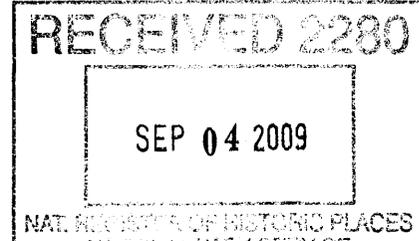


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

825



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 East Park Band Shell

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number East State Street between North Carolina and Kentucky [N/A] not for publication

city or town Mason City [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Cerro Gordo code 033 zip code 50401

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).

Barbara A. Mitchell August 31 2009
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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

Date of Action

for
Edson H. Beall 10-14-09

East Park Band Shell

Name of Property

Cerro Gordo County, IA

County and State

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	
		buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
2		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/Music Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE/Music Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other _____

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

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)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1924-1959

Significant Dates

1924

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lewis, Lester

Timmerman, J.H., & Son

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

East Park Band Shell
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo County, IA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.6 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1]5	[4]8[5]0[16]9[1]	[4]7[7]7[9]2[1]5	2	[1]5	[0]0[0]0[0]0	[0]0[0]0[0]0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[1]5	[0]0[0]0[0]0	[0]0[0]0[0]0	4	[1]5	[0]0[0]0[0]0	[0]0[0]0[0]0

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 Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant mollynaumann@pcsia.net
organization _____ date March 2009
street & number 167 West Alta Vista telephone 641-682-2743
city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501-1437

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete 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 Mason City (Attn: Pam Myhre)
street & number 10 First Street NW telephone 641-421-3626
city or town Mason City State IA zip code 50401

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**

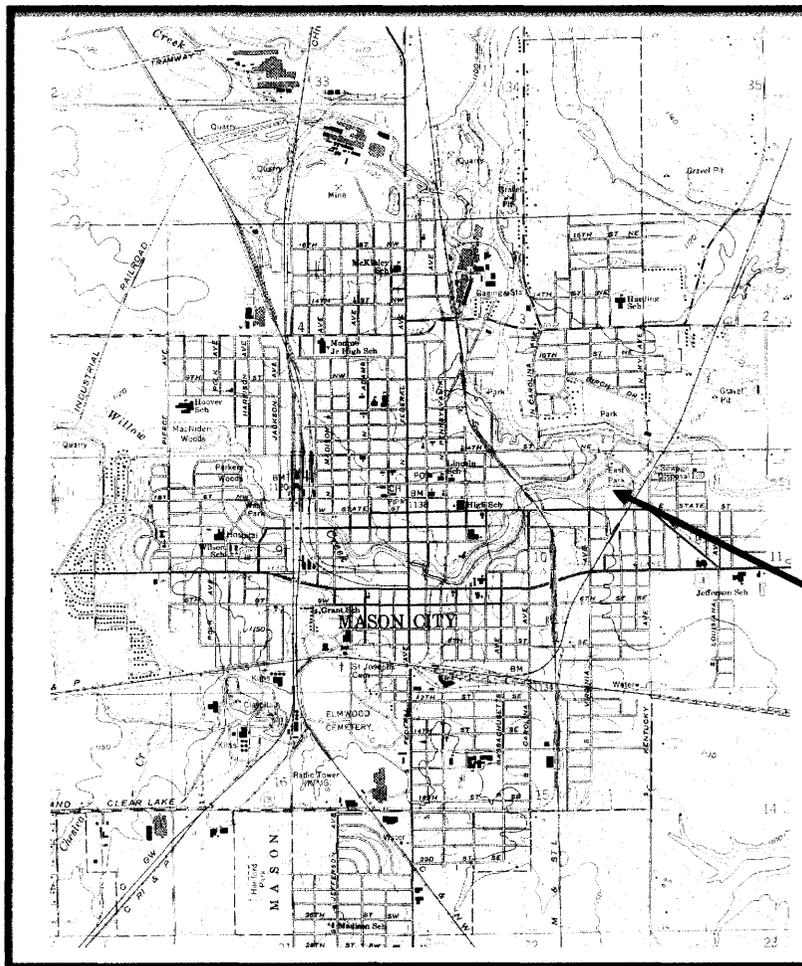
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

Section number 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

East Park and the East Park Band Shell (1924) are located in the eastern part of Mason City, on the north side of State Street. The park is bounded by Kentucky Avenue on the east, Virginia Avenue and Willow Creek on the west, and the Winnebago River on the north. The original 40 acres of East Park was purchased by the city in 1909. In September of that year F.E. Pease designed a park that is very similar to the East Park of today, with two entrances off of State Street, curving drives, a small pond, tennis courts, and a music pavilion. Today the park has grown to 57 acres and features the band shell, a swimming pool, campground, picnic shelters, tennis courts, a duck pond, a historic train engine, and a new "Prairie Playground" for children.



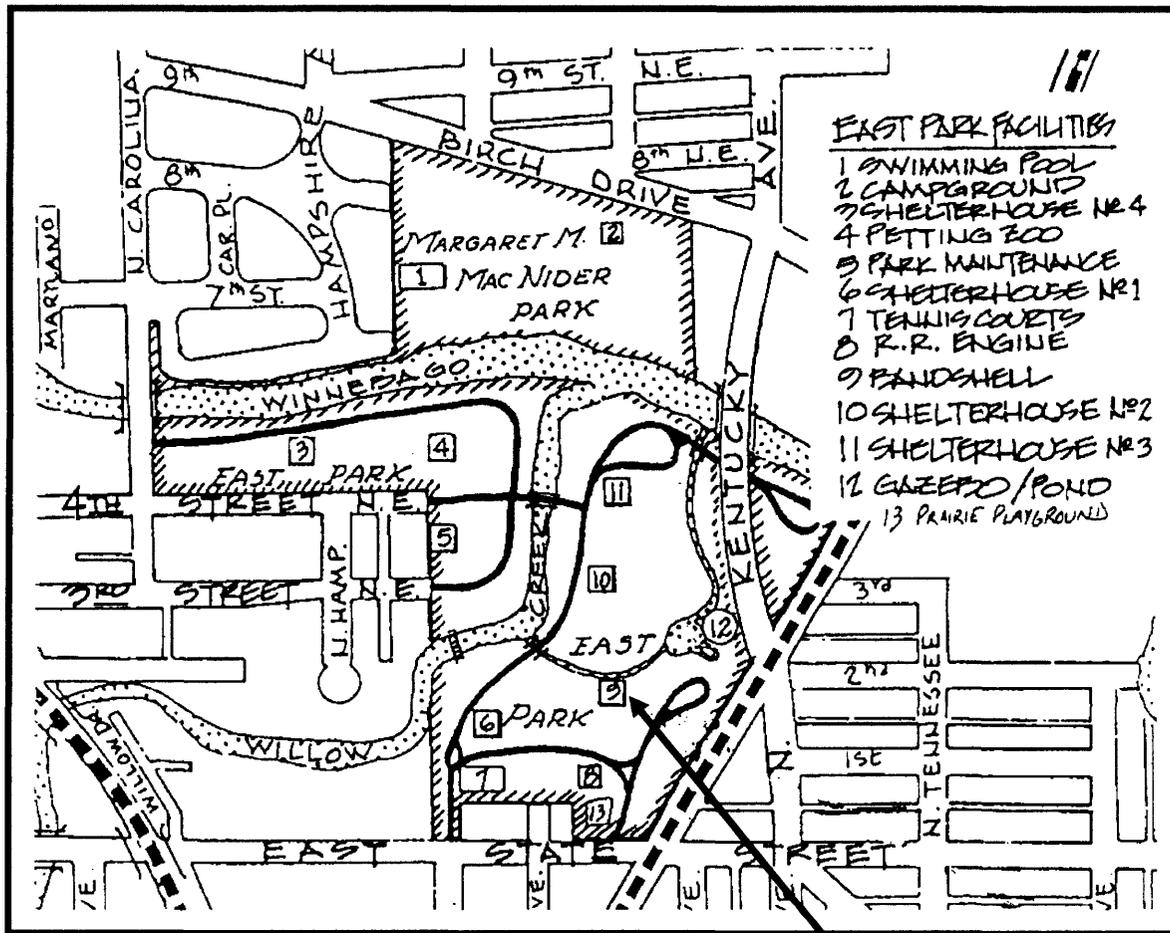
U.S.G.S. Map (1959)
Arrow indicates location of East Park Band Shell

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

Section number 7 Page 2



Map of East Park (2000)
Arrow indicates location of Band Shell
(Courtesy of Mason City Parks Department)

The band shell is sited near the center of the park in a tree-shaded area with a small stream flowing behind it. The front of the band shell faces south, toward a level area with a concrete paved seating area, abundant park benches, picnic tables, and paved paths. It rests on a high foundation, with the stage floor approximately four feet above the ground. The exterior of the original structure measures approximately 33 feet wide by 21 feet deep. A 10 foot by 33 foot hip roof addition to the rear of the structure is of undetermined date. It provides space for two restrooms and additional storage. The three windows on the north elevation feature double hung sash, and the exposed rafter ends lend a Craftsman feeling to the structure. There are no windows on the east or west elevations. On the west side of the structure wooden steps lead up to a door and a porch that connects with the west side of the stage.

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East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

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Aerial photo of site showing location of the band shell on bank of Willow Creek, concrete seating area in front, abundant tree cover, and the sidewalks and parking lot which define the viewing area.

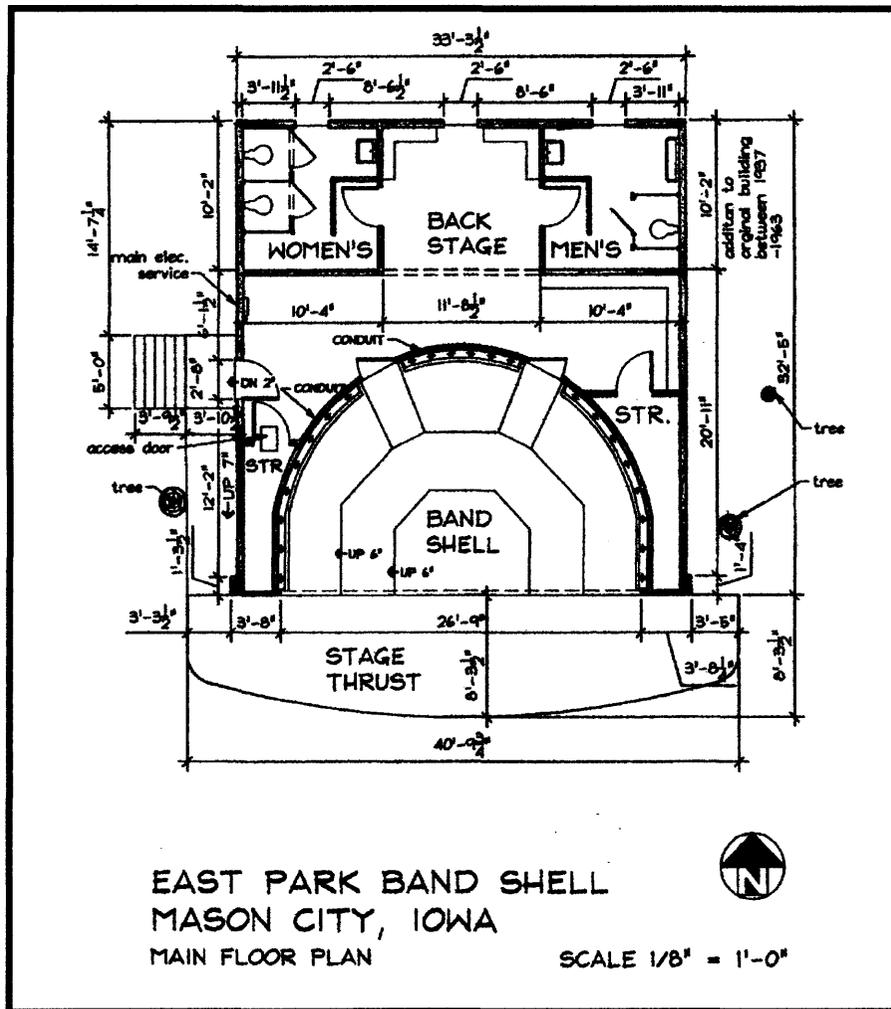
(Photograph courtesy of the Mason City Planning Department)

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

East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

Section number 7 Page 4



Floor plan of band shell
(Wetherell Ericsson Leusink Architects, 2001)

The stage thrust (apron) across the front is not original, but appears to have been added around 1938. It is elliptical in shape, being approximately eight feet deep at the center and slightly shallower at each end. This apron extends about three and a half feet beyond the walls of the shell on the east and west sides, with a porch and steps located on the west elevation.

On the exterior it is impossible to tell that the main feature is a quarter sphere band shell. From the rear and side elevations, the structure appears to be a simple frame building with asphalt shingled hipped roof. Wetherell Ericsson Leusink's Feasibility Study from 2001 provides details about this structure. The exterior walls are balloon framed with horizontal two and one-half inch lap siding on the east and west elevations, and six inch ship lap siding on the north and

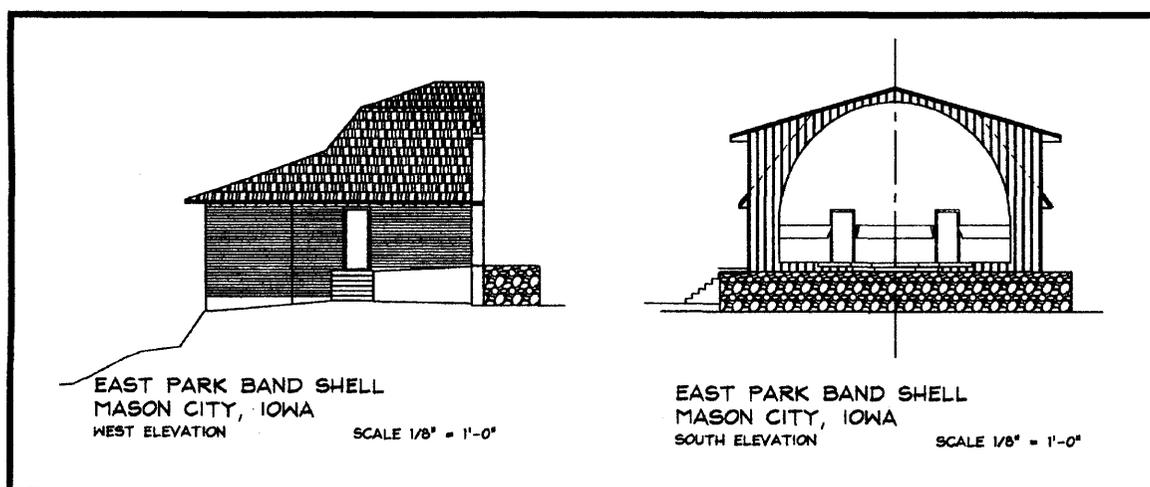
United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

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originally on the south elevations. The ship lap siding on the façade (south elevation) was replaced by vertical board and batten around 1980. It appears that the random limestone veneer was added to the apron front at the same time. The board and batten siding and stone veneer are both reversible alterations. No date has been determined for the installation of the two large loud-speakers which are mounted on the front center of the roof.



Elevation drawings by Wetherell Ericsson Leusink, 2001

Both the original section and the addition rest on a high concrete foundation. On the interior, the floor joists are supported by a double east/west row of eight inch by twelve inch concrete columns on eight foot centers. Utilitarian materials were used throughout the interior. The walls are of quarter inch plywood wainscot with a 3/16 inch tag board wall board above, while plywood was used in the addition. Four by ten foot sheets of fiber board were used for the ceiling in the original portion, with a dropped ceiling of fiber board tile in the addition. There is no heating or cooling system in the structure.

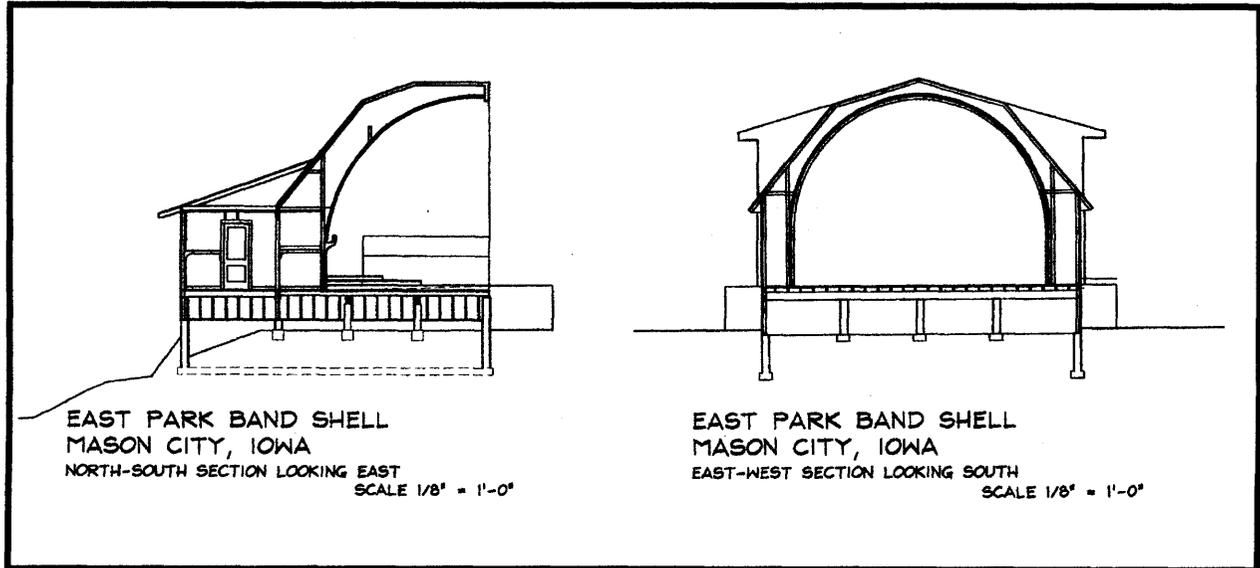
The shell proper is constructed of poured concrete over a curved form of hexagon wire mesh. The concrete shell was then enclosed by wood framing to protect it. Originally only a narrow hallway ran behind the concrete shell, with the corners used for storage. Portions of the concrete and wire form-work can still be seen from the back hallway. The shell is a quarter-circle in shape with the interior performing area approximately 27 feet wide by 17 feet deep. The ceiling of the shell is 20 feet at the front, sloping to six feet at the rear of the shell. The painted surface of the inside of the shell remains in good condition. Cove lighting surrounds the shell interior. The wooden stage floor is on three levels, rising to the rear. The front center is a nine foot deep semi-circle, with the next level being a four foot deep step, and the final step measuring five feet deep. Two doors are located in the rear of the shell, one located 20 degrees to the right of center, and the other one 20 degrees to the left.

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East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

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Cross-section drawings by Wetherell Ericsson Leusink, 2001

While the park setting is perfect for the band shell, the location and open design of the structure have made maintenance difficult. Exposure to the elements has caused deterioration problems with the wood, and wild creatures, especially squirrels, often take up residence in the structure.

The two Depression Era structures in close proximity to the band shell must be noted: a stone bridge immediately northwest of the shell which is included in the geographic area included with the band shell; and, a stone and timber shelter house which is farther west. Both of these are considered to be National Register eligible and a nomination of Depression Era structures should be considered in the future. In addition, further research may uncover potential archeological significance.

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East Park Band Shell
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WPA Foot Bridge



WPA Shelter House

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East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

Section number 8 Page 8

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The East Park Band Shell (1924) in Mason City has local Criterion A significance for the role it has played in the strong musical tradition of the community. The East Park Band Shell was constructed to provide a new modern performance stage for the municipal band. Prior to this time, the band had performed in a portable gazebo-like bandstand that appears to have been moved from park to park. While most people immediately think of Meredith Willson and *The Music Man*, music of all types has been important throughout Mason City's history. With further research the Band Shell may have Criterion B significance for its association with Meredith Willson, but at this time this association appears to be limited. Local Criterion C significance has been achieved as it is an example of a somewhat unusual building type, the band shell.

Criterion A:

Mason City's music tradition stretches back to the early 20th century. On April 14, 1908 the *Mason City Times Herald* announced

Four Brass Bands for July fourth

The latest plans of the Commercial Club for the big Fourth of July celebration promise a greater gala day than was expected at first. Patriotic music in large quantities and excellent quality will be one of the features of the day. At least four big bands will be in the city and all will be making the air ring with our grand old national songs and all the latest airs of the day. Music always stirs to more enthusiasm and real enjoyment of such a day than any other one element and those in charge of the celebration will see that the music is not neglected.

No mention was made as to the location of the band concerts, but there appears to have been a bandstand in City Park in downtown Mason City at that time. Young Hanford MacNider wrote a paper about City Park for his Landscape Architecture class at Harvard in the fall of 1909. In it he described the park "in the very heart" of the city's downtown, mentioning the bronze fountain in the center and a Civil War monument of a soldier. In addition he said, "A bandstand of fairly recent construction has been placed directly behind the monument. It is however, only temporary." One of the most interesting facts in MacNider's paper is that the bandstand was originally painted green with pink trim.

In 1920 the Mason City Chamber of Commerce decided to form a municipal band to give a series of concerts for ten weeks during the summer. When we think of a municipal band today, we think of a band composed of local or neighboring musicians. That does not describe the Mason City Municipal Band of 1920. Harry Keeler and the other members of the Chamber of Commerce committee hired professional musicians from across the country. The director was James M. Fulton of Boston, "a noted composer of band music and over five hundred of his compositions and arrangements have been published by the leading music houses of America," and the cornet soloist was Frank Simon of Sousa's Band. (*Mason City Daily Globe Gazette*, June 7, 1920) The article went on to list the musicians hired, according to their instruments. All were from out of town (and state) except Thomas Wells of Mason City who played a clarinet. The

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East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

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flute and piccolo were to be played by a gentleman named Meredith Willson of the Rio Theatre orchestra in New York City. In parenthesis the *Globe Gazette* noted Willson's Mason City roots. The band season opened to rave reviews from the newspaper (June 16, 1920):

Twenty men have been brought here from east and west, from Great Lakes to Gulf, and in four days have been able to reproduce masterpieces of music in a manner which almost seems incredible to music critics who were delighted with the initial performance. The band has volume, its attack is splendid, harmony is above criticism, charm is added by the quality of crescendos, and unison of effort has been accomplished to a most gratified degree.

Concerts will be given twice each day, with the exception of Mondays, for the next ten weeks. The programs will be given in Central Park at 3:00 PM and 7:45 PM unless other announcements for special occasions are made.

The article also mentioned the bandstand that had been made for the musicians to use during the summer concerts. "It is a frame structure, covered with screen and painted white. It has been built on a wagon truck so that it can be used at more than one place in the city if the desire arises." It was designed by local architect Einar Broaten, and paid for from the city park fund.

Evidently the municipal band was a great success because in 1923, when the Iowa legislature passed a law allowing cities to levy money for municipal bands, the citizens of Mason City quickly approved a two mil levy for a band and the construction of a new band shell. (*Mason City Globe Gazette*, May 23, 1923) The petition to form a band was filed by the local American Legion post and it was hoped that the band would be composed of both Legion members and other local talent. Plans were made for a band shell to be constructed in East Park.

On Saturday, July 19, 1924, the *Mason City Globe Gazette* ran a headline

Band Concerts in This Stand are Heard a Mile

It makes the concerts by the Mason City municipal band audible for a mile, does this new shell bandstand in East Park, It has been used by the band on two occasions, the two previous Sundays, with excellent results, according to Director Harry P. Keeler.

"The musicians are thoroughly delighted with the playing qualities of the stand" the director said. "It provides perfect support for their efforts; they play easily and obtain the greatest volume of any stand in which they have played."

There is a perfect blending of the instruments and no echo, so that the director has the best of an opportunity to get a balance between the various sections of the band.

One musician last Sunday, Mr. Keeler said, was able to hear the softest notes of the clarinet and flute while a block away from the stand while others tell of hearing the concerts six and seven blocks away.

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East Park Band Shell
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The East Park Band Shell was dedicated on Thursday, July 24, 1924. This concert replaced the weekly Thursday night concert in Central Park, and was highlighted by speeches given by the mayor and other city officials. The program for the dedication concert included songs by the Chamber of Commerce Glee Club, several vocal solos, a reading, and five selections by the band including the popular "Stars and Stripes Forever," the "William Tell Overture," and the "Slavonic Rhapsody" before concluding with the audience joining in singing "America."

The interest in, and support for, the municipal band continued strong in Mason City, even through the Depression and war years. A 1931 newspaper article noted "Large Crowd Hears Program by Local Band in East Park." It provided free entertainment at a time when many could not afford even a dime movie.



Band Concert, August 4, 1937
(Safford Lock photo, Lee P. Loomis Archives, Mason City Public Library)
Note the flat, stucco-covered front, with horizontal siding above.

In 1946 a flyer advertised two upcoming concerts by the band in a single week, one on Sunday, July 28, and the other on Wednesday July 31. Both took place at 8:00 PM in East Park. The Sunday concert featured three selections by the Mason City Women's Symphony Orchestra preceding the band concert. Each of the band concerts began and ended with a march, with a variety of music in between. During the 1950s, '60s, and '70s the concerts continued on a regular basis. In the 1980s East Park began to deteriorate. The concerts continued, but few people used the park otherwise. In 1985 the city took step to renovate, to "bring back" the park to its former grandeur, and within two years the park was again being used by a broad range of Mason City's citizens.

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East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

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Gypsy Queen Contest, July 15, 1954
(Safford Lock photo, Lee P. Loomis Archives, Mason City Public Library)
Note the horizontal siding on the façade and across the apron.

Throughout the eighty-five year history of the band, there have been only six conductors: Harry Keeler (1924-1926), John N. Eppel (1926-1927), C.F. Weaver (1927-1937), Carleton Stewart (1937-1963), Henry Paine (1964-1982), and Gilbert G. Lettow (1982 – present). During the period when Carleton Stewart conducted, several changes were made to make the band shell more functional: the addition was made to the rear, the front of the stage was extended to create an apron, and, for aesthetic reasons, the façade was covered with vertical board and batten and the apron (stage thrust) was given a stone veneer. No firm dates have been determined for these changes.

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East Park Band Shell
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Although Meredith Willson is locally associated with the Band Shell, there are only two times when it can be documented that he actually stood on it. The first was August 22, 1939 when he was the guest conductor for the Municipal Band. During this concert the band played "Wings on High," which he had written for the Army Air Corps. (*Mason City Globe Gazette*.) While he was in town in June 1962, for the premiere of "The Music Man," he was presented with the President's Gold Medallion by Douglas Dillon, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, for his service to the nation through the promotion of Bonds for Freedom. (*Mason City Globe Gazette*, June 20, 1962)



Meredith Willson conducting the Mason City Municipal Band, August 22, 1939
(Safford Locke photo, Lee P. Loomis Archives, Mason City Public Library)
Note that the stage has been extended forward creating the apron.

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East Park Band Shell
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Criterion C:

At the time this structure was built, the band shell was being touted as the best way to provide proper acoustics for both the listening audience, and the conductor and band members. The curvature of the shell projected the sound much farther than had been possible with an open, gazebo-like structure. Band shells (or music shells as they were often called) were built across the country in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s in a variety of different shapes. At least ten band shells are extant in the state of Iowa, dating in construction from 1924 to 1959.

Mason City Band Shell	East Park, Mason City	1924	
W.D. Peterson Memorial Music Pavilion	LeClair park, Davenport	1924	NRHP
Estes Park Band Shell	Estes Park, Iowa Falls	1931	NRHP
Oleson Park Music Pavilion	Oleson Park, Fort Dodge	1934-37	NRHP
Ames Band Shell	Band Shell Park, Ames	1935	NRHP
Sioux City Band Shell	Grandview Park, Sioux City	1935	
Ackley Band Shell	City Hall, Ackley	1939	
Newton Band Shell	Maytag Park, Newton	c 1950	
Clear Lake Band Shell	City Square, Clear Lake	1954	
Hampton Band Shell	Band Shell Park, Hampton	1959	NRHP

Several of these were architect designed, but others were apparently designed by local contractors. The Mason City shell and the W.D. Peterson Memorial Music Pavilion in LeClair Park on the Davenport riverfront appear to have been the earliest examples in the state of Iowa, both being constructed in 1924.

The East Park Band Shell "representing the newest ideas in stand construction" was designed by Lester Lewis (a draftsman with Mason City Tile & Marble), with suggestions from band director, Harry B. Keeler. Built by J.H. Timmerman and Son of Mason City, and described as a "quarter circle," the shell was made of cement, which was said to "Have greater acoustical values than a wood sound board...". Another reason "cement" may have been used rather than wood, was because Mason City was the home of one of the largest Portland cement plants in the world. "Cement" was truly a "local" product.

The East Park Band Shell design is unique in that it is a "shell" on the interior only. The other band shells around the state all reflect the shell design on the exterior as well. It is possible that Lester Lewis lacked the architectural/engineering expertise to design a true band shell shape, and settled for creating the resonating interior shell within a nondescript wood frame exterior. It might best be described as a vernacular adaptation of the concept, a transition between the band stand designs of the 19th century and the true band "shells" of the 20th century.

One of the major proponents of the band shell concept was an Iowa native, architect Henry L. Kamphoefner. (He designed both the Fort Dodge and Sioux City band shells.) In a 1945

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Continuation Sheet**

East Park Band Shell
Cerro Gordo County, IA

Section number 8 Page 14

article he discussed the pros and cons of shells, making a point that such a facility should be located in a quiet park-like area so that the audience could enjoy the quality of the music and not be subjected to the sounds of traffic and honking horns. He cited the Ackley band shell, literally in the center of the business district, as an example of poor placement. The East Park Band Shell is perfectly sited in terms of a quiet park-like setting.

Conclusion:

The East Park Band Shell achieves local Criterion A significance for its role in Mason City's musical heritage. Over the decades this was the place for music, this was the place for community activities such as the Gypsy Queen Contest, and this was the place people thought of when music was mentioned. Although the band shell, and East Park itself, went through a period of deterioration in the 1980s, today the park is filled with people taking part in all of the various activities offered, and the band shell continues to be used by the Mason City Municipal Band for concerts each summer. It is also used by a variety of vocal groups, serves as the site for occasional church services, is the site for "Band Shell Blues" several times each year, and provides performance space for bands during various festivals. Criterion C significance lies in its vernacular adaptation of a relatively unusual design form, and the fact that the shell shape continues to provide the acoustics for which it was originally built.

The band shell retains a high level of all seven aspects of integrity. Much of the band shell's significance lies in its setting... a tree shaded park that invites leisure activities and quiet moments. It is sited the way such a facility should be. This is a good example of how a location, setting, and feeling add to the significance of a resource, and how moving the resource from the original site would seriously impair the integrity. It is because of this significance of setting that over one acre of the park around the band shell has been included in this nomination. The design of the band shell has been altered with the addition to the rear, and the extension of the apron across the front. These changes do not have a negative impact on the structure, but add to its utility. The application of the board and batten siding to the façade continues the use of wood as a cladding material, and the use of limestone on the apron connects the band shell to the two Depression Era structures to the west. Integrity of workmanship is found in the shell itself, exhibiting both the original construction material and the construction method. There is a direct link to the original purpose of the band shell through its continued use as a performance stage.

The East Park Band Shell has been a point of controversy during the past decade. Curiously, the continued importance of music in the life of Mason City is one of the major problems facing the band shell today. At the time it was built, bands were smaller (20-30 musicians) and much of the music was march oriented. Today, bands are larger, with a full percussion section, plus several other instruments not common in the earlier groups. Changing acoustical and amplification demands have also had an impact on the 1924 structure. One local group has been advocating construction of a new outdoor performance facility on this site, while another group, Friends of the Band Shell, has been formed to save the historic structure. This latter group has been raising money to restore the structure and has plans from the Mason City architectural firm of Waggoner and Wineinger for the restoration on its present site.

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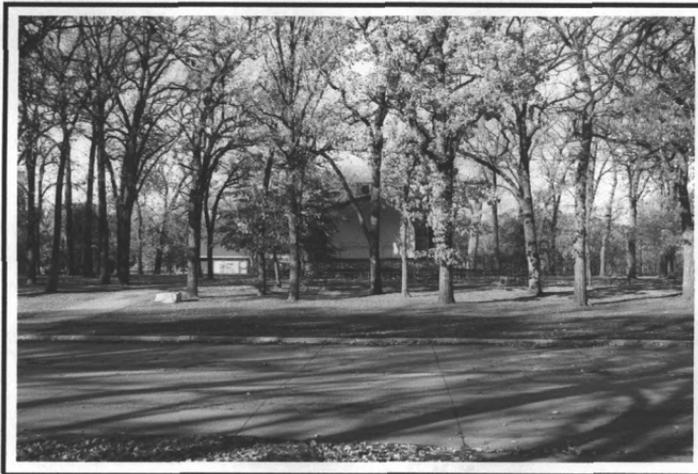
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Band Concert, July 12, 1949
(Safford Locke photo, Lee P. Loomis Archives, Mason City Public Library)



Same view to the north, 2008

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point north northwest of the band shell where the north/south sidewalk intersects with the south bank of Willow Creek, thence northeast 250 feet along the creek bank to the second paved sidewalk, thence 351 feet in a southerly direction along the sidewalk to the point where the southeast corner of the parking lot meets the right-of-way of the paved drive, thence west 251 feet along the right-of-way to the southwest corner of the parking lot, thence 208 feet in a northerly direction along the paved sidewalk to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This 1.6 acres containing the East Park Band Shell includes the immediate surroundings which provide a great deal of its significance: the concrete seating area with park benches and picnic tables, the mature tree cover, the sidewalks that provide access, and the large area to the south extending to the parking lot from which listeners enjoy the concerts.

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The photographs submitted with this nomination were taken by Craig Binnebose in December 2008.

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0001	View of Band Shell from parking lot looking North
0002	Façade (South elevation) looking North
0003	Façade and East elevation looking Northwest
0004	East and North (rear) elevations looking Southwest
0005	North and West elevations with foot bridge in foreground looking Southeast
0006	West and South (façade) elevations looking Northeast