

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUN 6 1978  
DATE ENTERED *Boundary provision approved 11/17/78*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Vardry Park; Reedy River Park, Furman University Botanical Garden and Arboretum

AND/OR COMMON

Reedy River Falls Historic Park and Greenway (preferred)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Both banks of the Reedy River  
from the falls downstream to Church Street

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Greenville

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

# 4

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

South Carolina

045

Greenville

045

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_\_ DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

\_\_\_ AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_ MUSEUM

\_\_\_ BUILDING(S)

\_\_\_ PRIVATE

\_\_\_ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL

PARK

\_\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_\_ BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_ EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_ RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_ OBJECT

\_\_\_ IN PROCESS

\_\_\_ YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_ GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

\_\_\_ YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_ MILITARY

\_\_\_ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of Greenville

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street, Post Office Box 2207

CITY, TOWN

Greenville

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

South Carolina

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Greenville County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

East North Street

CITY, TOWN

Greenville

STATE

South Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE

1973 (update)

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

S.C. Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Reedy River Park is a 14 acre property located at the heart of present day Greenville. The site includes the 50 foot Reedy River Falls and a secondary set of rapids in a rocky gorge downstream from these. The riverbank portion of the park includes the old Furman University botanical gardens and arboretum as well as the ruins of an early mill.

The park contains 6 acres deeded to the City of Greenville by Furman University and some 8 acres of additional land purchased by the City. Most of the property lies below the Reedy River Falls and provides an extremely desirable open space in this metropolitan area.

The Reedy River Falls lie just southeast of the South Main Street bridge and form the northernmost attraction of the park. At this point, the Reedy River plunges over a 50 foot drop into a rocky gorge which is defined on one side by the steep, rocky and heavily wooded Camperdown Bluff. Within this area a secondary set of falls can be found. These rapids were of key importance in the development of Greenville. Some brick ruins, presumed to be the remains of Vardry Mill built circa 1830, are still visible on the riverbank at this point. The wide granite outcroppings below the main falls are used for picnic facilities, walkways and footpaths. The low lying land immediately west of this point was developed ca. 1930 as a botanical garden and arboretum by Furman University.

The City of Greenville and the Carolina Foothills Garden Club have undertaken the development and maintenance of the area. Overhead lighting and underground water connections have been installed. Trails, walkways, and picnic areas have been constructed along the riverbanks. A 2.2 mile bike path has been constructed, connecting Reedy River Park with Cleveland Park, another city park. (These additions have not destroyed the historical integrity of the site.) In addition, a 19th Century structure known as the Falls Cottage has been renovated. It is being used cooperatively by the Greenville Metropolitan Arts Council, the Carolina Foothills Garden Club, and the Greenville Artists Guild.

Because the original nomination did not clearly delineate the nominated property and because the property has undergone changes, the nomination has been revised to clearly define the boundaries and to reflect the enlarged acreage.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Reedy River Falls are not only the geographical but also the historical center of Greenville. The speed and power of the falls and rapids below them were indirectly responsible for the founding of Greenville at this site in the early 1800's. Since that time, the mills that were the economic life of the city sat near the falls and used their power to grind flour and cornmeal or manufacture textiles. In the 1930's, the area surrounding the falls acquired additional significance as the site of a botanical garden and arboretum. Today, the falls are being preserved and the surrounding area developed as the Reedy River Falls Historic Park and Greenway.

INDUSTRY: The land immediately surrounding the Reedy River Falls was granted to Richard Pearis just prior to the American Revolution. The first white settler known in the area, Pearis established a grist mill and Indian trading post next to the falls. Reaction by his neighbors to his Tory-Loyalist sympathies forced him to leave the area hurriedly, his property later being confiscated by the State of South Carolina.

After changing hands several times, the property was deeded to Lemuel J. Alston in 1788. Alston remained in control of the land until 1815 when the tract which had increased to 11,018 acres was sold to Vardry McBee. The Town of Pleasantburg having been founded in 1812, McBee began development of the area with the construction of two mills, the remains of which can still be discerned. The surrounding Town of Pleasantburg continued to prosper with income derived from its thriving industry and in its 1831 charter, the town changed its name to Greenville. The continuing growth of the town enticed further industry. The construction of the Camperdown Mills about 1870 was responsible for the decline of the area surrounding the falls and the eventual erosion of the banks below the mill outlet. (These mills are no longer extant.)

CONSERVATION: The rocky gorge and bluff site below old Camperdown Mills have profuse and distinctive natural foliage, helping to produce an area described in 1907 as "the most distinctive feature of the topography and landscape of the City of Greenville."<sup>1</sup> Rehabilitaiton of the area began with the opening of the Furman University botanical garden and arboretum in 1929-30. Since 1967, the Carolina Foothills Garden Club and the City of Greenville have been working to develop the park. The gorge and falls site now serve as a focal point of the greenway and bike path which connect Reedy River Park and Cleveland Park, another municipal recreational facility. Preservation of this area is therefore not only of historical importance, but also provides a valuable recreational asset for downtown Greenville.

<sup>1</sup>Kelsey and Guild, "Beautifying and Improving Greenville, S.C.--Report to the Municipal League." Boston: January 1907

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Beautifying and Improving Greenville, S.C.--Report to the Municipal League." Kelsey & Guild: Boston, January 1907.

Crittenden, S.S. The Greenville Century Book. Greenville: Press of Greenville News, 1903.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 14

UTM REFERENCES

D	A	1,7	37,116,2,0	3,85,615,6,0	A	B	1,7	37,216,0	3,85,656,0
		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
B	S	1,7	37,216,0	3,85,62,0,0	C	D	1,7	37,16,2,0	3,85,62,0,0
		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All that tract or parcel of land lying between South Main and Church Streets and Camperdown Way and belonging to the City of Greenville; specifically, beginning at a point in the center of the Reedy River at its crossing with Camperdown Way; thence southeast along the river to Church Street; thence along Church Street to the cul-de-sac; thence east along the cul-de-sac; thence following the property line of parcel # 2.3, Greenville Co. Tax Map 69, to parcel # 5.1, Tax Map 89; thence north to South Main Street; thence running east along South Main Street to Parcel # 2, Tax Map 89; thence southeast

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES (con't.)

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Original nomination by Charles Thomas, Carolina Foothills Garden Club, Greenville, S.C.

Georgianna Graham, Regional Historic Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION

S.C. Department of Archives and History

DATE

February 17, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 11,669, Capitol Station

TELEPHONE

803/758-5816

CITY OR TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

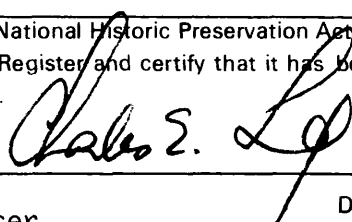
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Charles E. Lee  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE May 22, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

JANIS H. GILMORE

4/16/78

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE one

DeBow. "Portraiture of Vardry McBee." Reprinted from DeBow's Review, September 1852.

Ebaugh, Laura Smith. Bridging the Gap. Greenville: Greenville County Events - S.C. Tricentennial, 1970.

Historical and Descriptive Review of the State of South Carolina. Volume III. Charleston: Empire Publishing Company, 1884.

McKoy, Henry Bacon. The Story of the Reedy River. Greenville: Key's Printing Company, 1969.

Parker, Helen. "Greenville: Gift of the Reedy River." Sandlapper, September 1972.

State Department of Agriculture, Commerce and Immigration. Handbook of South Carolina. Columbia: The State Company, 1907.

Writer's Program of the W.P.A. South Carolina: A Guide to the Palmetto State. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.

Greenville County Deed Books.

Greenville Piedmont, May 24, 1972 and May 12, 1976.

Notes of Mrs. B.T. Whitmire, Greenville.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE two

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for 120 feet; thence northeast until meeting Campderdown Way; thence southeast along Campderdown Way to its point of beginning.