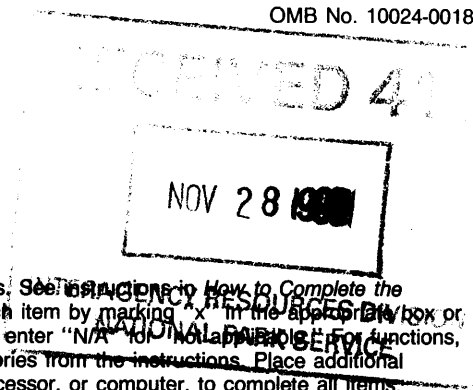


1541

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 Battell Park Historic District

other names/site number 141-587-41001 (-004)

2. Location

street & number Mishawaka Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Mishawaka N/A  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county St. Joseph code 141 zip code 46544

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 forth 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.)

*Patricia R. Roberts*

11-20-95

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State of 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  
Entered in the  
National Register

Date of Action

1-11-96

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
2	1	structures
1	0	objects
6	1	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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: Outdoor recreation  
RECREATION & CULTURE: Work of art

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: Outdoor recreation  
RECREATION & CULTURE: Work of art

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Park Rustic  
LATE 19th & 20th C. REVIVALS: Classical Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE  
walls BRICK  
STONE  
roof METAL: Copper  
other STONE: Field stones

**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.

**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
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1881-1937

**Significant Dates**

1894

1927

1936

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Works Progress Administration

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Mishawaka-Penn Public Library

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 11.0

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 1 6	5 6 7 4 8 0	4 6 1 2 8 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	1 1 6	5 6 7 9 1 0	4 6 1 2 8 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

3	1 1 6	5 6 7 9 1 0	4 6 1 2 7 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	1 1 6	5 6 7 4 8 0	4 6 1 2 6 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

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 Adrian Scott Fine, Field Coordinator

organization Historic Landmarks Foundation/  
Mishawaka Historic Review Board date 22 August 1995

street & number 600 East Third Street telephone 219/258-1625

city or town Mishawaka state IN zip code 46544

**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 City of Mishawaka, Board of Parks and Recreation

street & number 1122 Lincolnway West telephone 219/258-1664

city or town Mishawaka state IN zip code 46544

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

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including 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 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

RECEIVED 41  
NOV 28 1995

Section number 7 Page 1

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Battell Park Historic District  
St. Joseph County, Indiana

**Narrative Description**

Battell Park consists of an eleven acre, linear wooded parcel situated along the northern bank of the St. Joseph River. The park is located northwest of downtown and within the Oaks Neighborhood. Picturesque in design with large open areas of grass interspersed with mature, deciduous trees, both natural and man-made elements characterize the park. Three distinct features are prevalent in the park and include a Soldiers' Memorial; a Neo Classical style bandshell; and an outstanding WPA-built rock garden constructed with mortared fieldstones. The memorial consists of a white bronze statue depicting a Civil War soldier (photo 1). The bandshell, located at the west end and facing east, is symmetrically arranged with a central performance space flanked on each side by service wings and framed by an archway, columns, and plain entablature (photos 2 and 3). Arranged in a linear path facing north to south, the rock garden is sited within a natural ravine dropping down five-levels toward the river and is located near the center of the park (photos 5 - 12).

The Battell Park nomination includes the entire original boundaries of the park which includes a total of six (6) contributing and one (1) noncontributing resources. The park is the one (1) contributing site. The Soldiers' Memorial is the one (1) contributing object. The bandshell and the restroom/storage structure are the two (2) contributing buildings. The rock garden and the wading pool are the two (2) contributing structures. Surrounded by chain link fencing are three adjoining tennis courts that count as one (1) noncontributing structure. Additional park elements include playground equipment and a basketball court.

Erected in the park in 1884, the Soldiers' Memorial consists of a five-tier concrete base, including a portion of the white bronze statue, and measures 24 feet in height and 11 feet 4 inches square. Overall, the Memorial is 32 feet in height including the 8 foot statue. The statue is of a male figure in Union Army attire looking straight ahead facing east. In his left hand he holds the barrel of a rifle. In his right hand he holds a small box at belt level. The pedestal is divided into three primary sections. The first section on all sides is draped with a fabric detail. The second section, approximately at the midpoint of the shaft of the Memorial, is the head of an angel surrounded by garlands on all sides. Directly below are four different war scenes depicting a soldier on horseback on the east facade; a sailor with an anchor on the north facade; an eagle on top of crossed cannons with cannon balls and a starred crest on the west facade (GAR veterans symbol); and an eagle on a shield atop drums and cannons on the south facade. The third section contains busts of unidentified Union Generals on the north, south, and east facades. On

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

**Battell Park Historic District**  
**St. Joseph County, Indiana**

---

the west facade is a bust of Abraham Lincoln. Directly below are inset panels with various inscriptions on each facade. The inscriptions include patriotic messages and locations of prominent Civil War battles.

The 1927 bandshell exhibits characteristics of both Beaux-Arts Classicism and Neo-Classical Revival styles. The walls are a buff-colored brick with evenly-spaced stucco panels, the foundation base and molded water table are poured concrete, surface decoration is carved limestone, and the roof is copper sheathing. The front-facing or east facade incorporates a prominent central parapet wall with two, one-story wings flanking each end. Framing the recessed performance space is a central arch supported by a plain entablature, two Ionic columns, and brick pilasters. Extending beyond the archway is a gabled parapet wall capped by a limestone cornice. Atop each end of the cornice are two, mythological stone creatures. Two circular cartouche panels are set within the wall at either side of the archway. One reads "1927" while the other is a triangular design or logo.

To provide necessary ventilation and natural light for storage and restroom areas, three decorative metal grills are located at each service wing. Above each set of grills is a stucco panel framed by vertical and horizontal brick soldier coursing. The interior performance space is semi-circular with a stucco domed ceiling. With metal grills set within, pilaster strips are evenly spaced along the interior wall and visually supporting a curved limestone entablature. Access to service areas and one restroom are through doors leading from the performance space and from the rear or west wall.

Extending from the base of the bandshell is a low concrete wall that curves outward into the informal seating area (concrete pad). At the end of the wall on both sides are concrete-aggregate light fixtures, although only the light poles themselves remain. The west facade is dominated by the projecting curved wall and domed copper roof, reflecting the semi-circular performance space. Restroom and storage facilities are accessed from doors located at the center of each wing.

The notable WPA-built rock garden is the highlight of Battell Park and is a prominent landmark of Mishawaka (see diagram). Noted for its exceptional craftsmanship and unlimited creativity, the linear rock garden is situated north to south with five tiers leading toward the St. Joseph River. At the head of the rock garden is a 4 foot high by 30 inch square replica of a mill house with wooden water wheel, featuring mortared fieldstone walls and gable roof (photo 5). The water wheel admits water that flows through three separate pools and trickles through approximately five lower levels into the

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

**Battell Park Historic District**  
**St. Joseph County, Indiana**

---

St. Joseph River. Bordered by irregular fieldstones and plantings, each pool, originally stocked with small fish, drains into another through small channels and chutes. Situated within and along the edges of the pools are numerous types and sizes of planters and urns. One pool contains four separate concrete "islands" used for plantings and a spewing fountain that is now no longer in operation. Flanking the pools on both sides are sidewalks that lead toward the crest of the embankment where a cascading, rock-faced waterfall is located. Providing an east-west connection across the garden, a small, rustic bridge is located near the midpoint and is detailed with an arched, jagged cap of fieldstones (photo 10).

Because the rock garden was constructed within a natural ravine, the change in elevation is severe and requires retaining walls. One wall, approximately 8 feet in height, is located along the linear length of the rock garden. A second wall, approximately 4 feet in height, is located at the drop in elevation from the remainder of the park to the beginning of the ravine. Forming a series of terraces, both walls are constructed from mortared fieldstones. At two locations, steps used for seating and framed by an arched wall, are integrated within the retaining wall overlooking one of the pools.

The cascading waterfall incorporates various chutes, channels, and archways on different levels and is flanked by stairs and numerous landings. At the terminus of the rock garden, water gently flows into an oval-shaped grassy area which has at its center, a mature weeping willow tree (photo 9).

In addition to the rock garden's retaining wall, WPA workers also built a retaining wall which lines the crest of the embankment of the park, and a river wall at the bank of the river. Both were constructed from fieldstones and extend beyond Battell Park. Within the boundaries of the park and to the east and west of the rock garden, two separate stairs were constructed that lead from the embankment to the river below. Both stairs feature large landings with integrated benches flanking each side. Directly south of the Soldiers' Memorial, a unique feature of the retaining wall is an integrated "love-seat" set within the wall (photo 11). Following the completion of the rock garden and retaining wall, WPA workers constructed a small wading pool southwest of the bandshell. The concrete pool is circular in shape and is approximately 60 feet in diameter (photo 13).

In the early 1980s two construction projects took place in the park. In 1981, the City of Mishawaka estimated necessary repairs to the bandshell to be \$40,000. In October of the following year, a grant was awarded that covered half of the necessary repairs. Work included structural stabilization to the curved rear wall and tuckpointing. Shortly

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   4  

Battell Park Historic District  
St. Joseph County, Indiana

---

thereafter, sewer work was completed near the southwest corner of the park. At this time, a small portion of the fieldstone embankment wall was removed and replaced with a formed concrete wall.

Presently, the features of Battell Park retain their integrity. Only deterioration and vandalism have resulted in minor alterations to the memorial, bandstand, and rock garden. The overall park retains the integrity necessary to convey its historical and landscape architectural significance.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

Battell Park Historic District  
St. Joseph County, Indiana

---

**Statement of Significance**

Since its renaming and official dedication as a city park in 1881, Battell Park in Mishawaka, Indiana, has provided the city and its residents with an important recreational and cultural resource that continues to fulfill a wide array of functions. In the beginning, Battell Park was a significant link to the pioneer and entrepreneurial family who helped develop Mishawaka. The erection of a Civil War memorial in the park symbolized the patriotic and civic-minded attitude of the community's early residents. The construction of a grand bandshell in the early part of the twentieth century expanded the role of the park as a vital entertainment feature within Mishawaka. And with the combined imaginations of many creative men and women in the 1930s, Battell Park was symbolic of a much-needed economic development initiative. Battell Park remains the premiere park of the city of Mishawaka, as well as the oldest. Despite deterioration of several park features, the magnificence of the overall park is still apparent with each change of season and in scale, residential context, creative masonry craftsmanship, and mature vegetation.

**Historical Background and Significance**

In 1838, by order of the Indiana State Legislation, three settlements known as St. Joseph Iron Works, Barbee Town, and Indiana City were combined to officially form the city of Mishawaka. Taking advantage of the St. Joseph River and the power and transportation opportunities it afforded, much of the city's early development consisted of industrial operations set up along the banks of the river. The arrival of the Michigan Southern and Northern Railroad in the 1850s further contributed to the growth of the city. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, two of the largest industries in the city, Mishawaka Woolen ("Ball Band") and Dodge Manufacturing, insured that Mishawaka would continue to expand in land area and population. By this time, the area formally known as Indiana City, was one of the most established residential neighborhoods and contained many of the city's finest homes and churches, interlaced with a small commercial center to the east. It was in this context that Battell Park was reserved as a natural area overlooking the St. Joseph River.

Prior to 1881, Battell Park was known as Riverside Park, a private parcel named after its strategic location along the bank of the St. Joseph River. The land was set aside early on for use as a park and amenity for nearby residents by Joseph Battell, Grove Lawrence, and James R. Lawrence, entrepreneurs who platted Indiana City in 1836. By the time the area was incorporated into the city of Mishawaka, plans for the 102-block area

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

**Battell Park Historic District**  
**St. Joseph County, Indiana**

---

surrounding the park were well under way. North and south streets were named after the wives and daughters of the entrepreneurs, while east and west streets were named after the three entrepreneurs themselves and their sons (Mishawaka Avenue was formally known as Joseph Street). In 1852, Joseph Battell, son of the original partner and named after his father, bought the remaining interest from the Lawrences and became the sole owner of the Indiana City Plat.

Upon Joseph's death on July 8, 1874, his brother and sister, Robbins and Anna Battell continued their father's and brother's plans for the development of the Indiana City Plat. The Battell family's connection with Mishawaka was a speculative real estate venture that proved to be a profitable investment. With the exception of Joseph Battell, who lived in Brooklyn, New York until his death, the remaining Battell family members resided in Norfolk, Connecticut (Robbin's death in 1895 was the last remaining link with Mishawaka).

In 1879, with expressed intentions of donating the land referred to as Riverside Park to the city, Robbins Battell, son of Joseph, contacted a landscape gardener from the East, known only by the name of McClunnie, to survey and plat the park. Robbins' father reportedly had always intended for the area along the northern bank of the river to be used as a public park. Although it was never constructed, Joseph also proposed a female seminary west of the existing park. Prior to donating Riverside Park, Robbins and his sister Anna stipulated several conditions that included that the park should be improved and beautified and designed completely, preferably using the skills and talents of McClunnie.

In November of 1880, Robbins transferred his interest in Mishawaka to Anna who then formally offered the park to the city at a council meeting on December 22, 1880. In February, 1881, the deed to Riverside Park was officially transferred to Mishawaka as the city's first public park. It was at this time that Mishawaka's leaders decided to rename Riverside Park to Battell Park in gratitude of the generosity of the Battell family.

By the Fall of 1881, under the supervision of McClunnie, a wooden fence was erected around the property, a serpentine sidewalk was in place, and a "romantic, rustic" bridge was constructed over the ravine -- a natural feature of the park formed from a washout. The following Spring, a massive tree-planting project took place. The improvements were a cooperative effort between both the city of Mishawaka and the Battell family.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Battell Park Historic District  
St. Joseph County, Indiana

---

Three years later, as a testament to those men who had fought in the Civil War, Battell Park became the recipient of the Soldiers' War Memorial on September 18, 1884. Designed and erected by the White Bronze Company from Detroit, the estimated total cost of the memorial was \$1,460. Details of the original contract with White Bronze stated the Memorial shall be "artistic, elegant, and appropriate" (Baker, 1965). The end result was an eight foot high statue of a soldier surmounting an ornamental shaft. The cornerstone contained a sealed time capsule including local papers, a list of monument association members, city officers, coins, and business cards and circulars. A reoccurring problem over time, the Memorial began to lean slightly to the west by 1894. At that time, the White Bronze Company returned to Mishawaka and realigned the Memorial.

Sponsored by a group of patriotic men and women who formed the Mishawaka Soldiers' Monument Association, the dedication of the Memorial coincided with the fifth annual reunion of the Soldiers and Sailors of Northern Indiana. With more than 10,000 people attending, the reunion was, at that time, the largest gathering ever to visit Mishawaka. In honor of the first soldier to give his life in the war, a tent camp named Camp Robert Boyd was laid out at the west end of Lawrence Street. Kicking off the event was a parade that commenced at the camp and ended at Battell Park. Following the parade, there was a sham-battle in the park with artillery and rifle fire.

At the turn of the century, Mishawaka was a thriving and prosperous community of nearly 7,000 inhabitants. Battell Park provided an advantageous view of this vitality. Although now concealed behind mature vegetation, the view of the city in progress included numerous church steeples, a vast collection of buildings making up Mishawaka Woolen ("Ball Band"), and to the east, the Main Street iron bridge spanning the river. The expansive view and experience that once could be seen from Battell Park was described in 1901 in the following manner:

*Standing among the beautiful oaks and cedars, that nature has planted on this elevated plane, the eye is greeted with a view which is both inspiring and impressive. Church spires pointing heavenward dot the landscape; the hum and bustle of the great manufactures salute the ear; the river rolls in its picturesque beauty below, and the great dam sends its vast volume of water, with a rush and roar to give vitality and power to the great industries which have contributed so much to the advancement of the material progress of the city (Anderson and Cooley).*

As the area adjacent to the park quickly developed during the early part of the twentieth century, Battell Park became an increasingly important aspect of the lives of Mishawaka's

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Battell Park Historic District**  
**St. Joseph County, Indiana**

Section number   8   Page   8  

---

early residents. In 1920, the U.S. Census revealed that more than half the population of American people lived in urban settings. It was also during this time that, on average, people across the country began spending less time working and more time towards personal entertainment and relaxation. Because the pressures of urban life left less time for people to enjoy the countryside, the public park was an appealing alternative. The city of Mishawaka and Battell Park were no exception to this occurrence.

Near the early part of this century, two structures were erected in the park to serve the growing population attending the park. In 1918, a small brick structure was constructed along the embankment near the center of the park at the ravine. Separate restroom facilities were located in the basement with storage space on the ground floor. It was also at this time that a small, wooden bandshell was built in the park. Featuring decorative fretwork and a prominent cross gable roof, the bandshell was used primarily for Summer concerts. However, by late 1926, the citizens of Mishawaka recognized a need for a larger and more substantial bandshell. In May of 1927, Hay Weaver and Co. was hired as the general contractor and Joe Soens and Co. as the electrical contractor to construct a new bandshell. It is unknown if Hay Weaver and Co. or someone else was responsible for the design. Located along the western edge of the park in what was once a dense grove, construction on the new bandshell began on May 20, 1927 and was completed by August 15 for an approximate cost of \$20,000.

Because the bandshell would not be finished in time for either Memorial Day or the 4th of July celebration, the bandshell was officially dedicated a year later on May 28, 1928. The dedication was in honor of Mishawaka's World War I veterans. A commemorative plaque placed at the front of the bandshell reads; "[d]edicated to those of Mishawaka, Indiana, who offered their lives in humanity's defense in the wars of the nation and in memory of those who gave their last full measure of devotion." Prior to the dedication, a parade was held that ended at Battell Park. The bandshell continues to be one of the most dominant features of Battell Park.

In the 1930s, Mishawaka was an active participant of President Roosevelt's New Deal approach that attempted to ease the devastating effects brought on by the Great Depression through an array of alphabetized relief and work programs. Although the quickest method of providing relief is through direct payments, the biggest and costliest of the New Deal Programs -- the Works Progress Administration (WPA) -- relied on an innovative and imaginative approach of simply putting people back to work. The WPA

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Battell Park Historic District  
St. Joseph County, Indiana**

Section number 8 Page 9

---

in Indiana was extremely successful at accomplishing this goal while also visibly improving the state as a whole. Indiana was the first state in the nation to fulfill its quota by allowing unemployed workers to earn wages, thus reducing the relief rolls significantly. In 1938, the South Bend WPA district, comprised of 16 counties and representing one of four districts in the state, had spent more dollars, employed more workers, and generated more projects in the previous two years than any other district. The majority of projects occurred throughout St. Joseph County where a quarter of the population received public aid; 47 percent of which were employed through WPA jobs.

WPA projects often centered around improving parks and recreational areas, thus benefiting the overall community, boosting civic pride and morale, and providing much-needed employment. For Battell Park, the WPA played an important role in redefining its character and, in part, its significance. Prior to the Depression, the park was fairly typical of many public parks developed at that era. However, uncharacteristic of other parks was the natural topography of Battell Park. Located near and beginning at the center of the park had always been a ravine that dramatically dropped downward towards the river bank. Early in the park's history, a small walking bridge was constructed over the ravine and at least one other bridge was proposed in 1925.

Citizens of Mishawaka who were put to work through the WPA efforts created from this ravine an outstanding, five-tier, cascading rock garden incorporating a waterfall, small pools, and an arched bridge. Over a period of nine months between September, 1936 and June, 1937, WPA workers gathered fieldstones, most of which were obtained from the river, and transformed this natural feature into what has since been referred to as Mishawaka's central beauty spot. For those who designed and built it and those who have continued to enjoy it since its construction, the rock garden has fulfilled the need to play and allow one's imagination to run wild. Other parks throughout Indiana certainly have or had rock gardens, many of which were also built by the WPA. But few, if any, can match the overall scale and attention to detail of the rock garden in Mishawaka.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, rock gardening had become extremely popular across the country. Different from the formal rock gardens of the Victorian era, the Post-Victorian rock garden favored elements including multiple levels, slopes, and the use of water and retaining walls. A "proper" or "natural style" rock garden was to be incorporated within a natural feature rather than artificial or man-made. The geometric forms and topiary creations of the Victorian garden were no longer considered

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 10 **Battell Park Historic District**  
**St. Joseph County, Indiana**

---

appropriate for a rock garden. Rather, a rock garden was to be designed and patterned so that it resemble nature in its wild and picturesque state. The location of the rock garden was also important. A rock garden was to look as if it belonged there and not placed in the middle of a lawn, as was the case with many rock gardens. In a 1929 book called *American Rock Gardens*, the author Stephen F. Hamblin recommended the use of local rocks that could be found on or near the site. He considered dragging in rocks a "folly."

Depending on the extent to which a rock garden was designed, it was either categorized as "naturalistic" or "architectural." Naturalistic gardens tended to focus on the plantings of native perennials while architectural rock gardens like Battell Park favored terraces, retaining walls and pools. In addition, Battell Park's rock garden was designed with the need to highlight the sequence, journey, and importance of water. Beginning at a miniature mill house with working water wheel, water flows through various chutes, valleys, and fountains before working its way into several pools lined with water lilies. The climax of the journey is dropping over the rock-covered embankment and spilling into the river.

Following the completion of the rock garden, WPA workers constructed a circular, concrete wading pool for children that still remains. Many WPA park projects included a wading pool but few remain today due to the polio scare in the early 1950s that resulted in many of them to be closed and removed.

**History After Period of Significance**

In the years following 1937, the Soldiers' Memorial, bandshell, and rock garden have all served as dramatic backdrops for family reunions and picnics, civic events, concerts and weddings. Community groups such as the Boys and Girls Scouts and DeMolay Organization have sponsored flower gardens and assisted with the upkeep of the park.

By 1967, the Soldiers' Memorial was in deteriorating condition and began to lean severely to the south. Identified as causes for the leaning were settling, a crack in the base, and ongoing erosion. A youth group known as the Mishawaka DeMolay Organization took charge of restoring and straightening the Memorial. A concrete pad was installed throughout the fenced area of the Memorial to prevent any future leaning. Further, a new concrete base was constructed, replacing the stone ornamental base that included life-sized medallions, military and navel emblems, inscriptions, and the names of four

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11 **Battell Park Historic District**  
**St. Joseph County, Indiana**

---

Civil War battles located on each side of the base. At some point after 1957, a Civil War era cannon, once located west of the Memorial, was reportedly thrown over the embankment into the St. Joseph River, although its brick base still remains. Large portions of the river wall along the river bank have been washed away and a small portion of the embankment wall has been replaced with formed concrete. Later changes to Battell Park include the construction of three tennis courts, one basketball court, and a small gravel parking lot and access drive at the southwest corner of the park.

**Landscape Architectural Significance**

The overall park and rock garden are significant for their embodiment of distinctive characteristics of an early twentieth century recreational and WPA-built facility. Original features of the park setting and rock garden remain intact. There are no other known examples of a similar or outstanding rock garden as Battell Park in Indiana which were collectively funded, designed and constructed by the Works Progress Administration.

Battell Park can be compared to one other National Register listed WPA and recreational park facility in Indiana, namely Washington Park (*Washington Park Historic District* National Register of Historic Places Registration Form 6-26-91) in Michigan City, LaPorte County. Established ten years after and 112 acres in size, Washington Park nevertheless maintains a similar course of events and features as Battell Park. A Civil War monument was erected in the park in the mid-1890s and a bandstand in 1911. Washington Park however is most noted for its comprehensive WPA-built elements including a similar rock garden. Built from granite rocks and mortar, the garden consists of a series of pools and tributaries, with stone borders, flower urns, and bridges. It differs from the Battell Park rock garden in that it is on a much-smaller scale and less comprehensive in overall design and plan. The Washington Park rock garden also was not constructed within a natural land formation or feature but rather built within a flat, wooded landscape.

Battell Park can also be compared to the 1929 Memorial Park and Sunken Gardens in Huntington, Huntington County (069-288-540). Huntington was once referred to as "Lime City" because of its status as one of the largest lime producing areas in Indiana. A number of sites in the city were excavated for quarries. The Sunken Gardens were created from an abandoned quarry, located adjacent to Memorial Park. The gardens feature a landscaped peninsula set amidst a pool with fountains. Similar to Battell Park's natural land formation and the use of local materials; arched bridges, staircases, and retaining walls were constructed using leftover stone from the quarry. The park and

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 12

**Battell Park Historic District**  
**St. Joseph County, Indiana**

---

gardens were also very popular in the 1930s during the Depression years as a scenic spot for no-cost entertainment and family picnics. Unlike Battell Park, the gardens were not built by the WPA but rather sponsored and funded by local civic organizations.

To provide a local context for public recreation and WPA-built facilities in St. Joseph County, Howard Park (141-597-36398) in South Bend exhibits several similar characteristics. Originally designed by John G. Barker in 1899, Howard Park was also situated along the St. Joseph River, however level with the river bank. A fieldstone river wall nearly identical to Battell Park was also constructed by the WPA along a portion of the river bank. In addition, the WPA had a significant impact on the plan for this park with the erection of fieldstone viewing stands (141-587-36421) overlooking the river and constructing the park administration building (141-597-36379). Howard Park differs from Battell Park in its plan, relationship to the river, and its later "City Beautiful" additions.

Roosevelt's New Deal programs allowed for creative ingenuity and, in Indiana, created a unique style of architecture and landscape architecture for public parks. The materials, massing, and overall appearance of New Deal structures are distinctly different from earlier and later park developments. Other park projects generally did not rely on using native and/or discarded materials or stretching the imagination to new limits with playful and often whimsical creations.

Despite some deterioration caused by vandalism and exposure to the elements, Battell Park remains virtually unchanged from its original design. The plan for the entire park, occurring over a period of years and including the Soldiers' Memorial, bandshell, and WPA-built rock garden, collectively represents the evolution of a city park through the erection of structures commemorating the Civil War, World War I, and the Great Depression. The park and its features have continued to operate for its original landscape and passive recreation functions. To plan for its future preservation and provide a level of protection, Battell Park was designated locally in 1994 as a single-site historic district by the Mishawaka Historic Review Board.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   13   Battell Park Historic District  
St. Joseph County, Indiana

---

Anderson and Cooley. South Bend and the Men Who Have Made It. The Tribune Printing Company. 1901.

Baker, W. David. Battell Band Shelter. September, 1981.

Bridges, Janice. Indiana's Princess City: The History of Mishawaka 1832-1932. Mishawaka, Indiana: The Heritage Press. 1976.

Greiff, Glory-June. S.O.S. - Save Outdoor Sculpture. Washington, D.C.: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. May/July 1993.

Greiff, Glory-June. "Roads, Rocks, and Recreation: The Legacy of the WPA in Indiana." Traces. Indiana Historical Society. Volume 3, Number 3. Summer 1991.

Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory: City of Mishawaka. 1994.

Louchheim, Katie. The Making of the New Deal. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press. 1983.

Marinelli, Janet. "Rock Gardens and Wall Gardens." The Old-House Journal. May/June 1988.

Mishawaka Enterprise. October, 1966, July, 1981

Mishawaka Times Weekender. May 1965.

South Bend Tribune. August 1937 - May 1992.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 14

Battell Park Historic District  
St. Joseph County, Indiana

---

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 1, Battell Park Addition and its intersection with south right of way line of Mishawaka Avenue; thence west along the south right of way line of Mishawaka Avenue to its intersection with the east right of way line of Forest Avenue; thence south along the east right of way line of Forest Avenue to its intersection with the high water mark of the north bank of the St. Joseph River; thence meandering northeasterly along the north bank of said river to its intersection with the southwest corner of Lot 1 of Battell Park Addition; thence north along the west line of Lot 1 to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the original boundaries of Battell Park and the boundaries of the locally designated historic district.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number            Photo-graphs Page 15 Battell Park Historic District  
St. Joseph County, Indiana

---

**Photographs**

The following information is the same for all of the photographs:

Battell Park, St. Joseph County, Indiana  
Adrian Scott Fine, photographer  
August 5, 1995, date of photograph  
Location of negative: Mishawaka Historic Review Board  
Mishawaka Department of City Planning, 600 East Third Street  
Mishawaka, Indiana 46544, (219) 258-1625

1. Soldiers' Memorial, east elevation; camera facing west
2. Bandshell, south and east elevations; camera facing northwest
3. Bandshell, west elevation, camera facing east
4. Restrooms/storage bldg., north elevation, camera facing south
5. Rock garden (mill house), south elevation, camera facing north
6. Rock garden, camera facing north
7. Rock garden, camera facing south
8. Rock garden, camera facing northwest
9. Rock garden, camera facing southeast
10. Rock garden (bridge), camera facing west
11. Embankment wall ("love seat"), camera facing south
12. Rock garden (fieldstone urn), camera facing northeast

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Photo- Battell Park Historic District  
Section number graphs Page 16 St. Joseph County, Indiana

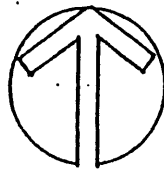
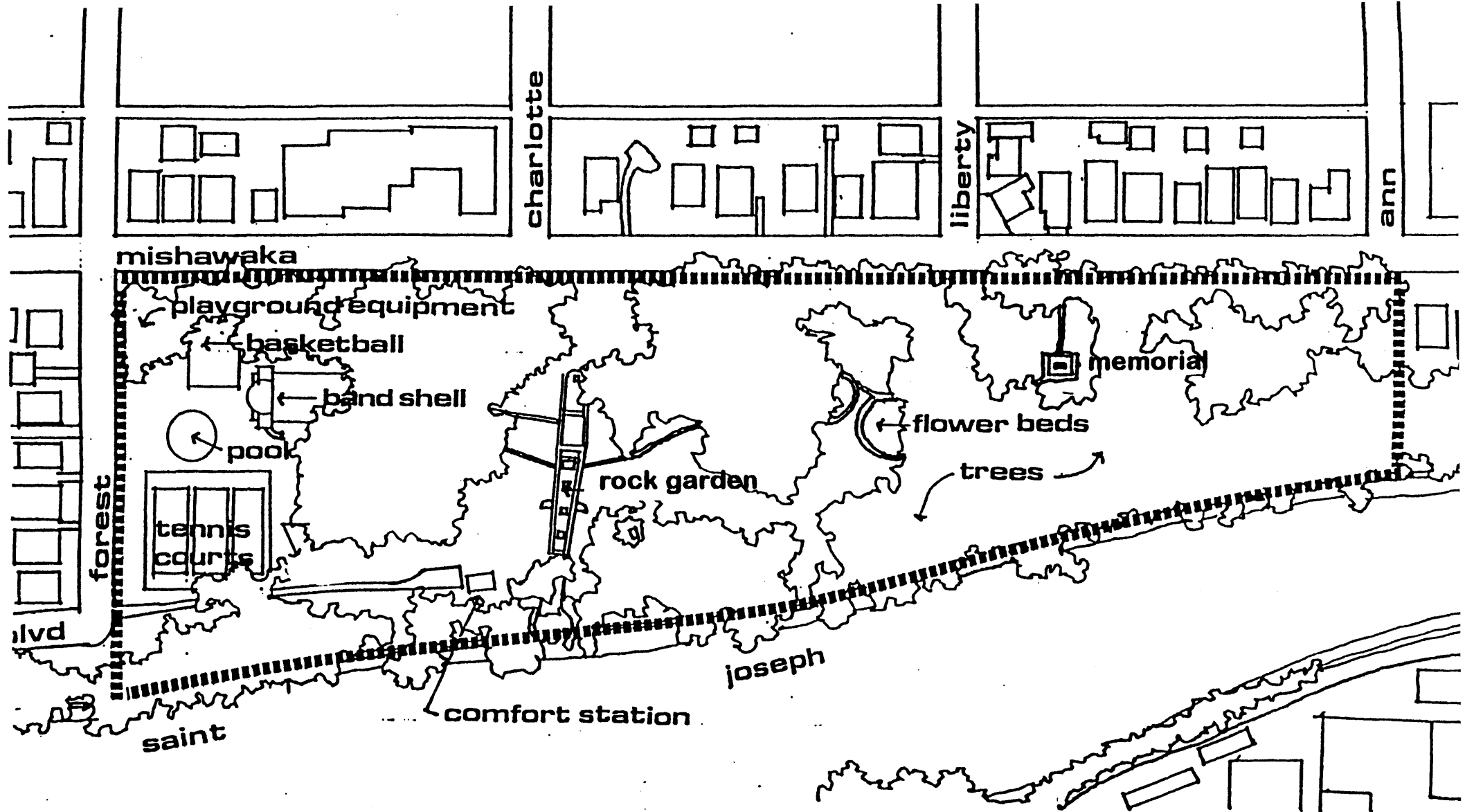
---

13. Wading pool and tennis courts, camera facing south

**Photocopies of historic photographs**

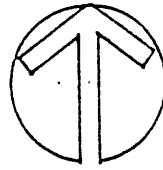
All photocopies were taken from original historic photographs at the Mishawaka-Penn Public Library.

1. Park area with Soldiers' Memorial in background; camera facing west. October 8, 1905.
2. Park area along embankment overlooking Mishawaka Woolen ("Ball Band") and the city of Mishawaka (view no longer visible, overgrown with mature trees); camera facing southeast. October 8, 1905.
3. Soldiers' Memorial; camera facing north. date unknown, after 1977.
4. Memorial Day services at the Soldiers' Memorial (with original carved stone base) including Civil War era cannon in background; camera facing west. May 30, 1957.



north

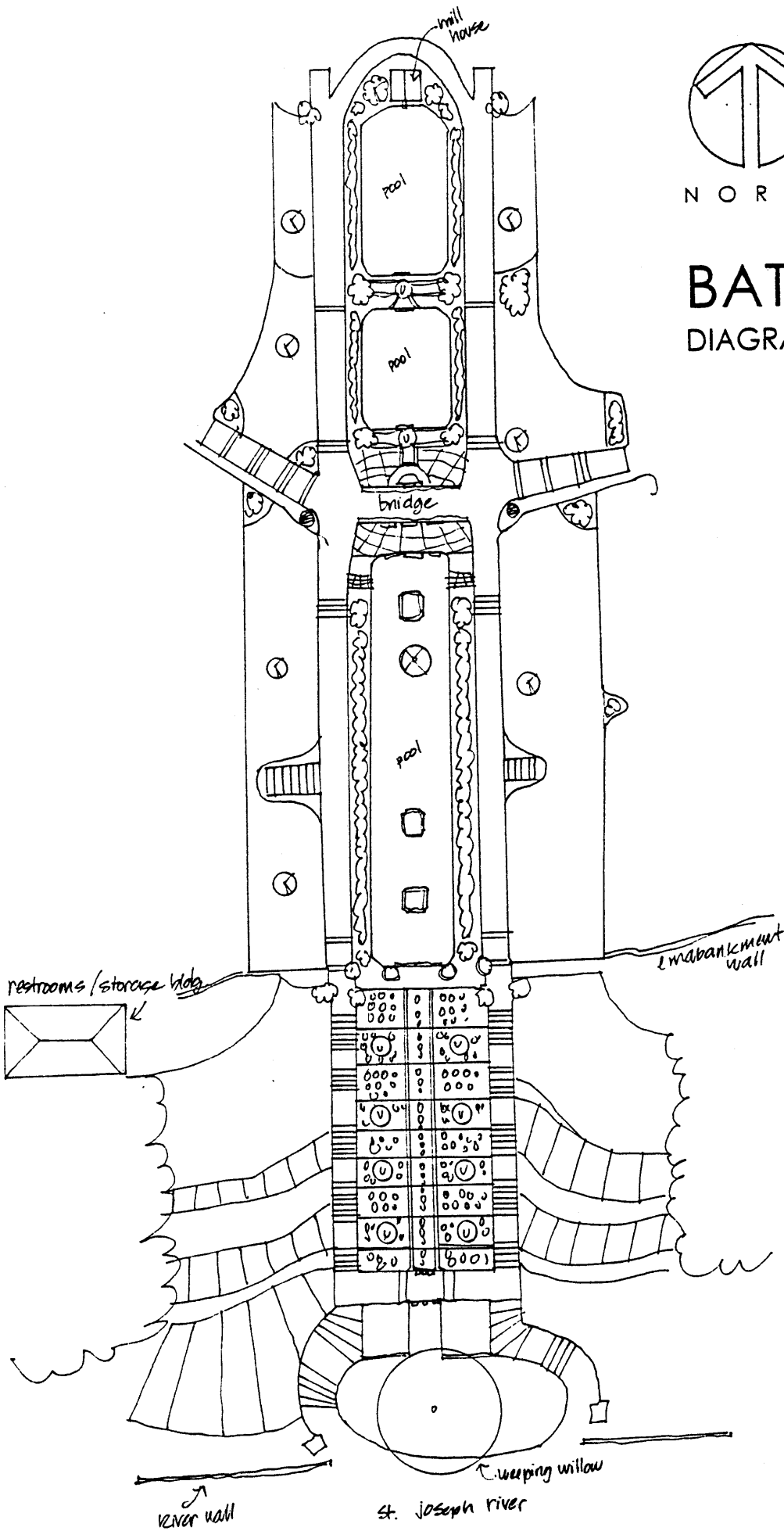
# BATTELL PARK



NORTH

# BATTELL PARK

DIAGRAM - WPA ROCK GARDEN





Bot 1071 Park 10-8-105





