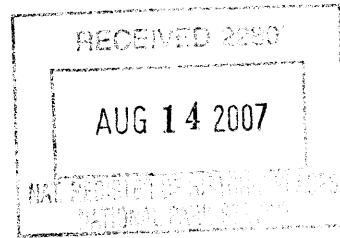


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



AUG 03 2007  
1005

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 Edmundson Park Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Southeast Corner 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue West & Edmundson Drive (South M Street) [N/A] not for publication

city or town Oskaloosa [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Mahaska code 123 zip code 52577

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).

Rowell J. Lortke Deputy SAPO August 10, 2007  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson R. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 9.27.07

**Edmundson Park Historic District**  
Name of Property

**Mahaska 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	
4	13	buildings
6	5	sites
19	2	structures
3	0	objects
32	20	Total

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

**Properties previously listed in the National Register**

N/A 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

Landscape: Park

Recreation & Culture: Outdoor Recreation

Swimming Pool

Playing Fields

Music Facility

Transportation: Road-related

**Current Functions**

Landscape: Park

Recreation & Culture: Outdoor Recreation

Swimming Pool

Playing Fields

Transportation: Trails

Road-related

**7. Description**

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

OTHER/Rustic

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls STONE/limestone

Wood

roof Asphalt

other Metal

**Narrative Description**

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

**Edmundson Park Historic District**  
Name of Property

**Mahaska County, IA**  
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.

**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)

- Community Planning**
- Landscape Architecture**
- Architecture**

**Period of Significance**  
**1936-1938**

**Significant Dates**  
**1936-1938**

**Significant Person**  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
**N/A**

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**  
**Wyrick, Ray F.**

**Works Progress Administration**

- Primary location of additional data:**
- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Edmundson Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Mahaska County, IA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 56.5 Acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>[115]</u>	<u>[52]8[4]8[6]</u>	<u>[4]5[7]0[4]7[2]</u>	2	<u>[115]</u>	<u>[52]9[0]8[0]</u>	<u>[4]5[7]0[4]7[2]</u>
	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>		<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
3	<u>[115]</u>	<u>[52]9[0]8[0]</u>	<u>[4]5[7]0[0]6[8]</u>	4	<u>[115]</u>	<u>[52]8[5]9[4]</u>	<u>[4]5[7]0[0]6[8]</u>
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>See continuation sheet</b>	

**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 For the Oskaloosa HPC date July 2007  
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 Oskaloosa  
street & number 220 South Market Street telephone 641-673-8361  
city or town Oskaloosa state IA zip code 52577

**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

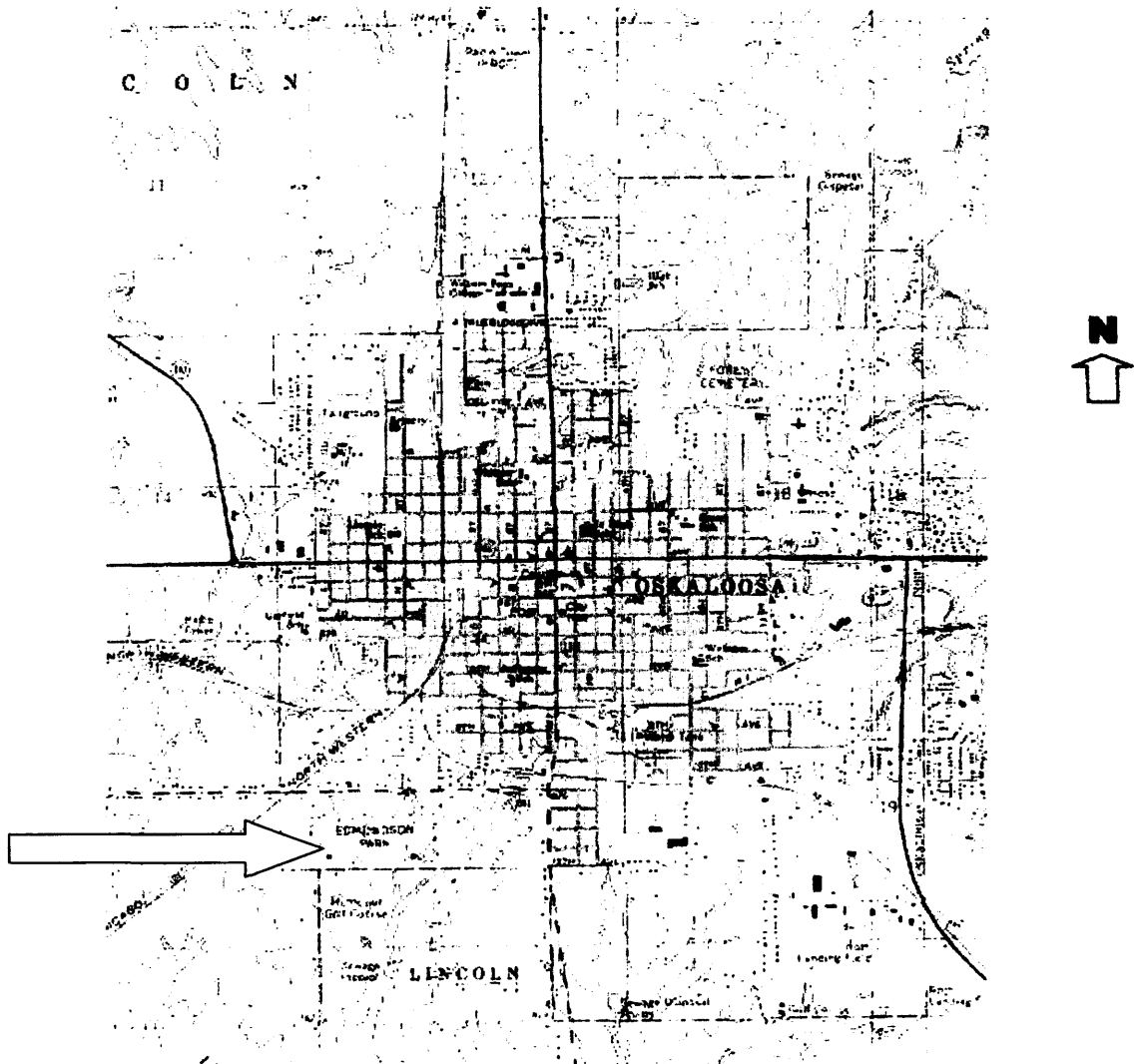
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA

Section number 7 Page 1

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The 56.5 acre Edmundson Park is located in the southwestern quadrant of the city of Oskaloosa. Constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) from 1936 to 1938, it retains a fine collection of the "rustic architecture" commonly associated with park design of the period. The park contains a total of 52 resources: 32 from the original WPA project and 20 "new" resources, most of which date to the last quarter of the twentieth century. Included in the WPA resources are large stone entry gates, stone shelter houses, arched stone bridges, and massive stone "ovens."



U.S.G.S. Map of Oskaloosa (1968)  
Location of Edmundson Park is indicated by arrow

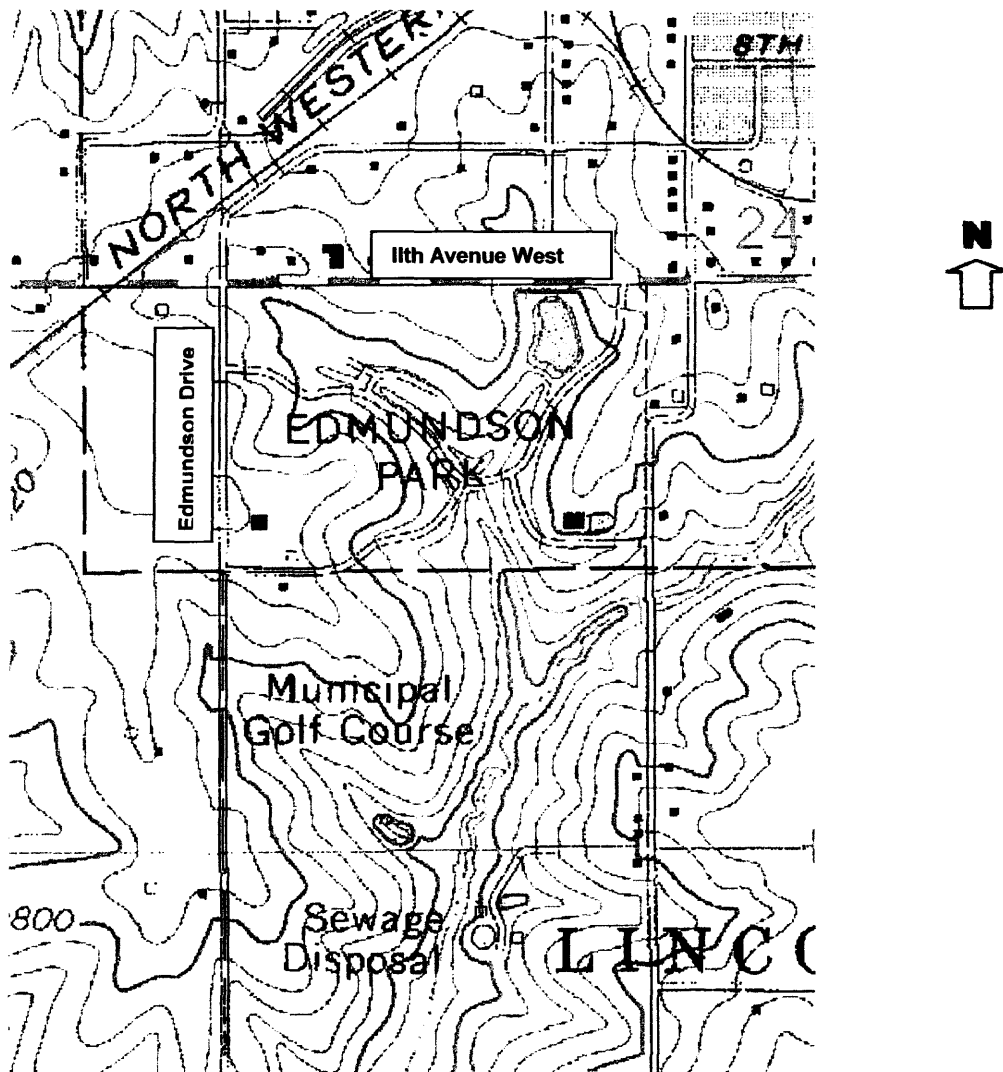
United States Department of the Interior  
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA

Section number 7 Page 2

This large city park is located on the southeast corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue West and South M Street (renamed Edmundson Drive south of 11<sup>th</sup>). There are two major entrances to the park, one near the northeast corner off of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the other on the west side of the park off of Edmundson Drive. In addition, there is a smaller vehicle gateway near the southeast corner off of F Street, and a pedestrian gateway at the northwest corner of the park. At the southwest corner the roadway leads to the storage and maintenance buildings of the golf course.



Detail: U.S.G.S. Map (1968)

Edmundson Park is the rectangular area that is bounded by streets on the west, north, and east sides, and is separated from the Edmundson Golf Course on the south by the dotted line.

Note the rolling terrain.

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Continuation Sheet

Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA

Section number 7 Page 3

Edmundson Park includes many of the design elements originally proposed by landscape engineer Ray F. Wyrick in his design presented to the city council in January 1936 and, in the final design that was drawn by Oskaloosa city engineer Don Russell later that same year. The major roadway creates a giant "X" pattern through the park, linking all four quadrants. Due to the rolling terrain of the area the land slopes gently downward from all sides towards the center, centering on the valley with a stream running through it. Note the large man-made lake in the northeast corner.



2006 Aerial Photograph with District Boundaries

The sharply delineated curving line running through the park from north to south is the new recreation trail.  
(Courtesy of Bryan Archer, Oskaloosa Public Works Department)

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA

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Massive stone piers with adjoining stone walls (forming 56 foot quarter circles) flank the main entrance at the northeast corner of the park, leading off of 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The curving roadway slopes gently to the southeast, providing a panoramic view of the park. To the right (west) is the man-made lake. (All photographs are keyed to the map on page 16)



Top: Gate on west side of north entrance (1) to southwest  
(Naumann photos August 2004)  
Bottom: Man-made lake with roadway on left to south





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**National Register of Historic Places  
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**Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA**

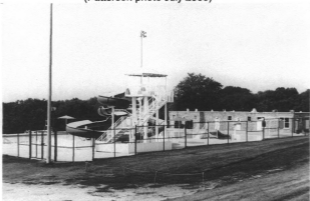
Section number **7** Page **5**

On your left (east) is a grassy hillside, topped by a softball field. Further south the roadway curves to the east toward the bathhouse and swimming pool that are located near the southeast corner of the park. The bathhouse is a long, low stone structure facing west at the crest of the hill. It is reached by a set of stone stairs leading from the south parking lot. The building has a flat roof and measures 54 feet by 102 feet. The exterior walls are of locally quarried stone. Immediately east of the bathhouse is the 75 foot by 150 foot poured concrete pool.



Top: Bathhouse and stone stairs (18 & 19) to northeast  
(Naumann photo August 2004)

Bottom: Swimming pool (20) to southwest  
(Patterson photo July 2006)



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Edmundson Park Historic District  
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The bathhouse and pool underwent rehabilitation in 2005 to make both more functional. Exterior alterations to the bathhouse were limited primarily to the lengthening of several windows and the widening of a door on the north elevation. The architect worked closely with the State Historic Preservation Office staff throughout the project. Alterations to the pool included making it zero depth at the west end (closest to the bathhouse) and the installation of large slides at the northeast corner of the pool. A new concession area with tables was added at the north end of the bathhouse. A fence separates the pool area from the softball diamond on the hill to the north.

Across the main road from the pool on the southwest is a modern shelter house with two stone WPA structures: an 'oven' (fireplace), and a stone bench with fountain (no longer functioning). The fireplace is one of six located in the park, four of which are similar in size to this one, measuring between five and six feet in height by three to four feet wide and four to five feet deep. Like many of the stone structures in the park, the top of the fireplace has been capped with concrete. This appears to have been done to slow deterioration of the stone and mortar. The stonework on this fireplace is typical of that found on other pieces in Edmundson Park. It was constructed of locally quarried stone and there is a mix of flat stones of varying sizes laid in well defined courses. The new recreation trail runs through this picnic area, linking the historic and the modern resources.



Shelter House (N) with Stone Fireplace (17) and Recreation Trail(Q) to southwest  
(Patterson photo July 2006)

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Continuation Sheet

Edmundson Park Historic District  
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View looking west across central bridge (16) toward stone stairs (15) and shelter (8)  
(Naumann photo August 2004)

Just north of this picnic area the main roadway crosses the watercourse on an arched stone bridge. This bridge connects the two halves of the park. Within the past two years the city has reinforced the ends of this bridge with light tan brickwork. While this is visually intrusive from some views, from others it is not apparent at all. This bridge is 25 feet wide by 40 feet long with stone railings measuring 2 feet tall by 2 feet wide. Like the stone fireplaces, this bridge is of quarried stone of varying thicknesses laid in well defined courses. The ends of the bridge flare out, creating the impression of a broader structure. Note the free standing stone pier at the southeast east end. At the west end of the bridge the roadway parts, with the south branch leading southwest toward the non-contributing golf course buildings beyond the hill. The north branch runs northwest, curving around a hillside and ultimately leading out of the park through the west gateway onto Edmundson Drive.

The stone buildings and structures on the west hill form a visually cohesive unit and are the centerpiece of the entire park design. A curving set of monumental stone steps (1 ½ feet wide plus stone sides) leads from the roadway up to the stone flagpole base, originally surrounded by formal gardens, and on to a stone shelter house near the top of the hill. A second set of stone stairs begins 50 to 60 feet farther north and leads from the roadway to the stone latrine and joins the first set of stairs approximately 40 feet east of the flagpole. The gable roof shelter house measures 27 feet by 12 feet and includes a 15 foot by 27 foot concrete patio. Like the other stone resources the shelter is of quarried stone of varying

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**Edmundson Park Historic District  
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thicknesses laid in well defined courses creating a series of eight 2 foot square piers, four on each side. A low stone wall connects these piers, allowing access on each end and in the center of the long sides. A large, well used, fireplace is located on the west interior wall of the shelter house with the stone chimney projecting through the roof. The shelter's log rafters are from trees cut on the site during park development.



Shelter house (8) on west hill to northeast  
(Naumann Photo October 2006)

Several fireplaces are located in the area of this shelter house, including one large stone oven. Unlike the smaller ones, this oven features broad wings to each side, perhaps for seating. The fire opening is surrounded by large, shaped, pieces of stone, and other large stones are scattered throughout the design. Overall this fireplace is five and one half feet tall, approximately 20 feet from side to side, and six and one half feet deep.

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Typical small stone fireplace (12) on west hill to southeast  
Note golf cart storage buildings in background  
(Naumann photo October 2006)

Large stone fireplace (10) on west hill to west  
(Patterson photo July 2006)



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Edmundson Park Historic District  
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The latrine (restrooms) located on the northern stone path/stairs features an open central portion, much like dogtrot houses. It is 25 feet by 19 feet with a corrugated metal gable roof and ventilators. The exterior walls of this building differ from most of the other stone resources as many large, irregularly shaped pieces of stone are found on the side walls. It almost appears that this building was constructed of stones left over from all of the others.



Latrine (14) with stone stairs, flagpole (13) area at top left to southwest  
(Patterson photo July 2006)

The other major structure on the west hill is the stage that was built as part of the amphitheater design. The raised stone stage is shaped like a guitar pick, measuring 60 feet by 40 feet with a set of nine-foot wide steps leading up to it. Since it is built on the hillside, the height varies from one to four feet above ground level. It is sheltered by trees on two sides and serves as a "patio area" for a grouping of picnic tables. Although Wyrick's original drawing showed amphitheater seating on the south and west sides of the stage it does not appear that seating was ever built.

The center of the park north of the roadway contains two major WPA structures. The first is the west bridge that crosses the watercourse in the northwest quadrant of the park. Like the central bridge, this is a stone arched bridge, approximately 25 feet wide by 40 feet long with two foot stone walls, flaring out at each end. These walls are not flat on top, but are capped by irregular pointed stones. Unlike the central bridge, no alterations have been made to this. The roadway divides both right and left, leading into parking lots. The east parking lot serves the central picnic area. This area contains the largest of the stone "ovens," a stone water fountain, two modern shelter houses, and a modern foot bridge.

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**Edmundson Park Historic District  
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West bridge (7) to northeast  
(Patterson photo July 2006)

The giant oven is located on the south slope of the hill, facing to the southwest. It is six feet tall above the fire opening, with five foot tall end posts. Semicircular in shape, it extends 31 feet from side to side, 19 feet from front to back. The stonework is a combination of large irregularly shaped stones and small, thinner pieces which are laid in distinct courses. This oven may be the most impressive of all of the WPA structures in the park.



Massive stone "oven" fireplace ( 22) to northeast  
(Naumann photo August 2004)

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**Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA**

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The main roadway turns west near the west bridge and exits the park through the large stone gate onto Edmundson Drive. On the north side of the roadway is the area of the park that has undergone the most modernization. A large wooden playground with gazebo, brick restroom building, and two new shelter houses occupy this area. The Rotary shelter (14 feet by 51 feet) is one of the largest of the modern shelters, but is typical of the design used. It consists of wood poles (4 inches by 4 inches) supporting a gable roof of corrugated metal. The Kiwanis shelter in the northwest part of the park near 11<sup>th</sup> Street is similar in size (26 feet by 54 feet) but the four other new shelters are much smaller, averaging approximately 15 feet by 25 feet.



Rotary shelter house (F) to north  
(Patterson photo July 2006)

The north central part of the park is accessed by a drive off of 11<sup>th</sup> into a parking lot that serves the original ball field and the largest stone shelter house. This shelter measures 22 feet by 32 feet and has a hip roof of corrugated metal. This roof is supported by square stone piers, three on the ends and four on the long sides. A low stone wall connects these piers, with door-like openings centered on the long walls. Like the south shelter, this has a well used stone fireplace on the interior, and the log roof construction is clearly visible. A modern concrete block building next to the parking lot contains two restrooms.



North shelter house (23) to northeast  
(Naumann photo August 2004)



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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA

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All seven aspects of integrity of Edmundson Park have been maintained at a high level. The location at the southeast corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue West and Edmundson Drive remains unchanged. The rolling hills of the farm land were gently modified to emphasize the valley with the stream running through center of the park from northwest to southeast. It is unusual for a city park to retain this high degree of integrity of the original setting. The original defining characteristics of Wyrick's design, rolling hills, gently curving roadway, water features, and the rustic stone and log architecture remain intact. Many of the plantings suggested by Wyrick still line the roads and the waterway. The distinctive features that identify this as a Depression Era project, specifically the stone "ovens," shelter houses, and bridges that were associated with the "Rustic Architecture" touted by the National Park Service are virtually unaltered except for some ill-conceived concrete caps. The use of locally quarried limestone and logs hewn from trees removed from the site remains a major feature of the park. Changes to the park have been made to encourage continued use by the Oskaloosa community. These changes include the new shelter houses, playground area, restrooms, and a disc golf course that incorporates the entire park. Rather than detracting from the original design, these changes encourage continuing use of the park. Edmundson Park today is a vibrant part of Oskaloosa's recreation system, while retaining the rustic feeling that was created by Depression Era craftsmen.



Roadway (31) in the eastern part of Edmundson Park to north  
(Patterson photo July 2006)

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Continuation Sheet**

**Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA**

Section number **7**

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**LIST OF EDMUNDSON PARK RESOURCES**

**CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

Contributing resources constructed by the WPA are indicated by numbers next to circles on the map on page 16

	<b>Resource</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>North Gate</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>NW Pedestrian Gate</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>West Gate</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Fireplace</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Stage</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Stone Culvert</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Bridge</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>West Stone Shelter House D</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Fireplace</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Fireplace</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Fireplace</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Fireplace</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Flag Pole Area with Gardens</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Latrine (rest rooms)</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Monumental Stone Stairs</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Stone Bridge</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Fireplace</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Stone stairs</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Bath House</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Swimming Pool</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Stone Stairs</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Massive Stone Fireplace</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>North Stone Shelter House A</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Stone Fountain</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Stone Bench</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Softball Field</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>East Gate</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Parking Lot East of Pool</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>Parking Lot South of Pool</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>Parking Lot South of Softball Field</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>Roadway</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>Edmundson Park Design</b>

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Continuation Sheet**

**Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA**

Section number **7**

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**NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

**Non-Contributing Resources are indicated by letters next to squares on the map on page 16**

<b>A</b>	<b>Restrooms</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Small Rotary Shelter House</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Shelter House B</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Shelter House E</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Privy</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Large Rotary Shelter</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Playground</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Kiwanis Shelter</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Office/Garage</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Maintenance Bldg</b>
<b>K</b>	<b>Golf Cart Storage</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Golf Cart Storage</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Golf Cart Storage</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Shelter C</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Baseball Diamond</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Foot Bridge</b>
<b>Q</b>	<b>Recreation Trail</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Playground Parking Lot</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Northwest Parking Lot</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>North Parking Lot</b>

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA

Section number 7 Page 16



Aerial Map with Historic District Boundaries

Contributing resources are denoted by numbers next to circles  
Non-contributing resources are denoted by letters next to squares  
(Map by Bryan Archer, Oskaloosa Public Works Department)

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Edmundson Park Historic District  
Mahaska County, IA

Section number 8 Page 17

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**ARCHITECT/BUILDER (Cont):**

Higgins, Lafayette (Lafe), Jr.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

Edmundson Park is locally significant under Criterion A as a complete, relatively unaltered example of a Depression Era public works project that was part of a much larger program of community planning. As the New Deal programs were being developed, Oskaloosa city engineer Don Russell recognized the role that these programs could play in making some much needed community improvements become a reality. He realized that this was an opportunity to add value to the \$20,000 bequest that the city had received from James Depew Edmundson to establish an Edmundson Memorial Park. The park is also locally significant under Criterion C as a fine example of landscape design of the period by a noted landscape architect/engineer (Ray F. Wyrick) and, as an example of the "rustic architecture" that was promoted by the National Park Service between 1916 and 1942 for use in not only national parks but state, county and local parks as well. The period of significance for the park is 1936 to 1938.

**Historic Background:**

Edmundson Park was made possible by James Depew Edmundson and was named in memory of his family. Edmundson was responsible for at least two other important twentieth century enterprises in the state of Iowa: He established the Jennie Edmundson Hospital in Council Bluffs in memory of his first wife; and, he provided \$600,000 to establish the Des Moines Memorial Art Museum, aka Des Moines Art Center. (An article in the *Oskaloosa Daily Herald* on Tuesday, April 6, 1965, p 10 provides the following information about his life and his impact on the community.)

Edmundson was the son of the first Mahaska County sheriff, William Edmundson. Although he was born near Burlington, Iowa, the family arrived in Oskaloosa in 1845 when James was 7 years old. In addition to serving as sheriff, William Edmundson also served as a representative from Mahaska County in the Iowa General Assembly held in Iowa City in 1848. In 1850 the senior Edmundson moved to California due to the gold rush, never to return to Iowa.

James Edmundson began the study of law with Seevers, Williams and Seevers of Oskaloosa and was admitted to the bar in 1860. In 1866 he moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa and entered into a law partnership with D.C. Bloomer (husband of Amelia). He first married Jennie Hart, and following her death he married Laura Kirby. Mr. Edmundson amassed a fortune during his stay in western Iowa through his dealings in real estate, railroads and banking. He maintained a strong connection with the town in which he was raised. In 1909 he presented the City of Oskaloosa with a statue of Chief Mahaska in honor of his father. This statue stands on the west side of the Oskaloosa City Park.

When James Edmundson died in 1933 at age 94 his will carried provisions for memorials in Oskaloosa as well as funds for the hospital in Council Bluffs and the art museum in Des Moines. Specifically, he provided a bequest of \$20,000 for the establishment of an Edmundson memorial park in Oskaloosa.

At the time of Edmundson's bequest, the only municipal park in existence in Oskaloosa was City Park in the center of the downtown square. (Interview with Charles Russell, 17 January 2007) The

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Oskaloosa City Park and Band Stand (NRHP, 1983) features trees, plantings, and park benches, but no playground equipment. The need for park facilities with playground space was noted by Miss Edith Holtman, principal of Jefferson grade school, at a public meeting held in August 1935. (*Oskaloosa Daily Herald*, 28 August 1935, p 1, c 7)

### Criterion A:

The development of the federal government financed public work programs in the early 1930s played a major role in the development of parks at the national, state, county, and municipal levels. The National Park Service (NPS) was established in 1916, and a coordinated development began in some of the nation's parks through the teens and twenties. Under Herbert Hoover's administration the National Park Service budget quadrupled in 1931 and 1932. This allowed for the development not only of roads and bridges in the national park system, but also buildings to house staff, and provide security and services to visitors as well as directional and interpretive signage. "The largess of the Hoover Administration had its effect throughout the national park system. Every area received at least a few new buildings or a new section of road or trail." (Tweed, National Park Service Rustic Architecture: 1916-1942, p 66)

With the New Deal programs established by Franklin Roosevelt to combat the nation-wide high unemployment level, parks at all levels were expanded and developed. Initially it was the Public Works Administration (PWA) that provided funding for the development of America's national parks while also building roads, bridges, community buildings, etc. across the country. The PWA was allocated \$3.3 billion for its programs, which it spent or committed by June 1934, although it took several more years before all of the funded projects were completed. Another federal program, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) worked primarily with the state park systems but as time went on it turned more and more to working on NPS projects as well. (Joyce McKay chronicled Iowa CCC projects in her 1990 Multiple Property Document Civilian Conservation Corps Properties in Iowa State Parks: 1933-42.)

Despite the popularity and success of these programs, the unemployment rate remained high. For that reason the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created in 1935. The WPA undertook the same types of projects as the PWA but it also conducted artistic and cultural projects. For example, the book Iowa: A Guide to the Hawkeye State, was compiled and written by the Federal Writer's Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Iowa. The book was considered significant enough that it was reprinted in 1986 by the Iowa State University Press. Oskaloosa's Edmundson Park is mentioned on page 14.

In her 1991 Multiple Property Document The Conservation Movement in Iowa: 1857-1942 Rebecca Conard noted the impact of the New Deal Programs on Municipal Parks:

As was true with state parks, the development of Iowa's municipal parks benefited greatly from New Deal programs. However, whereas the Civilian Conservation Corps had a greater presence in the state parks, municipal park work was generally carried out under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration. Iowa communities vastly improved their roadways, public buildings, waterworks, and other public facilities with WPA assistance. Park improvements have proved to be the most enduring of these civil works projects. An untold number of towns and cities in Iowa used WPA funds to improve municipal parks with shelter houses, bathhouses, swimming pools, artificial ponds or lakes, bandshells, tennis courts, toilets, entrance portals, roadways, bridges, and other

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structures. Native stone provided the basic building material for many of the WPA structures, in keeping with the architectural guidelines for rustic park architecture disseminated through the National Park Service. (p E-110)

Conard mentions four municipal park projects specifically: Clinton's Eagle Point Park dating from the 1880s was extensively developed; Dubuque's Eagle Point Park was greatly improved; and, new parks were created by this program in LeMars and Oskaloosa.

Oskaloosa city engineer Don Russell began planning municipal improvements that might qualify for one of the New Deal programs as soon as they were announced. It appears that several were funded through the PWA before those funds were exhausted. Two sewage treatment plants had already been constructed in Oskaloosa by 1936, the south one being located just south of the proposed new park in what is now the Edmundson Park Golf Course. It also appears that some projects that had originally been designed for, and application had been made for, PWA funds, were eventually funded by the WPA. This was the case with Edmundson Park and Swimming Pool in Oskaloosa (Projects #2982 and 3265). Other WPA projects in Mahaska County included remodeling of the Caretaker's Home at the Sewage Plant, 1936 (#2381), a Shelter House in the New Sharon City Park, 1937 (#257), the High School Gymnasium in Cedar, 1937 (#1319), the Mahaska County (Maintenance) Garage from 1936-9 (#4469), Landscaping and Fence at the Sewage Plant, 1939 (#2381), Quarrying Stone for a Farm to Market Road, 1930 (#3749), and an addition to the County Home in 1940 (#5078). It appears that only the New Sharon Shelter House and County Maintenance Garage are extant.

**Criterion C:**

An article on the front page of the *Oskaloosa Daily Herald* on Tuesday, July 16, 1935 told of the selection of land for the new park, and explained why this particular plot of land had the characteristics needed by the landscape architect.

**WALTON FARM FOR PARK  
City Offers \$7,400 for 54 Acre Tract  
Site Chosen By Trustees  
Edmundson Estate and  
Oskaloosa Officials**

The Mrs. Mary Walton 54 acre farm at the southeast corner of Eleventh Avenue West and South M Street has been selected as the site for the Edmundson memorial park, made possible through the \$20,000 bequest of the late James DePew Edmundson of Des Moines for a city park as a memorial to his father, William Edmundson, first sheriff of Mahaska County.

The Walton farm was chosen by E.H. Lougee of Council Bluffs, long a friend of Mr. Edmundson, and C.W. Oxborrow of Des Moines, trustees administering the Edmundson estate, and by Mayor George E. Burdock and members of the city council park committee, H.D. Riggs, Dr. W.E. Berry and George Loos, after visiting several park sites.

**Desirable Location**

The trustees are enthusiastic over the Walton location because of its close proximity to town, size, and landscaping possibilities. The several sites had previously

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been suggested by Ray F. Wyrick of Des Moines, landscape architect employed by the city to select prospective park sites, submit preliminary plans for development, and finally direct the improvement of the location chosen. The land is beautifully rolling, well shaded, and will be easily adapted to landscaping.

The contour of the property is such that will lend itself to the building of a series of small lakes in the beautification of the property. The grounds will be planted with trees, shrubs, and flowers, winding drives will be built, some buildings erected, entrances provided, etc.

....

**Funds for Improvement**

If the city's offer is accepted, and there is every reason to believe that it will be, some \$12,000 will remain for the park improvement. The city is planning a small park levy to support the park and the appointment of three park commissioners at a nominal annual salary to administer the park affairs, as provided by an old city ordinance.

In addition to the \$12,000 available for the development of the park, city officials expect to make application for federal assistance in the improvement of the land. A formal project application will be filed at the earliest possible opportunity.

At some point during the summer of 1935 the decision was made by the city to include a swimming pool in the Edmundson Park design. On August 6, 1935, p 5, the *Oskaloosa Daily Herald* headlined "City Will Apply for Pool Here" and noted that even though there was little chance that construction could be started before next spring (1936), the city was going to go ahead with a formal application for a public works loan and grant to finance construction of the pool.

Council members in first of August session of the city hall Monday evening approved a contract with Lafe Higgins Jr., of Des Moines for engineering services in connection with the preparation of the pool, bath house and filtration plant, and supervision of the construction.

The article went on to say that it had been determined that it might be necessary to submit the pool proposition to the voters for approval.

Mayor George E. Burdock expressed the opinion that the pool would be more popular with the public than the proposed coliseum in event the propositions have to be submitted to a vote.

A new reason for the pool construction was advanced by Councilman W.E. Berry during the discussion. He said that the presence of Lake Keomah here (a CCC project four miles east of Oskaloosa) makes the pool all the more necessary. The populace must be taught to swim, he said, if more drownings are to be avoided at the state park.

On August 28, 1935 the *Herald* carried the following headline on page 7,

**OSKALOOSA PARK PLANS ARE JOLTED  
Trustees May Withold (sic) Edmundson Gift Unless Price Agreeable.**



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It seems that the trustees had been receiving comments that the price for the Walton Farm was too high and that there might be better places for the park and pool. The Trustees threatened to hold the money until the will's covenant had expired, thus allowing the money to go to other projects. Many people spoke before the city council explaining that the farm was not overpriced and that the city should proceed with the purchase.

Eventually the city council and the Edmundson trustees reached an agreement, and in December 1935 the city purchased 52.5 acres of farmland just southwest of town (the Walton Farm) and signed a contract for \$2,800 with Ray F. Wyrick, landscape engineer from Des Moines, to develop a plan for the new park.

Ray F. Wyrick was well-known in Iowa landscape circles. Born and raised in Iowa, he worked in the Kansas City area prior to 1909 when he established his office in Des Moines. In her 1988 Multiple Property Document The City Beautiful Movement in Iowa: 1892-1938, p E-10, Barbara Beving Long noted that he served on the Des Moines Boulevard Committee with architects Frank Wetherell and Ralph Sawyer for a number of years. The Des Moines Parks Department files contain plans drawn by Wyrick for several parks in the city including:

Plans for Civic Center Coliseum Park, 1912  
Plan for Development of Grounds about Public Library, undated.  
Plan for Fountains, Before Municipal Building, 1911.  
Plan for Grounds about New Municipal Building, 1911.

In addition to park designs Wyrick was also deeply involved with cemetery landscaping. He drew plans for additions to the Union Cemetery in Newton (nd), St. Joseph and Oakland Cemeteries in Iowa City (1917), the Chariton Cemetery in Chariton (from the 1920s on), the Ottumwa Cemetery in Ottumwa (nd), and Forest Cemetery in Oskaloosa (1949).

On January 15, 1936 the *Oskaloosa Daily Herald* carried a drawing by Wyrick of the park proposal, and a long article about all of the amenities that would be included in it. The newspaper article that accompanied the Wyrick drawing provides an insight into his plan.

**LANDSCAPE ENGINEER'S PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PARK HERE**

The above trial design was prepared by Ray F. Wyrick of Des Moines, for approval by the park committee of the Oskaloosa city council and will be used as a basis in the preparation of the final plans. Few changes are expected to be made in the final design. The above sketch was drawn after a preliminary drawing had to be made and following the topographical survey of the 52.5 acre tract southwest of Oskaloosa recently acquired from Mrs. Mary Walton for park purposes. The park is being made possible as the result of a \$20,000 bequest by James Depew Edmundson of Des Moines, son of William Edmundson, first sheriff of Mahaska County. The development is going forward under a \$67,000 works progress project.

Features to attract every member of the family are included in plans for the development of Oskaloosa's new Edmundson memorial park in the southwest part of the city. When the 52.5 acre tract has been improved under the plans adopted by the park committee of the city council and prepared by Ray F. Wyrick of Des Moines, landscape engineer employed by the municipality in connection with the \$67,000 WPA

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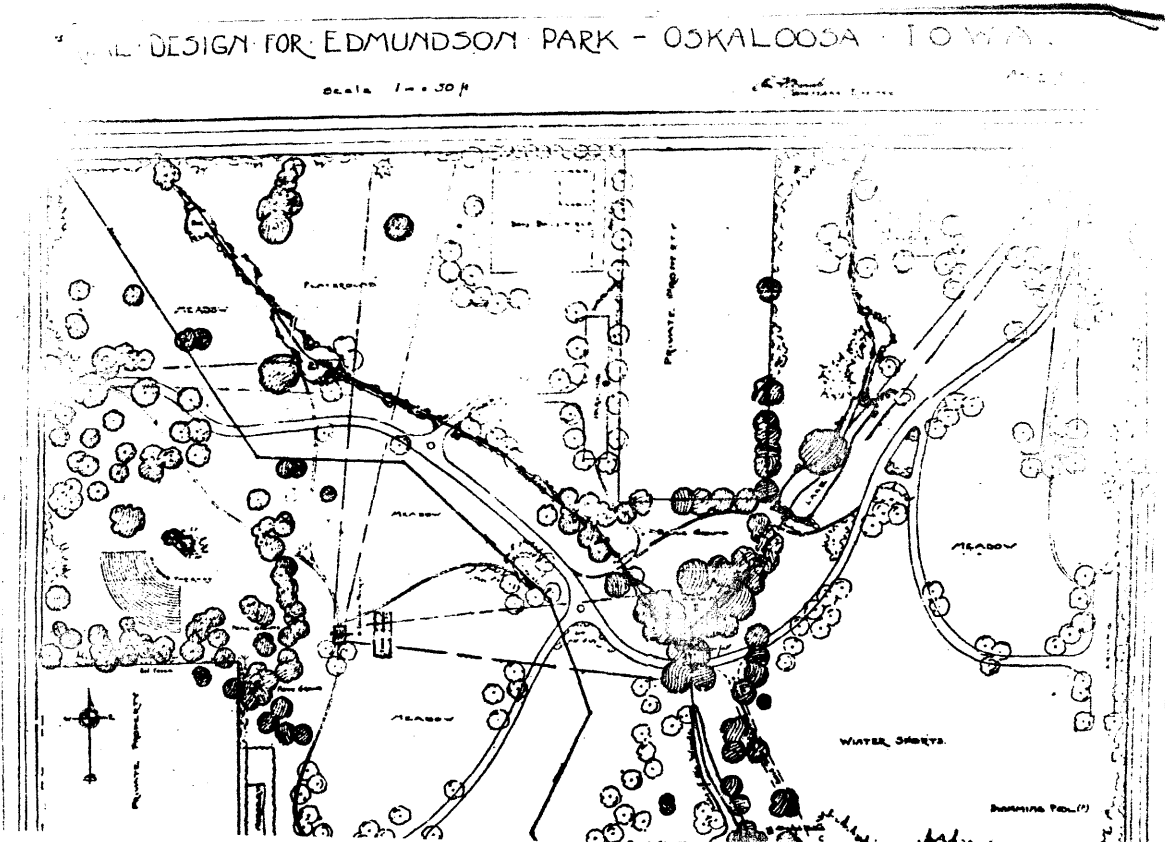
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project, there will be outdoor playground facilities that will appeal to old and young alike, summer or winter.

The present day park is more than an acreage set aside for picnic parties but is developed to better serve the greatest number of citizens of a community the greatest number of days of the year.



Wyrick's plan as presented to the city council in January 1936, including recommended plantings  
(Courtesy of the Oskaloosa Public Works Department)

### Many Requirements

There must be natural beauties, sheltering shade trees for protection from the summer sun, beautiful evergreens to catch winter's snow, shrubs and flowers, winding drives over rolling landscapes, trickling streams with placid lagoons, playgrounds for the children, etc.

But that is only part of the job. There must be ornamental ovens, some with attractive shelters for picnickers, as well as tables, pavilions for larger picnic groups,

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baseball diamonds and tennis courts with adequate field house accommodations, wading pools with fountains for the little tots, trails and foot paths away from the drives, proper rest room facilities for both sexes, etc.

The Edmundson park will have all these, and more too. In a natural amphitheater there will be an outdoor theater for plays, concerts, service, meetings, etc. Boy Scout camping provisions, bird sanctuaries, nurseries for trees and shrubs to permit a continuous replacement of those lost by the ravages of age and weather, lighted parking places for the hundreds of cars to be attracted to the park on special occasions, etc.

**Result of Much Study**

Plans proposed by Mr. Wyrick, and approved by the park committee of the city council are the result of careful study of the topography of the land and needs of the community.

The topographical survey, made first, indicated the various levels of the land, creeks, trees, fences, etc., and from this outline the first trial design was drafted. Out of this proposed development came the preparation of the final plans, to be followed by a detailed planting plan and plans and specifications for the various buildings, shelters, ovens, ornamental entrances, open air theater, waterfalls and cascades, Edmundson memorial, etc.

**Two Entrances Provided**

Two entrances are to be provided, one off the Beacon primary road No. 309 and the other off south M street. The main roadway will wind through the center of the park, with side roads extending to the large and conveniently located parking areas. The ornamental entrances will be built out of native rock or stone.

Three large lakes or lagoons are to be built as the plans develop over a period of years, one in the east valley, one where the two streams traversing the park area join, and one in a timber tract near the south side of the park. A large children's wading pool with concrete bottom will be provided in the west valley. Rock waterfalls and cascades will be built at the lower end of each lagoon, while final park plans call for concreting of the entire waterway through the park.

Several picnic areas have been designated, one in a secluded spot near the center lake, two more on the west side of the park, and a fourth near the Lake of the Woods at the south side. All will be attractively landscaped, equipped with ovens, etc.

**Open Air Theater**

A natural amphitheater in the large valley in the southwest corner of the park has been set aside for the open air theater. The curved sloping hillside will provide seating accommodations for several thousand persons, while the level ground at the foot of the hill will afford a splendid location for a stage.

A large open pavilion of natural rock and logs and with a large ornamental fireplace will top the highest point on the grounds, a promontory in the southwest part of the park. From this spot a wide panorama of the countryside, as well as of the park, is visible. Just east of the pavilion the memorial to James Depew Edmundson probably

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will be placed, and on the terrace east of the memorial will be a beautiful flower garden.

**Area for Children**

The children's area will be especially attractive, adjoining the playground equipment there will be a large cemented wading pool with a drinking fountain either at the side or in the center.

Since the west outfall sanitary sewer line passed through the center of the park the provision of modern public toilets will not be a serious problem and toilet accommodations are planned for the center of the tract, near the main drive and on several of the footpaths.

**Possible Pool Site**

Looking to the future one of the most attractive sections of the park is reserved as a possible site for a public swimming pool. One section is set aside for the use of the Boy Scouts, while ample provision has been made for bird sanctuaries, nurseries, etc., along the outer boundaries of the grounds. A field house is proposed for the east side to serve the various athletic features, including tennis, courts, baseball diamonds, pool, etc.

The southeast corner is ideally adapted for winter sports and probably will be developed along that line with accommodations for coasting, skiing, skating, etc.

**Various Types Shelters**

Various types of shelters, preferably the Adirondack type, will be conveniently placed about the grounds. Ovens in front of the open south sides of these shelters will not only be serviceable in the preparation of picnic meals but will provide warmth for those in the shelters.

After the removal of some 20 diseased and dead trees from the park grounds more than 200 splendid specimens remain and have been incorporated in the general landscape scheme. Hundreds of additional trees are to be planted annually for some time until the planting plan is completed. Over 150 shade trees and 100 evergreens will be set out this year. A nursery will provide future stock for replacing any removed.

**Plan Rustic Buildings**

The trunks of the trees being removed now are being worked into shape for use in many of the rustic buildings to be erected. The rest of the wood is being cut into firewood for use at the various ovens. Natural rocks and stone from Mahaska County will be employed in much of the construction of entrances, buildings, ovens, etc.

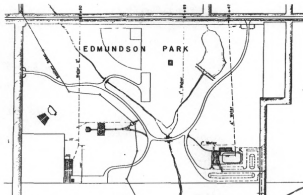
Sometime during 1936-37 city engineer Don Russell drew a simplified version of Wyricks' plans, this time showing only the roadway and lake, pool and bathhouse, parking lots, and the shelter, flagpole, stone steps and amphitheater on the west hill. Note that the parcel of land near the center of the north side of the park labeled "private property" on Wyrick's drawing is now included. During the year the city had purchased that rectangular parcel, bringing the total acreage to the present 56.5 acres.

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TOP: Don Russell's 1936-37 plan of park with pool and bathhouse  
(Courtesy of Oskaloosa Parks Department)

BOTTOM: Late 1930s aerial photo  
Note plantings as recommended by Wyrick  
(Photo obtained online from Iowa State Geographic Map Server, [cairo.gis.iastate.edu/](http://cairo.gis.iastate.edu/))



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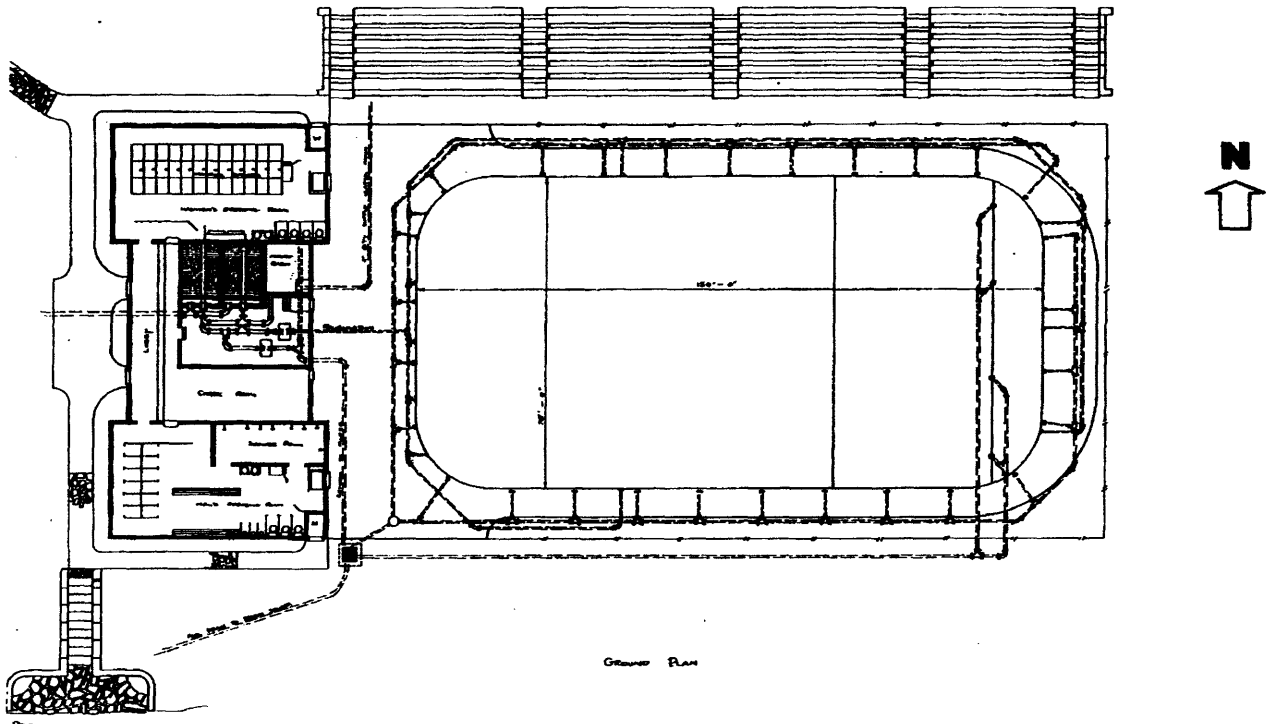
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Once construction started, close to 125 WPA workers were employed in the construction of the park from 1936 to 1938. Under the supervision of engineer Charles Capper, the WPA project director, roads were built and surfaced, athletic fields leveled, and stone bridges, shelters and "ovens" (fireplaces) were built according to Wyrick's plans. Trees and shrubs were planted, with a schedule for more to be added in the following years. Stone used to construct the entrance gates, bridges, shelters, and fireplaces, came from three Mahaska County quarries in Richland, White Oak and Jefferson townships. (Mrs. Stillman Clark, *Oskaloosa Daily Herald*, June 26, 1965) Like most Depression Era projects, the construction of Edmundson Park is well documented photographically. The State Historical Society of Iowa Special Collections in Iowa City, Iowa houses approximately two dozen WPA photographs of Edmundson Park.

As noted earlier, the swimming pool and bathhouse were funded separately from the rest of the park. The pool complex was designed by Des Moines sanitary engineer Lafayette (Lafe) Higgins, and construction was supervised by city engineer Don B. Russell. Original construction costs for the pool and bathhouse were \$50,000.



1937 Drawing of Municipal Pool , Bathhouse, and Stone Steps  
(Courtesy of Oskaloosa Public Works Department)

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Swimming Pool (20) dedication July 4, 1937 to southwest  
(Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Special Collections, Iowa City, IA)

State WPA officials participated in the dedication ceremonies, and "the following day Larry Griswold and Patty Brown and a troupe of water champions and gymnasts presented two delightful entertainments." (*Oskaloosa Daily Herald*, 25 January 1938, np) Construction was completed at a final cost of \$55,000.

The stone and log structures and buildings that were constructed in Edmundson Park were continuing the tradition of "rustic architecture" that had been developed by the National Park Service (NPS) between 1916 and 1942. Originally it was primarily found in National Parks, but as smaller local parks were designed and built, the rustic architecture followed. Tweed and his colleagues wrote in their introduction:

This little noticed movement in American architecture was a natural outgrowth of a new romanticism about nature, about our country's western frontiers....The conservation ethic slowly took hold in this atmosphere of romanticism. Part of this ethic fostered the development of a unique architectural style. Perhaps for the first time in the history of American architecture, a building became an accessory to nature....Early pioneer and regional building techniques were revived because it was thought that a structure employing native materials blended best with the environment. No (other) single government agency has to date been responsible for such a revolutionary break in architectural form.

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The intent of "rustic architecture" was to create non-intrusive forms that looked as though they were part of the landscape whether it be in the forests of Yosemite, the deserts of Arizona, or the rolling hills of Iowa. The building materials used were those found locally, stone from nearby quarries, and logs from trees cut on the site, just as the Oskaloosa newspaper documented for this project.



WPA workers beginning construction of an unidentified stone structure  
Edmundson Park, Oskaloosa, IA  
(Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City)

The next four pages of historic photographs illustrate the architecture of Edmundson Park, and are all located in the Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.



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TOP: West shelter house (8) under construction, June 1937  
BOTTOM: North shelter (23), May 1940



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TOP: Great Fireplace (22), May 1938  
BOTTOM: Stone and timber footbridge (non-extant), May 1938



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TOP: Flagpole (13) looking east, May 1938  
BOTTOM: Stone stairs(15) with flagpole(13) in center and west shelter (8)  
in background, May 1938



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TOP: Central bridge (16), undated postcard  
BOTTOM: Central bridge with car, undated  
(Both photographs courtesy of Charles Russell)



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Not only was the swimming pool complex dedicated on July 4, 1937, there was also a formal dedication with "fitting ceremonies" for the park as a whole. In 1965 Mrs. Stillman Clark, president of the Mahaska County Historical Society, wrote an article for the *Oskaloosa Tribune Press* about this event.

High on the hilltop in the center of the \$100,000 Edmundson Memorial Park is a flag pole set on an ornamental base of native stone, erected in the memory of the first sheriff of Mahaska County, William Edmundson, and to his son, the late James DePew Edmundson whose \$20,000 bequest to the city of Oskaloosa made the park possible in 1937. The flag pole, erected in the formal garden at the east side of the rustic shelter on the hill, may be seen from all parts of the park. The United States flag was raised for the first time on this pole on July 2, 1937 and the formal dedication ceremonies took place two days later on July 4<sup>th</sup>. At 1:30 p.m. on the Dedication Day the Oskaloosa Municipal Band gave a concert in the newly constructed out-door amphitheater. The new flag was presented to the park officials by the Harry L. Anderson Post No. 34 of the American Legion. Mr. Harley Riggs, Park Commission chairman, was presiding officer for the ceremonies and introduced the speaker of the day, Mr. Roy Murray of Des Moines, State Work Progress Administration director. (June 26, 1965)

Despite the Dedication Ceremony, there was still work to be done to complete the park construction. On January 25, 1938 the *Oskaloosa Daily Herald* published their annual Progress Edition. There were two articles about Edmundson Park and a three column photo of the pool and bathhouse. The main park article on page 15 provided a detailed account of the park as illustrated by the following excerpts:

#### **EDMUNDSON PROGRESS IS NOTEWORTHY \$25,000 Spent on Noteworthy Developments During the Past Twelve Months**

Although the development of the new Edmundson Memorial park is in its third year, noteworthy progress was made in 1937 with \$25,000 of the total \$92,584.11 expended to date, spent during the past 12 months in the improvement of Oskaloosa's 56.5 acre public playground at the southwest part of town.

#### **Apart from \$55,000 Pool**

The park project was separate and apart from the \$55,000 municipal swimming pool development at the southeast corner of the park. Naturally, some of the park work was occasioned by and dove-tailed into the pool construction and development.

#### **Formal Gardens**

But not all the park improvement has centered about the pool. Last year saw completion of the formal gardens at the Edmundson memorial flag pole on the knoll just west of the picnic grounds. Flagstone walks and terraces leading to gardens from the picnic areas were built. The stone building housing public toilets for both men and women was finished.

#### **Foot Entrance**

The new foot entrance at the northeast (sic) corner of the park for the accommodation of those who ride the busses or walk was finished during the year and proved an attractive addition to the park development. ....

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**Softball Diamond**

Sharing an important place in the year's activities was the moving of the community softball diamond from the Webster grade school field to the new park playgrounds. The field was fenced, lighted and temporary bleachers provided and was the scene of the 1937 softball league games. The diamond is being enlarged this winter and stone bleachers, similar to those at the swimming pool, are to be placed for the accommodation of spectators.

**Another W.P.A. Project**

Although the first Works Progress Administration project, begun December 6, 1935, was completed September 9, 1937, another WPA project has been started. Under the first project \$85,321.08 was expended in park development including \$67,908.85 in WPA funds and \$17,412.23 from the \$20,000 bequest by the late James DePew Edmundson. The new WPA park project is for \$36,250 and provides much additional work. To date \$7,227.03 of this amount has been expended.

Construction of Edmundson Park was successfully completed in 1938. It provided the people of Oskaloosa and the surrounding area with a large, well-designed public space filled with a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages, just what Wyrick had planned.



Edmundson Recognition Plaque (13)  
(Patterson Photo July 2006)

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**Conclusion:**

The integrity of the Depression Era design of Edmundson Park has been maintained at a high level. The original stone and timber buildings and structures have been treated with respect, with the exception of the ill-conceived concrete caps that were applied to impede deterioration. The size, scale, mass, and building materials of the WPA buildings and structures have such a strong visual impact that the "new" shelters, etc. are almost invisible when viewing the park as a whole. Your eye is drawn from one substantial stone resource to another with the placement of the stone and timber resources throughout the rolling landscape creating a strong visual rhythm. There is no doubt that Ray F. Wyrick, Lafe Higgins, and Don Russell would all instantly recognize their joint project, and perhaps be a bit in awe that it has survived in its relatively unaltered condition.

Edmundson Park speaks to the significant role played by Roosevelt's New Deal programs in shaping communities across the country. And, it illustrates the whole idea of rustic architecture from the curving roadways following the contour of the land, to the importance of proper plantings, and the use of native stone and timber in the creation of buildings and structures that blend into the landscape. Edmundson Park meets the criteria established for local significance under both Criteria A and C.

**Recommendations:**

Although Rebecca Conard discussed municipal parks to some degree in her Multiple Property Document (noting on page G-21 that Edmundson Park is "deemed worthy of further investigation to determine National Register eligibility"), and several individual municipal parks have been listed on the National Register based on local significance, there is a need for additional research on city parks state-wide to develop a context and establish criteria for evaluation of these resources at the state level of significance.

At this point in time there appears to no single reference for landscape architects in Iowa similar to Wesley I. Shank's Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary. During the preparation of this nomination there was the opportunity to gather information concerning the work of Ray F. Wyrick. Additional research is recommended to determine just how influential he was in the physical development of Iowa's "urban" landscapes (parks, cemeteries, private gardens) during the twentieth century.

The preparation of this National Register of Historic Places nomination has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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**Newspapers**

*Des Moines Register.*

Apr 25, 1933 "Leaves Funds to Found Park in Oskaloosa"  
Sep 29, 1985 "Edmundson's Heritage"

*Oskaloosa Daily Herald.*

Jul 16, 1935 "Walton Farm for Park"  
Aug 28, 1935 "Oskaloosa Park Plans are Jolted"  
Jan 15, 1936 "Landscape Engineer's Plans for Development of Edmundson Park Here"  
Jan 25 1938 "Edmundson Progress is Noteworthy"



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Jun 16, 1939 "Program for Pool Opening Here Sunday"  
Jun 19, 1939 "Big Crowd Witnesses Pool Show"  
Jul 21, 1976 "Wading Pool Dedicated at Park"

*Oskaloosa Tribune-Press.*

Jul 5, 1937 "Edmundson Park Dedicated Sunday"  
Jun 26, 1965 "Edmundson Park Dedication Ceremonies Took Place on Fourth of July in 1937."  
Article by Mrs. Stillman Clark.

**Historic Photographs**

Oskaloosa Parks & Engineers Office. Private Collection

Russell, Charles. Private collection.

Works Progress Administration Photograph Collection: State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Special Collections, Iowa City, IA.

**Plans & Drawings**

Higgins, Lafe (Sanitary Engineer) and Russell, Don B. (City Engineer). Plans for Pool and Bathhouse, 1937

ORIS, LPC. Plan for Bathhouse remodeling, Aug 2004.

RDG. Drawings for Pool, Bathhouse, and parking lot, with landscaping, Aug 2004.

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**GEOGRAPHIC DATA:**

**UTM References Cont:**

- 5) 15 528594 4570199
- 6) 15 528486 4570199

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Beginning at the NW Corner of Lot B of the Northwest Quarter (NW 1/4) of the Southwest Quarter (SW 1/4), thence East to the NE Corner of the West 1/2 of the Northeast Quarter (NE 1/4) of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4), thence South to the SE Corner of the West 1/2 of the Northeast Quarter (NE1/4) of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4), thence West to the SE Corner of Lot A of the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4), thence North to the NE Corner of Lot A of the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4), thence west to the NW Corner of Lot A of the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4), thence North to the point of beginning, all in Section twenty-four (24), Township seventy-five (75) North, Range sixteen (16) West of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M

**Boundary Justification:**

This is the area shown in the 1936-37 Don Russell drawing of Edmundson Park and is the area historically associated with its development.

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The photographs submitted with this nomination were all taken by Lloyd Patterson in July 2006. They accurately represent the condition of the historic district. Negatives are on file in the Office of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa, 600 East Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0290.

1. North Entrance Gate to south
2. General view to south from north edge of park, note recreation trail, pond, and roadway
3. Swimming Pool Complex with Bathhouse to southwest
4. Swimming Pool Complex with new slide to southwest
5. View to north from immediately west of the pool complex
6. Shelter House C with stone fireplace and recreation trail in foreground looking west
7. Central bridge looking west from east hill
8. Stone latrine with stone stairs looking southwest
9. View looking east from flag pole, note stone stairs, central bridge at right
10. Flag pole base looking northeast
11. WPA plaque on flag pole base looking west
12. Bronze plaque on flag pole base recognizing James DePew Edmundson as donor, looking east
13. West Shelter "D" on west hill looking northeast
14. Interior of West Shelter, stone fireplace looking west
15. Interior of West Shelter, log framing looking north
16. Stone fireplace on west hill looking southwest
17. Stone stage for amphitheater on west hill looking southwest
18. West bridge looking north
19. Small Rotary Shelter and Shelter House "B" looking southwest, note stone fireplace
20. Stone water fountain looking west
21. Great "oven" or fireplace in central part of park looking north
22. North Shelter "A" looking northeast

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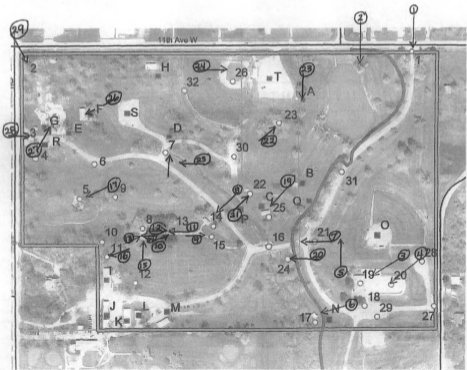
23. North restrooms looking south
24. North ball field looking east
25. Curving roadway leading from center of park to the west
26. Large Rotary Shelter looking southwest
27. Children's playground on west side of park looking northeast
28. West entrance gates looking east
29. Pedestrian gateway at northwest corner of park looking southeast

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Map Showing Photo Angles