

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

MAY 19 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Memphis Parkway System
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number S Parkway W, S Parkway E, E Parkway S, E Parkway N, N Parkway
city, town Memphis
state Tennessee code TN county Shelby code 157 zip code 38103
not for publication NA
vicinity NA

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____	_____ buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Memphis Park and Parkway System
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

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.
Herbert L. Hays
Signature of certifying official Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau
Date 5/11/89

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ 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:) _____
Amy Schreyer
Signature of the Keeper
7/3/89
Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION - Road related
(vehicular)
Parkway

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION- Road related
(vehicular)
Parkway

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

NA

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls N/A
roof N/A
other asphalt
concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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 NA

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND

DEVELOPMENT

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

C. 1902-1927 (Crit. A)

C. 1902-1914 (Crit. C)

Significant Dates

C. 1902

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kessler, George

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

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: Memphis Landmarks Comra.
Department of Transportation
Memphis Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of property twelve miles (approximately 182 acres)

UTM References

A

1	6
7	7
0	4
8	1
0	3
1	8
9	4
0	1
6	1
0	0

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	6
2	2
7	8
1	9
1	0
3	1
8	8
9	6
1	4
1	0

B

1	6
2	2
8	3
4	1
0	3
8	9
3	6
4	0
0	0

Zone Easting Northing

D

1	6
7	6
7	7
8	0
3	8
8	8
7	4
0	0

409SW, 409NW, 409NE, 404SE

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Cathy Bruner, Preservation

name/title Martha Carver, Historic Preservation Specialist; Planner - Memphis
organization TN Dept. of Transportation; Landmarks date Commission 2/25/89
street & number 505 Deadrick St./ 701 N. Main St. telephone (615) 741-5363
city or town Nashville Memphis 38107 state TN zip code 37219
(901) 576-7370

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1 Memphis Parkway System
Historic District

The Parkway begins in the southwestern part of Memphis on the bank of the Mississippi River and extends east and then north. At the northeast corner of Overton Park, the Parkway turns west and comes back into the downtown. Its historic terminus was Manassas Drive, but the Parkway was later extended into the heart of the downtown. About twelve miles in length, the Parkway contains four to six lanes and has unlimited access.

The names given to the Parkways change along the route. From the river to Third, it is known as South Parkway. At Third Street, the name changes to South Parkway East. At Lamar it becomes East Parkway South until it makes an abrupt turn eastward at Cooper where it becomes South Parkway East. At Airways, the Parkway turns north and the name changes to east Parkway South. At Union the name changes to East Parkway North. At its intersection with Summer, the roadway turns to the west and becomes North Parkway.

Specific right of way varies, along the parkway, but in general, it is 100 to 250 feet wide. The following dimensions are approximate: From its beginning at Riverside Park, South Parkway West is 100 feet wide to Airways/Trezevant. From Airways to Central it is 150 feet wide and from there to Poplar 250 feet. From Poplar to Summer/Trezevant it is 100 feet wide. It is 120 feet wide until Bellevue. From Bellevue to Waldran, it is 100 feet wide and from there to Leath 150 feet wide. From Leath to its terminus at Manassas the Parkway is 100 feet wide. The portions of the Parkway from Riverside Park to Florida and from Manassas to Dunlap do not appear to have ever developed as planned and are, therefore, not included in the nomination.

(see continuation sheet)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2Memphis Parkway System
Historic District

Two portions of the Parkway are within historic districts listed on the National Register. Within the South Parkway-Heiskell Farm Historic District (NR 2/11/83) is East Parkway South and South Parkway East from near Lamar to just east of Meda Street. Within the Evergreen Historic District (NR 2/11/85) is a section of North Parkway from near McLean to Stonewall. These sections are not described as contributing elements in the nominations, but each is discussed as being significant to the area. Located immediately to the east of East Parkway South is the Libertyland Carousel (NR 7/30/80). Located adjacent to the Parkway at the union of East Parkway North and North Parkway is Overton Park (NR 10/25/79). To the north of North Parkway is Southwestern University Historic District (NR 7/20/78), and Hein Park Historic District (NR 11/16/88)

From the Commission's Minutes, it can be seen that the Parkway was to be a linear Park with the Commission developing it and even building the roadways, although the city public works department soon acquired responsibility for the actual roadway. In 1905, Kessler sent a letter to the Commission detailing his plan for the Parkway (MPC Minutes, Book 1, p. 103). For the wider areas of the Parkway, he planned to have a 20-foot sidewalk, a 35-foot roadway on each side of the Parkway, and the center area was to be developed as a park. Where the right of way was only 100-foot wide, he still wanted to have a planted Parkway but on a smaller scale. A 1905 newspaper article (Commercial Appeal, 15 March 1905) stated that the Speedway (and possibly by implication the entire Parkway) would have strips of grass with ovals, squares, circles, stars, etc., for flowerbeds. There is no indication that exotic plants or elaborate fixtures such as arcades or loggias were ever actually designed.

The parkway is flanked by residential structures, many dating to the early twentieth century. However, from Riverside Park to Latham, the Parkway lies in a non-historic commercial area. Residences along this portion of the Parkway are smaller in scale and often simpler in design than residences found elsewhere along the road. This reflects the historic industrial/commercial nature of this portion of Memphis. Along the route there are trees except from Riverside to Swift. From Swift to Florida are scattered trees, and near transition areas with interstate crossings and at intersections with many major roads, other trees have been removed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3Memphis Parkway System
Historic District

Today, most of the medians along the Parkway have a large number of trees and shrubs in both planted and natural groupings, with a few simple flower beds. One modern feature is an "M" shaped flower bed built in 1977 near Morningside Place. There have been some changes to the landscaping plan and medians have also been added or reduced in the past fifty years. There have also been several modern bridges built over or under the Parkways, and the 1960's Interstate system intersects it at three points. Despite these changes, the Parkway continues to retain its integrity and historical purpose as a scenic transportation corridor.

Detailed Description:

The Parkway originated at the northeast corner of Riverside Park (now Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Riverside Park) at Riverside Park Drive. However, when Interstate 55 was built, it was routed along the Park's eastern edge and an elevated interchange with the Parkway was built at the northeast corner. Thus the original terminus of the Parkway is located within this interchange. This interchange has a half cloverleaf design and the Parkway (which by name extends westward to the river's edge) crosses over I-55 on a two-span 132-foot concrete box bridge (79-2807-0.00).

From I-55 to Florida, the Parkway was originally four lanes wide with trees flanking it on either side. However, about 1965-75 the roadway was widened to five (or seven) lanes, primarily by removing the trees. From Estill to Swift, a few trees, including oaks and elms are still located on the north side. At Florida, the roadway drops to its original four lanes and is flanked by trees on each side. East of Michigan, the Parkway crosses the Illinois Central Railroad and two city streets on a three span 105-foot concrete slab bridge (79-2807-0.98). A bridge is shown here on a 1924 map. The date of this bridge is unknown, but it is estimated to have been built about 1920-40. Between this bridge and Third Street, trees still stand, but near the intersection, the roadway has been widened and no trees remain. West of Third Street the Parkway again crosses the Illinois Central Railroad on a 704-foot twenty-two span concrete deck girder bridge built about 1950. Prior to the construction of this bridge, the Parkway crossed the tracks at grade.

At the foot of this bridge, the Parkway takes on a residential character with trees, mainly hardwoods, flanking the four lanes.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4 Memphis Parkway System
Historic District

The 1973 quad map has the section from Latham eastward to I-240 revised in purple indicating some new construction occurred. It is unclear what this construction was but the I-240 full cloverleaf interchange with the Parkway was added during that time. From Latham to Lauderdale, the original character seems intact. From Lauderdale to Ely, the road surface widens to add parking lanes and there are no trees. From Ely to I-240 trees are somewhat scattered. Between Bullington and I-240, the Parkway makes four sharp curves which were "flattened out" in recent years to improve the turning radius. Leading up to I-240 on the west side is a narrow grassy median added when the Interstate was built. The Parkway crosses I-240 on a c. 1965 two-span 219-foot concrete beam bridge (79-2897-2.73).

Immediately past the Interstate the Parkway has an at-grade crossing with the MOPAC Railroad; a section on each side of the tracks is clear of trees. Just past the Interstate at Cummings begins a grassy median with trees and some shrubbery. At Pillow, the road loses its median and drops to 90 feet due to Zion Cemetery on the north side of the road (Rather than relocate graves, the Park Commission reduced width of the road.) To the east of the cemetery is an at-grade crossing with the FRISCO Railroad. This median is not shown on the 1927 Sanborn Map. On the Sanborn Map, the first median is shown beginning to the east of Zion cemetery. Up to this point the Parkway has been primarily four lanes although there have been portions with five or six lanes with or without on-street parking. From here to the end, the Parkway loses its four-lane arrangement and becomes six lanes or wider.

At LaPaloma, the median widens and within this area are many trees, two rubble stone faced bridges and a drainage ditch. On the roadway there is a three span 27-foot concrete box bridge also faced with rubble stone. The dates of these bridges and ditch are unknown but are estimated to c. 1930. A culvert is located on the north side of the Parkway. In this area, as for much of the rest of the Parkway, three traffic lanes flank the median. Between Lamar and Airways, the Parkway is within the South Parkway-Heiskell Farm Historic District, and there are flower beds in the median. At Airways, the Parkway makes a ninety degree turn to the north and becomes East Parkway northward to Poplar. Near the south end of East Parkway, the Parkway crosses another large

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 5Memphis Parkway System
Historic District

bridge over railroad tracks. This 1949 bridge is 677 feet along and contains twenty-one concrete deck girder spans. It replaced an earlier bridge.

From the bridge to Central, there is a grassy median with shrubs and some younger trees. The roadway is flanked by trees. At Central the median becomes wider, and at the intersection, turn lanes have been cut into the median. Past Central, the Parkway is full of mature trees and plantings, including oak and other hardwoods. It is depressed under a railroad bridge (79-SR277-1.67) on the Louisville and Nashville (old Union) Railway. This three span concrete slab bridge was built in 1952. It too, replaced an earlier bridge. The Parkway is again depressed a short distance further north at its intersection with Union Avenue where there is a 100-foot two span box beam modern bridge (79-SR277-1.09) with full cloverleaf interchange. Between Court and Madison (opposite Morningside) is an "M" shaped flower bed in the median. This flower bed replaced a sunken garden at this site. The "M" denotes Memphis. Mature hardwoods and flowering dogwood fill the median up to Poplar.

As at Central, turn lanes have been cut into the median at Poplar. The section from Poplar to Summer, which lies adjacent to Overton Park, is the portion for which there were right of way acquisition problems. This segment had a narrow roadway without a median until 1966 when land was taken from the Park to widen the Parkway and to create a narrow median. This section now has six traffic lanes plus turn lanes. It appears that the land that was originally a part of Overton Park became the median of the widened road. Not only were historical landscape materials retained during this alteration but the historic character of the Parkway System was maintained.

At the intersection of Summer (at the northeast corner of Overton Park), the Parkway turns west. From here west to Stonewall is the location of the Old Speedway. Turn lanes have been added in the center and at the curbs. From here to its end, turn lanes have been cut into the median where it exists at all street crossings. From Summer to just east of Center there is only a narrow grass median. This is consistent with the 1929 Sanborn Map. Few trees are located on this section. From University to the end of the old Speedway at Stonewall, the historic seventy-foot landscaped median was reduced to about ten feet in 1955-56 to provide additional traffic lanes. Small plantings, including groups of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6 Memphis Parkway System
Historic District

hollies, are located in the median and the roadway is flanked by large mature trees. A modern bridge carries the Parkway over Lick Creek.

From Stonewall (at the end of the old Speedway) to Claybrook the roadway is completely new. In this area, it is depressed to go under three modern bridges. On this section there is no median and the roadway is flanked by retaining walls until after the bridges. Past the bridges, a grassy median begins; there are no trees on it nor are there any trees along the roadside. From Claybrook to Dunlap, the Parkway goes back to six lanes with a median. Mature rows of trees are within the median and along the roadside. Just past Claybrook, the Parkway crosses the Interstate, and from there to Dunlap is a wide median with rows of trees.

At Dunlap, a row of trees was removed from the median to add a left-turn lane and trees are planted along the parking strip. From Dunlap to Manassas the character of the streetscape changes dramatically; there is no grassy median and only a few scattered trees. A map in the 1924 City Plan labels the section from Manassas eastward to past Bellevue (which was on the edge of the map) as "proposed" parkway. The 1927 Sanborn Map does not show a median from Bellevue to Dunlap.

Later Developments:

The original historic terminus of the Parkway was Manassas. However, about 1920 plans were made to extend it into the downtown business area. The 1924 City Plan discussed that the expense for the parks and parkway were originally justified by their aesthetic merits but that they should be more fully utilized and thus were now being more fully developed for recreational purposes. It is possible that this movement to expand the Parkway from a primarily residential area into the business district reflected this change in thinking. For whatever reasons, the work to extend the Parkway to Jackson was nearly completed in 1924. The 1924 City Plan proposed plantings be placed on this extended section but none exist now.

In the early 1960's, as part of the Jackson Avenue Urban Renewal project, the parkway was extended into the downtown to Front Street. The new road was on a different alignment than the 1924 Plan had proposed and lies south of Jackson and Auction Avenue.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 7 Memphis Parkway System
Historic District

From Dunlap westward to the end of the Parkway, its character is entirely different from that of the rest of the Parkway. The residential character changes to business, there is no median, and there are only a few trees along the roadsides. Just as in the portion from Florida to Riverside Park this area was never developed as expected, so it is not included within the boundaries of this nomination.

Conclusion:

The Memphis Parkway is an intact representation of a historic urban parkway, designed to encourage residential growth and promote the use of city parks. The Parkway was designed as a single entity. The district only includes the right of way and not adjacent lots. However, residential and small commercial development along the Parkway indicate that it has helped to develop this section of the city as it was planned to do.

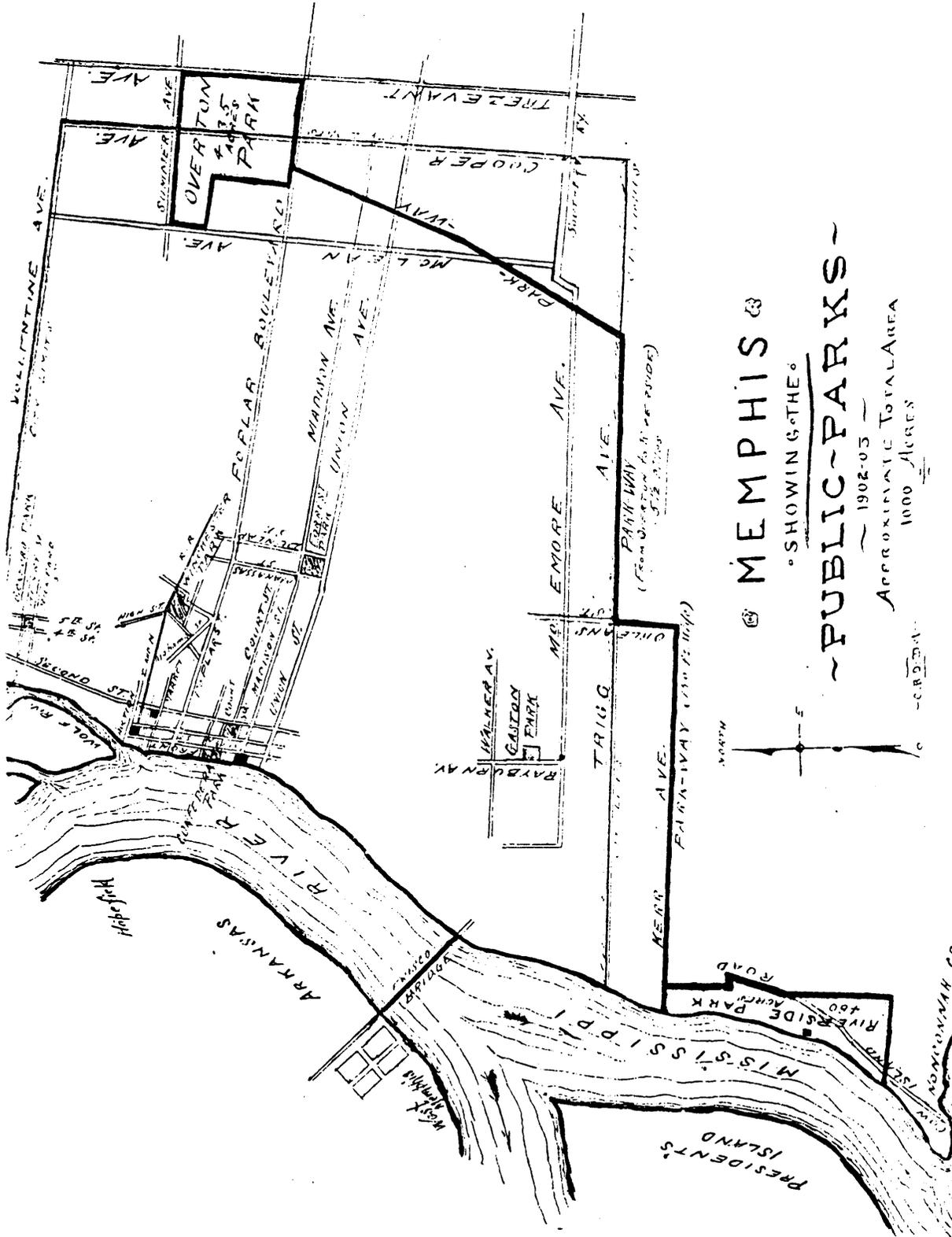
Except for the extreme western edges, which were altered by the removal of trees in later years, or were never completed, the Parkway has retained its integrity. Within the System there have been some alterations that cause certain sections to be non-contributing. These are: (1) from the railroad past the overpass; (2) Humber to Ely; (3) Gabay to Cummings; (4) Bridge to Young; (5) Union Street interchange; (6) intersection of East and North Parkway westward to Center (7) Stonewall to Claybrook; (8) Bellevue to Waldran. (See Map.) These noncontributing sections do not detract from the overall integrity of design, feeling, location, setting, association.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

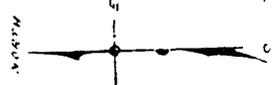
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Memphis Parkway System
Historic District



MEMPHIS
 SHOWING THE
 PUBLIC PARKS
 ~ 1902-03 ~
 APPROXIMATE TOTAL AREA
 1000 ACRES

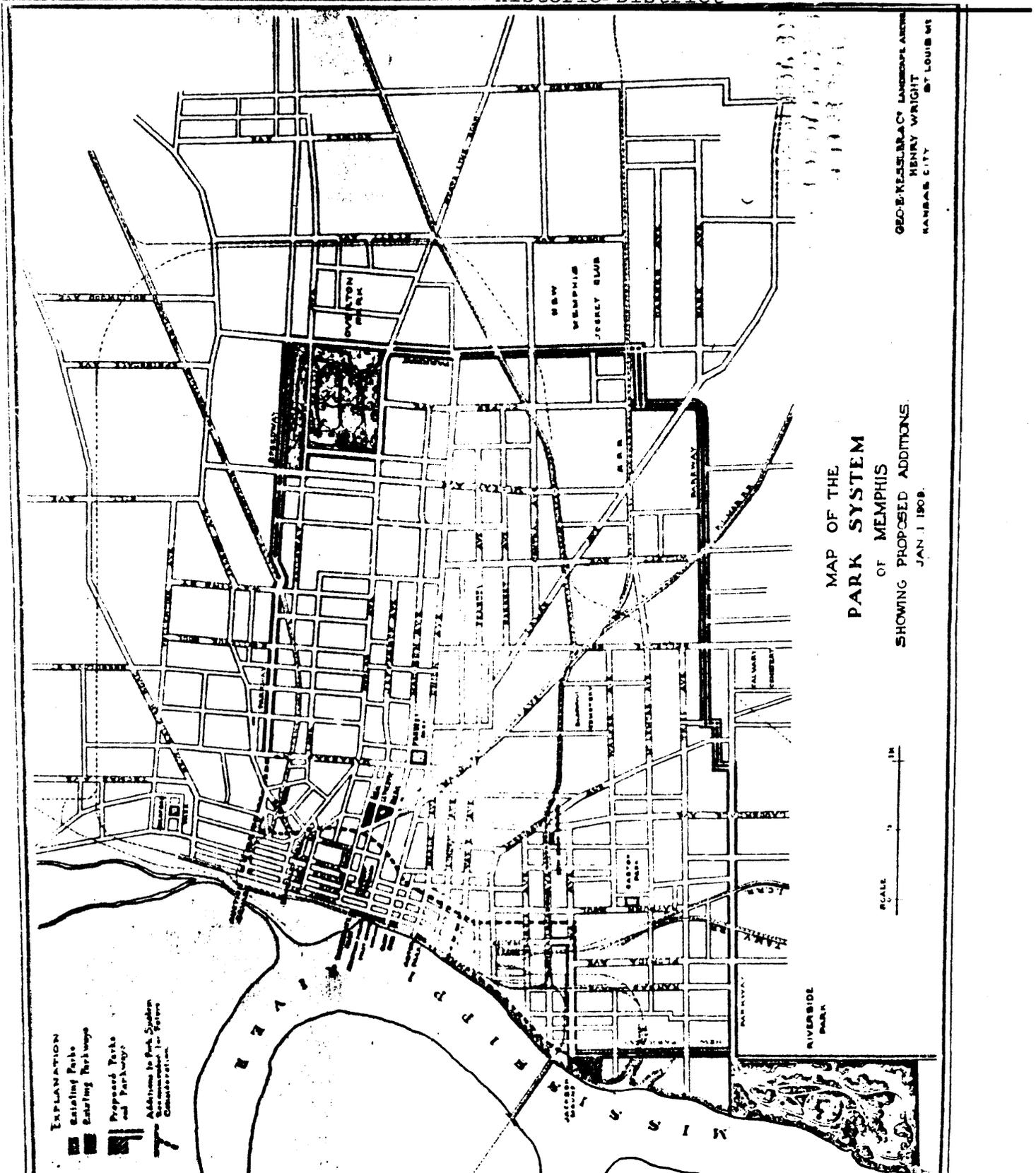


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

Memphis Parkway System
Historic District



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

The Memphis Parkway System is nominated to the National Register under criterion A for its significance in community planning as a representative example of a landscaped boulevard built during the early 20th century. Because it opened up the western section of Memphis for development, the parkway played an important role in the economic growth and development of the City. The parkway system is a U-shaped roadway approximately twelve miles in length around downtown Memphis that was developed from 1902 to about 1910. It varies in width and landscaping, however, the actual right-of-way has seldom changed. The Memphis Parkway System is believed to be the only parkway system in Tennessee that was implemented during the City Beautiful Movement of the 1910s-1920s period. It represents the city's growing involvement in large scale municipal works to guide future development.

In addition, it is significant under Criterion C because of its association with George Kessler, a noted planner and landscape architect of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was the second such system designed by Kessler (Kansas City was his first), and represents the synthesis of many of his urban design and planning concepts at that time. Board minutes, correspondence, newspaper accounts and a 1909 map of the system show that Kessler not only planned the system, but was closely involved in its implementation until 1914.

(see continuation sheet)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2 Memphis Parkway System
Historic District

The 1909 plan by Kessler (drawn by Henry Wright, his assistant at this time), shows the system as it existed with several proposed additions. The system is similar to the Kansas City system of 1893, including the orientation to the river, the connections with the major parks, and the reinforcement of the grid street pattern. Kessler's designs synthesized the earlier concepts of the Parks and Boulevard movement, the City Beautiful Movement and the emerging functionalism of planning after 1904. With his guidance, the Park Commission was able to implement this plan, which shaped so much of the present form of Memphis.

The Parkway was conceived as a scenic, linear park with two main functions of connecting Overton and Riverside Parks and of encouraging new suburban development in the areas along the Parkway. It was not designed as an elaborate and formal parkway, although it did contain trees and shrubs in a planned design. It varies in width and landscaping, but the actual right of way is essentially unchanged. Over the years, plantings have been changed as the original plants died or as the road needed widening to accommodate increased use. The majority of these alterations are in keeping with its historic character and it has retained integrity of design, setting, feeling, association, and location.

The development and growth patterns of Memphis have been determined in part by its location on the Mississippi River, which is approximately one-half mile wide at this point. As the city grew, its geography made it inevitable that residential development would go to the north, south and east. The 1890's was one of Memphis's greatest periods of growth, resulting in part from an aggressive annexation program in 1899. In 1900 the City's population passed 100,000 and the city experienced a boom in residential development. The building of the Parks and Parkway System supported this development and encouraged it to occur in a more planned and attractive way.

Despite current use of the Parkways as major traffic routes, they were not originally designed for this function. The original intent was to develop the Parkways as scenic nature drives and as a setting for upper and middle class residential development. The streetcar was the principal mode of transportation during the time the Parkways developed and played a major role in the development of suburban areas up until the 1930's. The Parkways were not designed to handle heavy traffic, and in March, 1910 the Commission passed a resolution asking the City Commission to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

construct parallel service roads to keep heavy traffic off of the parkways (MPC minutes 3/8/10). This was finally resolved by resurfacing the Parkways to handle automobiles.

In addition to the changing function of the Parkways, the Park Commission had to be constantly vigilant to keep utility companies and developers from raising overhead wires and from running utilities under the parkways, and to keep signs off the right of way. For several years, they had disputes with the power companies, the railroads and developers over intrusions into the parkways, which they wanted to maintain in an unspoiled, park-like state.

In 1902 the Park Commission began to acquire right of way for the Parkway. They found that acquisition of land for parks was an easy task in comparison to the Parkway. The land for the two major parks had involved only three owners, but the Parkways crossed many property owners' land, even though some tracts were large. In his memoirs in the 1920s Chairman McFarland described the Park Commission's approach to getting citizens to donate land for the Parkway:

In order to interest the citizens and induce donations of the right of way we selected and surveyed two rights-of-way, one along the line now occupied, and the other about half a mile further out, and both far enough out to run through as large tracts as practicable, that would be increased in value by location of Parkway and invite donations. This, with some advertising and arousing competition of lands on both surveys resulted in donation of most of the right of way and acquisition at an expenditure of only a few thousand dollars of the entire route of over eleven miles in length and embracing 182.23 acres.

The Commission chose the route nearest the City in July, 1902. A local newspaper stated, "This route was also selected with a view to invite selection and erection of handsome homes adorning their grounds on both sides of the Parkway by having it run between higher grounds where practicable."

Although a substantial amount of right of way was donated, some owners opposed having their land acquired. Consequently, the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

Commission was forced to condemn some of the property, and in the fall of 1903, the City Council passed an Amendment giving the Commission condemnation authority. At the same time, \$2,000 was authorized to help pay for some of the right of way. However, the Commission continued to experience difficulty in buying land round the proposed Parkway because of speculative development pressures. In 1904 the Commission Minutes reflected the need to accelerate the purchase of right of way as new houses were being built in the path of the proposed route.

By 1905 buying the Parkway right of way from Riverside to Poplar was the top funding priority, and in 1906 the board appropriated a large sum from its budget to buy and develop this section of the Parkway. This was helped by the last legislature having levied a twenty cent tax to buy right of way based on the argument that it was urgent to buy now before additional speculative development occurred in the area. In March of 1906, the Commission appropriated \$13,000 to complete the right of way acquisition from Riverside to Overton Park and to pay for moving houses from the right of way. An additional \$65,000 was approved to grade stretches of the parkway. During these years, the Commission worked to finish small stretches of the Parkway so that citizens could see how attractive it would be and thus increase support for the project.

The section of the Parkway from Poplar north of Summer (on the east side of Overton Park) proved especially difficult to acquire. In June of 1907 a committee was appointed to secure the right of way for this section, but it reported in September that it was having problems with property owners on the east side of the Parkway. The committee reported in August of 1908 that the right of way for the entire parkway from Manassas to Riverside Park had been acquired but problems continued to be reported in the newspaper and in the Park Commission Minutes. The Committee reported that property owners on the east side of the Parkway (Trezevant) would not donate ten feet of land even though the Commission was willing to donate twenty feet from Overton Park. The Commission then voted to delete this section from the Parkway and route traffic through a road in Overton Park - and ordered the Park Superintendent to place plantings along the east side of the park with no opening on that side.

If this rerouting through the park was ever done, it did not last long. In September of 1909, the Minutes state most of the right

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

of way on this stretch had been acquired, though the ten-foot strip was still unresolved. A reference in January, 1910 stated that all of the right of way had been acquired, but due to acquisition problems, this section of the Parkway was about fifty feet wide (although the 1927 Sanborn Map shows this section having a 100-foot right of way). In 1960, this section was widened from 46 feet to 84 feet when 50 feet of land was taken from Overton Park. A 38-foot strip of this 50 feet was dedicated right of way. A grass median was added at this time. These changes were similar to the historic character of the Parkway and did not affect the integrity of the system.

One unique but short-lived feature of the Parkway was the Speedway. The Speedway was authorized by the Park Commission in 1905. It began at University Street near the northwest corner of Overton Park and extended westward exactly one mile to Stonewall Street. Located within the larger North Parkway, the Speedway itself was in the 70 foot median. On either side were two traffic lanes. Apparently, the Speedway was about fifty feet wide and was flanked by plantings. A 1905 newspaper article (Commercial Appeal, 3/15/1905), stated that the Speedway (and possibly by implication the entire Parkway) would have strips of grass with ovals, squares, circles, stars, etc., for flowerbeds.

The purpose of the Speedway was to provide a safe racetrack for amateur sportsmen while separating them from normal traffic. Due to the popularity of the Speedway, the westward portion of Summer was often called Speedway. However, the Park Commission ended the very brief history of the Speedway by closing it September 21, 1910. Afterwards (according to the 1927 Sanborn Map), the Speedway was converted to a park area approximately 70 feet wide. This basic plan seems to have survived until 1955 when traffic lanes were cut into the median leaving a grassy strip about ten feet wide.

The original Parkway terminated at Manassas. In an effort to provide a more direct route to the business district, attempts were made to extend it several times. About 1920-25 the Parkway was extended to Jackson Avenue (this street becomes Auction Avenue further to the west). Like the section of the Parkway from Leath to Manassas, this portion has a 100-foot right of way. A 1921 Planning Commission report stated that the City hoped to eventually extend the Parkway westward along Auction Avenue to North Front Street and then south down Front Street to the Custom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

House. The 1924 City Plan also called for the Parkway to be extended past Jackson, and proposed a circular, plaza type intersection at Jackson. In the 1960s the Parkway was extended past Jackson west into the downtown business district, but it was redirected to go south of Jackson and Auction Avenue.

Another major alteration occurred in the 1950's when the park area of North Parkway from Stonewall to Trezevant was reduced to widen the roadway. In 1955-56, the trees along the inside lanes of the Old Speedway that had separated the Speedway/median from the traffic lanes were removed. The right of way remained the same.

Due to the problems with right of way acquisition previously discussed, the segment of the Parkway from Poplar to Summer was not the same width as the Parkway around it. Although the 1927 Sanborn Map shows this section having a 100 foot right-of-way, it appears that only a strip of approximately fifty feet was utilized until 1960. At that time, this segment was widened from 46 feet to 84 feet when 50 feet of land was taken from Overton Park. A 38 foot strip of this 50 feet was dedicated right-of-way that had been used by the Park. Although this segment never had a grassy median, one was added about this time. These changes were similar to the historic character of the Parkway and did not affect the integrity of the system. Most of the identifiable components of the historic Parkway System remain intact.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Barthomew, Harland. A Comprehensive City Plan, Memphis, Tennessee 1924.
- City Planning Commission. First Annual Report, City Planning Commission. Memphis, 1921.
- Commercial Appeal, 11 November 1898, 15 November 1901, 18 May 1902, 5, 6 November 1903, 15 March 1905, 7 May 1908, 22 September 1910, 26 January 1930, 14 December 1952, 3 September 1966.
- Coppock, Helen and Crawford, Charles, editors. Paul R. Coppock's MIDSOUTH. Nashville: Williams Printing Co., 1985.
- Foster, Janis; Frankle, Barbara; and Ostby, Lloyd. "Evergreen Historic District National Register Nomination." September 1984.
- Glabb, Charles and Brown, Theodore. A History of Urban America. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1975.
- McFarland, L.B. Memoirs and Addresses. 1928.
- Memphis Board of Park Commission Minutes, Volumes 1 and 2. 1900-1916.
- Memphis Chamber of Commerce. Memphis. Chamber of Commerce, 1921.
- Memphis City Planning Commission. First Annual Report. 1921.
- "Memphis, Tennessee." 1913 Map. Number 1417, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Volume XX. New York: James T. White and Company, 1929.
- Olmstead Brothers. Letters of Olmstead Brothers to Park Commissioners. Memphis Room, Memphis Public Library.
- Ostby, Lloyd and Frankle, Barbara. "South Parkway - Heiskell Farm Historic District" National Register Nomination, 1982.
- Press-Scimitar, 17 November 1949, 15 August 1956, 1 August 1960.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 2 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

Report on Traffic Planning Survey, Memphis. 1940.

Sanborn Insurance Maps. 1907, 1927.

Scott, Mel. American City Planning Since 1890. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

Who Was Who in America. Volume 1 1897-1942. Chicago: A.A. Marquis Company, 1942.

Williamson, James. "Overton Park Historic District"
National Register Nomination, 1978.

Young, J.P. editor. Standard History of Memphis, Tennessee. Knoxville:
H.W. Crew and Company, 1912.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary is approximately twelve miles in length and extends from the intersection of Florida and South Parkway West to the intersection of Dunlap and North Parkway. The boundary width follows the legal right-of-way along the road. In general this is 100 feet wide from the beginning to Airways on South Parkway; at Airways the road turns and becomes East Parkway; from Airways to Central it is 150 wide and from there to Poplar it is 250 feet wide; From Poplar to Summer the road becomes East Parkway North and it is 100 feet wide; from Trezevant westward the road becomes North Parkway and it is 120 feet wide to Belleview; from there to Waldron it is 100 feet wide; from there to Heath it is 150 feet wide; from Heath to its terminus it is 100 feet wide.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Memphis Parkway System is an intact representation of an historic resource designed to encourage residential growth and promote the use of city parks. The Parkway was designed as a single entity. The width of the Parkway boundary includes only the right-of way (not the adjacent lots). However, residential and small commercial development along the Parkway indicates that it has helped to develop this section of the city as it was planned to do. Except for the extreme western edges of the Parkway, which did not appear to develop as planned, the Parkway has retained its integrity. Within the System there have been some alterations that caused certain sections of this district to be non-contributing. These are: (1) from the railroad past the overpass; (2) Humber to Ely; (3) Gabay to Cummings; (4) Bridge to Young; (5) Union Street interchange; (6) intersection of East and North Parkway westward to Center; (7) Stonewall to Claybrook; (8) Belleview to Waldron. (See map.) These non-contributing sections do not detract from the overall integrity of design, feeling, location, setting, and association.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

Memphis Parkway System Historic District



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photo Page 1

Memphis Parkway System Historic District

Memphis Parkway System
Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee
Photo by: Martha Carver
Date: August 1986
Neg.: Tennessee Department of Transportation

At Florida, facing east.
#1 of 24

Near Michigan, facing west
#2 of 24

Near Michigan, facing east
#3 of 24

At Preston, facing west
#4 of 24

At Preston, facing east
#5 of 24

At Woodward, facing west
#6 of 24

At Woodward, facing east
#7 of 24

At Wilson, facing west
#8 of 24

At Wilson, facing east
#9 of 24

At Pillow, facing west
#10 of 24

At Pillow, facing east
#11 of 24

At LaPaloma, facing west
#12 of 24

At LaPaloma, facing east
#13 of 24

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photo Page 2 Memphis Parkway System Historic District

At LaPaloma, facing northwest
#14 of 24

At Libertyland (fairgrounds), facing south
#15 of 24

At Libertyland (fairgrounds), facing north
#16 of 24

Near Avery, facing northeast
#17 of 24

Near Union, facing southwest
#18 of 24

From Poplar, facing northeast
#19 of 24

Near intersection of Summer and Trezevant, facing west
#20 of 24

At Rhodes College entrance, facing west
#21 of 24

At Claybrook, facing east
#22 of 24

At Claybrook, facing west
#23 of 24

At Dunlap, facing southeast
#24 of 24