

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 08000689

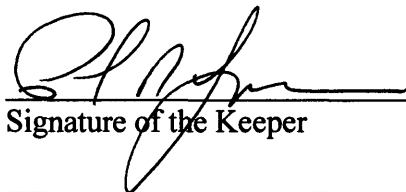
Date Listed: 7/15/08

Property Name: Centennial Park

County: Davidson

State: TN

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

7/15/2008

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 5: Category of Property

This large-scale, multi-component park is best categorized as a district; the nomination is hereby amended to categorize the property as a District.

The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

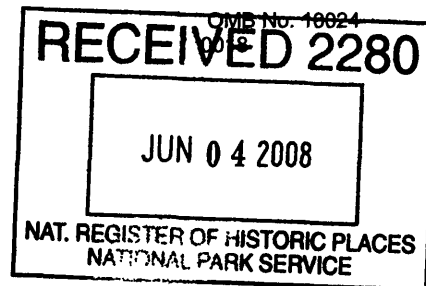
DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Centennial Park
other names/site number Tennessee Centennial Exposition Grounds

2. Location

street & number West End Ave at 25th Ave N NA not for publication
city or town Nashville NA vicinity
state TN code TN county Davidson code 037 zip code 37203

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title E. Patrick M. ... Date 6-02-08
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 certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 7/15/2008

Centennial Park
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7	2	buildings
1		sites
6	4	structures
14	3	objects
28	9	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument/marker

RECREATION AND CULTURE: bandstand

LANDSCAPE: city park

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument/marker

RECREATION AND CULTURE: bandstand

LANDSCAPE: city park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Modern Movement

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete, Stone

walls Concrete, Brick, Stone, Wood

roof Metal, Asphalt, Composite

other Concrete, Stone, Wood, Brick, Metal

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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or 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)

- ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
ART

Period of Significance

c. 1897-1963

Significant Dates

- 1897—Centennial Exposition
1903—Opening of Centennial Park
c. 1920—Reconstruction of Parthenon
1963—Consolidation of Metro Government

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Hart, Russell E.; Creighton, Wilbur, Sr.; Lewis, Eugene C.; Zolnay, George; Kinney, Belle; Yandell, Enid; Scholtz, Leopold; Dinsmoore, William B.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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 (part)
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:

Metro Parks and Recreation, Metro Archives

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 91.28 acres Nashville West 308 NE

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>516885</u>	<u>4001096</u>	3	<u>16</u>	<u>516840</u>	<u>4000065</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>517256</u>	<u>4000273</u>	4	<u>16</u>	<u>516362</u>	<u>4000593</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 Katie Merzbacher (MTSU graduate student); Elizabeth Moore (MTSU Center for Historic Preservation); Tara Mielnik (Nashville Metropolitan Historical Commission)

organization Center for Historic Preservation date April 11, 2008

street & number MTSU Box 80 telephone 615-898-2947

city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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.)

Property Owner

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

name Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation, c/o Mr. Roy Wilson, Director

street & number 511 Oman Street telephone 615-862-8400

city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37203

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 listing. 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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Centennial Park
Davidson County, Tennessee

Additional Contacts:

The Parthenon
c/o Ms. Wesley Paine, Director
P O Box 196340
Nashville, TN 37219-6340
(615) 862-8431

Conservancy for the Parthenon & Centennial Park
c/o Ms. Sylvia Feldman
Centennial Park
Nashville, TN 37210
(615) 862-8431

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Centennial Park
Davidson County, Tennessee

7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Centennial Park is a designed landscape park located in central Davidson County, in the heart of Nashville, and has its main entrance off of West End Avenue, which becomes historic Broadway downtown. The nominated portion of the park contains approximately 91 acres of the 132-acre park. Centennial Park was home to the Tennessee Centennial Exposition of 1897 and in 1902, Percy Warner and the Nashville Railway and Light Company gave the grounds to the Park Board. In 1963, the city and county governments were integrated, creating the Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County Government. This led to the disbanding of the Board of Park Commissioners and the creation of the Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation and a new era in park management. The nominated site contains twenty-nine contributing resources including five buildings, eight structures, fifteen objects, and one site and only nine noncontributing resources, which are scattered over the 91 acres. The Parthenon, the prominent building in the park, was listed in the National Register in 1972 for its local significance in art and architecture. The additional buildings, structures, monuments, and landscaping, provide an overall picture of the park as a designed landscape that has, over the years, adapted to suit the growing city of Nashville while, at the same time, retaining historic integrity.

There are currently ten buildings on the property, with eight of those historic: the Parthenon, c. 1920-1931; the Croquet Clubhouse, c. 1963; the Centennial Art Center, c. 1932; the Picnic Pavilion c. 1942, 1957; the East Restroom, c. 1955; the Croquet/Events Pavilion, c. 1958; the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center, c. 1959-1963; and the Band Shell, c. 1963. Centennial Park also contains over twenty monuments and markers, with more than half of these being historic, as well as many other notable features such as the Rose Arbor, c. 1897; Locomotive 576, c. 1953; the Sunken Garden, c. 1897; the Concrete Bridge, c. 1910; the Belgium Liberty Bell, c. 1961; and the Shell Spring, c. 1906-1912, all of which are within the period of significance. The park is bounded on the north by Park Plaza, on the west by 28th Avenue North and 31st Avenue North, on the south by West End Avenue and Poston Avenue, and on the east by 25th Avenue North. A small non-associated adjacent parcel containing the Marshall-Donnelly-Combs Funeral Home is located at the northwest corner of West End Avenue and 25th Avenue North.

At the center of Centennial Park is the Parthenon. Both the Parthenon, although reconstructed from 1920-1931, and the Rose Arbor have been present in the park since the 1897 Centennial Exposition, as has another dominant feature in the Centennial Park landscape, Lake Watauga. The various features of the park are connected both by a system of roadways, which cars can travel on, as well as a system of paved walkways that visitors can use to travel freely throughout the park. The park also includes a one-mile walking trail around scenic Lake Watauga, which features fountains, beautiful foliage, and several historic monuments and markers.

While Centennial Park is a combination of both past and present Nashville history, it is important to note that *all* of the twenty-nine contributing features in Centennial Park possess a great degree of integrity of association, feeling, location, and design. The historic features in Centennial Park have been meticulously cared for over the course of their existence in the park, some for over one hundred years. While there have been new additions to the park landscape, the nine non-contributing elements are small, isolated, and well blended with existing features to suit the overall feel of the park landscape and they do not infringe upon the quality and integrity of the historic features. Most importantly, there are no historic features in the park that lack historical integrity. Although modern buildings have encroached the boundaries of the park, they have not detracted from the historical integrity of the park landscape. Centennial Park is a vibrant and

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dynamic area that attempts to represent both the past and the present of Nashville while at the same time creating an inviting environment for its citizens to enjoy.

Contributing (29)

1. **The Parthenon (c. 1920-1931, contributing building)**

National Register Listed in 1972.

Originally constructed for the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition, the Parthenon is a replica of that of ancient Athens, Greece. The Nashville Parthenon saw an almost complete reconstruction in the 1920s in an effort to make permanent what was originally intended to be a temporary Exposition structure. The architect for the reconstruction was Russell B. Hart of the Nashville firm, Hart, Freeland, and Roberts, while the contractor was the Nashville company of Foster and Creighton. Hart worked closely with William B. Dinsmoor, a New York archaeologist who spent time in Greece studying the original Parthenon.¹ The north and south elevations of the Parthenon measure 228' while the east and west elevations measure 101'. The structure is 65' tall and is composed of reinforced White Portland Cement produced by the Atlas Portland Cement Company based in New York.² The entire exterior is surrounded by columns, with seventeen columns each on the north and south elevations and six columns each on the east and west elevations. The columns are not equally spaced; in fact, none of the columns are the exact same distance from each other. The columns measure approximately six feet in diameter around the base and have an average spacing of eight feet. Sculptor George Zolnay created the models that were used in the frieze that surrounds all four elevations of the structure. The east and west elevations have large pediments that contain images of Greek gods and goddesses that were sculpted by Nashville native Belle Kinney and her Austrian husband Leopold Scholz. The structure rests on a base that is composed of three massive concrete steps that run the length of all four elevations.³ The Parthenon historically and currently serves as an art gallery.

Within the Parthenon are the Lewis Marker and the Smith Memorial. The Lewis Marker, dedicated to Eugene Castner Lewis, Director General of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, dates to 1934 and is a bronze table of Greek design located in the wall of the gift shop in the basement of the Parthenon. The Smith Memorial (c. 1903, moved 1944) is a small bronze plate dedicated to Colonel William C. Smith, the architect of the temporary Parthenon structure at the Centennial Exposition. It is located in the Art Gallery of the Parthenon Building.

2. **Lake Watauga (c. 1897, contributing structure)**

Lake Watauga is located east-northeast of the Parthenon and was constructed for the Tennessee Centennial Exposition of 1897. It covers approximately five acres and is irregularly shaped. Lake Watauga serves as a focal point of the northeast section of the park with a one-half mile-long scenic path wrapping around the lake. Although the scenic path has been repaved with concrete and asphalt over time, it follows closely the original 1897 path around the lake. The lake also contains a small island that is covered with trees, shrubbery, and various types of flora at its north end. Two small fountains are located in the south section of the lake and appear to date to the early period of the park.

¹ Wilbur F. Creighton, *The Parthenon in Nashville: Athens of the South*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: privately published, 1996), 22.

² "The Atlas Portland Cement Company," advertisement, *Garden Magazine* 40, no. 6 (Feb 1925).

³ Herbert L. Harper, National Register of Historic Places Nomination for "The Parthenon," 1971 and Creighton, 20-36.

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Much of the rough-cut stone that lines the edge of the lake appears to be original, although some changes have been made where a boat dock once sat on the east side of the lake.

3. Croquet Clubhouse (1963, contributing building)

The Croquet Clubhouse is a one-story, irregular plan, modern brick structure with a concrete slab foundation. The façade of the structure is angled and forms an apex at the south end. Metal awning windows are located on the east and west elevations and in the triangular bay. Twenty windows (five vertical x four horizontal) are in each of the east and west elevations. On either side of the bay are fifteen windows (five vertical x three horizontal). The pitched roof of the structure is composed of composite shingles and also comes to a point at the front façade. The structure also features a brick interior chimney. Restrooms are located on either side of the building. This building was built for the Centennial Park Croquet Club.

4. Croquet/ Events Pavilion (c. 1958, contributing building)

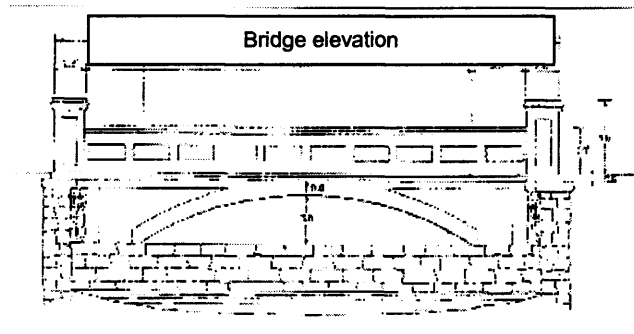
The Croquet/Events Pavilion is located in the northwest section of the park. It is an open-air structure composed of a concrete slab foundation and metal posts supporting a low-pitched metal roof. It functions as a shelter for various park picnics and events. According to minutes of the Board of Park Commissioners, it appears that this structure was constructed around 1958 and has undergone few changes since its construction.

5. Sunken Garden (1897, 1922, c. 1951-1959 contributing structure)

The Sunken Garden is located west of Lake Watauga and north of the Parthenon in the northwest section of the park. It is approximately one-half acre, is set slightly below ground level in a roughly rectangular shaped plot, and contains a landscaped garden of various plantings. Originally constructed for the 1897 Centennial Exposition, it was called Lily Lake until 1922. At that time, it was converted into a Japanese water garden and remained so until 1949. Then, in the 1950s it became the Sunken Garden, as it currently is known. Although plantings have changed over time and with seasonal variations, it contains many of the same types and general layout as originally planted in the 1950s. A set of c. 1950s rocks steps, forming a small bridge over plantings and drainage leads down into the east side of the garden. Metal handrails have been added to either side of the steps. On the west side of the sunken garden, c. 1950s concrete steps lead up and out of the garden. A small marker labeling it as the Sunken Garden was placed on the ground near the east entrance to the garden in 1974.⁴

6. Concrete Bridge (1910, contributing structure)

The Concrete Bridge is located in the northwest section of the park between the Sunken Garden and Lake Watauga. The bridge was constructed in 1910 by Wilbur Creighton, Sr., of Foster and Creighton Company, to replace a wooden bridge over the lake. This is one of the company's first reinforced concrete bridges. The bridge



⁴ Leland R. Johnson, *The Parks of Nashville: A History of the Board of Parks and Recreation* (Nashville: Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, Board of Recreation, 1986), 235.

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measures 39.5 feet long and 25.0 feet wide. It has one closed spandrel arch with a design incised in the spandrel area. The parapet rails each contain ten incised rectangular panels. The four end posts are crenellated and also contain incised rectangular panels. It remains unaltered from its original construction in 1910.⁵ The Tennessee Department of Transportation identified this as the Duck Pond Bridge and found it eligible for the National Register as an early pre-1946 filled spandrel arch bridge in Tennessee.⁶

7. Locomotive 576 (1942, 1953, contributing object)

Locomotive 576 was originally built in 1942 as a modern steam engine for use on the N C & SL Railway for the movement of military personnel and equipment during WW II. It was placed in the park in 1953 after electric power completely replaced steam engines on the N C & SL Railway. This large black steam engine is located southwest of the Croquet Clubhouse and Pavilion in the northwest section of the park. It is sheltered by an open-air pavilion with a concrete slab foundation and slender metal posts supporting a double-gabled, metal roof. It is highly probable that this pavilion was placed in the park at the same time that Locomotive 576 was placed in the park, as the railroad would not agree to donate the engine unless a suitable building would be provided to house it.⁷ In 1987, a small concrete marker to Bascom F. Jones was placed at the southwest corner of the Locomotive.

8. F-86 Aircraft Monument (1961, refurbished and moved 1981, contributing object)

The F-86 Aircraft Monument was originally placed in park in 1961. The plane was acquired by Mayor Ben West and Councilman Charles Bramwell as Air Force surplus. It originally served as play equipment for children in the park. In 1981, the 118th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Tennessee Air National Guard, restored it according to its original design, placed it on a stand, and moved it to its current location south of the Croquet Clubhouse in the northwest section of the park.⁸ Although the plane has been moved and no longer serves as play equipment it reflects the shift taking place in the 1950s and 1960s from classically-inspired monuments, recreational uses, to more modern symbols of technology.

9. Centennial Art Center (1932, 1972, contributing building)

Originally the Centennial Park bath house and swimming pool, this facility was constructed in 1932 and transformed into the Centennial Art Center in 1972, with the main adaptation being the transformation of the former swimming pool and pool deck area into a sculpture display garden and pond with courtyard.⁹ The building was used as a bathhouse with restrooms and changing facilities. The actual structural components of the building itself remain much the same as when it was originally constructed in 1932.

It is a one-story, brick, H-shaped building that faces south in the northeast corner of the park. The east and west sections of the building have a flat roof while the center of the structure has a flat-on-gable Spanish tile roof. The south façade of the structure has a recessed entry bay with two Doric columns supporting the roof of the recessed opening. Flanking the entryway are horizontal bands of

⁵ Martha Carver, *Survey Report for Historic Highway Bridges (draft copy)* (Nashville: Tennessee Department of Transportation), 443-444.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁷ *Board of Park Commissioners Minutes*, XII, 281.

⁸ Johnson, 269.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 235 and "Centennial Art Center," Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation pamphlet.

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four fixed metal-and-glass windows. The north elevation of the building is visible from within the sculpture garden. It consists of a central recessed porch with six fluted Doric columns supporting the Spanish tile roof. The east and west bays of the north elevation each have a single metal-and-glass door with a classical wood surround.

An enclosed courtyard lies to the rear, or south, of the building. Enclosing the courtyard to the south, east, and west of the building is a brick wall with slender vertical window openings. The sculpture garden is located in the center of the courtyard and is accessed via concrete steps leading down into the former pool. Enclosing the sunken sculpture garden are brick walls, circa 1972. On the west side of the courtyard is a covered pavilion with half-height brick walls and a reinforced concrete awning supported by a single central reinforced concrete post. The only major change in 1972 converted the pool into a sunken sculpture garden, and, although no longer a pool, the sunken sculpture garden maintains the feeling of a pool.

10. East Restrooms (c. 1955, contributing building)

The East Restrooms are housed in a one-story, brick building located east of Lake Watauga in the northeast section of the park. It is a simple brick structure with a composite shingle gable-on-hip roof. Wood vents are located in the gable ends. The structure is divided in two, east to west, to accommodate males on one side and females on the other. Just below the roofline are wood, horizontal band openings that allow for ventilation.

11. Tennessee Centennial Exposition Monument (1904, contributing object)

A marker for the Tennessee Centennial Exposition is located on the west bank of Lake Watauga in the northeast section of the park. It is composed of a metal plate on top of a flat stone with inscriptions commemorating the event, government officials, committees, architects, boards, and departments of the exposition. The flat stone was originally the base of the large granite shaft, now a part of the Robertson Monument that was on display during the Centennial Exposition by a company in Georgia.¹⁰ From postcards of the Exposition, it appears that the shaft and base were located just southwest of the Parthenon, approximately where the Thomas Monument currently stands. In 1904, the flat stone became the base for the Exposition Monument on the west side of Lake Watauga. The metal Centennial Memorial Tablet was attached to the flat stone, which was purchased for ten dollars by Major E. C. Lewis.

12. Powder Grinding Wheels (1897, 1968, contributing object)

The Powder Grinding Wheels are located near Park Plaza in the northeast section of the park. These wheels have been present in various locations in the park since the 1897 Exposition and have occupied this site since 1968. They were originally made in England and were used by Confederate troops to grind gunpowder in Augusta, Georgia. After the war, they were purchased and used by the Sycamore Powder Mills in Cheatham County (NR 7/9/79).¹¹ Next to this object is a standard historical marker erected by the Historical Commission of Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County in 1968.

¹⁰ Johnson, 285.

¹¹ Ibid, 282.

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13. Centennial Park Arts Activity Center (circa 1959-1963,¹² contributing building)

The Centennial Park Arts Activity Center is a brick building with a concrete foundation located in the southwest section of the park. The structure is a one-story, modern, T-shaped building facing east. The north-south stretching section of the building is one story with a flat roof. The east-west section extends west toward the rear of the building and has a gabled roof rising higher than that of the front section of the building. The front, or east, façade of the building has a recessed entryway of metal-and-glass windows and entry doors. Concrete steps lead up to the entryway. Flanking the entryway, along the rest of the façade, are horizontal bands of two-light awning windows stretching just below the roofline. A concrete barrier-free ramp with metal handrails stretches south of the entryway along the façade of the building. This building has undergone few alterations since its construction.

14. Confederate Private Monument (1904, contributing object)

The Confederate Private Monument, a sculpture by George Zolnay, is located about five hundred feet southwest of the Parthenon in the southwest section of the park and is dedicated to the heroism of the Confederate private. It has a concrete base that contains inscriptions on all four sides with a list of names of the Frank Cheatham Bivouac, Number 1, Association of Confederate Soldiers, Camp Number 35, United Confederate Veterans of Nashville inscribed on the metal plate on the west side. The focal point of the monument is a bronze statue of a Confederate private sitting atop a boulder holding a rifle.

15. Thomas Monument (1907, contributing object)

The Thomas Monument is located about one hundred feet southwest of the Parthenon in the southwest section of the park. It has a concrete foundation and eight benches, two on each side to form a balustrade around the focal point of the monument, a bronze statue of John W. Thomas that was sculpted by Enid Yandell. Steps lead up on all four sides to the statue. The base of the statue contains four metal plates: the three on the west, north, and south sides contain bas-relief figures while the metal plate on the east side contains an inscription to John W. Thomas. A standing figure of Thomas is atop this base. The concrete benches surround the statue: the outsides of the benches are inscribed with the words LAW, TRAFFIC, MECHANICAL, TRANSPORTATION, ROADWAY, ACCOUNTING, ADMINISTRATION, and EXECUTIVE; and the insides of the benches contain the words JUSTICE, CHARITY, DEVOTION, PROMPTNESS, INTEGRITY, COURAGE, PATRIOTISM, and WISDOM. Freestanding fluted columns are at each corner holding lamps.

16. Woman's Monument (1904, 1928, contributing object)

The Woman's Monument is located about four hundred feet southwest of the Parthenon in the southwest section of the park. It is a twelve-foot tall stone monument composed of a granite shaft and a large granite sphere. The sphere is thought to be the one displayed at the 1897 Exposition by the Southern Marble Company of Marblehill, Georgia. A metal plaque is attached to the shaft and recognizes the Woman's Department and Woman's Building at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition. The monument was erected in 1904 to mark the site of the Woman's Building, but was moved when the roads were relocated in 1928.¹³

¹² 63rd Annual report of Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation, Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee Fiscal year July 1 1962- June 31 1963, and email correspondence with Wesley Paine.

¹³ Johnson, 288.

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17. Rose Arbor (1897, 1957, contributing structure)

The Rose Arbor is located north of the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center in the southwest section of the park. The structure is curved to form a semicircle and is composed of stone columns that support wooden trellis framework. The Rose Arbor was originally constructed for the 1897 Centennial Exposition. Much of the wooden trellis framework was replaced c. 1957 due to deterioration, but it was replaced to match the original and the majority of the stone columns are original.¹⁴ The Rose Arbor maintains its original appearance and location.

18. Belgium Liberty Bell (1961, contributing object)

The Belgium Liberty Bell is located near the Rose Arbor in the southwest section of the park. Three large, approximately twenty foot tall steel posts rest on small concrete blocks and join together at the top to suspend the bell from a small platform.

19. Picnic Pavilion (c. 1942, 1957, contributing building)

The Picnic Pavilion is located in the southwest corner of the park near Poston Avenue. It has a decahedron footprint and is an open-air structure composed of two rings of large stone columns, one ring of tapered rough-cut stone columns on the interior that supports a small gabled roof, and another set of tapered rough-cut stone columns on the exterior of the pavilion that support the ten-sided flat roof, contributing structure. A photograph of this building with a simple pitched roof appears in a 1942 engineering report and the 1957 minutes of the Board of Park Commissioners suggest the replacement of the "high roof" with a flat roof, which is present on the structure today. This structure provides space for picnic and events within the park.

20. Natchez Trace Monument (1912, contributing object)

The Natchez Trace Monument is located along the roadside of West End Avenue in the southwest corner of the park to mark the point where General Andrew Jackson and his army started their march over the Natchez Trace.¹⁵ It is composed of granite and is five feet tall with small metal inscription plaque reading "NATCHEZ TRACE: Nashville, Tenn.—Natchez, Miss. Five Hundred and One Miles." It was erected by the Cumberland, Campbell, and McCrory chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

21. Band Shell (circa 1963, contributing structure)

The Centennial Park Band Shell, designed by Nashville architects Earl Swenson and Joe Kott, is located north of the entrance to the park from Elliston Place in the southeast section of the park. It is a modern structure composed of brick and concrete with a concrete foundation. The walls of the structure are brick and angle outward from the center to form a fan-shaped plan. The fan shape of the building was intended to accelerate acoustics. The brick walls angle upward to support the concrete roof. The back of the stage is a concrete wall that curves as it becomes the roof. The concrete roof is higher at the front of the stage and forms a triangular point at its apex. In front of the stage is an area with benches for the audience.

¹⁴ The Superintendent reported to the Board of Park Commissioners on March 7, 1957, that it needed "replacing". He stated that the stone columns were in good condition but that it would be necessary to replace the wooden framework. While the wooden trellis framework has needed replacing, at least some of the stone support columns are original to the structure. (Johnson, 283-284, and *Mins.*, XIV, 47).

¹⁵ Johnson, 280.

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22. Ann Robertson Cockrill Monument (1946, contributing object)

The Cockrill Monument is located near the entrance to the park from West End Avenue in the southeast section of the park. The monument is composed of a four-foot tall granite boulder with an attached metal inscription plate. A bas-relief carving on the metal plate shows a woman holding a book, teaching children outside of Fort Nashborough. The inscription below recognizes Ann Robertson Cockrill's efforts in establishing Nashville's first school after her arrival in 1780. This monument was erected by the school children of Nashville and Davidson County and the Tennessee Historical Commission in 1946.

23. Gold Star Monument (1922, 1967, contributing object)

The Gold Star Monument is located in the southeast section of the park by the intersection of 25th Avenue North and West End Avenue. Sculpted by George Zolnay, it is dedicated to the members of the armed forces from Davidson County who died during WW I. Its base is composed of concrete and has metal plaques on the east and west sides containing the names of the dead. Inscribed in the concrete on the south side is: I GAVE MY BEST TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD 1917-1918; and on the north side: ERECTED BY THE CITIZENS OF DAVIDSON COUNTY TENNESSEE. 1923 NASHVILLE KIWANIS SPONSOR. On top of the concrete base is a bronze statue of a fallen soldier who is being tended to by an allegorical figure. According to Leland Johnson, Wilbur Creighton restored and refurbished the monument in 1967.

24. Gunboat Tennessee Monument (1910, contributing object)

The Gunboat *Tennessee* Monument is located south of the band shell at the entrance to the park from Elliston Place in the southeast section of the park. This large bronze ship's prow is a replica of that of the Gunboat *Tennessee* and displays the figurehead of the boat. The figurehead contains an eagle, thirteen stars and beautiful scrollwork, and was on display at the 1909 Seattle World's Fair. Major E. C. Lewis designed and directed the construction of a concrete ship's prow to hold the figurehead in 1910. Circa 1956 some repairs were made to the gunboat *Tennessee* replica. At the August 10, 1956, Board of Park Commissioners meeting the issue of repairing the replica was discussed. The Board approved repairs to the battleship replica and instructed the Superintendent to secure bids before a contract was awarded.¹⁶ These repairs do not appear to have altered the overall appearance of the monument.

25. Shell Spring (1906-1912, contributing structure)

The Shell Spring is located south of the band shell and the Gunboat *Tennessee* Monument in the southeast section of the park. This large concrete seashell was erected over a spring near the Lick Branch Sewer. Local legend has it that it was designed by Major E.C. Lewis from a seashell found on a Florida beach.¹⁷ Although the spring has dried up, the shell remains in its original location to mark the place of the spring; however, it is now surrounded by a fence due to its fragile condition.

26. Bridge at Lick Branch Sewer (c. 1910, contributing structure)

The bridge at Lick Branch sewer is located just east of Shell Spring in the southeast section of the park. This is a concrete bridge with regularly spaced openings in the parapet rails. The four end posts

¹⁶ *Mins.*, XIII, 424

¹⁷ Johnson, 284.

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have an incised panel on each exterior side. Each of the four posts also has a concrete planter atop it that is a recent addition; however, these planters are very similar to those that are shown in historic sketches of the bridge. Leading west from the bridge are rough-cut stone retention walls that mark the water source to the former spring. Underneath the bridge is an opening composed of rough-cut stone surrounding a large pipe that remains from the water source that led to the spring. The bridge was built by Foster and Creighton and was their first experience with reinforced concrete bridge construction.¹⁸

27. Robertson Monument (1903, contributing object)

The Robertson Monument is located at the south end of Lake Watauga. It is composed of granite, the shaft and base combined rise fifty feet in the air, and metal plaques are on all four sides of the base. The granite of the shaft was quarried at Stone Mountain, Georgia by Venerable Brothers of Atlanta and was brought to Nashville to be displayed at the 1897 Exposition. From postcards of the Exposition, it appears that the shaft sat just southwest of the Parthenon where the Thomas Monument now stands. In 1902, the shaft was moved and erected atop a granite base on the south side of Lake Watauga as a monument to James Robertson.¹⁹ There is no evidence to suggest that the shaft left the park between the closing of the Exposition and 1902. Metal plaques containing inscriptions to Robertson are on the north, west, and south sides of the base; and one with an inscription to his wife, Charlotte Reeves is on the east side of the base. The monument was completed in 1903.

28. Timothy Monument (1919, contributing object)

The Timothy Monument is located in the southeast section of the park, approximately one thousand feet from the entrance to the park from West End Avenue. It is composed of concrete, is approximately three feet tall, and has a bronze plate that contains an inscription to Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy, who was the first Tennessee officer to lose his life in WW I. At the same time as the construction of the concrete and bronze marker, a tree was planted to honor Lieutenant Simmons by the Catholic children of Nashville. The tree still stands just north of the marker.

29. Park Landscape (c. 1897-1963, contributing site)

The Park Landscape as a whole defines Centennial Park as a public municipal park composed of roadways, pathways, vegetation, gates, and fences located within the park. The various elements of the park represent the activities and functions of the park over its more than 100-year history. From the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, to the early municipal scenic and leisure park, to the playground movement and recreation movement of the first half of the twentieth century, and finally the post-WWII history of the park, the extant landscape features of the park are physical representations of the evolution of the property.

Although the roadways and pathways have been altered over the years to accommodate for the many changes that have taken place over the long and fascinating history of Centennial Park, the changes have not been significant enough to detract from the overall feel of the park atmosphere. The main instance of alteration of roadways and pathways occurred in 1928, as discussed by Leland R. Johnson

¹⁸ Wilbur F. Creighton, Jr. *A Paragraph from Nashville's History: The Foster Creighton Story*. (Nashville: privately published, 1974), 11.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 283.

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in *The Parks of Nashville: A History of the Board of Parks and Recreation*.²⁰ It is plausible that these changes in the roadways and pathways were timed to coincide with the completion of the reconstruction of the Parthenon, which occurred around 1931.²¹ However, the growth of the national recreation movement should not be underestimated; therefore, it is also possible that these changes in the drives in Centennial Park were the results of the shift from the idea of the park as a place of scenic and isolated relaxation to the concept of the park as a place for active recreation and play, highlighted by the increased proliferation of automobiles. There was a major change in traffic patterns (changed to more one way streets) and more parking adding around the Parthenon in the late 1990s.

The park contains a c. 1910 rough-cut stone fence spanning the park boundary on West End Avenue and 27th Avenue. Historic iron light posts sit at regular intervals atop the fence. Plantings and trees also contribute to the historic landscape and are scattered throughout the park. Trees are also planted in regular intervals along roadways in the park.

Centennial Park also contains several small, minimal elements such as swings, water fountains, picnic tables, concrete pads and blocks, benches, and planters that, according to National Register Bulletin 16A, are too small in scale to count as contributing or non-contributing resources. Several of these are historic, but do not substantially add to the significance of the landscape, such as the 1937 water fountain and the 1950s curved benches. Most are removable or movable objects and act as functional park elements that are scattered throughout the park landscape. These include concrete pads for swings, swings, small planters, and small markers to label trees. There are also examples of recent public art, as seen with the sculpture of the fish by the East Restroom. These elements do not necessarily add or detract from the historical integrity of the park landscape, they are merely objects that are functional for the users of a park.

Also located within the park are five Tennessee Historical Markers erected by the Tennessee Historical Commission, including those for the Parthenon, Anne Dallas Dudley, Cockrill Spring, the N C & SL Railway, and the Battle of Nashville Federal Defenses. In addition to these state markers, the Metropolitan Historical Commission has erected three markers to Major Wilbur Fisk Foster, the Powder-Grinding Wheels, and United Nations Visit to Nashville. These eight markers are small, inconspicuous, and scattered throughout the park and do not detract from the overall integrity of the park landscape.

²⁰ Ibid, 288.

²¹ Wilbur F. Creighton, Jr. and Leland R. Johnson, *The Parthenon in Nashville: Athens of the South*, 2nd ed. (Privately Published, 1996), 27 and 35.

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Non-Contributing (9)

30. Parthenon Marker (1979, non-contributing object, due to date)

The Parthenon Marker is located approximately fifty feet from the west entrance to the Parthenon in the northwest section of the park. Composed of aggregate, the plaque discussing the history of the Parthenon encompasses almost the entire front of the marker.

31. Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway Monument (1970s, non-contributing object, due to date)

The N C & SL Railway Monument is located approximately twenty feet north of Locomotive 576 in the northwest section of the park. It is the concrete door from the downtown Nashville office of the railway company and contains a colored depiction of two engines at the top of the door and a metal plaque at the center.

32. Park Police Complex (c. 1980, non-contributing building, due to date)

The Park Police Complex is located in the northwest corner of the park. It is a one-story building that is composed of gray rectangular concrete blocks and has a flat roof. A set of concrete steps leads to the front entrance. There is a large cargo bay at the northwest end of the building.

33. Frist Memorial Garden (c. 2000, non-contributing structure, due to date)

The Frist Memorial Garden is a small, planted garden dedicated to Thomas F. Frist, Sr., M.D., and Dorothy Cate Frist. It is located in the northeast section of the park near Park Plaza. A small plaque sits in the garden marking it as the "Frist Memorial Garden."

34. Centennial Café Restaurant (c. 1995, non-contributing building, due to date)

The Centennial Café Restaurant is located north of the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center in the southwest section of the park. It is a single story structure composed of cement blocks, painted white, with a two-foot wide blue horizontal stripe at the top of the north, west, and south elevations and alternating two foot wide red and white vertical stripes on the north, west, and south elevations. It has a flat roof with a faux-gable on its east and west ends. The east façade has a recessed portico containing a large square opening to facilitate the service of food. Restrooms are located on the south elevation of the building.

35. Victims of Violence Children's Memorial Garden (1998, non-contributing structure, due to date)

This Memorial Garden is located north of the Rose Arbor in the southwest section of the park. It contains two small rock monuments as well as two arched entranceways, at the east and west, made of painted white timbers. A brick walkway lines the path through the garden and a circular planter is at the midway point of the path.

36. Fulton Monument (c. 1980, non-contributing object, due to date)

The Fulton Monument is located in a planter south of the Rose Arbor in the southwest section of the park. It is an approximately four-foot tall concrete monument with a large plaque at the center.

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37. ReLeaf Nashville Plaza (2001, non-contributing structure, due to date)

The ReLeaf Nashville Plaza is located west of the Confederate Private Monument, along the roadway, in the southwest section of the park. It is a large semi-circle formed of cut rock, contains a large plaque at the center, and has stone benches to the north and south.

38. Centennial Park Playground (late 20th century, non-contributing structure, due to date)

The Centennial Park Playground is located in the southwest section of the park just north of the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center. It contains modern children's playground equipment. The current playground is located on the same site as the first playground built in 1909.

These non-contributing elements in Centennial Park constitute just less than one-fourth of the total resources in the park. They are isolated and relatively small in scale compared to the contributing elements. They are well blended into the park landscape and do not detract from the overall historic character of the park.

Although modern facilities have encroached on the parks boundaries, the nominated 91 acres are separated by roadways and landscape features. To the south, across West End Avenue is a modern commercial building; to the west, on the south end of the park, across 28th Avenue is a modern apartment building; to the east is Centennial Sportsplex, a modern facility associated with the park, and modern healthcare facilities; and to the north, across Park Plaza, are modern park administration buildings as well as healthcare facilities. To the west, across 31st Avenue at the north end of the park, is Flagpole Hill, currently and historically associated with the park. Located across a major roadway and due to significant recent changes, the Flagpole Hill parcel is not included within the nominated boundaries. Flagpole Hill and Centennial Sportsplex, although part of the park, are on separate legal parcels from the nominated 91 acres.

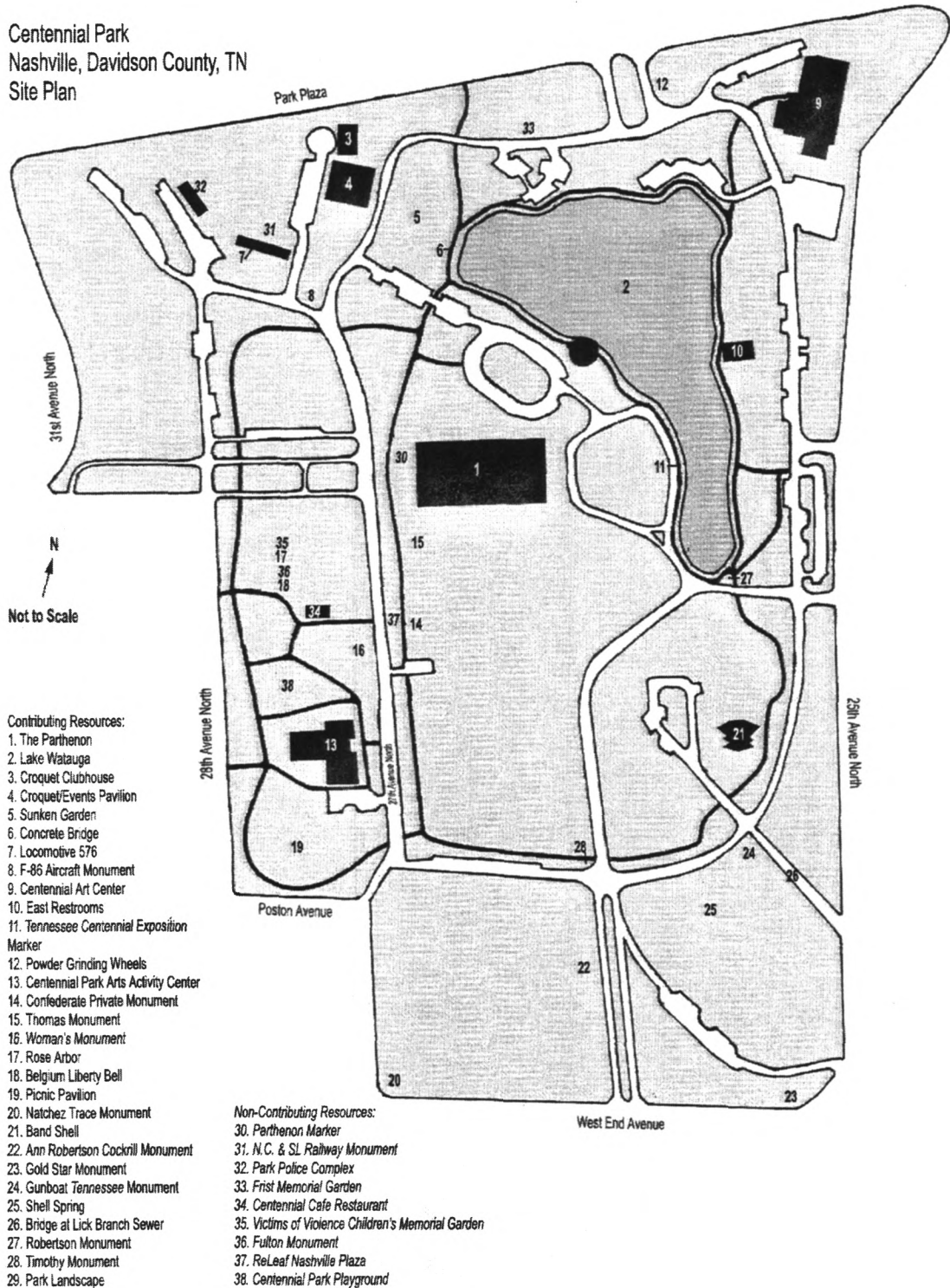
The nominated portion of the park, although surrounded by modern development, has preserved much of its historical integrity. The changes made to the park over the last century, allowing it to continue as a functional park by following changes in national park theory, are compatible with the original layout and design of Centennial Park. The park continues to exhibit characteristics from each of its historic phases of development: the Exposition, the formation of the park, the playground and recreation movements, and the post-WWII period. The park maintains its integrity of feeling and association as well its integrity of location, materials, and design.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Centennial Park, located in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as a designed historic landscape under criteria A and C for its local significance in art, architecture, landscape architecture, entertainment/recreation, and politics/government. As it was the location of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in 1897 and has continued to be the home of the iconic replica of the Parthenon, Centennial Park has been, for over 100 years, a Nashville landmark that has made an excellent contribution to local history. Centennial Park contains buildings and monuments that both maintain historical integrity and are, in many cases, architecturally one of a kind. Furthermore, Centennial Park demonstrates, at the local level, many of the movements that were taking place at the national level, such as the parks movement, the playground movement, the recreation movement, and the post-WW II modern period.

The period of significance ranges from c. 1897 when the Tennessee Centennial Exposition began until 1963 when the city and county governments consolidated to form the Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County Government and at which time the Board of Park Commissioners disbanded and the Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation was formed. Centennial Park is also being nominated under criteria consideration G, as the park has continued to achieve significance within the last 50 years as it relates to the political history of Nashville and Davidson County with the consolidation of the city and county governments.

Many of the classical resources that are associated with the park, such as the Parthenon, the Thomas Monument, the Robertson Monument, the Concrete Bridge, and the Woman's Monument, were products of the first three decades of park design; while several of the buildings and monuments that contribute to the association, feeling, and design of the Centennial Park landscape came out of a more modern period of park design in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Although Centennial Park is exceptionally significant (Criteria Consideration G) under Criterion A for politics/government, the additions to the park in the late 1950s through 1963 follow national trends in design and park theory during that period and thus contribute to this nomination. These later resources represent the post-WWII shift from the classical to the modern and include the Croquet Clubhouse and Events Pavilion, the Sunken Garden, the F-86 Aircraft Monument, the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center, the Belgium Liberty Bell, and the Band Shell. These important features of the Centennial Park landscape contribute to the overall historical integrity of the park and should also be considered contributing elements to this nomination. Criteria Consideration F also applies to Centennial Park as it contains many commemorative properties.##

Historical Narrative

Centennial Park, approximately 132 acres of land (approximately 91 of those being nominated) in central Davidson County, was originally a farm owned by John Cockrill. Cockrill purchased the land in 1783 and it was maintained as farmland until the Civil War era. After the Civil War and until 1884, the land served as the state fairgrounds. Then, from 1884 -1895, the property was a horse racetrack called West Side Park. In the early 1890s, Douglas Anderson, a Nashville attorney, proposed that there be a celebration of the Centennial of Tennessee's entry into the Union and in 1894, Colonel William C. Smith recommended that Nashville's Commercial Club, which would merge with the Chamber of Commerce, should help to make this idea a reality. In 1895, construction of buildings that would be used in the Tennessee Centennial

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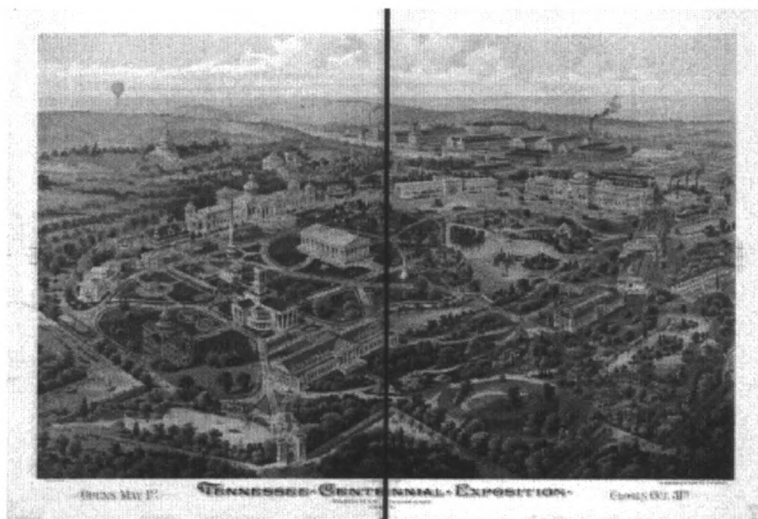
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Exposition commenced and the property began to take the form of the park Nashvillians are familiar with today.²²

Eugene Castner Lewis (1845-1917), given the honorary rank of "Major," was a prominent railroad engineer who served as both the president of the L&N Railroad and as chairman of the board of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway. Major E.C. Lewis became the Director General of the Exposition company, and, with the people of Nashville in full support of the Centennial Exposition, struggles to obtain funding were overcome and the Exposition buildings were constructed rapidly during 1896 and 1897. Twenty temporary buildings composed of wood lathing covered with white plaster were constructed on an approximately 200-acre Exposition site to showcase an array of Tennessee history.²³ The Tennessee Centennial Exposition opened on May 1, 1897 and closed on October 30, 1897. During this six-month period, 1.8 million people visited the Exposition. It was a boon to the local economy, as many jobs were created, and hotels and other local venues gained heightened levels of patronage.²⁴



1897 Centennial Exposition from The Library of Congress, American Memory, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html> (accessed June 2, 2008)

From the closing of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in 1897 throughout the twentieth century, the property witnessed an evolution that would transform it from the city's first large municipal park into its present appearance. Most significantly, the development of the landscape during the first sixty years of its use as a city park closely parallels national trends in urban park development. Centennial Park can be viewed as a physical representation of the parks and Playground movements of the early twentieth century as well as the Recreation movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Centennial Park saw further transformations after WW II, similar to those occurring across the country that continued into the early 1960s. On the local level, the end of this post-WWII period of evolution can be marked by the consolidation of the city and county governments in 1963.

²² Johnson, 24 and 234 and Beasley, Kay "Horses once raced in area that's now Centennial Park," *The Nashville Banner*, 31 October 1990.

²³ "The Tennessee Exposition," *The New York Times*, 2 May 1897.

²⁴ Johnson, 23-27.

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The Establishment of Centennial Park and the Board of Parks Commissioners

At the end of the nineteenth century, cities were growing rapidly as more people moved out of rural areas and closer to urban centers. Populations in cities also grew, with many more people living in smaller, more congested areas. People during this time also worked longer hours each day, sometimes six days a week. One of the issues in the late nineteenth century was that in an era without modern conveniences such as air conditioning, automobiles, refrigerators, television, or even radio, it became necessary for people to look for other ways to both entertain themselves and stay cool in the hot summer months.

These desires for a form of escape and respite from the rigors of both work and city life fueled the parks movement on both a national level and at the local level in Nashville. As city populations grew, access to rural areas decreased, and people began to enjoy visits to trolley parks – parks that the trolley companies built along or at the end of their trolley lines – in their free time. In Nashville, it was the success of both the local trolley parks and the Tennessee Centennial Exposition that led Nashvillians to support the idea of a public city park system. Nashville's population reached 95,000 by the turn of the century and the citizens and local government began to look at the success of parks in cities such as New York, Boston, Cincinnati, and Louisville. In Tennessee, Memphis established its first park commission in 1900 and purchased its first two parks in 1901.²⁵

The beginnings of the movement to create a citywide park system and to transform the land that was the home of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition into a park began when the Exposition ended and leaders of the Exposition wanted to preserve the famed replica of the Parthenon. One of these Exposition leaders, the chairman of the Exposition's executive committee, was James M. Head. Head was a newspaper publisher, attorney, and lobbyist. When Head was elected mayor in 1899, he made establishing an extensive park system for Nashville a priority. Mayor Head felt that, "...every consideration of policy and humanity requires that some source of recreation and innocent amusement be provided for that class of our population which cannot leave the city during the summer months, and which must have some recreation and fresh air during the warm summer nights."²⁶ At this time, recreation was seen as getting out into the open air, becoming one with nature in a peaceful and serene setting, and escaping from the crowded atmosphere of city life, and Centennial Park would provide this respite to the citizens of Nashville during its formative years.

On April 3, 1901, Governor McMillin signed a bill to allow for the creation of public parks in Nashville and outside the city limits. By the following week, Mayor Head had selected the five members to form Nashville's first Board of Park Commissioners: Major Fountain P. McWhirter, Benjamin Lindauer, Robert Dudley, Major E.C. Lewis, and Samuel A. Champion, all prominent individuals, most of whom had served on committees for the Centennial Exposition.²⁷

At their second meeting on April 25, 1901, the Board of Park Commissioners devised a two-point comprehensive plan for the development of a citywide park system to include a system of large parks of fifty or more acres in each section of the city as well as a system of small parks evenly distributed over the entire city. The first two tracts of land were given to the Board of Park Commissioners by the city. The first

²⁵ Ibid, 40-42.

²⁶ Ibid, 31-32.

²⁷ Ibid, 43-44.

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was Watkins Park, an 8.2-acre lot just northwest of the state capitol. The second was the small lawn of the Customs House on Broadway.²⁸ These first two parks were a step in the creation of a citywide park system, but the Board of Park Commissioners looked to the site of the Centennial Exposition for the development of the first large park in Nashville.

On February 4, 1902, the Board of Park Commissioners held a meeting in which representatives of the Centennial Land Company, owners of the exposition site, were present. They wished to sell the property for no less than \$125,000. Due to financial reasons, the city was unable to purchase the park, and Mayor Head looked for other options to acquire the land. Following the example of Indianapolis, Mayor Head worked out a settlement with the owner of the Nashville Railway and Light Company, Percy Warner. Mr. Warner, who would become one of the greatest supporters of Nashville parks, purchased the first 72 acres in the center of the former 200 - acre exposition grounds and gave it to the Park Board in 1902. Opening in 1903, this 72 - acre parcel became Nashville's first large public park. A series of other land purchases followed and Centennial Park eventually grew to its present 132 acres, but the Nashville park system can trace its origins to the Centennial Exposition and Centennial Park.²⁹

A few of the attractions of the Centennial Exposition would remain in the new park when it opened in 1903, such as the Parthenon, the Rose Arbor, and Lake Watauga, while many other structures and features would be placed on park property in the years to come. Architecturally, these structures and monuments tended to take on a classically influenced appearance to follow that of the Parthenon. Both the Robertson Monument and the Smith Memorial³⁰ in the Parthenon were placed in the park in the year it opened. A year later, in 1904, several monuments were added: the Woman's Monument was erected on the former site of the Centennial Exposition's Woman's Building by the women who had been in charge of the building during the exposition; the cornerstone for the Confederate Private Monument, to be designed by George Zolnay³¹ and funded by the Frank Cheatham Bivouac Chapter of the United Confederate Veterans and the Daughters of the Confederacy, was laid to honor the heroism of the Confederate private; and the Tennessee Centennial Exposition Monument was placed by Lake Watauga. The year 1907 saw the John W. Thomas Monument, created by one of the best known Southern American women sculptors in the early part of the twentieth century, Enid Yandell³² of Kentucky. The Confederate Private Monument was finally

²⁸ Ibid, 45-46.

²⁹ Ibid, 48-51 and 235.

³⁰ H. M. Brunicke of the Nashville chapter of the American Red Cross asked to place a memorial to Colonel William C. Smith, the architect of the temporary Parthenon structure at the Centennial Exposition, at the Parthenon on March 2, 1903. A tablet composed of gray marble was unveiled on July 5, 1903 on the east side of the Parthenon by Mrs. Hart Blanton, Colonel Smith's daughter. The memorial was, at some point between July 6, 1903 and 1944, moved to its present location over the south doorway into the art display room in the Parthenon basement. (Johnson, 284) In 1944, Major William Britt Jr. wrote a letter to the Board of Park Commissioners requesting that a stone tablet that was, at the time, in the basement of the Parthenon and that named Colonel William C. Smith as the architect for the building be given a place of prominence in the Parthenon. After discussion of the issue at their April 6, 1944 meeting, the Chairman asked Commissioner Tupper to review the wording of the tablet and update it in a way that would allow Colonel Smith to receive recognition for his efforts in the construction of the earlier temporary building. This was to be inscribed on a small brass or bronze plate and placed in the Art Gallery of the Parthenon Building, subject to the approval of the Board of Park Commissioners. (*Board of Park Commissioners Minutes*, VIII, 270)

³¹ George Julian Zolnay (1862-1949), was a Hungarian-born immigrant who resided primarily in St. Louis and New York. Zolnay was an extremely prolific monumental sculptor, and extant examples of his work can be found in St. Louis, MO; Richmond, VA; Washington, DC; Baltimore, MD; Richmond, KY; Savannah, GA; and elsewhere. Zolnay died in 1949; he was most active in the years between 1899 and 1920, and it appears that the Gold Star Monument in Nashville may have been among the last of his professional commissions (Johnson).

³² This was not Enid Yandell's first contribution to Centennial Park. Yandell had previously created the monumental *Pallas Athena*, which stood in front of the Parthenon during the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in 1897. Yandell's *Athena*, who stood

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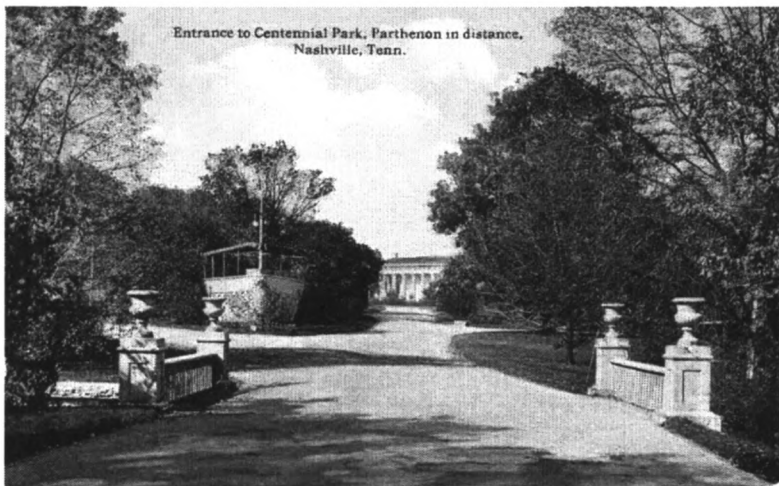
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erected and dedicated in 1908-1909. Shell Spring was constructed between 1906 and 1912. In 1909-1910, Wilbur Creighton, Sr. constructed the concrete bridge between Lake Watauga and what was then Lily Lake. The bridge is an early example of a filled spandrel arch bridge in Tennessee and is one of the first constructed by the Foster and Creighton Company.³³ In 1910, the Gunboat *Tennessee* Monument was completed and in 1912 the Natchez Trace Monument was placed in the park. The Timothy Monument and tree were placed in the park in 1919.³⁴

The majority of the objects and structures in Centennial Park were monuments of a classical nature to honor either an individual or to ideas such as the heroism of the Confederate private. These followed the prominent idea from the turn-of-the-century that parks should be a place of leisure and relaxation. The commemorative nature of many of the objects present in the park brought a sense of reflection into a natural environment. This idea of a serene park setting continued through the first two decades of the twentieth century, even as the Playground movement began to take a central place in discussions of park theory.



Postcard of entry to the park, c. 1907-1915 from Norton Collection of Vintage Nashville Postcards.

forty-two feet tall, was at the time the largest sculpture ever attempted by a woman sculptor. *Athena* was so tall, in fact, that Yandell threw a dinner party in the 12-foot stomach section on the night prior to shipping the sculpture from her Paris studio to Tennessee. Yandell also won a silver medal at the 1897 Exposition for her sculpture *Allah Il Allah Indian*. *Athena*, constructed in plaster, was destroyed; *Allah Il Allah Indian* was lost. Yandell had been born in Louisville, Kentucky; her mother, Louise Elliston, had been a Nashville native. She studied at Hampton College in Louisville and at the Cincinnati Art Academy, and with famed sculptor Lorado Taft. She first worked professionally as a sculptor for Taft in Chicago at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, where she and her two roommates published a fictionalized account of their life and work, *Three Girls in a Flat*. Besides working on the Women's Building at the Columbian Exposition, she exhibited her *Daniel Boone*, commissioned by the Filson Society of Louisville. *Daniel Boone* was much admired and compared favorably with the famed *Minute Man* of Daniel Chester French; in 1906, it was commissioned in bronze and stands in Cherokee Park in Louisville. She moved to Paris in 1895, where she was working when she received the commission for the *Pallas Athena* for Nashville. After her successes in Chicago and Nashville, Yandell was elected as one of only three women sculptors to the National Sculpture Society in 1899. Although she continued to work for another fifteen years, primarily on commissioned sculptures (including the Thomas Monument) and fountains for wealthy clients, she gave up sculpture during World War I and worked in France for the Society of the Orphans of War and the Red Cross. She returned to the United States after World War I, taught sculpture in Massachusetts, and died in 1934. (Charlotte Steifer Rubenstein, *American Women Sculptors*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Company, 1990, 116-121).

³³ Tennessee Department of Transportation, 443-444.

³⁴ Johnson 235.

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The Parks and Playground Movements of the Early Twentieth Century: 1905-1920

At the same time that these early monuments began appearing in Centennial Park, a major impetus to develop playgrounds and more active spaces for recreation began to drive the development of the Nashville park system between about 1905 and 1920. During the first five years of the existence of the Board of Park Commissioners, only three parks were opened, Watkins Park and Federal Park, both under 10 acres, and the 72-acre Centennial Park. Largely due to financial problems, supporters of the national playground movement saw this lack of success as an opportunity to shift the focus of Nashville's parks into more active places for children to play.

The beginnings of the playground movement can be traced to the 1890s to the success of Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago. During the first decade of the twentieth century, hundreds of cities across the country began building playgrounds that included sand piles, swings, handball courts, and ball diamonds. With the beginnings of the playground movement and its emphasis on the importance of active recreation to the development of productive citizens, the focus of leisure and relaxation would begin to shift to active recreation. The idea for park playgrounds gained the support of President Theodore Roosevelt and, in 1906, the Playground and Recreation Association of America formed.³⁵ Larger cities like New York, Boston, and Chicago experienced this movement earlier than Nashville, however, the playground movement heavily influenced the history of Centennial Park. "Nashville's Board of Park Commissioners soon after its organization was confronted by two seemingly opposed concepts of what constituted proper park management: whether parks should be places for quiet communion with nature, or whether they should, for purposes of social improvement, be the sites of active recreation...the Commissioners determined that Nashville's park system could and should be made to serve both purposes."³⁶

Although the Commissioners supported the idea of playgrounds across the city, financial limitations prevented them from acquiring additional property and equipment. Thus, another group, the ladies of the Centennial Club, who were thought to be some of the wealthiest and socially prominent citizens of Nashville, set out to follow the lead of ladies like Jane Addams across the country to construct park playgrounds. They were first given control of Watkins Park in 1905, and opened a playground there in 1906. After seeing great success at Watkins Park, the Centennial Club was allowed to construct two more playgrounds on small lots, one in East Nashville and one downtown. The acceptance of these playgrounds by Nashville citizens prompted the city government to expand the control and funding of the Board of Park Commissioners so that additional parks across the city could be developed.³⁷ Between 1907, with the election of Mayor James S. Brown, and 1920, eighteen new parks opened across the city of Nashville, many of these as playground parks for children. In 1909 alone, six new parks opened and a playground was added to Centennial Park.³⁸

The success of the playground movement in Nashville shifted the focus of the evolution of Centennial Park. This is exemplified by the construction of the first playground in the park in 1909 and the appearance of organized athletics from 1910-1916. While in the first decade of its existence, the Board of Park Commissioners focused on creating a scenic and relaxing atmosphere in Centennial Park with the

³⁵ Ibid, 65

³⁶ Ibid, 63.

³⁷ Ibid, 66-67.

³⁸ Ibid, Appendix A.

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placement of several monuments and the maintenance of Lake Watauga, Lily Lake, and the Rose Arbor. By 1916 they accepted the principles of the playground movement and had not only built a playground in the park, but also had constructed a community center and promoted organized athletics in the park. In 1916, the first building other than the Parthenon, a community center, was built.³⁹ Although the original Centennial Park playground has been replaced over the last century due to safety considerations, the playground is thought to be located in the same area as originally constructed, southwest of the Parthenon. The modern playground equipment, although non-contributing because of its recent construction, serves to represent the lasting effects of the playground movement of the early twentieth century.

The Recreation Movement: 1920-1944

The playground movement was merely an impetus for what would become a major influence on the development of Centennial Park, the recreation movement. Building on the playground movement, the recreation movement of the 1920s – 1940s combined the ideals of the playground movement with New Deal ideals, programs, and, at times, government funding, to produce a new philosophy in park design that focused on the importance of organized recreation in parks systems at national, state, and local levels.

Although the National Recreation Association (NRA) was founded in 1906 as the Playground and Recreation Association of America, it was not until the 1920s, when President Calvin Coolidge and the federal government began to show an interest in funding recreation, that a shift occurred in which greater emphasis was placed on the importance of a park to provide organized recreation instead of a scenic place for relaxation. Prior to the 1920s, the NRA provided sponsorship of national conferences, as well as recreation manuals and other literature. In 1924, the NRA and the federal government cooperated when President Coolidge held a National Conference on Outdoor Recreation that was funded by the NRA. After this conference, others championed the cause of federally funded recreation. For example, the push for

federally funded recreation continued in 1933 with the publication of Jesse Steiner's article "The Challenge of the New Leisure" in *The New York Times Magazine*. Steiner urged the federal government to provide emergency relief money toward a program of recreational planning and construction.⁴⁰ Articles such as this brought attention to the issue of federally funded recreation.



Concrete, made with Atlas, permanently repairs the glory that was Greece

Concrete, made with Atlas, permanently repairs the glory that was Greece. The Parthenon, one of the most famous buildings in the world, has been reconstructed in Nashville, Tennessee. The building is made of concrete, made with Atlas Portland Cement. Atlas Portland Cement is the best for all kinds of concrete work. It is strong, durable, and easy to work with. It is the only cement that is made in the United States. It is the only cement that is made in the United States. It is the only cement that is made in the United States.

In Centennial Park, the 1920s began with the reconstruction of the Parthenon. By this time the structure, which was originally built to be a temporary exhibit at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, was in serious need of repair. The plaster had begun to deteriorate and fall off and the structure had become hazardous. Due to public demand, the Board of Park Commissioners decided to rebuild the structure with more permanent materials. Because of the high cost of marble, it was decided to rebuild the Parthenon primarily with reinforced concrete. Russell E. Hart was the architect for the permanent replica of the Parthenon and Wilbur F. Creighton was the construction supervisor. George Zolnay was one of the primary sculptors who worked on the

ATLAS
PORTLAND CEMENT Company

Ad for concrete for Parthenon reconstruction in Nashville

³⁹ Ibid, 235.
⁴⁰ Phoebe Cutler, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 8-9.

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Parthenon, both in 1897 for the Centennial Exposition and the 1920s restoration/recreation, primarily in the metopes. Belle Kinney, another famous Southern American female sculptor of the early twentieth century, and her husband Leopold Scholz⁴¹ sculpted the figures that appear on the east and west pediments. The permanent replica of the Parthenon was completed in 1931.⁴²

In 1922 the Gold Star Monument, sculpted by George Zolnay and funded by the Nashville Kiwanis Club, was placed in the southeast corner of the park to honor Gold Star heroes of WW I. That same year, Lily Lake, another remnant of the Centennial Exposition, was converted into a Japanese Water Garden. In 1928 many of the park roads were relocated.⁴³ In 1932, the swimming pool and bathhouse⁴⁴ were built. In 1934, the E.C. Lewis Marker⁴⁵ was placed in the Parthenon.

Following the Depression, the recreation movement began to gain full force. With many people out of work and low on funds, public parks became more important than ever. At a time when many people did not have money to pay for recreational activities, public parks, like Centennial, provided an inexpensive way to get exercise, have fun, and reinforce good morals. Similarly, it was the Depression that spurred the New Deal programs and funding that would come to be so influential on park development throughout the nation.⁴⁶ Although Centennial Park did not receive federal government funds for use in the park, (the Park

⁴¹ Belle Kinney (1887?-1959) and Leopold Scholz (1877-1946) are sculptors well known to Nashville. Belle Kinney was a Nashville native, who as a child exhibited a bust of her father at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition. Famed sculptor Leonardo Taft commented favorably on her work at the Exposition, and she later studied with Taft at the Chicago Art Institute. Her first commission came while a student in Chicago, for the monument to Jere Baxter in Nashville. In 1908, the United Confederate Veterans sponsored a competition for a design for a monument to the women of the Confederacy, which they hoped would be erected in the state capitols of each of the Confederate states; Kinney's design was selected as the winner of the competition, and her *Confederate Women* was erected in Jackson, MS (1917) and Nashville (1922). Following her studies in Chicago, Kinney opened a studio in New York, where she met and married the noted Austrian-born sculptor Leopold Scholz. Kinney and Scholz worked primarily in collaboration until his death in 1946, including their *Victory in War* Memorial Plaza in Nashville (1929), and their work on the re-creation of the Parthenon pediments in the early 1920s, where they worked closely with George Zolnay and architect Russell Hart. During these years, Kinney and Scholz lived in Nashville, working from casts of the Elgin Marbles, studying anatomy and Greek art and mythology to re-create the lost east pediment. (Local tradition holds that Kinney used football players from Vanderbilt University as male models for some of those figures, and the famed poet and literary critic Randall Jarrell posed as a teenager for the figure of Ganymede.) Kinney and Scholz also worked on the 23-foot tall bronze doors of the Parthenon. During the New Deal, both sculptors continued their artistic endeavors. Scholz is individually credited with at least two New Deal art projects in post offices in Angola, New York and Chattanooga, TN. In 1934, the Nashville Park Board paid Kinney \$150.00 for a four-foot model of a proposed *Athena* that stood in the Parthenon prior to the monumental Alan LeQuire *Athena Parthenos* (1990). Most of Kinney's sculptures are lifelike interpretations of historical figures, including Confederate generals A.P. Stewart and Joseph Johnston, and Tennessee heroes John Sevier and Andrew Jackson. Kinney is probably Tennessee's best-known sculptor; she and Scholz created both of Tennessee's entries in Statuary Hall at the Capitol in Washington, DC (*Andrew Jackson*, 1927, and *John Sevier*, 1931). Other extant examples of Kinney's work outside of Nashville can be found in Chattanooga, TN; New York City; Dalton, GA; Topeka, KS; and Annapolis, MD. Belle Kinney died at her home in Boiceville, New York, in 1959, just hours after completing the busts of Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk for the Tennessee State Capitol. ("Belle Kinney" in *Tennessee Encyclopedia*; *Nashville Banner* 28 August 1959;

Holland's Magazine of the South May 1935; Christine Kreyling, et. al. *Classical Nashville*)

⁴² Creighton, 20-36.

⁴³ Johnson, 235 and 288.

⁴⁴ Originally the Centennial Park swimming pool, this facility was constructed in 1932 and transformed into the Centennial Art Center in 1972. (Johnson, 235)

⁴⁵ On February 26, 1926, Sarah Polk Bradford requested that the Park Board allow her to raise money for the placement of a memorial to Major Eugene Castner Lewis in the Parthenon. The Board granted her permission that same day, however, the memorial was not unveiled by Rumsey Lewis, Major Lewis's grandson, until June 10, 1934. Created by Leopold and Belle Kinney Scholz, the bronze tablet of Greek design is located in the wall of the gift shop in the basement of the Parthenon. (Johnson, 279)

⁴⁶ George D. Butler, *Introduction to Community Recreation: Prepared for the National Recreation and Park Association* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), 79-81.

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Board applied for funds in 1935 for a community building, but let the application languish) the citizens of Nashville still continued to believe in many of the goals that the recreation movement espoused. During this period from 1920 until the beginning of WW II, eleven new parks were constructed across the city.

When Phoebe Cutler, in her book *The Public Landscape of the New Deal*, describes an ideal 1930s park, many comparisons can be made to Centennial Park in the 1930s. Cutler mentions that the landscape of a park that she considers a model for 1930s park planning has a balance of active and passive recreation. It contains a large pool and bathhouse, an outdoor amphitheatre, tennis courts, and a rock garden.⁴⁷ Likewise, in the 1930s, Centennial Park contained a pool and bathhouse, an outdoor amphitheatre area, and a Japanese water garden. Furthermore, many of these features can still be seen in the park today, although somewhat modified. Centennial Park still features its original 1930s bathhouse, however, through a successful adaptive reuse, it now serves as an art center. The park also featured a bandstand where musical concerts were held, and, although this structure no longer exists, a Band Shell was constructed in 1963. The area that used to be the Japanese water garden in the 1930s is today a beautiful sunken floral garden that contains a magnificent display of flora.

The ideas of active recreation and entertainment introduced during the period between 1920 and WW II continue to dominate the idea of the park during the last half of the twentieth century. Although Centennial Park has continued to change in the Post-WW II period, many of the characteristics that made it a successful recreation landscape, through conscientious adaptive reuse and careful management of historic park features, continue to remain today for new generations of Nashvillians to enjoy.

Centennial Park in the Modern Era: 1945-1963

From 1945-1963, the landscape of Centennial Park began to reflect changing attitudes following in the aftermath of WW II and the beginning of the Cold War. During this period, there was still an interest in traditional park landscape, but there was also new interest in a park landscape that reflected the growing importance of technology in American society. At the same time, modern architecture was beginning to greatly influence construction in the park. The ideology behind the design in Centennial Park between 1945 and 1963 was changing alongside the transformation of the administration of Nashville's park system. This is particularly evident from the mid-1950s until the 1963 integration of the city and county government.

Between 1945 and the end of the 1950s, seven new parks were opened in the city.⁴⁸ Centennial Park witnessed a few changes in the immediate post-WWII period. In the 1940s and early 1950s, the Ann Robertson Cockrill Monument⁴⁹ was placed in the park in 1946 and the Japanese water garden was drained in 1949 and transformed into a sunken floral garden in the early 1950s.⁵⁰ This action followed a

⁴⁷ Cutler, 46.

⁴⁸ Johnson, Appendix A.

⁴⁹ Francis B. Warfield wrote a letter to the Board of Park Commissioners on behalf of the Tennessee Historical Society requesting permission to erect a monument to Ann Robertson. They wished the monument to be placed in Centennial Park, not far from Cockrill Spring, near the area that was her home. After discussing the matter, permission to erect the monument was granted, but the location was to be subject to the Board's approval. (*Mins.*, IX, 81) According to Johnson, Ms. Warfield made this request on October 18, 1945. (Johnson, 264)

⁵⁰ During the Centennial Exposition, this area had been Lily Lake. In 1922, the Park Superintendent, George Moulder had Lily Lake converted into a Japanese Water Garden, and, following World War II, it was drained and converted into a sunken garden in the 1950s by Frank Pickens and Z. N. Dobbs. (Johnson, 96, 284) In 1947, it was suggested by the General Manager at the February 20 meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners that the lake at Centennial Park be filled. It was also suggested that the

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push to have the lake filled, as it was thought to be hazardous to children, reflecting new attitudes toward the liability of the city government toward the safety of its citizens. Across the city park system during this time, sports activities in Nashville's parks grew, with baseball and softball programs coming under the direction of the Park Board after the Municipal Baseball Association gave up their control in 1948.

Between 1952 and 1959, funding for the park system doubled from a half a million to one million; however, much of this funding went to the growing recreation program and little to park development. With the population of Nashville significantly increasing during the 1950s, the park system was no longer able to meet the needs of its citizens. Between 1953 and 1956, the Park Board battled with the city council over taxes and bonds in an effort to secure additional funding for park activities. But in 1956, then-Mayor Ben West and the city council ordered that the Park Board, still an independent agency at that time, cease using their revenue for capitol improvements and instead rely on bonds for the further development of the park system. Having recently paid off bonds debts from the 1920s and 1930s, the Park Board strongly spoke out against the order of the mayor and city council.⁵¹

These financial disputes between the Park Board and Mayor West led the city to enlist the National Recreation Association (NRA) to compile a report of the current state of the city park system and make recommendations for its improvement. In their final report of 1957, the NRA scrutinized the Park Board for neglecting comprehensive planning for the city's parks and, having knowledge of the likely future consolidation of the city and county governments, recommended a complete reorganization of the park system staff. This reorganization happened almost immediately, starting with consolidating the positions of the Park Board Secretary, General Manager, and Superintendents of Parks and Recreation into one position that would be in charge of the entire system. After the Park Board gave in to the demands of the Mayor regarding bond issues for capitol improvements in 1958, the board submitted a \$2.3 million proposal for new parks, community center, and recreational facilities to the city. Mayor West, the city planning commission, and the city council approved much of this cost, and in 1959 bonds were issued for a \$1.6 million park improvement program.⁵²

These changes in Nashville's park administration are evident in the built environment of Centennial Park. In 1953, as battles between the Park Board and the city council for funding began to develop, one building was built, the East Restrooms on the east side of Lake Watauga, and Locomotive 576⁵³ was placed in the

lake could perhaps be converted into a sunken garden. It was noted that the lake was hazardous to children when it was frozen. Although the Board also considered the lake to be a hazard when frozen, action was to be postponed until the next meeting, so that Councilman Craig could be present. (*Mins.*, IX, 420) At the meeting on April 8, 1947, the General Manager withdrew his recommendation that the lake be filled, however, he recommended that the lake be thoroughly cleaned in October of that year after the close of the park season. The recommendation to drain and clean Centennial Lake was approved by the Board. (*Mins.*, IX, 441) At some point between 1947 and the early 1950s the board must have changed its mind.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 147-150.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 152-154.

⁵³ Mr. Wrenne C. Phelps, a city councilman, wrote a letter to Mr. W. S. Hackworth, the president of the N. C. & St. Louis Railroad in which he asked the company to donate a steam locomotive that would be placed in Centennial Park. He had read of how the Frisco Lines had donated a steam locomotive to the city of Memphis and felt that perhaps the N. C. & St. Louis would consider a similar charitable donation to the city of Nashville. On February 19, 1953, the City Council authorized an expenditure of \$2,500 to help finance the move of the engine. At a Board of Park Commissioners meeting held on March 6, it was said that the railroad had not yet agreed to donate the engine and would not consider doing so unless they could be assured that a suitable building could be furnished to house the engine. It was mentioned that the \$2,500 would not be enough to build a suitable structure since it might require that amount to move the engine. At this point, the Board decided to not take action on the issue, as it was not clear as to whether the railroad company would even agree to donate the engine. (*Mins.*, XII, 279-281) At some point between

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park. After the restructuring of the Park Board in 1957, repairs were made to the Rose Arbor, however, the historic stone columns remained in place.⁵⁴ The Croquet/Events Pavilion in the northwest section of the park was constructed in 1958 for recreational purposes.

The issue of the capitol improvement bonds in 1959 brought about a surge in construction activity in Centennial Park. Between this time and the consolidation of the city and county governments in 1963, five buildings, objects, and structures were placed in the park. In 1961, the Belgium Liberty Bell⁵⁵ was moved to Centennial Park and the F-86 Aircraft⁵⁶ was located to the park to be used as children's play equipment. The F-86 Aircraft Monument particularly represents a modern shift in the ideology of the park board with its representation of technology as a war monument rather than a monument to the war "hero." In 1963, the year of the consolidation of the city and county governments, two buildings and one structure, the Croquet Clubhouse⁵⁷, the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center, and the Band Shell, were completed. Efforts for the construction of the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center had begun in 1957 when the Park Board sold a portion of Centennial Park to the Davidson County Health Department for forty-five thousand dollars and earmarked the funds to be used to construct a new community building. In 1959, plans for a new community center were approved and in 1960 the old community center was razed.⁵⁸ In 1962, repairs were again made to the Parthenon by Wilbur Creighton, Jr.

The greatest significance of these later structures, built between 1958 and 1963 lies with the political history of Nashville and the administration of the Park Board, but the modern style of these resources also points to a shift in the ideology of park design, following not only national trends in architectural design, as seen in the Croquet Clubhouse, the Band Shell, and the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center, but also in the transition from monuments of a more classical nature, such as the Thomas Monument and the Woman's Monument, to monuments that were more representative of war and advances in technology, such as the F-86 Aircraft Monument and Locomotive 576. Technology and functionality, whether related to a monument or to a park structure housing recreation or community needs, was becoming the focus of park improvement and development. These changes in design, from classically-inspired buildings and

March 6 and April 24 the railroad agreed to donate the steam engine. Some of the members of the Board of Park Commissioners met on April 24 in Centennial Park to decide upon the location of the engine. The City of Nashville paid for all of the expenses involved in moving the engine as well as erecting a suitable building to house it. (*Mins.*, XII, 298-299) A year later, it was recommended by the Superintendent that the area in front of the locomotive be hard surfaced due to heavy foot traffic. The Board of Park Commissioners authorized this at their meeting on February 26, 1954. (*Mins.*, XII, 458)

⁵⁴ Locomotive: Johnson 144, 235 and *Mins.*, XII, 279-281, *Mins.*, XII, 298-299. Rose Arbor: Johnson, 283-284, and *Mins.*, XIV, 47.

⁵⁵ In 1961, the state offered the Belgium Liberty bell that had been displayed on Capitol Hill to be located in Centennial Park. The state agreed to supply the cost of relocating the bell if the Park Board would pay the costs of the pedestal on which the bell would be displayed. The Park Board agreed to this. (*Mins.*, XV, 326, 342)

⁵⁶ Mayor Ben West and Councilman Charles Bramwell acquired the surplus jet fighter from the Tennessee Air National Guard in 1961. The Park Board paid \$1000 to relocate the fighter from the airport to Centennial Park. In 1981, the fighter was relocated to its present site where it was refurbished and placed on a stand for display by the 118th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Tennessee Air National Guard. (Johnson, 144-145, 235, 269)

⁵⁷ Constructed in 1963, blueprints of this building are dated 1958. Funding for the structure is listed in the 63rd annual report of the Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation under the 1959 Park Bond Fund. (63rd Annual report of Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee Fiscal year July 1 1962- June 31 1963) However, members of the croquet club began petitioning for the building of a larger facility as early as 1958. (*Mins.*, XIV, 250).

⁵⁸ (*Mins.*, XIV, 133-135) Additional funding was included in the 1959 Park Bond Fund. (63rd Annual report of Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee Fiscal Year July 1, 1962- June 31 1963) In 1959, preliminary plans for the center were approved by the Park Board and in 1960, the old community building was razed. (*Mins.*, XIV, 431 and *Mins.*, XV, 187)

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monuments into modern resources, along with the transition of the administration of the Park Board just prior to the integration of the city and county governments in 1963 all contributed to Centennial Park shifting in the early 1960s to become a fully modern park.

The end of this early modern period in Centennial Park, and in the Nashville park system as a whole, came in 1963, with the integration of the city and county governments to form the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. At this time, the Board of Park Commissioners, up until then an independent board, was disbanded and the Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation was created, with a nearly complete turnover in board members (only Bascom F. Jones would sit on both boards).⁵⁹ With an increase in service area from 72.47 square miles to 533 square miles, and more than doubling the number of citizens served by the park system, this would signal a shift in a new direction for not only the Nashville government but also the future of the park system in Nashville.

Centennial Park contains over a century of history that documents the growth and evolution of the Nashville community as well as displays the way in which national movements, such as the parks movement, playground movement, the recreation movement, and the modern movement, were taking place at the local level. As the home of the Parthenon as well as several other prominent examples of historic architecture such as the Rose Arbor, Picnic Pavilion, and concrete bridge, to name a few, Centennial Park should be recognized on the National Register under criterion C for its historic art and architecture. Furthermore, due to its use over the past one hundred years as a designed park landscape where many Nashvillians have enjoyed not only the scenery but also many public events, it should also be nominated under Criterion A for entertainment/recreation, landscape architecture, and social history.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 159-161.

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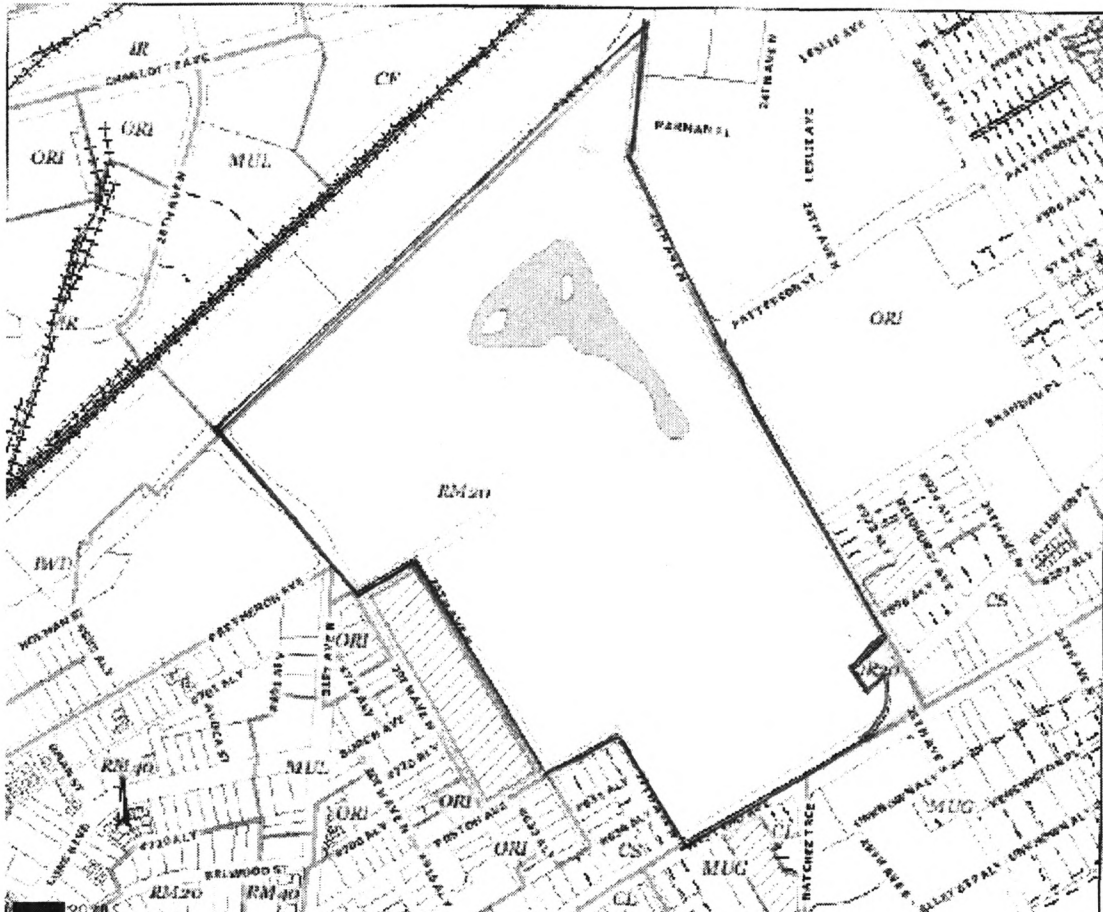
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated portion of Centennial Park is shown on the accompanying Davidson County Tax Map as parcel 09214007600. The nominated property includes 91.28 acres and is bounded on the south by West End Avenue and Poston Avenue; on the east by 25th Avenue North; on the north by Park Plaza; and on the west by 27th, 28th, and 31st Avenues North.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated portion of the park includes historic park land that retains integrity as a park. It represents the majority of the extant historic acreage of the park.



- Legend**
- Street Names
 - Airport
 - Lot lines
 - Railroad
 - Interstates
 - Ownership Parcels
 - Planned Unit Developments
 - Zoning
 - Lakes and Water Bodies
 - Satellite Cities
 - County Boundary

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs by: Tara Mielnik, Nashville Metropolitan Historical Commission
Elizabeth Moore, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: June 2007, March 2008

Digital Files: Tennessee Historical Commission
Nashville, Tennessee

Centennial Park
Davidson County, Tennessee

- 1 of 63 The Parthenon, east elevation, facing northwest
- 2 of 63 The Parthenon, north and west elevations, facing southwest
- 3 of 63 The Parthenon, south elevation, facing north
- 4 of 63 The Parthenon, west elevation, facing east-southeast
- 5 of 63 Lake Watauga, facing north from south bank
- 6 of 63 Lake Watauga, facing south-southeast from north bank
- 7 of 63 Croquet Clubhouse, west elevation, facing west-northwest
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- 10 of 63 Sunken Garden, facing north-northwest from east entrance steps
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- 20 of 63 Centennial Arts Center, rear courtyard, facing northeast
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- 29 of 63 Thomas Monument, facing northeast
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