ⊙





PRIMARY  
RESIDENCE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GARDENCOURT HISTORIC DISTRICT  
1010 ALTA VISTA RD.  
LOUISVILLE KY.



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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

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PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

Gardencourt Historic District  
1010 Alta Vista Road  
Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky

Joanne Weeter-Photographer  
June 1988-Date taken  
Landmarks Commission-negative repository

All photographs are numbered as indicated and keyed to site maps.  
Directional arrows indicate views taken.

1. Primary Residence (west facade)
2. Primary Residence-Service area showing entry gates and laundry drying area (north facade)
3. Primary Residence-service area entrance to mansion (north facade)
- 4&5. Primary Residence-entry court and auditorium addition (east facade)
6. Primary Residence-entry court gates (east side)
- 7&8. Pergola Garden
9. Primary Residence and Pergola Garden
10. Pergoal garden-walkway
11. Primary Residence-primary and secondary facades (south and east)
12. Rose Garden
13. Primary Residence-view from rose garden of mansion
- 14&15. Rose garden
16. Landscape-west of primary residence, looking toward northwest
17. Primary Residence Interior-grand stair

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National Park Service

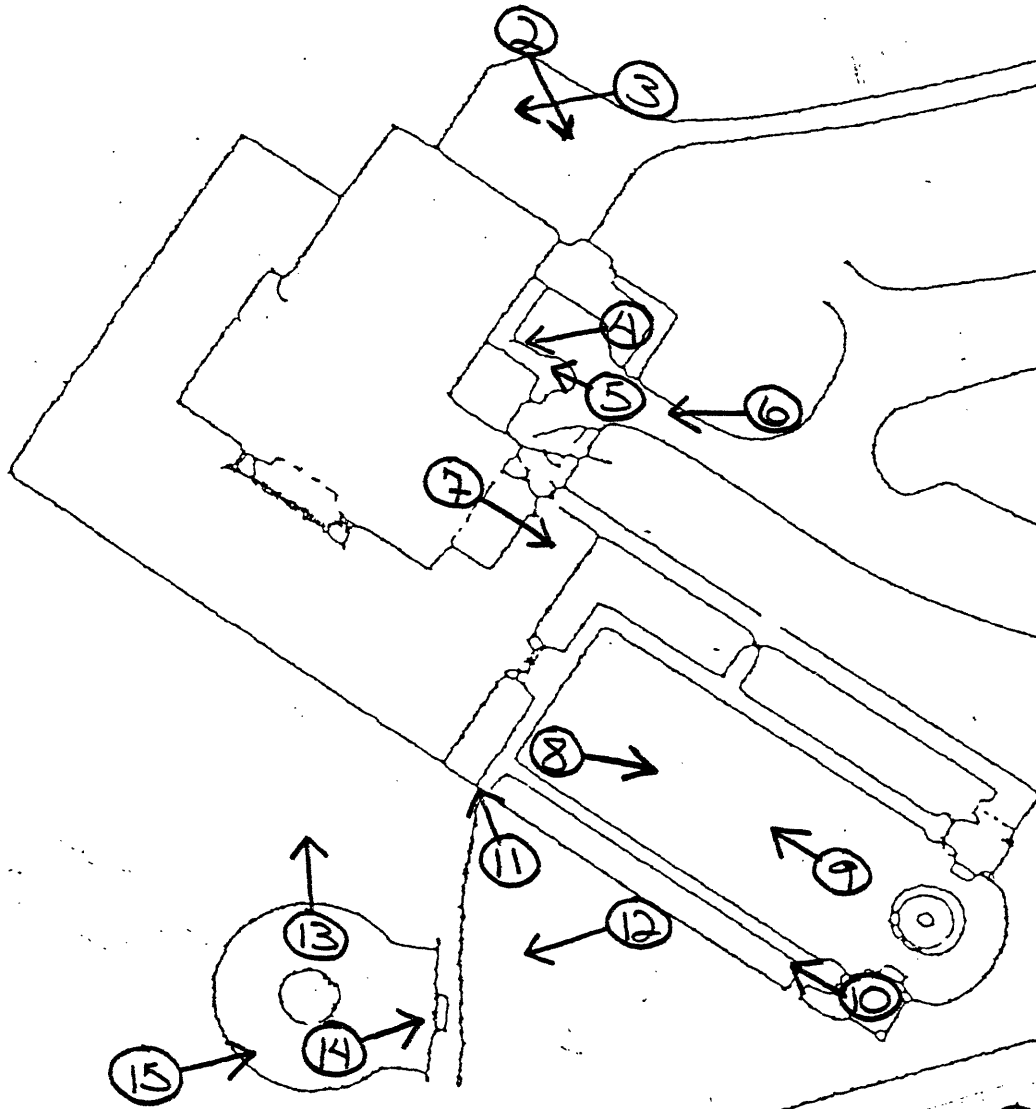
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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graphs Page   2  

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18. Primary Residence Interior-grand hall
19. Primary Residence Interior-sun room
20. Primary Residence Interior-parlor
21. Carriage House-secondary facade (west)
22. Carriage House-secondary facade (north)
23. Entry gates and brick wall-looking southeast along Alta Vista Road
- 24&25. Carriage House-primary facade (west)
26. Gardener's Cottage/Greenhouse-primary facade (south)
27. Gardener's Cottage/Greenhouse-showing landscape setting (south)
28. Carriage House-showing landscape setting (west)
29. Greenhouse-secondary facade (northeast)
30. Carriage House-secondary facade (north)

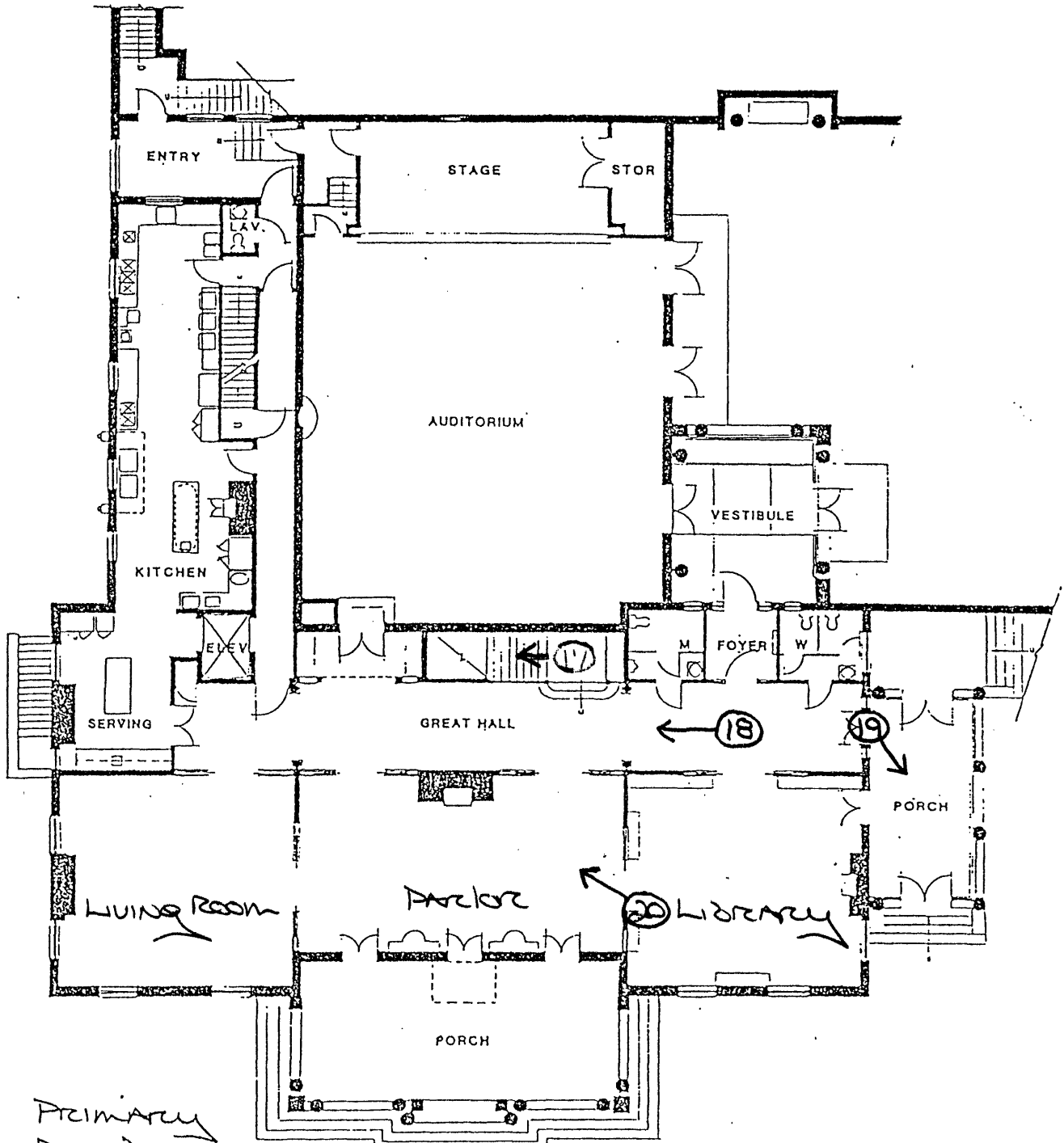
Photographic key  
Notes 1 Thru 16



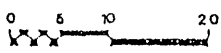
Garden Court Historic  
District  
1010 Alta Vista Rd.  
Louisville, Ky.



Photographic key  
photos 17 Thru 20



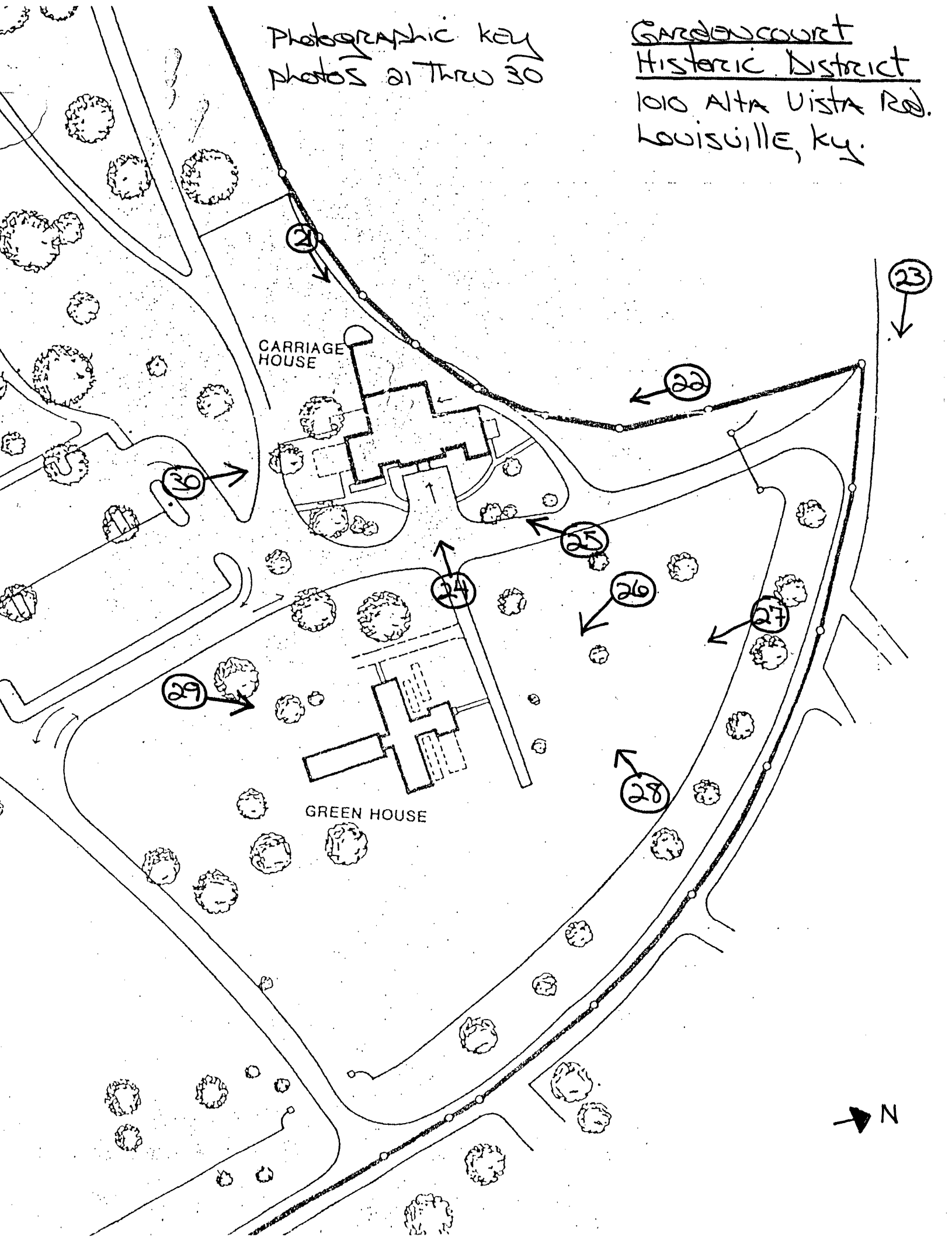
Primary Residence  
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Garden Court Historic District  
1010 Alta Vista Rd.  
Louisville Ky.

Photographic key  
photos 21 thru 30

GARDENCOURT  
Historic District  
1010 ALTA VISTA RD.  
LOUISVILLE, KY.



CARRIAGE HOUSE

GREEN HOUSE

