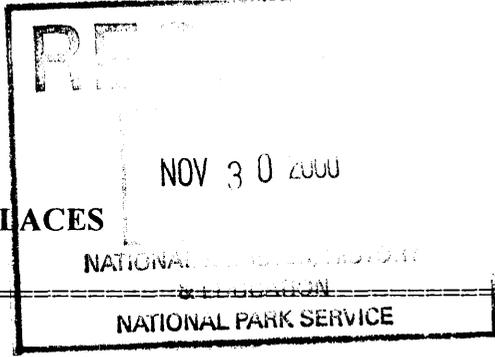


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1608

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

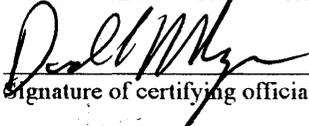
historic name **Linden Grove Cemetery**
other names/site number **KEC 8**

2. Location

street & number **1421 Holman Avenue (mailing address)** not for publication N/A
city or town **Covington** vicinity N/A
state **Kentucky** code **KY** county **Kenton** code **117** zip code **41011**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 David L. Morgan, SHPO and Executive Director, Kentucky Heritage Council 11-16-00
Signature of certifying official Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): _____

Signature of Keeper

1-4-01
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property:

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register:

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
1	sites
	structures
	objects
2	Total

2

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: FUNERARY Sub: Cemetery
Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: FUNERARY Sub: Cemetery
Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation **stone**
roof **asphalt shingles**
walls **wood, synthetic shingles**
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

**COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

Period of Significance **c.1835-c.1900**

Significant Dates **1843, 1854, c.1900**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) **N/A**
Cultural Affiliation **N/A**
Architect/Builder **N/A**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository: **City of Covington**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **21.3 Acres**

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	<u>16 714 830</u>	<u>4327590</u>	3	<u>16 715 060 4327 880</u>
2	<u>16 714 740</u>	<u>4327 830</u>	4	<u>16 715 130 4327 580</u>

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Alexandra Kornilowicz-Weldon/Preservation Consultant for the City of Covington		
organization	City of Covington	date	July 28, 2000
street & number	638 Madison Avenue	telephone	606-292-2163
city or town	Covington state Kentucky	zip code	41011

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Additional Documentation:

All photographs were taken by Alexandra Kornilowicz-Weldon in July, 2000. The negatives are on file at the City of Covington, Economic Development Department, 638 Madison Avenue, Covington, KY 41011.

Property Owner

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

name **Linden Grove Cemetery
c/o Kenton County Circuit Court**

street & number **230 Madison Avenue** telephone **859-292-6521**

city or town **Covington** state **KY** zip code **41011**

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Linden Grove Cemetery
Kenton County, Kentucky**

Narrative Description

Linden Grove Cemetery (KEC 8) is approximately 21.3 acres in area. It is located on the west side of Covington, one block east of I-75. The cemetery is bounded by W. 13th Street on the north, Kavanaugh Street to the West, Linden Street to the south and by an alley, parallel to Holman Avenue, to the east. Its entry is off of Holman Avenue, between W. 14th and W. 15th Streets. The nominated property's boundaries have been the cemetery's historic boundaries since the mid-nineteenth century. Linden Grove is entirely surrounded by dense urban development, primarily residential. Most of the neighboring housing stock dates from the second half of the nineteenth century, development beginning concurrently with the cemetery's planning and design, c. 1840.

Topography

The layout and topography of the cemetery is clearly divided into two almost equal areas. The south area is very flat and has a linear layout of paths and burial plots (Photos # 8, 12, 16 & 17), a multi-fingered ravine punctuates the north area and subsequently, the layout of the paths and burial plots around the ravine are in keeping with the contours of its topography (see Maps 4 & 9 and (Photos # 9, 20, 22 & 24). Upon walking the perimeter of the cemetery, it appears that the south area was graded to achieve its flat topography. This is evidenced by the very regular slope down to the street level along the cemetery's southern and western boundaries (Photos # 11, 13, 18 & 19). The man-made regularity of the south area contrasts with the north area; besides the depression of the ravine, the north area is relatively rolling with slight knolls in the northwest and northeast corners of the cemetery (Photos # 21 & 23).

Description

The entrance to Linden Grove is via a straight drive, perpendicular to Holman Avenue, which leads through a pair of ornamental iron gates. Above the gates is an iron sign bearing the words 'Linden Grove Cemetery' (Photos # 1 & 2). Inside of the gates, the sexton's house is located immediately to the left. This side-gable, two-story frame house has a lower two-story rear wing as well as a one-story rear room addition. At the front of the house is a one-story wood porch with two turn-of-the-century battered wood columns and on the east side of the house is another one story porch with later wood posts. The front section of the house dates from the mid-nineteenth century and is possibly a part of the original, c. 1843, sexton's house. This two-bay front section has two-over-two double-hung windows and a late-nineteenth century wood entry door. The rear section of the house has smaller, six-over-six double-hung wood windows. The house exterior has been covered with non-historic siding, c. 1950, but all of the wood trim,

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**Linden Grove Cemetery
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including corner moldings, box gutters, cornices, and window and door moldings have been retained (Photos # 2-6). Behind the house, along the alley is a metal storage building (Photo # 6).

The entrance road continues past the sexton's house on a straight axis almost to the rear of the cemetery, and was originally known as Maple Avenue. The 1858 illustrated map of the cemetery depicts Maple Avenue lined with deciduous trees, some of which remain to this day (Photo #7). Apparently, most of the original paths and roadways were named after trees, except for Spring Avenue, which ran along the contours of the ravine (see Map 3). Continuing west along the entrance road, the military burial section is located on the south side. Two large monuments commemorating the dead from the Civil War (NR 1998) flank the rows of simple military markers. Along the entrance road, just past the military section is a circle where an original vault for temporary storage of the dead was located. It is not know when this vault was removed, but the entrance plaque from the original gate (replaced c. 1900) is now located within the circle. Behind the plaque, the outline of the vault's footprint is still visible (Photo # 10). To the right of the circle are several large, ornate private vaults that have been located along the banks of the ravine (Photo # 26 & 27). These vaults date from 1848 to the 1890s.

The road continues west, past the circle to the back of the cemetery. There, the road turns at right angles, heading north. It continues straight for a short while before it begins meandering along the curves of the topography. Several mature trees, line the curves of the road in this section (Photos # 17, 18, & 20). The curvilinear layout of plots in this area is in marked contrast with the rows upon rows of markers that line the straight path of the entrance road. Heading east towards the ravine, the grave markers become less dense (Photo #22) and eventually the area becomes an open field (Photo # 23 & 24). Originally, an artificial pond was sited along W. 13th Street, near the intersection of Lee Street. This pond was originally small in size and was fed by a natural spring located within the ravine (see Maps 2 & 3). On an 1877 city atlas (Map 4), the pond appears to be the same original size, but in time it grew into a substantial lake, eventually filling up the ravine. The rising water level began disrupting the vaults and graves and the lake was drained in 1982. There must still be a water source in existence because the lowest lying parts of the ravine remain marshy.

The apparent drainage problems with the spring and the lake rendered much of this area of the cemetery unusable, thus there are only scattered graves and markers. Most of it remains open field and a small tot-lot playground has been recently located along W. 13th Street, at the approximate location of the original pond (Photo # 23).

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**Linden Grove Cemetery
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The cemetery's current layout of paths and plots is generally in accordance with the original design (see Map 3), however, the graveled road does vary slightly along W. 13th Street, probably to accommodate motor vehicles. The remaining paths and roadbeds shown on the 1866 plat (see Map 4) are not graveled, but they are intact and readily discernable in the grass, and the burial plot layout has remained in use. Many mature trees remain lining the original roads and even though the lake has been drained, the originally topography of the ravine has been left untouched.

Unfortunately, the probable reason that few changes have taken place at Linden Grove is the poor financial situation of the cemetery. After decades of financial crises dating back to 1854, the cemetery was placed into receivership in 1948, where it remains to this day. Numerous attempts have been made by concerned citizens to aid the cemetery but, as yet, no long-term plan has been developed. In the meantime, the cemetery's care remains minimal and its neglected condition continues.

Integrity considerations appear at the end of the statement of significance.

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**Linden Grove Cemetery
Kenton County, Kentucky**

Statement of Significance

The Linden Grove Cemetery meets National Register Criteria A and C and Criteria Consideration D. Linden Grove Cemetery is historically significant within two historic contexts: the first as an important remnant of “Covington’s Early Planning and Development, c. 1835 to 1854”, and secondly as an extant example of “American Nineteenth Century Cemetery Design, c. 1840 to c. 1900”. Both bases of significance qualify Linden Grove Cemetery for listing under Criteria Consideration D. The period of significance, c. 1835 to c. 1900, is the time spanning the original land transfer and layout of the cemetery and its environs until the approximate date of construction of the rear section of the sexton’s house. Linden Grove Cemetery is one of the few remaining physical reminders of an important era of development in the history of Covington. In 1833, when the Baptist Education Society first purchased land south of the original town plat, Covington was a tiny community with less than 1000 residents. The annexation of the lands planned and improved by the Western Baptist Theological Institute more than doubled the area of Covington and included its first institution of higher learning as well as its first major cemetery. The seminary and its square are now gone, the only reminders of the Baptist’s plan for Covington are the streets named after the Institute’s trustees and Linden Grove Cemetery. The relatively intact cemetery survives today as the only major historic green space from the nineteenth century city. As a cemetery, Linden Grove represents an early transitional design, having both formal rectilinear elements and the romantic curvilinear elements of mid-nineteenth century rural cemetery design, a forerunner in cemetery development west of the Alleghenies. Ironically, the retention of its original layout and the survival of many landscape elements have been primarily due to its long-term financial constraints rather than as an intentional preservation effort.

Historic Context: “Covington’s Early Planning and Development, c. 1835 to 1854”

As Cincinnati’s southern neighbor, Covington experienced tremendous growth during the period between 1840 and 1860; primarily due to the large influx of German immigrants to the area, estimated to have numbered up to 200 a day. The population of Covington itself grew from about 2,000 in 1840 to about 12,000 by 1853 (Konicki, 2000). Much of the development during this period has been investigated and recorded in several National Register Historic District Nominations; including Old Seminary Square Historic District NR 1980, Emery-Price Historic District, NR 1987, Helentown Historic District, NR 1987, and Lee-Holman Historic District, NR 1996. What has not been thoroughly addressed as a major force behind the planning and development of Covington between 1835 and 1854, was the Western Baptist Theological Institute. Over 200 acres of Covington south of 8th Street, including much of the area included in the above four National Register Districts as well as Linden Grove Cemetery, were planned, platted, subdivided and developed by the trustees of the Western Baptist Theological Institute.

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Early Planning Development of Covington 1815 to c.1835.

The original 150 acres comprising early Covington were initially platted in 1815. The Old Plat of Covington ran from the Ohio River north to 6th Street and extended from the Licking River on the east, west to Washington Street. This original plat was a simple grid plan, laid out as a continuation of the street grid of Cincinnati. Initial development was slow, in part due to an 1815 flood and a national depression in 1819. It was not until after the construction of a cotton factory on the original public square in 1828 did settlement really begin. Nevertheless, Covington remained a small town, and by 1830 its population only numbered 715 residents (Konicki, 2000).

In the decades following the development of the steamboat in 1820, Cincinnati became one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. Covington did not really benefit from this growth until the mid-1830s, after the establishment of a steam ferry connecting the two cities in 1833 (Walsh, 1993). In 1835, the 'New Lexington Pike' was completed, and Covington became an important link between the products of the Bluegrass area and the markets of Cincinnati. Before these transportation developments Covington had been a small, struggling community, but by 1840, its population numbered about 2,000 residents and few lots of the original plat remained available for development.

Growth and The Western Baptist Theological Institute, 1833 to 1854.

The exploding population caused the city to expand south and west by annexing adjacent lands. In 1841 the city limits reached Willow Creek on the west and 12th Street to the south (Konicki, 2000). By 1843, Covington had annexed the remainder of the lands which comprised the Western Baptist Theological Institute's First, Second and Third Subdivisions, bringing the city's southern boundary to 15th Street, from the Licking River west to Willow Run. These annexations more than doubled the area of the city. Development must have continued at a rapid pace within these annexed areas, as the city's population also doubled between 1840 and 1845 (Gastright, 1980). A major contributor to the development and growth of Covington after 1835, was the Western Baptist Theological Institute.

In October 1833, a general meeting was held in Cincinnati to unite the current Baptist leaders from west of the Alleghenies. These men considered themselves neither northern nor southern, but representatives of the new Western Baptist brethren. 109 delegates gathered, most from Ohio, but also from Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, as well as seven representing the East; for the most part the western delegates were Northern men as well, primarily from New England, who had come west as missionaries of their Baptist faith. Their Yankee roots naturally gave them anti-slavery

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sentiments. Their position on this issue in direct opposition to the southern delegates, ultimately destroyed their attempts at establishing a united Western Baptist Church.

One of the primary goals of the Western Baptist Convention was that a “theological institution be established in some central portion of the Mississippi valley” (James, 1911). Eventually, a site for this effort was chosen in Covington, Kentucky. In 1835, The Western Baptist Education Society, formed a year earlier, purchased approximately 370 acres just south of what was then the small town of Covington. For several years, development of the property was stalled because of lack of funding, and the land was simply farmed. In 1838, a member of the Society’s executive committee, Ephraim Robbins, stepped forward to manage the property as superintendent. A prominent Cincinnati insurance broker, Robbins proposed that the Society lay out town lots with public improvements to generate the much-needed funds. Between 1839 and 1841 approximately 73 acres were sold in large tracts to raise money to develop the three subdivisions that were platted on the remaining land. Twelve acres were retained for the school and a new public square, identified either as ‘College Square’ or ‘Theological Square’ on early maps, and approximately 22 acres were reserved for a cemetery. The Western Baptist Theological Institute’s First, Second and Third Subdivisions extended south from lots facing 9th Street to roughly 15th Street and west from the vicinity of present day Garrard Street to present day Kavanaugh Street. These subdivisions included over 1100 building lots and followed the grid system established by the Old Plat of Covington (see Map 1, all lots have not yet been laid out). The public square was graded and landscaped and construction of the school buildings had begun by 1842. Improvements outside of the school grounds included fences, sidewalks, and paved streets. Lot sales were brisk and an 1843 account states that about 150 buildings had been constructed within “two squares of the public grounds” (cited in James, 1910).

Besides the development of the city lots and the school grounds, the trustees of the Institute included the design and development of a public cemetery, possibly on the site of an earlier burial ground. W. C. James, a Baptist historian, described the trustees’ plan for their development of Covington:

An interesting and useful appendage of the property and one which shows the completeness of the plans which the executive committee had for the little city, of which the seminary was to be the center, was the Linden Grove Cemetery, located at the extreme southwestern limit of the whole tract . . . The whole area of twenty-two acres was tastefully laid out and adorned with forest trees, shrubbery and evergreens . . . The owners of the property hoped to make it one of the most beautiful cemeteries in the West (James, 1910).

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The Western Baptist Theological Institute began its classes at the new seminary in September of 1845. Even though this was intended to be an institution fair to both the northern and southern factions, the makeup of the faculty and the students was primarily from north of the Ohio River. This and the apparent anti-slavery sentiment of the school's faculty caused great mistrust among the southern members. The national Baptist Church had tried to remain neutral on the moral issues surrounding slavery but the reality of the time revealed a great division among its brethren, leading to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in May 1845. The division of the church into two distinct denominations ultimately ensured the failure of the seminary in Covington. The northern (Ohio) trustees were locked out of the school in June 1845 by the Kentucky trustees and a bitter power struggle ensued as the school struggled to continue to operate. After much controversy and legal entanglements, the conflict between the trustees was finally mediated by then U. S. Supreme Court Justice McLean in 1853. During the conflict, the seminary had continued under the auspices of the Kentucky trustees, but it was closed in 1853 when the assets of the Institute were divided equally between the north and the south, as per McLean's arbitration. The southern seminary was moved to Georgetown College in Kentucky, and the still unsold portion of Linden Grove Cemetery and any unsold building lots were divided and put up for sale. Mercifully, Superintendent Robbins did not live to see his grand plan for the seminary and the city dissolve. He died in 1845 and an impressive white marble monument was erected to mark his grave at Linden Grove Cemetery (Photos # 28 & 29).

To further hasten the eventual disappearance of the seminary's presence in Covington, the Kentucky Central Railroad was completed in 1853, bisecting the square. School buildings were demolished and surrounding areas were subdivided, all vestiges of the city's only remaining public square soon disappeared. Regardless of the fate of the seminary, the Western Baptist Theological Institute did leave its mark on the city of Covington. Spurred by the railroad and the new Covington and Cincinnati Suspension Bridge, the city's growth continued through the 1850s and 1860s. The subdivisions the seminary had laid out did continue to be developed, and were eventually absorbed into ever-growing city, and most of the streets that had been named after the Institute's trustees retained their historic names. The most important surviving element of the trustee's grand plan for Covington, however, was Linden Grove Cemetery. Except for a small Catholic cemetery outside of the city limits, Linden Grove remained Covington's only cemetery until almost 1870. At that time, several cemeteries were opened far outside the city limits. To this day, Linden Grove Cemetery remains the only local cemetery completely incorporated within the city fabric.

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**Linden Grove Cemetery
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Historic Context: “American Nineteenth Century Cemetery Design, c.1840 to c.1900”.

To better understand the significance of Linden Grove Cemetery and how it meets Criterion C, it is beneficial to view its establishment as a local example of a much larger pattern of development – the emergence of ‘rural’ cemetery design in the United States.

Early American Cemetery Design

Tracing back to the early settlement of this country, the sparse population centers established along the east coast had little need for organized burial systems and the dead were usually interred in individual plots on farms or close to home, often unmarked. As the populations grew and towns were organized, a more public dimension to burial grounds emerged. Burial grounds were found in town centers, as graveyards, or alongside churches, as churchyards. This pattern was based on centuries old practices in Europe, especially England. As the colonial population continued to grow and these small yards became more and more crowded, concerns arose over sanitary conditions as well as whether the proper respect was being accorded the dead.

The “first cemetery of modern genus in the United States” (Jackson, 1989) was the Grove Street Cemetery in New Haven, Connecticut, established in 1796. Laid out in a grid pattern of blocks and streets by James Hilhouse, this ten-acre cemetery was private, non-denominational and completed removed from what was then the boundary of the town. Grove Street became the model for literally thousands of cemeteries in small towns across the country. The attitude towards death and the dead was changing. Located away from the town center, these cemeteries were considered places of eternal repose where the family could privately experience their loss, not the public reminders of the mortality and immorality of man the Puritan graveyards had been. Cemeteries began to be divided into family rather than just individual plots, and prominent family name markers became predominant. Perhaps this rise in the importance of the individual and the family developed as a result of the more-independent and less-class-conscious society America was becoming, in contrast to the European tradition. Any family, no matter how poor its roots, had the potential to rise to the top and erect the most impressive monument. Not only was the cemetery at New Haven a radical change in the social perception of cemeteries, it was also influential because of its design and hygiene qualities:

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New Haven was ‘certainly some improvement’ over the standard ‘soppy churchyard where the mourners sink ankle deep in a rank and offensive mould, mixed with broken bones and fragments of coffins’. Basil Hall, Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828, (Edinburgh: Adell, 1829, cited in French, 1975).

The Rural Cemetery Movement c.1831 to c.1855

As important a milestone in modern cemetery design as Grove Street Cemetery is, it has been far superseded by the influence of what can be considered the most famous American cemetery, Mount Auburn Cemetery, just outside of the city of Boston in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mount Auburn, consecrated in 1831, was the first large-scale example of Romantic landscape design in this country. The landscape of this and the hundreds of American cemeteries modeled after it embodied the spirit of Romantic naturalism where the works of nature would ideally inspire and instruct those whom experienced it (Clendaniel, 1997).

Mount Auburn became a huge popular success, not just as a cemetery but as a place of public enjoyment, a public confirmation of the Romantic ideals. Within fifteen years, virtually every city in the eastern United States had built its own ‘rural’ cemetery and the movement continued into the Midwest and Upper South. Green-Wood in New York City, 1838, Albany Rural in 1840, Spring Grove in Cincinnati, 1844, Cave Hill in Louisville, 1848 and Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, 1849. The populist success of these cemeteries encouraged Andrew Jackson Downing, often referred to as the father of American landscape architecture, to suggest in the *New York Horticulturist* that every large city should have this kind of public space, simply as places for enjoyment of nature.

Linden Grove Cemetery, c.1840 to c. 1900

Most of the early- and mid-nineteenth cemeteries were founded in an atmosphere of civic improvement; the local leadership saw them as an opportunity to give something to the community that could edify as well as educate, and thus represent to the world the civilized, democratic nation the United States had become (French, 1975). Linden Grove Cemetery was founded on just these principles. Superintendent Ephraim Robbins (1784 -1845), the trustee credited with the management of the lands and the planning and layout of Linden Grove Cemetery, was born in Suffield, Connecticut. As an educated New Englander and a religious leader, Robbins was probably familiar with both the Grove Street Cemetery and Mount Auburn Cemetery and the idealistic as well as romantic philosophies that inspired them.

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**Linden Grove Cemetery
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The earliest map depicting a layout for a cemetery on the Linden Grove site is Rickey's 1842 'New Plat of the Lands of the Western Baptist Theological Institute' (See Map 2) recorded in County deed books. Identified as the 'Cincinnati and Covington Cemetery' the map shows a rectilinear plan with a centrally located circle. Whether this was the surveyor's interpretation of the Institute's plan for the cemetery or an authentic early design, is not known. Because no other early plan of the cemetery exists, its original layout must be discerned from written accounts of the day. At the time of the cemetery's consecration in September 1843 as Linden Grove Cemetery, contemporary newspaper accounts and descriptions from the consecration program refer to both rectilinear avenues and winding paths and glens as well as a pond:

Descending from the avenues and paths which skirt the margins of the dells and glens, you enter the ravines, along whose serpentine winding grass paths have been formed . . . These grassy paths, as they are traversed, lead to various interesting improvements on the way, such as a large clear fountain of water, handsomely walled, embanked and sodded, the waste water from which, winding its silent way down the glen along the path side, discharges itself into a circular artificial pond which constantly, as it receives fresh supplies from the spring above, discharges itself into the glen beyond. The descent to these grassy walks is not only through the natural entrance to the ravines, but by numerous flights of grass steps constructed at appropriate points. The green banks along the depth of the ravines are most appropriately formed for the erection of tombs, and many most desirable locations may be selected for that purpose (Storer, 1843).

A newspaper article preceding the consecration states that in the "midst of this most quiet and romantic scenery"..."the extensive improvements in these appropriate and beautiful grounds have been silently but steadily progressing for about three years" and that "it cannot be doubted, are very far in advance of any thing of the kind in the western country." It closes with the following admonishment:

Our citizens of Covington lose much by not occasionally paying a visit to this retreat. with its delightful avenues and walks, richly margined with almost every species and varieties of shrubbery, evergreens, flowers, &c. A place like this, in the vicinity of Cincinnati, would be thronged with the admirers of nature and art thus happily combined (Licking Valley Register, 1843).

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Another early account states “that it is simply justice to say that the grounds laid out entirely under the direction of Mr. Ephraim Robbins are arranged in a taste and convenience superior to anything in the West, and rarely excelled anywhere . . . The grounds are intersected with numerous avenues and walks planted with trees . . . There are in the cemetery some glens with walks to them (The Daily Cincinnati Chronicle, 1843).

Obviously, by the time of the cemetery’s dedication, its plan and name had been modified from the 1842 plat. The early verbal descriptions are more in keeping with some of the elements from the next oldest surviving plan of the cemetery, an 1858 illustrated map by Benjamin Grove (see Map 3). Grove (1824-1915) was a surveyor and civil engineer from Louisville who became a well-known designer of Kentucky cemeteries including Cave Hill in Louisville (NR 1979) and Elizabethtown City Cemetery (NR 1997). Grove’s elaborately illustrated drawing indicates the vault, springhouse, pond, and perimeter avenues as described in the 1843 written accounts, but it imposes a grid of cemetery plots over the curvilinear elements of the cemetery. By 1858, the cemetery belonged to a private developer named Samuel Walker. Even though Grove’s plan provided for an efficient layout and an increased number of plots, Walker apparently never implemented it. A subsequent 1866 plat depicts a more accurate representation of the actual plan (see Map 4), as does the map of the cemetery from an 1877 city atlas (see Map 5).

Besides the cemetery layout and features such as the vault and springhouse, early accounts also describe a sexton’s house located at the cemetery entrance off of Holman Avenue. In the consecration program, this ‘Porter’s Lodge’ was described as an “imposing brick front of forty feet in width, two stories high, with an arched gateway in its centre (sic), on either side of which, in the rear, is a wing constructed for the permanent residence of the porter and his family. Immediately over the arch, at the entrance of the gate, is inserted in the brick work a large stone tablet, on which is cut the inscription ‘Linden Grove Cemetery’” (Storer, 1843). The 1894 Sanborn Insurance Map clearly shows this arched entry and lodge, identified as Sexton’s D (see Map 6). By the time of the 1909 Sanborn Insurance Map, this house had been removed and the current sexton’s house is indicated (see Map 7). The reasons for the removal of the original lodge and gate are unknown, but it is possible that the front room of the present sexton’s house were at one time the rear wing of the original lodge. The location and footprint of the rear wing shown on the 1894 map correspond to the front of house shown on the 1909 map and interior moldings within the front section of the existing house appear to be in keeping with mid-nineteenth century detailing. The remainder of the house has later period detailing and will be presumed to have been built between 1894 and 1909 (c.1900). Probably contemporary to the rear section of the sexton’s house are the ornamental iron entryway and gates, manufactured in Covington by Stewart Iron Works.

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Also shown on the 1894 and 1909 Sanborn Insurance Maps are several greenhouses located behind the sexton's house. City directories list greenhouses and florists at Linden Grove Cemetery between 1874 and 1915 (Dreyer, 1998). The area of the cemetery where these greenhouses are located was apparently never sold, so an assumption can be made that the florists leased the land from the cemetery. None of the greenhouses exist today and several graves have since been located on their site.

The original plan of Linden Grove Cemetery exhibits both the rectilinear characteristics of the Grove Street Cemetery and the romantic curvilinear characteristics of rural cemeteries such as Mount Auburn. Predating Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery by two years, and Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery and St. Louis's by several years, Linden Grove can be seen as a transition from the orderly layout of earlier formal cemeteries and the naturalistic designs of rural cemeteries of the 1840's; a forerunner in cemetery design west of the Alleghenies. Cemetery design was in a state of flux, and the designers of Linden Grove attempted to incorporate both formality and romanticism into their design. Perhaps the 1843 newspaper account was correct in stating that Linden Grove Cemetery was "very far in advance of any thing of the kind in the western country". Ironically, the duality of its design embodied the progressive ideals of the Western Baptist Theological Institute's trustees in their attempt to unite two diverse schools of thought.

The Lawn Cemetery Movement c.1855-c.1920

The next important stage in the evolution of the American cemetery came as a reaction against what were perceived as the crowded and cluttered landscapes of the 'rural' cemetery, too full of varied monuments and other visual interruptions. Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati is considered the forerunner of this direction, the first American lawn cemetery. Even though Spring Grove was originally established as part of the 'rural' cemetery movement, in 1855 a new superintendent, Adolph Strauch, was to change its face forever. He rerouted roads, removed fencing and curbstones and in general insisted on greater aesthetic controls in order to achieve a more uniform and harmonious landscape. Spring Grove, at 733 acres, was twice the size of Mount Auburn yet contained fewer monuments, this was not purely a result of a change of aesthetics, but rather a "marriage of aesthetic ideals to the gospel of efficiency". By limiting the number of monuments, especially for family plots, the cemetery would seem less crowded and maintenance would be simplified (Farrell, 1980).

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Lawn cemeteries completely took over American cemetery design after the Civil War. Perhaps as a reaction to the horrors of death made public by the war photographs of men like Mathew Brady, Americans were ready to embrace a landscape that suggested the simple pleasures of a park rather than one that reminded them of the pain of death. As the American population continued to explode with the vast waves of new immigrants of the late nineteenth century, the business of caring for the dead did the same. Perpetual care programs, in a way, insurance policies for the maintenance of the dead, became commonplace by the 1870's and cemetery superintendents, considering themselves professional businessmen, organized nationwide. The American Association of Cemetery Superintendents, AACS, was founded in 1887 at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati.

At the close of the nineteenth century, cemetery superintendents, memorial manufacturers, the newly established field of funeral directors and even the clergy sought to standardize the practices associated with death and burial, ostensibly to make things easier for the survivors but in reality to make it easier for business. "Idealism gave way to pragmatism and a more simple functionalism." (Linden-Ward, 1989). The larger cemeteries developed outside of Covington's city limits during the late nineteenth century were examples of these pragmatic lawn cemeteries. They were able to stay abreast of cemetery fashion, while Linden Grove, with its constant financial woes and strictly limited area could not.

Integrity Considerations

Today, Linden Grove Cemetery exhibits the spatial organization and retains the historical associations of its original design and layout. Even though it has continued in use as a cemetery, twentieth century burials have been in accord with its original plan and have not impaired its historic integrity (see Map 8). To fully assess the historic integrity of Linden Grove Cemetery, five of the seven aspects of integrity have been examined – location, design, setting, feeling and association.

The location, setting and design of Linden Grove Cemetery remain intact and represent its role as an early planning element of the Western Baptist Theological Seminary's trustees' plan for Covington and as an early example of progressive nineteenth-century cemetery design. The cemetery's location and setting in relationship to its historic urban environment remains unchanged as it continues to be surrounded primarily by mid- and late-nineteenth century urban residential development. The cemetery's major topographic features have remained intact, except for the drainage of the flooded artificial pond during the early 1980s for health and safety reasons. The pond bed remains undisturbed, however, and is readily discernible.

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During the nineteenth century, cemeteries transitioned from formal gardens into picturesque landscapes. They were laid out in much larger tracts of land than previously to allow their visitors a sense of privacy and serenity. The introduction of romantic elements such as varied topography, curvilinear designs and naturalistic landscapes was meant to enhance the appreciation of the cemetery as an object of natural beauty and the inclusion of elaborate monuments married 'art with nature'. Linden Grove has retained its defining elements, both man made and natural. An examination of the aerial photo (see Map 9) reveals the existence of original paths and roadways, linear and curved, as well as historic grave markers and monuments. Original vegetation, including many mature trees, has survived and the outline of the ravine is unchanged. Walking through the cemetery, one further appreciates that the southern portion continues as a rectilinear design and that the northern portion retains its curvilinear layout. Fortunately, twentieth-century grave markers have followed the pattern set by lawn cemeteries and are relatively modest, being low to the ground, thus not interfering with the visual impact of the nineteenth century monuments.

The c. 1900 ornamental-iron entry gates, sign, and fence are intact, and the c. 1900 sexton's house has retained its form, and all of its historic doors, windows, porch and roof elements. The non-historic siding applied to the house does not appear to have damaged its historic architectural features. Situated at the cemetery's entry, the house retains its historic function as the home of the cemetery's caretaker, keeping watch over the gate.

A number of resources standing in Linden Grove Cemetery were constructed after the Period of Significance but which are compatible with the cemetery's design. An early-twentieth century design element is the 1933 War Between the States Monument, listed in the National Register as part of a Multiple Property Nomination (NR 1997). This 21-foot long by 9-foot wide stone and concrete monument is 5 feet tall and was erected as a platform for veterans' ceremonies. Although substantial in size, its location along the cemetery's southern boundary is not intrusive when viewing the cemetery as a whole. Another monument listed in the same nomination is the 1929 G.A.R. Memorial, a much smaller scale monument that provides little visual impact (Photo # 8). Two other twentieth century elements are a small tot-lot located on 13th Street (Photo # 23) and a metal storage building located behind the sexton's house, along the cemetery's eastern boundary, abutting an alley (Photo # 6). The playground is located on part of the site of the original pond and can be seen as a minor intrusion because its equipment is not permanent. The storage building, although more permanent, is not easily seen from the cemetery's entrance nor from its major paths or roadways. All of these twentieth century elements are dwarfed by the scale of the cemetery, which, because of its gentle topography, is easily appreciated.

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Because the location, setting and design of Linden Grove Cemetery have been maintained, the grounds still evoke the feeling of a nineteenth century landscape. The many mature trees contribute to the rural feeling of the site and promote a sense of calm in contrast with the dense nineteenth century urban landscape that envelops the cemetery. The intact historic boundaries and general plan laid out by Ephraim Robbins and the Western Baptist Theological Institute maintain the cemetery's association with that long forgotten historic institution that was responsible for much of Covington's planned nineteenth century development.

There is a frame of mind to which the cemetery is, if not an antidote, at least an alleviation. If you are in a fit of the blues, go nowhere else.

-Robert Louis Stevenson, Immortelles (cited in Curl, 1979)

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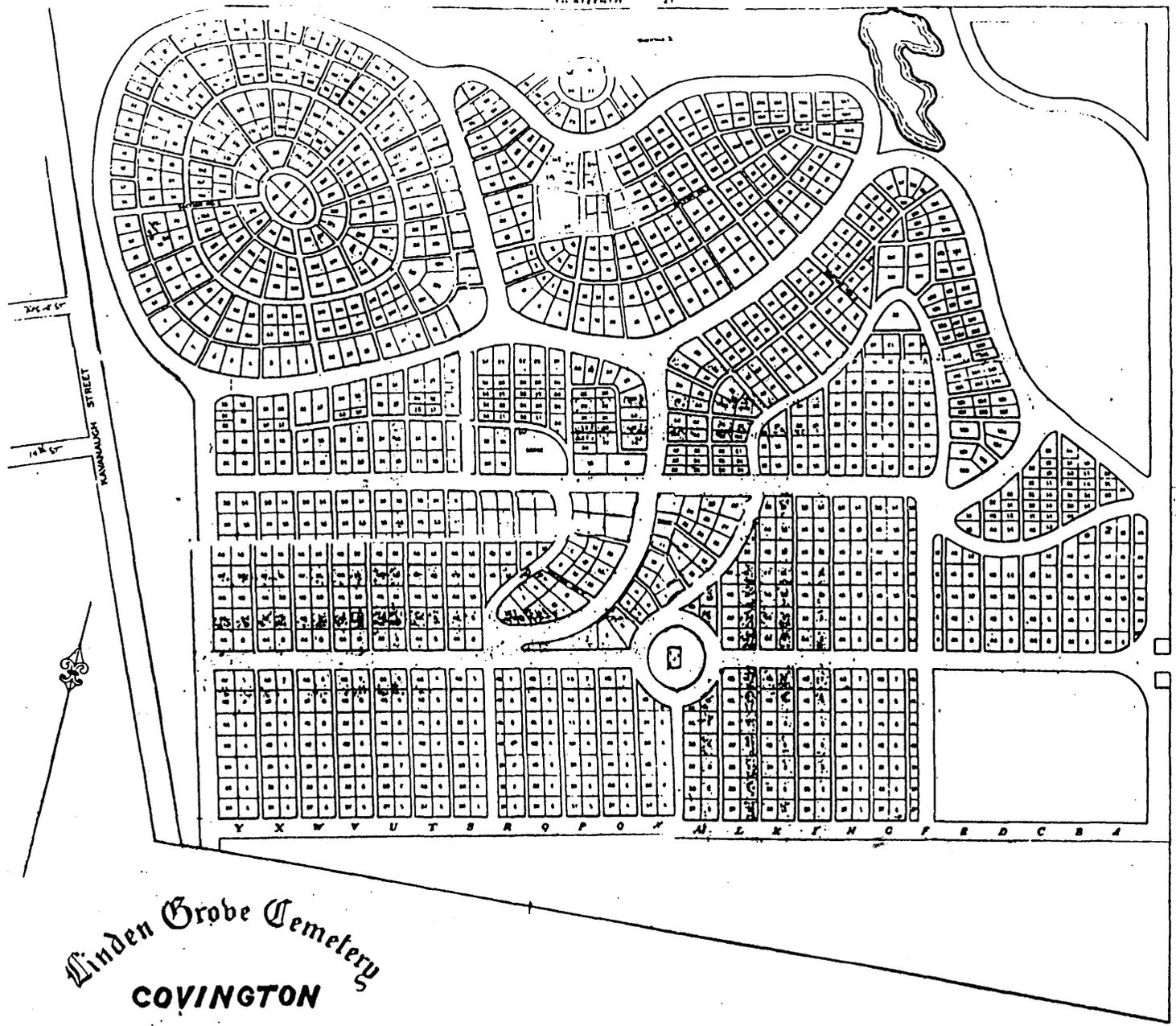
**Linden Grove Cemetery
Kenton County, Kentucky**

Verbal Boundary Description

See enclosed Map 9 that indicates cemetery boundaries in heavy black lines.

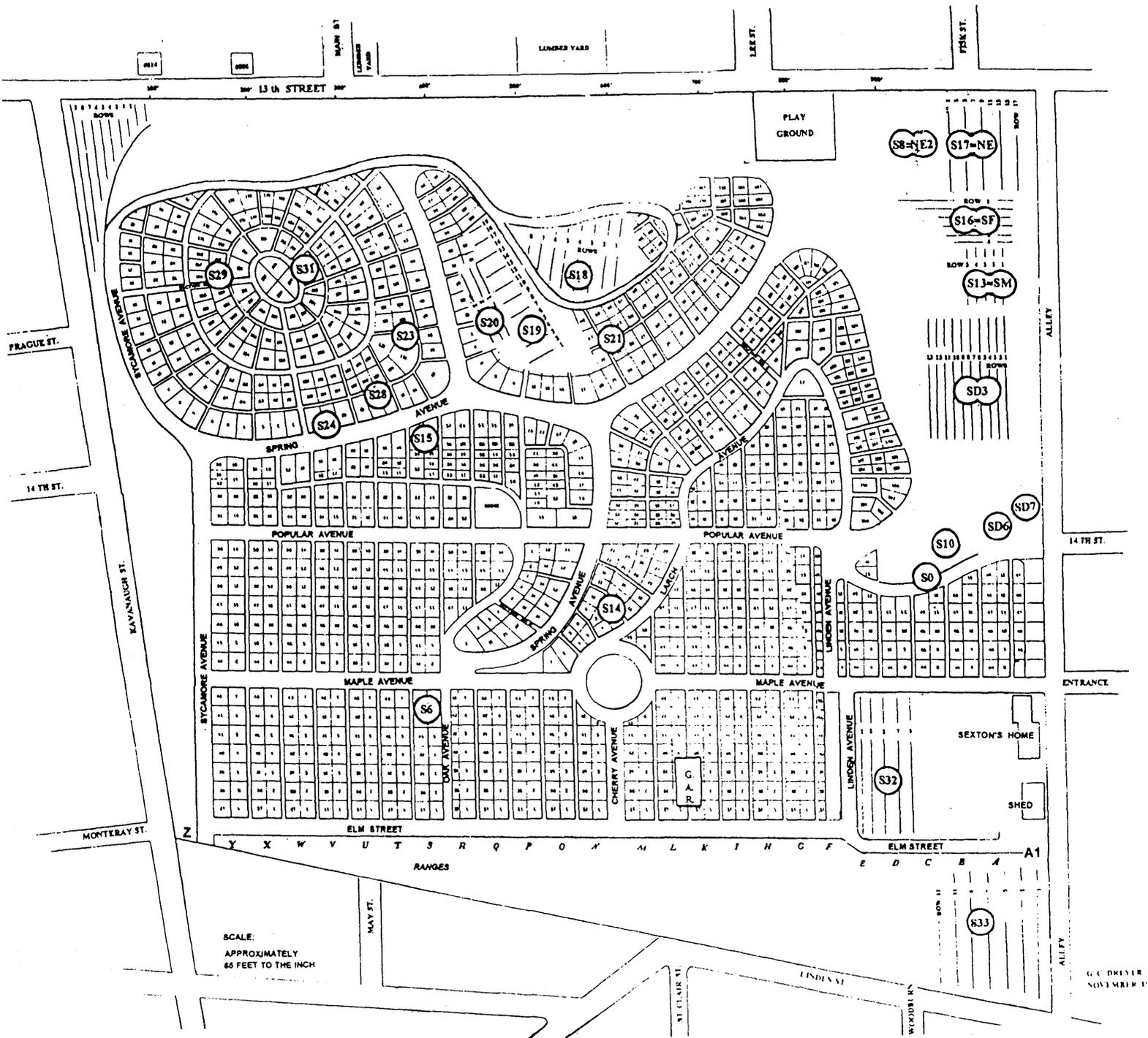
Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Linden Grove Cemetery are set along the property lines of the tract historically identified as the Linden Grove Cemetery since 1843. The boundary of the historic cemetery is intact and retains its historic integrity as a distinct feature of the neighborhood and its environs.



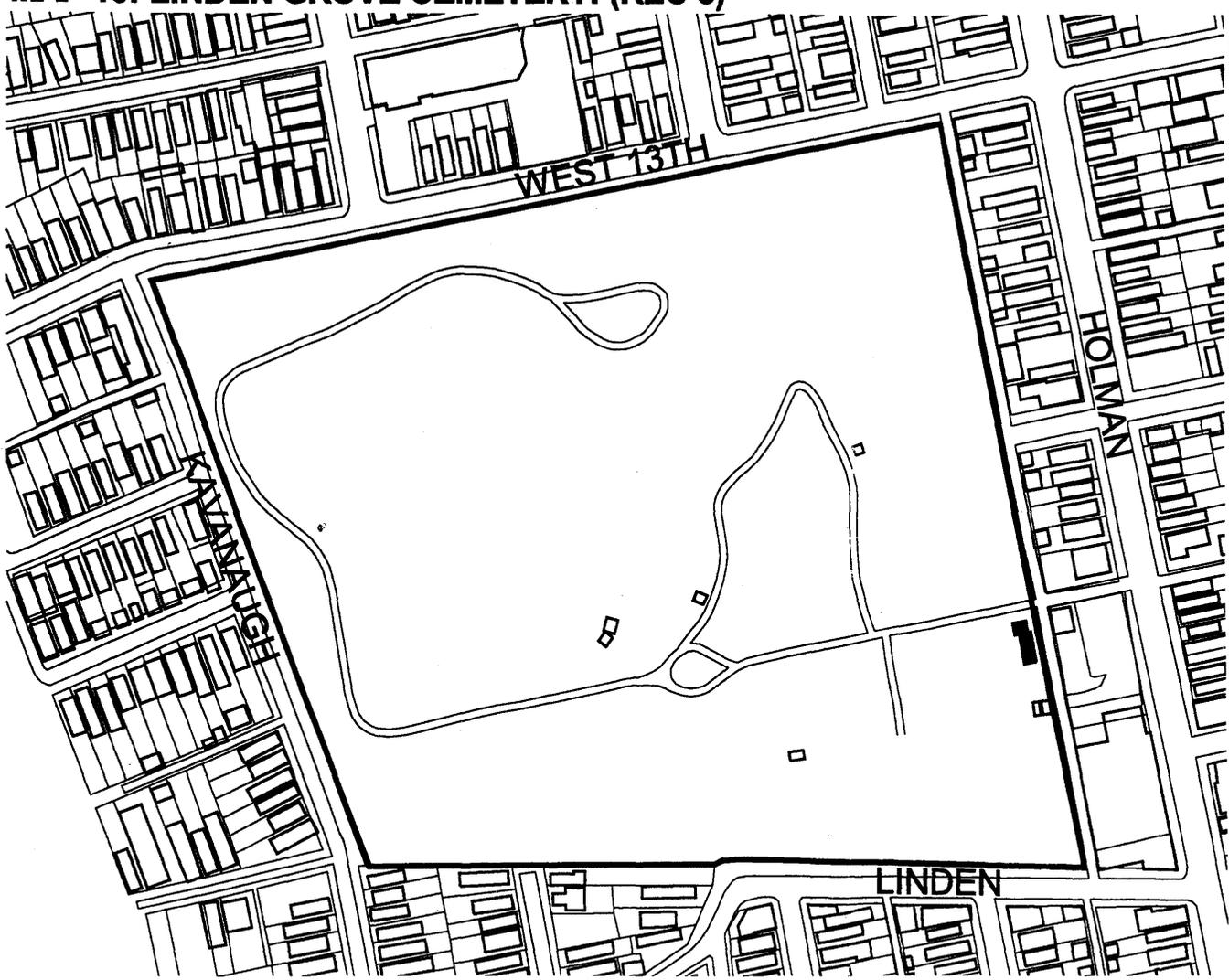
Linden Grove Cemetery
COVINGTON
KENTUCKY.

**MAP 4: 1866 Plat of
Linden Grove Cemetery**
Linden Grove Cemetery, Covington, Kentucky (KEC 8)



**MAP 8: 1983 Plan of
Linden Grove Cemetery**
Linden Grove Cemetery, Covington, Kentucky (KEC 8)

MAP 10: LINDEN GROVE CEMETERY: (KEC 8)



-  Contributing Building
-  Proposed Boundary
-  Parcels
-  Buildings
-  Roads

1:150



CITY OF COVINGTON
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
638 MADISON AVENUE, COVINGTON KY. 41011
PHONE (606) 292-2112
FAX (606) 292-2106

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MAP 11: PHOTO KEY - LINDEN GROVE CEMETERY: (KEC 8)



-  **Contributing Building**
-  **Proposed Boundary**
-  **Parcels**
-  **Buildings**
-  **Roads**



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ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**
638 MADISON AVENUE, COVINGTON KY. 41011
PHONE (502) 232-2112
FAX (502) 232-2106

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