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by SHPO

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: East Park Historic District

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: Roughly bounded by N. Carolina Avenue, the Winnebago River, N. Kentucky Avenue, the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks, E. State Street, N. Virginia Avenue and Fourth St. NE.

City or town: Mason City State: Iowa County: Cerro Gordo

Not For Publication:  N/A

Vicinity:  N/A

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national          statewide        X   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  X   A          B        X   C          D

<u>Steve King</u>	<u>DEPUTY SHPO</u>	<u>26 AUG 2014</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<b>STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA</b>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:)

*for Eason H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*10.15.14*  
Date of Action

#### 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

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

LANDSCAPE/ park

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

LANDSCAPE/ park

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Rustic

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE: Limestone; WOOD: clapboard;  
CONCRETE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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**Summary Paragraph**

See Continuation Sheet - Section 7

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, 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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1909 to 1965  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1924  
1937  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Pease, Frank E.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

**See Continuation Sheet – Section 8**

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**See Continuation Sheet – Section 8**

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See Continuation Sheet – Section 9

#### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Mason City Public Library, Lee P. Loomis Archives.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 57.6 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |



East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

**Or**  
**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 484557 | Northing: 4778203 |
| 2. Zone: 15 | Easting: 484987 | Northing: 4778243 |
| 3. Zone: 15 | Easting: 485372 | Northing: 4778108 |
| 4. Zone: 15 | Easting: 485137 | Northing: 4777703 |
| 5. Zone: 15 | Easting: 484867 | Northing: 4777723 |
| 6. Zone: 15 | Easting: 484887 | Northing: 4778113 |
| 7. Zone: 15 | Easting: 484532 | Northing: 4778128 |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The verbal boundary description of East Park in Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa is as follows:

Beginning at the northwestern corner of the park at the intersection of N. Carolina Avenue and the south bank of the Winnebago River, continue east along the south bank of the Winnebago River, across the bridge for N. Kentucky Avenue and stop at the intersection of the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks and the south bank of the Winnebago River. Turn southwesterly, and continue on the west side of the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks, again crossing N. Kentucky Avenue, to the intersection with E. State Street. Turn west on E. State Street and continue approximately 2/3rds block to the house lot at the corner of the park and E. State Street, turn north, continue to the northeast corner of the house lot, turn west, continue west on the north side of the house lots, until stopping at west side of N. Virginia Avenue, turn north on N. Virginia Avenue, crossing Willow Creek until intersecting with Fourth Street NE, then turn west, continuing west on the north side of Fourth Street NE until intersecting with N. Carolina Avenue until coming to the point of the beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of East Park includes 57.6 acres, the entire boundary that has been part of East Park since circa 1957, which is within the historic period. Thus this boundary represents the historic boundary of East Park.

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Barbara Kooiman, Architectural Historian and Carol Ahlgren, Architectural Historian  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 1932 Cass St.  
city or town: La Crosse state: WI zip code: 54601  
e-mail barbara\_kooiman@hotmail.com  
telephone: 608-782-0131  
date: July 2014

### Property Owner:

name/title: Attn: Tricia Sandahl, City Planner for Mason City, Iowa  
organization: City of Mason City  
street & number: 10 First St. NW  
city or town: Mason City state: IA zip code: 50401  
e-mail tsandahl@masoncity.net  
telephone: 641-421-3626

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

East Park Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

### Photo Log

Name of Property: East Park  
City or Vicinity: Mason City  
County: Cerro Gordo State: Iowa  
Photographer: Barbara Kooiman  
Date Photographed: 18 June 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

**See Continuation Sheet for photos and descriptions of each.**

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   7   Page   1  

**East Park Overview**

East Park, established in 1909 as the second municipal park in Mason City, Iowa, was the city's first large, recreational park. It is situated in the northeast part of the city, in a picturesque area defined by rolling hills, open meadows, the Winnebago River (historically known as Lime Creek) and its tributary Willow Creek, which meanders through the park. Initially in 1909 it started as a tract of approximately 40 acres. The original boundaries were bordered by the Canadian Pacific Railway on the east, State Street on the south, North Virginia Avenue to the west and the Winnebago River at the north side. Small parcels were added to the park so that by the 1940s, it totaled 48 acres. In 1951, an additional five and one-half (5 ½) acres were donated to the city at the northwest corner of the park, linking a segment that goes along the Winnebago River to North Carolina Avenue, bounded by Fourth Street Northeast on its south edge, essentially creating a "panhandle" shape. Today the park encompasses a total of 57.6 acres.

**District Properties**

There are a total of twenty-one (21) individual properties within the boundaries of the East Park Historic District. Of those, nine (9) are contributing (which includes the park site itself); and twelve (12) are non-contributing. The majority are buildings, however, there are several structures within the park's boundaries, as well. The contributing elements of this district are strong, particularly the site itself, the street system and the waterway system. Additionally, many of the buildings, which include the shelters, are contributing. Most of the non-contributing features are lesser in scale, and do not detract from the overall historic feel and appearance of the park. There is one property, the band shell, which is individually listed on the National Register, and therefore is not part of the resource count. All other properties within the boundaries of East Park do not appear to be individually eligible for listing, and could only be listed as contributing resources within the historic district boundaries.

**Contributing (9):**

- 1) East Park – site – 1909 - 1964
- 2) Shelter # 1 – building, 1937
- 3) Shelter #4 – building, 1965
- 4) Parks Department maintenance building – building, 1956
- 5) Tennis courts – structure – 1937
- 6) Stone bridge – structure – ca. 1937
- 7) Locomotive – structure, 1912; 1959
- 8) Street system – structure – 1909
- 9) Waterway system – structure – 1909, 1937

**Non-contributing (12):**

- 10) Barn – building – ca. 1975
- 11) Shelter #2 – building – 1937
- 12) Shelter #3 – building, ca. 1970
- 13) Parks Department garage – building- ca. 1990.
- 14) Restroom – building – ca. 2000

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 2

- 15) Shelter #5 – building – ca. 2000
- 16) Gazebo – building – 1991
- 17) Prairie Playground – structure – ca. 2000
- 18) Stone bench – structure – 1992
- 19) Willow Creek Vehicle Bridge – structure - ca. 1990
- 20) Willow Creek Foot Bridge – structure - ca. 1990
- 21) Duck Pond Bridge – structure - ca. 1990

**CONTRIBUTING:**

**1 – East Park (Contributing Site) 1909 - 1964 (Photos 1 through 36)**

East Park is a city park, planned landscape established by the city of Mason City in 1909 as a large, public, recreational park for its citizens. The original portion, approximately 40 acres, was first designed by Des Moines, Iowa landscape architect Frank E. Pease. Pease's plan indicates that his intentions were to improve on the natural beauty and amenities of the land, taking advantage of its position adjacent to the Winnebago River with Willow Creek flowing through it. A segment to the east which was low, probably somewhat marshy area, was turned into a small "duck pond" or "lily pond". Curvilinear streets and pathways emphasized the flat prairie and the rolling hills of the park landscape. Tennis courts (constructed 1937), in the southeastern portion of the park, were not initially built in the park, but were part of Pease's original design. Additionally, a "pavilion" was an original part of the Pease design, in the south/central part of the park. The band shell was later built north of the original, intended position. A bathhouse was intended near the confluence of Willow Creek and the Winnebago River; however, that was never built (*MCDGG* 2 Sept. 1909).

Though few early photos of East Park exist, it appears that there were few if any buildings or structures constructed in the park until the band shell was constructed in 1924. The band shell shifted a much-desired venue for summer evening concerts out of the small downtown park, to this larger park where there would be more seating and parking available. Then the next major period of development for East Park was during the Great Depression, when funds were available for conservation and construction projects through the New Deal programs. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was one of the largest programs utilized in Mason City, where funds were used for street and sewer improvements, as well as improvements in East Park, on flood control improvements on the shores of Willow Creek, the construction of three rustic shelters, improvements to the band shell, construction of a footbridge, and programs for children's activities in the park. The National Youth Administration (NYA) also may have done some projects in this park toward the end of the New Deal era, in the last few years before World War II.

After World War II, there appears to have been a third period of development in East Park, as well as the city park system in general. During this period, the citizens of Mason City saw the construction of a new park maintenance building, the addition of five and a half more acres at the northwest edge of the park, and the construction of yet another shelter. By 1957, the park boasted a total of 57.6 acres, the total it still holds today.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   7   Page   3  

The signs at the three entrances (N. Virginia Ave. near E. State St.; N. Carolina Ave. at 4<sup>th</sup> St. NE; and west of N. Kentucky Ave on E. State St.) were built/erected in 2004 and were designed to reflect the Prairie School style heritage of the city and the neighborhood. Other modern alterations which are in keeping with the original design include improvements made in the early 1990s in and around the duck pond area.

East Park as a complete landscape maintains its integrity of location because its borders encompass the entire park as it was originally laid out and with later additions, all within the historic period. Additionally, it maintains integrity of setting and feeling with its continued urban park design. The park retains integrity of materials and workmanship with many of the original materials for roads, bridges and landscaping intact. The landscape design as laid out by Pease in 1909 has remained mostly intact to the present, giving the park integrity of design. Finally, East Park has been Mason City's most prominent urban park since it was first designed in 1909, giving it integrity of association.

**2 - Shelter # 1 (Contributing Building) ca. 1937 (Photos #4 & 5 of 36 )**

Shelter House #1 is a limestone, rectangular shaped open enclosure building oriented east-west, resting on a concrete slab that measures approximately 43 x 26 feet. The gable roofed building features four 1.6 feet square limestone columns, 6 feet in height on the south façade, approximately 6 ½ feet apart. The north façade of the building is a solid limestone wall with a centrally located fireplace. The rolled asphalt roof is supported by an open truss system; the limestone chimney projects above the roofline on the north façade. The shelter is located in a wooded area, primarily oaks, with picnic tables and path system connecting to the band shell (Naumann, 2009) to the east. Construction of Shelter #1 was part of a WPA project announced in March, 1937 which included the East Park tennis courts and two "stone and log" shelters in the park. (MCGG 25 March 1937). Shelter House #1 is eligible at the local level under National Register Criterion A for its association with the public works programs of the New Deal.

Shelter #1 exhibits a high level of integrity of location, setting and feeling as it is in its original location in a wooded section of East Park, representing the "rustic" feeling that was popular in the pre- World War II era. The shelter exhibits a high level of integrity of materials, with all of the original stone, wood and concrete materials intact. The integrity of workmanship and design, as a well executed and designed rustic shelter, and it upholds its integrity of association as a shelter house within a large urban park.

**3 - Shelter #4 (Contributing Building) 1965 (Photos # 20 & 22 of 36)**

Shelter #4 is located in the northwest section of the park north of 4<sup>th</sup> Street Northeast and east of the Sledding Hill. A parking area is located east of the building, and small playground areas to the south and west. The gable roof concrete block open shelter features a wood shingle roof. The rectangular shaped building is oriented northeast/southwest and measures 75 by 27 feet. Restrooms are located on the northeast elevation at the north and south corners. The shelter consists of partial concrete block walls with large openings. A concrete block partial wall which measures 9 ½ by 5 feet is located in the center of the interior and divides the interior into two spaces. Shelter #4 is eligible at the local level under National Register Criterion A for its association with the development of East Park.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 4

Shelter #4 exhibits integrity of location, setting and feeling as it is in its original location on an open terrace section of East Park, representing the simple concrete block construction which was popular in the 1950s and '60s. The shelter exhibits a high level of integrity of materials, with concrete materials intact. The integrity of workmanship and design, as a well executed and designed functional shelter, and it upholds its integrity of association as a shelter house within a large urban park.

**4 - Parks Department Maintenance Building (Contributing Building) 1956 (Photo # 14 & 15 of 36)**

The parks department maintenance building was built in 1956 according to the City of Mason City Annual Report (*Report to the People*, March 29, 1957). The stone and concrete block parks department building is located at the west boundary of the park south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street Northeast. The concrete block, gable roof, rectangular shaped building measures 62 feet on the main or north façade, by 40 feet. The west façade features three garage door openings. The south elevation consists of a limestone building, which measures 43 by 28 feet and features two garage openings. Single windows with stone sills are located on the east and west facades, respectively. Built as one integrated building, the stone portion housed the office and rest room, whereas the concrete block part housed the garage and storage area for the maintenance crews. The original 1909 plan of the park indicates a building in this area as a "Superintendents quarters." However, there is no other evidence that there were any buildings in this location in East Park until this stone office and frame garage building was constructed. Built on a rise at the western edge of the park, the building had a view of most of the park. The rustic stone office building portion was in keeping with the other stone and wood WPA era rustic shelters in East Park. The parks department maintenance building is eligible at the local level under National Register Criterion A for its association with the post WWII development of East Park.

The Parks Department Maintenance Building exhibits integrity of location, setting and feeling as it is in its original location in a wooded section on the edge of East Park, easily assessable to the park as well as city streets. The building exhibits integrity of materials, with all of the original stone, wood and concrete materials intact. The building retains its integrity of workmanship and design, as a well executed and designed functional maintenance building with a stone office intact, reflecting the overall rustic feel of the park, and it upholds its integrity of association as a maintenance building within a large urban park.

**5 - East Park Tennis Courts (Contributing Structure) 1937 (Photo #3 of 36)**

The East Park Tennis Courts, located in the southwest corner of the park, immediately west of the locomotive, are a basic tennis court design. There are three poured concrete pads with painted court dimensions, as well as nets and a chain-link fence, approximately 10 feet high. The courts are still functional today.

According to local newspaper the tennis courts were built in East Park, as well as in West Park in 1937, with construction beginning in March of that year, with assistance from the Lions Club, using WPA funds (*MCGG*, 30 March 1937). The tennis courts were last paved in 1982, though they've retained their overall size and configuration from when they were first built. The East Park Tennis Courts are

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 5

eligible under Criterion A as an example of New Deal era WPA funds being used to construct a recreational facility in Mason City.

The tennis courts exhibit a high level of integrity of location, setting and feeling as they are in their original location on the southern edge of East Park, accessible to surrounding neighborhoods for their recreational function. The tennis courts exhibit a high level of integrity of materials, with the concrete surface materials intact. The integrity of workmanship and design, as a well executed and designed tennis court, and it upholds its integrity of association as a recreational venue within a large urban park.

**6 - Stone Foot bridge (Contributing Structure) ca. 1937 (Photo #8 & 9 of 36)**

A limestone foot bridge, accessed by the trail system that links Shelters # 1 and #3 to the band shell and picnic area, is located northwest of the band shell. Shelter #1 and the band shell are located in picnic and passive recreation area, with mature oaks. Steps descend from the band shell area, and the footbridge crosses the stream which flows out of the duck pond, and leads to the more open park areas to the north, toward Shelter #3. The footbridge is 51 feet in length with a pathway six feet wide. The sides of the bridge are two feet in height and feature a flat stone top. The stone wall sides of the bridge extend from the stream crossing up the stairs. The top of the stone rail wall is capped with a ridge of concrete across the entire length of the bridge, on both sides. The bridge was likely constructed as part of the WPA developments at East Park circa 1937.

The stone foot bridge exhibits a high level of integrity of location, setting and feeling as it is in its original location in a wooded section of East Park, representing the "rustic" feeling that was popular in the pre- World War II era. The bridge exhibits a high level of integrity of materials, with all of the original stone and concrete materials intact. The integrity of workmanship and design, as a well executed and designed rustic foot bridge, and it upholds its integrity of association as a bridge over a water feature within a large urban park.

**7 - Locomotive (Contributing Structure) 1912, moved 1959 (Photos #32 & 33 of 36)**

Engine 457 is a Minneapolis, and St. Louis Railroad (M & STL) steam locomotive built in 1912, that was moved to East Park in 1959 through the efforts of the Mason City Rotary Club, and is located at the southeast corner of the park, north of East State Street and west of North Kentucky Avenue. Approximately 100 feet to the east, the Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks transect the North Kentucky Avenue from northeast to southwest; the eastern boundary of East Park parallels the railroad tracks.

Currently, the locomotive is located beneath a tall (approximate 20 foot) open shed with metal support posts, and brick paving surrounding the historic trackage, suggestive of a 19th century train shed and platform. A small information shed is located west of the locomotive along with landscaped grounds and interpretive signage. The circa 1959 chain link fence was replaced by a six foot tall wrought iron fence. The improvements to the area were initiated in 2003 when the Friends of Engine 457 organization was formed to raise funds and ensure the Engine's preservation. A local architectural firm, Bergland-Cram, designed the new train shed/platform area; restoration efforts are ongoing to provide information and tours to ensure the locomotive's continued presence as an East Park



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 6

attraction ([www.friendofthe457.org](http://www.friendofthe457.org)).

As a relocated resource, Engine 457 is subject to National Register Criteria Exception B. When evaluating the locomotive for inclusion as a contributing resource in the present nomination, the white paper on National Register integrity requirements for locomotives prepared by Barbara Wyatt of the National Register was taken into consideration (Wyatt, 2009). Engine 457, although relocated, qualifies for inclusion on the National Register: its move in 1959 is now over 50 years ago and is in itself historic; the locomotive is located on original, abandoned track, and is less than 100 feet from the still operative Canadian Pacific railroad line which parallels the eastern boundary of the present nomination. The addition of the open shed roof structure and the wrought iron fence are sensitively done, and do not contribute to a false sense of history. Further, the improvements to the area provide needed protection of the locomotive from the elements and vandalism.

Engine 457 exhibits a high level of integrity of location, setting and feeling as it is in the southeastern edge of East Park, only about 100 feet from the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks, thus keeping it within close proximity to its original setting. The locomotive exhibits a high level of integrity of materials, with all original materials intact. The locomotive retains integrity of workmanship and design, as a well designed early 20<sup>th</sup> century railroad locomotive, and it upholds its integrity of association as an important representative of the railroad industry in Mason City in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**8 – Street System (Contributing Structure) 1909 (Photos #2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 17, 18 & 30 of 36)**

The street system inside of East Park remains substantially the way it was designed in 1909, according to the site map that was published locally in 1909 (*MCDGG* 2 Sept. 1909). The map shows two entrances into the park along State Street, which runs along the park’s south border. The westerly entrance shows a landscaped island which today is a traffic circle. It shows a circular loop in the northwestern part of the park, and a pond and island in the eastern part of the park, near where the Duck Pond is today. Though the roadway is now paved (likely gravel in the early years) and has had some minor changes, it holds much of its integrity in how it follows the contours of the land and takes advantages of the edges of the water features such as Willow Creek through the park.

The East Park street system exhibits a high level of integrity of location, setting and feeling as follows most of the original pathways that Pease first designed in 1909, giving the park its natural landscape feeling. The street system maintains integrity of workmanship and design, as a naturalistic pathway through the park, and it upholds its integrity of association as a transportation system within a large urban park.

**9 – Waterway System (Contributing Structure) 1909, 1937 (Photos #6, 7, 8, 18, 19, 24, 25 & 26)**

Much like the street system, the water system has remained substantially the same as when it was initially designed in 1909. The curve of Willow Creek, the secondary stream that runs from south to north through the center of the park, and the pond that would eventually be developed as the Duck Pond area has remained much the same. In the New Deal era, concrete edges to Willow Creek, with concrete spillways to help control and contain the water during floods was developed by the WPA to maintain the flow of water through the park. Though deteriorated and in need of repair in some

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 7

places due to recent floods, most of that development is intact in the park today.

The East Park waterway system exhibits a high level of integrity of location, setting and feeling as it is in its original location along Willow Creek in East Park, maintaining the meandering path of the creek. The waterway exhibits a high level of integrity of materials, with the original concrete materials intact. The waterway system maintains integrity of workmanship and design, as a well designed waterway containment and spillway construction, and it upholds its integrity of association as a transportation and floor control system within a large urban park.

**NONCONTRIBUTING:**

**10 – Barn – (Noncontributing Building) ca. 1975 (Photo # 13 of 36)**

This is a small, one story wood frame with vertical board and batten siding. It features a south-facing gabled end roof with shed extensions on both the east and west sides. It was likely built when the deer park enclosure was moved to this central location in the park, just north of the maintenance building, in circa 1975. It is not old enough to be a contributing building within the park.

**11 - Shelter House # 2 (Noncontributing Building) ca. 1970 (Photo #11 of 36)**

Shelter House #2 is located in the central area of East Park east of the main roadway and west of the open playground area which includes a basketball court, playgrounds and Frisbee golf area. To the north is a parking area which provides a separation between the shelter and Shelter House #3 (described in inventory). The stone and frame rectangular shaped building, with an east-west orientation rests on a concrete slab that measures 76 by 37 feet. The rolled asphalt gable roof features an open truss system; the shelter is open and supported by wooden posts. The center portion of the building features a limestone restroom core measuring approximately 21.5 feet.

The building appears to have been designed in the 1970s, replacing an earlier small hipped cube shaped building which had been repeatedly inundated and damaged by 20<sup>th</sup> century floods. Due to its post-1964 construction date, this building is noncontributing to the history of East Park.

**12 - Shelter House #3 (Non-Contributing Building) ca. 1937, altered ca. 1975 (Photo #12 of 36)**

Shelter House #3 is located on the north side of the parking area shared with Shelter House #2. The hipped roof open shelter building has an asphalt shingle roof and is located on a concrete slab that measures 57 x 32 feet. The open truss roof is supported by limestone columns, five each on the north and south elevations; the columns are 1 ½ feet square and approximately 8 feet in height, spaced 10 feet apart. This appears to be the original circa 1930s shelter built in this location, however, that wood frame shelter has been severely altered in the 1970s by having walls opened and newer stone veneer adhered to the exterior, thus compromising its integrity of materials, and necessitating its designation as “non-contributing”.

**13 – Parks Department Garage – (Noncontributing Building) ca. 1990 (Photo # 16 of 36)**

This is a one story, gable end, steel pole-shed style building. It has a steel roof and steel siding. It is used for storage of street and park maintenance equipment. It is located just southeast of the park

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 8

maintenance building (#5).

**14 – Restroom – (Noncontributing Building) ca. 2000**

This is a one story, hipped roof, concrete block building which houses restrooms for the southeast part of East Park. It was built around the same time as the adjacent Shelter #5 (#14) and Prairie Playground (#16). It is not old enough to be considered contributing to the park.

**15 – Shelter #5 – (Noncontributing Building) ca. 2000**

This is a simple building, with a hipped roof and four wood posts on a concrete pad. It shelters picnic tables. It is located on the southeastern part of the park, immediately west of the locomotive (#9).

**16 – Gazebo – (Noncontributing Structure) 1991 (Photos #25 & 27 of 36)**

The gazebo is one story metal frame shelter with a unique, zig-zag roof design. It is located on the northeast side of the duck pond. It was designed by Stanley F. Haynes, and built by David Murphy of David Manufacturing, a local company capable of specialized metal working. Stone seating (also 1991), adjacent to the east of the gazebo, was designed by Jack Lehman, landscape architect. The nearby waterfall feature, built in 1992 as part of this development, was designed by Don Lee, and built by Dave Randall, who made the zigzag pattern mold from left-over metal from gazebo roof. Summer youth groups helped with landscaping.

**17 – Prairie Playground – (Noncontributing Structure) ca. 2000 (Photos #34 & 35 of 36)**

This is a wood playground complex which offers multiple climbing, digging, and interactive play opportunities for small children. It is located in the eastern part of East Park, just southwest of the locomotive (#9).

**18 – Stone Bench – (Noncontributing Structure) 1992 (Photo #31 of 36)**

This unique bench which sits on the south side of the duck pond was designed by Don Lee. It uses a heart shaped rock on its back side as its inspiration, and was intended as a place to admire the duck pond area.

**19 – Willow Creek Vehicle Bridge – (Noncontributing Structure) circa 1990 (Photo #18 of 36)**

This is a flat concrete deck bridge with simple concrete and metal rails on either side. Though an exact date of its construction was not located, it replaced an early vehicle bridge at this location which was built in 1914.

**20 – Willow Creek Foot Bridge - (Noncontributing Structure) 1999 (Photo #6 of 36)**

This steel, bowed footbridge has a steel and concrete deck with steel side rails, featuring a simple triangular truss system. It is a virtual twin to the foot bridge built adjacent to the duck pond. This bridge is located on the western edge of the park, closest to Shelter #1 (#2).

**21 – Duck Pond Foot Bridge – (Noncontributing Structure) 1999**

This bridge, a twin to the Willow Creek Foot Bridge (#20) is a steel, bowed footbridge with a steel and concrete deck and steel side rails featuring a simple triangular truss system. It is located between the

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

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

East Park Historic District
-----
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 9

---

band shell and the duck pond.

**INTEGRITY**

The overall integrity of East Park is good. The following discussion addresses the seven aspects of integrity.

**Location:** East Park is in the same location as it was when first platted and built in 1909. Situated south of the Winnebago River, an additional five and one-half acres were added to the northwest part of East Park, however, its continuity along the south bank of the Winnebago River made this a logical addition within the historic period, further enhancing the overall integrity of location of East Park Historic District.

**Design:** East Park was designed by landscape architect Frank E. Pease in 1909. The street system, streams and water features are all substantially intact. Though not sited in the same location as Pease suggested, the addition of the band shell at the southern part of the park was in keeping with Pease's overall design. Therefore, the integrity of the design of East Park Historic District is very intact.

**Setting:** The overall setting of East Park Historic District has not substantially changed since it was first built in 1909, thus retaining its integrity of design.

**Materials:** The primary material of a park is the landscape. With the mature trees, terrace, and meandering Willow Creek through the park, the park retains its integrity of materials. The buildings and structures within the park also have retained a high degree of integrity of materials, with the shelters exhibiting stone and concrete construction as they originally were, and the band shell displaying its concrete construction.

**Workmanship:** The buildings of East Park Historic District are mostly shelters. One of the shelters (Shelter #1) was designed and built during the New Deal era WPA program, and exhibits the style and workmanship of the Rustic style. Additionally, the band shell, individually listed on the National Register, retains its integrity of concrete construction.

**Feeling:** East Park is Mason City's premier park, and for many years was by far the largest of the city's two parks, until Parker's Woods was added to the system in 1939, followed by a substantial increase in park acreage during the post World War II era. East Park was originally planned to take advantage of the terrain, the waterways and the natural plantings, with the addition of rustic buildings such as the New Deal era shelters, East Park Historic District conveys a strong sense of its historic feeling through retention of much of the original 1909 plan.

**Association:** East Park Historic District demonstrates through the band shell, street system, rustic bridge and shelter, its integrity of association with the history of Mason City demonstrating the community's early dedication to recreation and leisure.

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   8   Page   10  

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The East Park Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under National Register Criterion A for its association with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century emphasis on outdoor public recreation and leisure spaces, the public works programs of the New Deal and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century push for more public space in cities.

The East Park Historic District is also eligible at the local level under National Register Criterion C because it is a good example of early to mid-twentieth century landscape and parks planning. Having started as a planned landscape by Frank E. Pease, the park has retained much of its original design with curvilinear streets and water features such as streams and ponds, while incorporating later additions such as a rustic WPA era shelter, bridges and other landscape features. The park further accommodated mid-20<sup>th</sup> century additions such as a newer shelter and the locally historic locomotive. The period of significance for East Park spans from 1909, when it was first designed and built, to 1965, when Shelter #4 was completed, just short of fifty years ago. Other major contributions to the design of East Park did not occur again until the early 1990s, when the Duck Pond area was significantly developed. An archaeological investigation was not a part of this nomination; additional research may identify archaeological sites that could contribute to the overall historical significance of the property.

**Mason City**

Mason City is a city with a population of 28,079 (2010 census) located in the northeast part of Cerro Gordo County, Iowa. Located in north central Iowa, Mason City is approximately 30 miles south from the Minnesota/Iowa border and is located within the "Silos to Smokestacks" National Heritage Area, designated by the National Park Service 1996. It is the largest incorporated community in Cerro Gordo County, and it was established as the county seat in 1858. Its founding is typical of many communities in the Midwest. The first settlement in Cerro Gordo County was made when Joseph Hewitt and James Dickerson, pioneers from Clayton County, arrived in 1851. They constructed temporary structures on the shores of Clear Lake with the intentions of hunting buffalo and elk. After wintering in that location, they decided to stay and stake claims on the fertile land. In 1853, the county and townships were surveyed in Cerro Gordo County, bringing other early settlers. A town plat was prepared by some of these early settlers and they named the new community Shibolet, shortly later to be known as Mason City. The plat was filed by July of 1855, with subsequent additions filed in the next few years (Wallis, 1926: 31 – 33).

Mason City's population grew rapidly over the next few decades. The first railroad came through Mason City in 1869, effectively connecting it to larger communities such as Dubuque, 150 miles east, and Des Moines, 120 miles south. It was soon a major railroad center with the Chicago Northwestern, Iowa Central Railroad, the Minneapolis, St. Louis Railroad, and others. Mason City was first incorporated as a village in 1879, and designated as a city in 1881. In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it became an established regional trade center, as well as an important manufacturing town. A major industry was the production of clay tile, which was placed to drain regional land for agricultural use. Other major industries included the production of brick and Portland cement. Processing industries included the American (later American Crystal) Sugar Refining Company, and a large packing plant.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   8   Page   11  

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mason City had a population of 6,747. As the population continued to grow (11,230 by 1910), the residents began to request amenities that most cities offered, such as good roads, schools, and parks. Discussions of levying taxes to purchase public park land were held. Focus tended to be on lands adjacent to Willow Creek and Lime Creek (now known as the Winnebago River)<sup>1</sup> where previous industries such as Parker's Mill had been located (CGCR 20 Feb. 1902). With the one block square, city-center City Park being the only park in Mason City up until then, the time had come for Mason City to have a true, recreational park.

#### **EAST PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT CONTEXT**

East Park is a 57.6 acre park located in the northeast section of Mason City Iowa. It started as a 40 acre tract, however the basic design laid out in 1909 is still very much in place today.

#### **Early Development: 1900-1932**

In February 1902, a local citizen, "Capt. Smith" wrote to the *Cerro Gordo County Republican* urging the City to purchase land for a public park, then "get a landscape gardener," to survey the area, and "select a park committee." (CGCR 20 Feb. 1902). During the same month an editorial appeared in the *Mason City Globe Gazette* calling for the city to purchase a 40 acre tract along Willow Creek, west of the Iowa Central Railroad tracks from a Mrs. Hill for \$10,000. (CGCR 26 Feb. 1902). By 1906, no new parks had been added, but the local Women's Club urged the acquisition of parks for Mason City, stating that the city was "waiting too long to secure what is almost as necessary to its civic health as pure water." (MCGG 23 May 1906).

Two years later, in the fall of 1908, Mason City moved rapidly to establish additional parks and set a course for a future park system. The mayor and city council made clear that they understood the importance of developing a park system in Mason City. In fact, they recognized, that as a city of the second class, they were required by the laws of Iowa to create a board of park commissioners by ordinance (MCTH 31 Aug 1908). On July 20, 1909 the city purchased the original tract where East Park was to be planned from Amos G. Dunham and his wife for \$10,000 (Dunham to Board of Park Commissioners, Warranty Deed, 20 July 1909). The Dunham tract was seen to be a good location due to its natural beauty along the banks of "Lime Creek" (aka Winnebago River) and with Willow Creek meandering through the property. Additionally, the 40 acre tract could allow for three entrances, at Ninth Street, Eighth Street and State Street (*Daily Times Herald*, 22 May 1909).

By 1909, the city had hired Frank E. Pease, a "landscape gardener" from Des Moines, and a plan for East Park was established. To date, little is known of Pease's education or training. From 1898 to 1906 he was listed in the Des Moines, Iowa city directories as a "florist." The 1900 federal census, meanwhile, had listed him with the occupation of "nurseryman." Beginning in 1906, Pease was listed as "landscape gardener" in the Des Moines city directories; a title that continued from 1909 to 1917,

<sup>1</sup> The Winnebago River in Mason City, Iowa was originally known as Lime Creek, however, the "river" designation was changed by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names in 1961 to the current name, Winnebago River ([http://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=gnispq:3::NO::P3\\_FID:463134](http://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=gnispq:3::NO::P3_FID:463134)).

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 12

encompassing the time he developed the landscape plan for East Park. In 1910, the federal census listed his occupation as "architect, landscape."

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Pease was hired by Mason City and was developing the plan for East Park, he was also working on city parks in other parts of Iowa. In 1906 he designed the plan for Buxton Park in Indianola, Iowa; features included a small lagoon and a band stand (*American Florist*, July 7, 1906). In 1912, after his work with Mason City was completed, Pease designed the 38 acre Foster Park in Ottumwa, Iowa; the design featured three entrances, a pavilion, formal garden, and wading pool. It was noted that the park would be an "important feature" of the Ottumwa's park and boulevard system (*Park and Cemetery and Landscape Gardening*, February 1912).

Once the 40 acres were acquired for East Park, work commenced. A park design by "F.E. Pease, landscape gardener," was published in the *Mason City Daily Globe-Gazette* on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1909. At the time, the proposed park consisted of the section that is primarily located east of Willow Creek, bounded by the railroad track and Kentucky Avenue on the east side, State Street on the south, and Lime Creek (aka Winnebago River) on the north. The original plan showed a band shell pavilion, however, it was further south than the current band shell is now positioned. It also showed the duck pond in approximately the same location it is yet today. One significant element of Pease's plan was to control sections of Willow Creek with retaining walls so that it would not flow entirely out of control during floods (*MCTH*, 12 July 1909). The curvilinear streets indicated on Pease's original plan are the basis of the park's current circulation system ("Plat of New City Park," *MCDGG*, 2 September 1909).

In the September 5, 1909 *Mason City Daily Globe Gazette*, Pease described his plan for the new park. He felt that the entrance near State Street should exhibit a formal flower garden with a water feature in it. A pavilion across from it would have full view of the planned feature. He indicated another important feature of the plan included the middle branch of Willow Creek, which left a natural border for a playground. A promenade could go along the edge of the creek. The street system would give access to all parts of the park, and the walk system would supplement the park's streets, going through woods, along the creeks, and terminating at garden shelter houses. He suggested using the water to help create lily ponds with water plants along them, and footbridges in appropriate locations (*MCDGG* 5 Sept. 1909).

Pease went on to give his opinion on parks in general, which echoed the strong, prevailing opinion of many planners and civic leaders of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century:

"Parks are no longer a luxury. In our rushing modern times they are necessities, and their possession an added source of wealth. Breathing places should be provided in every residence section. Well kept parks are a source of inspiration to home builders, exert a good moral influence, stimulate civic pride, provide better conditions for child growth and thus lessen crime; add to the value of your property; attract the traveler and the home seeker, and are boosters for your city in ways never dreamed of."  
(*MCDGG* 5 Sept. 1909).

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 13

There appears to have been few structures built in East Park in the early years. For a year or two, the old bandstand from City Park in downtown Mason City had been relocated to East Park. However, because of its deteriorated condition, Pease suggested to the city that it be demolished in the spring of 1912 (*MCGG* 10 May 1912). Another major improvement in East Park was the construction of a concrete bridge over Willow Creek in East Park. The arched bridge stood for many years, but is no longer extant, with a modern vehicle bridge now in its place (*MCGG* 12 May 1914). The completion of the bridge allowed for the improvement of the street system in East Park to be implemented, according to Pease's 1909 plan. Roadways and entrances were completed by December 1914 (*MCGG* 12 Dec. 1914).

In 1915, there was a large municipal push to improve East Park further with a playground area. With a \$2000 donation by Mrs. Mayme Denison Keeler, plans were implemented. The area at the eastern part of the park were graded to provide for a running track, tennis courts, a concrete lined wading pool, playground equipment and a concrete pergola. The city council agreed, at Mrs. Keeler's request, to name the area Denison Field, in memory of her father. Denison Field was dedicated within East Park on June 29, 1915 (*MCGG*: 15 April 1915, 12 May 1915, 30 June 1915).

1915 was a busy year for East Park improvements, with the addition of a small zoo. Though the word "zoo" was used to describe the area west of Denison Field, it was actually just a small area with a few fenced-in enclosures for the animals, which were an unlikely group of two silver foxes, one prairie wolf, one coyote, and three alligators. Because of the small area, the animals were moved to interior quarters in the early winter. By January 1916 the city had acquired a young black bear named Queenie from a traveling vaudeville troupe. By March 1918 Queenie was joined by another bear companion, Teddy. In late 1919 the park also acquired a pair of buffalo for the zoo (*MCTH* 10 Aug 1915, 20 Nov 1915, 2 March 1918; *MCGG* 7 Jan 1916, 15 Dec 1919).

By 1924, a major feature was added to East Park: the band shell. The city had always embraced its musical history and had established the Mason City Municipal Band by 1920, composed of professional musicians, including a piccolo player named Meredith Willson, who would go on to become nationally famous for his musical "The Music Man". With the popularity of summer concerts, it was decided by the city with assistance from the American Legion to construct a permanent band shell. The East Park Band Shell was dedicated in July 1924 (and listed on the NRHP in 2009; Naumann 2009).

In 1926 the University of Iowa put forth a city planning study that recommended the importance of parks, describing types of recreational developments, such as playgrounds. The plan noted that a standard "has become accepted that one acre of park or playground land for every 100 people in a community..." be set aside. Since Mason City's 1925 state census was 22,600 people, ideally the city would have 226 acres of park and recreation land. However, in 1926, the city only had Central Park and East Park collectively totaling approximately 40 acres of park land available to its citizens, well



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

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

East Park Historic District

Name of Property

Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 14

below the standards of the day (Wallis, 1926: 34, 60). Mason City was aware that its citizens could use more recreational space.

**New Deal era: 1933-1942**

During the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933 – 1945) implemented a series of work projects that assisted both workers as well as local units of government. The “New Deal” has come to refer to the vast array of federal agencies created to alleviate the social and economic crises caused by the Great Depression. Public works programs such as the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the National Youth Administration (NYA) were created to provide employment in work that would benefit society as a whole. Of its contemporary work relief programs, the WPA, established by Executive Order in May, 1935, was the most extensive and far-reaching. Approximately 80 percent of the WPA’s activities were for public works and construction projects; the WPA built or improved more than 644,000 miles of roads; 750 airports, 24,000 miles of sewage lines, and 120,000 public buildings (Cutler 1985). Public buildings constructed by the WPA funds and labor included libraries, schools, and recreational facilities such as playgrounds, swimming pools, and county and city parks.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA)<sup>2</sup>, and the Public Works Administration (PWA) were the two programs most often used by Mason City for a wide variety of municipal projects, including library improvements, paving, sidewalks, storm sewer improvements, roads, schools, water tower as well as several projects in the parks system.

New Deal projects had started in Mason City parks as early as 1933. The Civil Works Administration (CWA) had been in the city crushing rock at the municipal quarry to be used in street paving. Additionally, over \$12,000 was spent on park maintenance, mostly for flowers, shrubs, tree trimmings, cleaning streams and general repairs, in the 59.4 acres of municipal park lands. One CWA funded project included the protection of banks along Willow Creek and Lime Creek (aka Winnebago River) within East Park to help with flood damage (*Annual Report of MC, 1933-34; MCGG 30 Dec 1933*).

Despite the federal aid money, most of it was going to other municipal projects, not necessarily the parks, right away. For example, in 1934, only \$5,249 was spent on municipal parks, and they hovered between approximately \$4,000 and \$6,000 for the next two years. The greatest maintenance event involved taking graded dirt from streets and moving it to the East Park ball diamond to fill it in with about 1,980 cubic yards of dirt (*Annual Report of MC, 1934-35: pp 6, 21*). In 1935, plans were announced to flood approximately two and one-half acres in East Park near the ball diamond to create a skating rink in winter. This project was realized through WPA funds (*MCGG 23 Nov 1935*). Additionally, in 1935 the city saw other improvements to East Park, such as \$2,100 attributed to the construction of an “indoor pavilion” (Shelter #1) and “comfort station” (*MCGG 22 May 1935*).

<sup>2</sup> The Works Progress Administration was renamed as the Works Projects Administration in 1939 (Taylor, 2008: 436).

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 15

Major improvements continued in East Park in 1937. Funds from the WPA were received to construct up to three concrete tennis courts, according to the American Lawn Tennis court specifications and two shelter houses, as well as road grading in the city parks. The majority of the grant would be spent on labor, as the cost of materials for the projects was considered minimal (*MCGG*: 25 Mar 1937).

The work spilled into 1938, when thirteen WPA workers were sent to Quinby's quarry in Mason City to produce stone for the "lodge building for the park." Additionally, Mason City received a WPA grant in the amount of \$3,408 to construct a retaining wall in East Park. The project consisted of construction of a masonry wall 275 feet long and seven feet high, intended to alleviate the flooding of Willow Creek. The description of the project noted that it would "improve [the] east bank of Willow Creek in East Park... by excavating, sheeting, bracing, placing footing, erecting walls, digging rock from creek bed for wall, and performing appurtenant work to prevent creek from overrunning its banks." The project began in April 1938 and was completed in July 1938 (*MCGG*: 27 Apr 1938; Iowa WPA, Project No. 3650, July 30, 1938).

In 1939, the city saw some continued improvements to East Park through the WPA project to build a retaining wall along Willow Creek to help contain floods. The NYA sent in workers to develop picnic areas in East Park, and to construct a few rustic, rock fireplaces (not extant). They also helped maintain a skating rink in East Park throughout the winter (*Annual Report of MC, 1938-39*).

As early as 1940 a report on Mason City's comprehensive plan called for an expansion of the park system. The report noted that while East Park had been developed on a "beautiful site, ideal for park purposes," it was "impossible" for the then 48 acre park "to answer the recreational needs of a city of 25,500 persons." (Harland et.al., 1940, p.136). By the time the residents of Mason City were facing the onset of World War II, they had 91 acres in municipal parks.

**Post World War II: 1943-1965**

During the war years, once New Deal funding ceased, little was done in the way of new improvements to city parks until after the war was over. In 1947, a 50 foot retaining wall was built across the east branch of Willow Creek near the band shell. Additionally, the band shell was completely rewired, and an extension was built on its north side, providing restrooms and a dressing room for the band (*Annual Report for Mason City 1947-48*: p 10). New park land acquisitions began in the early 1950s. In 1951, Hanford and Margaret MacNider quitclaimed a five and one-half (5 ½) acre segment of land just west of the northwest corner of East Park for park purposes. The City accepted the donation by resolution (*MCGG* 30 Nov 1951). The addition of this parcel gave East Park good access to North Carolina Avenue. This area later came to be known as the "Sledding Hill" area, for its steep embankment sloping from a natural terrace north toward Lime Creek (aka Winnebago River).

As the city moved into the 1950s, they also paid closer attention to expanding park acreage in other parts of the city. For example, in 1956, the city purchased 18 lots north of Parker's Woods to connect it to the donated MacNider's Woods. With this addition, the city was up to over 223 acres, with an annual expenditure of nearly \$43,000 on parks and recreation in 1956. A reason given for this

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   8   Page   16  

expansion, which also included the acquisition of land for a public golf course, was based on expanded recreation land suggestions in the 1943 *Comprehensive Plan for the City of Mason City*. In 1956 the city built a new maintenance garage in East Park, which would be the maintenance base for all of the city's parks. However in that same year, the public turned down a ballot referendum to build a \$180,000 swimming pool in East Park. Nonetheless, by 1957, the city boasted nearly 240 acres of park land (*Annual Report to the People, 1956 & 1957*).

Despite the focus on other park properties in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, East Park continued to be the crown jewel of the city's parks. With the band shell, rustic picnic shelters and waterways, East Park offered amenities that other, newer city parks could not. It became a logical location when area railroad enthusiasts had the opportunity to obtain a locomotive that had run through Mason City many times throughout its history.

Engine 457 is a Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad (M & STL) steam locomotive that was moved to East Park near the southeast boundary of the park, north of East State Street, and west of North Kentucky Avenue which forms the eastern boundary of the park. The Canadian Pacific (CP) Railroad tracks parallel North Kentucky Avenue. Since its relocation in 1959, Engine 457 has been sited on railroad tracks on an abandoned spur associated with the adjacent CP railroad line and has served as a local attraction for both residents and tourists ([www.friendsofthe457.org](http://www.friendsofthe457.org)).

Built in 1912 in Schenectady, New York, Engine 457 was one of twelve (12) consolidation type steam engines numbered 450 to 461, powered by a combination of steam and coal. The locomotive weighs 169 tons, is 67 feet long and 10 and one-half feet wide, and is 15 and one-half feet in height. After its relocation to East Park in 1959 through the efforts of the Mason City Rotary Club, Engine 457, although located on the abandoned spur, was exposed to the elements and surrounded by a chain link fence. It is now covered by a circa 2003 open shed built to suggest a 19<sup>th</sup> century structure ([www.friendofthe457.org](http://www.friendofthe457.org)).

The area around the duck pond in the eastern part of East Park deserves special attention, though most of this development took place outside the period of significance for East Park. The duck pond had been part of Pease's original landscape design from 1909. However over time it, and the area around it, became increasingly neglected. Up until circa 1975, the area just east of the duck pond had been where the small zoo was kept. In 1975, the animals, including a few red fox, a coyote, a few red squirrels, a raccoon and a few whitetail deer, were dispersed to other reserves. A new "deer park" was built with an enclosure developed exclusively for whitetail deer. The area where the zoo had been became overgrown and unused. In the late 1980s a local garden club was organized, and spear-headed by local resident Don Lee, who came onto the Mason City Parks Board in 1987, took on the beautification of the duck pond area of East Park. From his barbershop, less than a block away from the park, Mr. Lee talked to customers about his ideas for the duck pond. He was able to get donations of labor, equipment, and eventually grants from the Elizabeth Muse Norris Charitable Foundation to beautify the duck pond. He had the pond dredged, the island cleaned, and boulders brought in to line the edges of the pond. He convinced Dave Murphy of David Manufacturing to build a gazebo (1991),

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District

Name of Property

Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 17

which was designed by architect Stan Haynes. Stone benches (1991) were designed by landscape architect Jack Lehman and were built east, adjacent to the gazebo. Copious flower, shrub and tree plantings were made around the duck pond, along with a waterfall feature. A stone and concrete bench was erected in 1992 on the south bank of the pond. Because of his dedication to the beautification of East Park, Don Lee was honored as "Mr. Park" during East Park's centennial celebration in 2009 (Lee, 13 June 2013).

East Park has had a full history in over 100 years of existence. Starting out as a planned landscape by Frank E. Pease, the park developed further in the 1910s with the Denison Field improvements. The band shell was built in 1924, and continues to be a focal point in the park today. The 1930s saw several improvements, including three shelters and retaining wall improvements along Willow Creek and Lime Creek (aka Winnebago River). Finally, in the post-WWII era, the park expanded in acreage, saw the construction of a park maintenance building, another shelter and the introduction of the historic locomotive. Throughout all of these changes, including improvements made to the duck pond area in the early 1990s, the overall landscape design that Frank E. Pease laid out in 1909 has been honored and preserved.

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   9   Page   18  

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*Mason City Times Herald (MCTH)*: 22 May 1902; 31 August 1908 "Plan Park System for Mason City"; 22 May 1909; 12 July 1909; 10 Aug 1915; 20 Nov 1915; 2 March 1918.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   9   Page   19  

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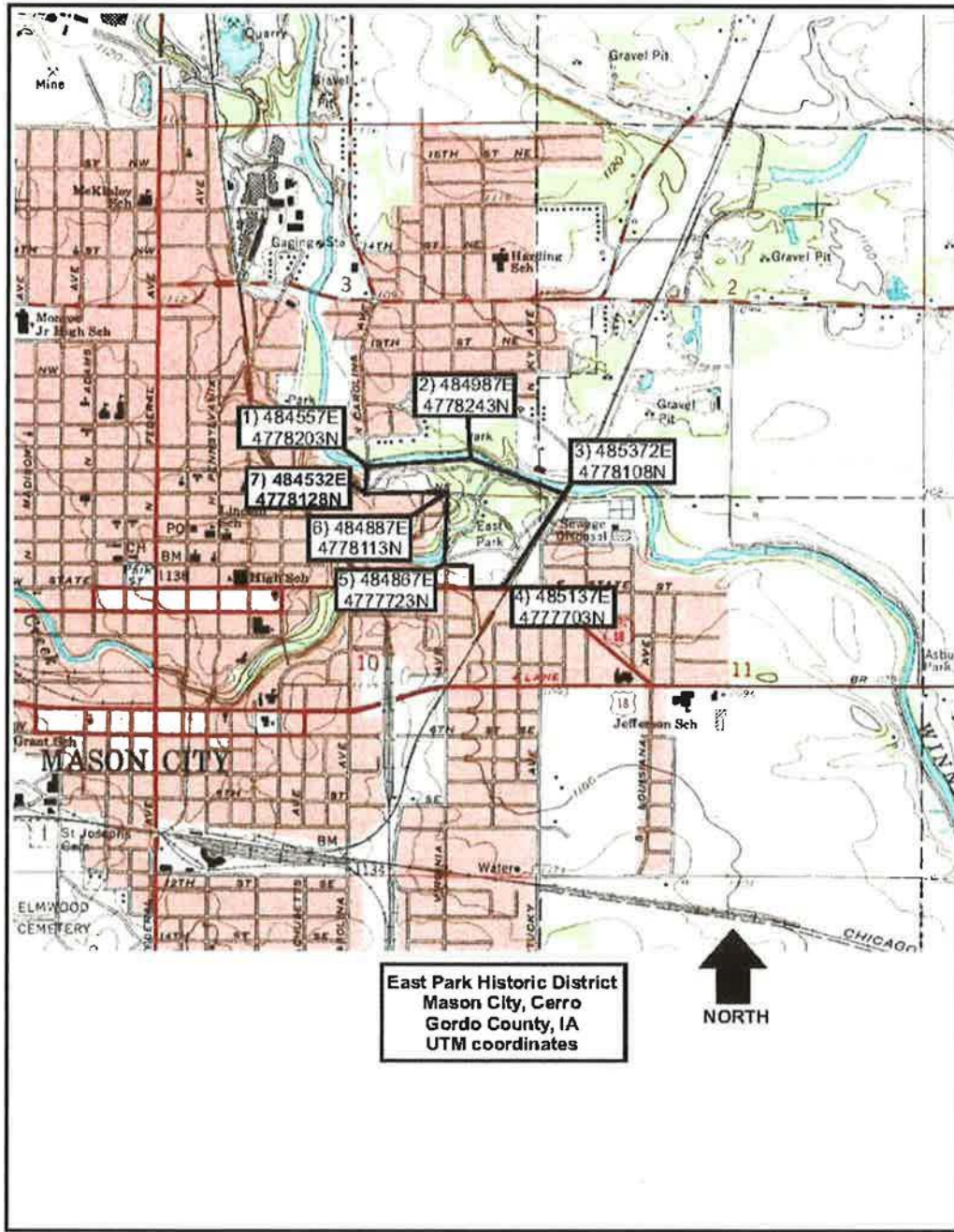
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 20



East Park Historic District  
Mason City, Cerro  
Gordo County, IA  
UTM coordinates

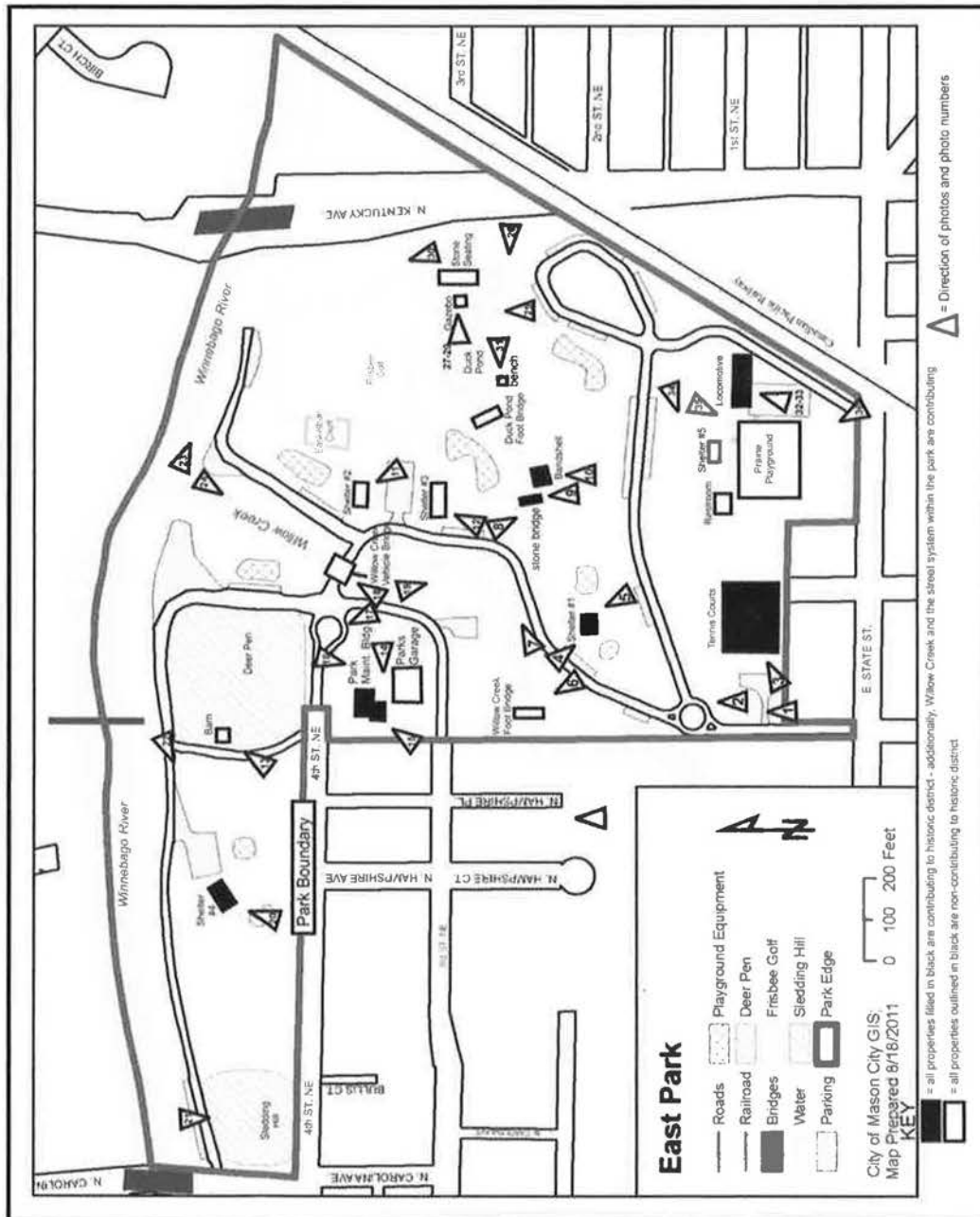
Map #1 - East Park - USGS showing UTM coordinates (Map created July 2013 by B. Kooiman)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 21



Map #2 – East Park Site Map showing properties, contributing & noncontributing. Map modified for NRHP nomination May 2014 by B. Kooiman.

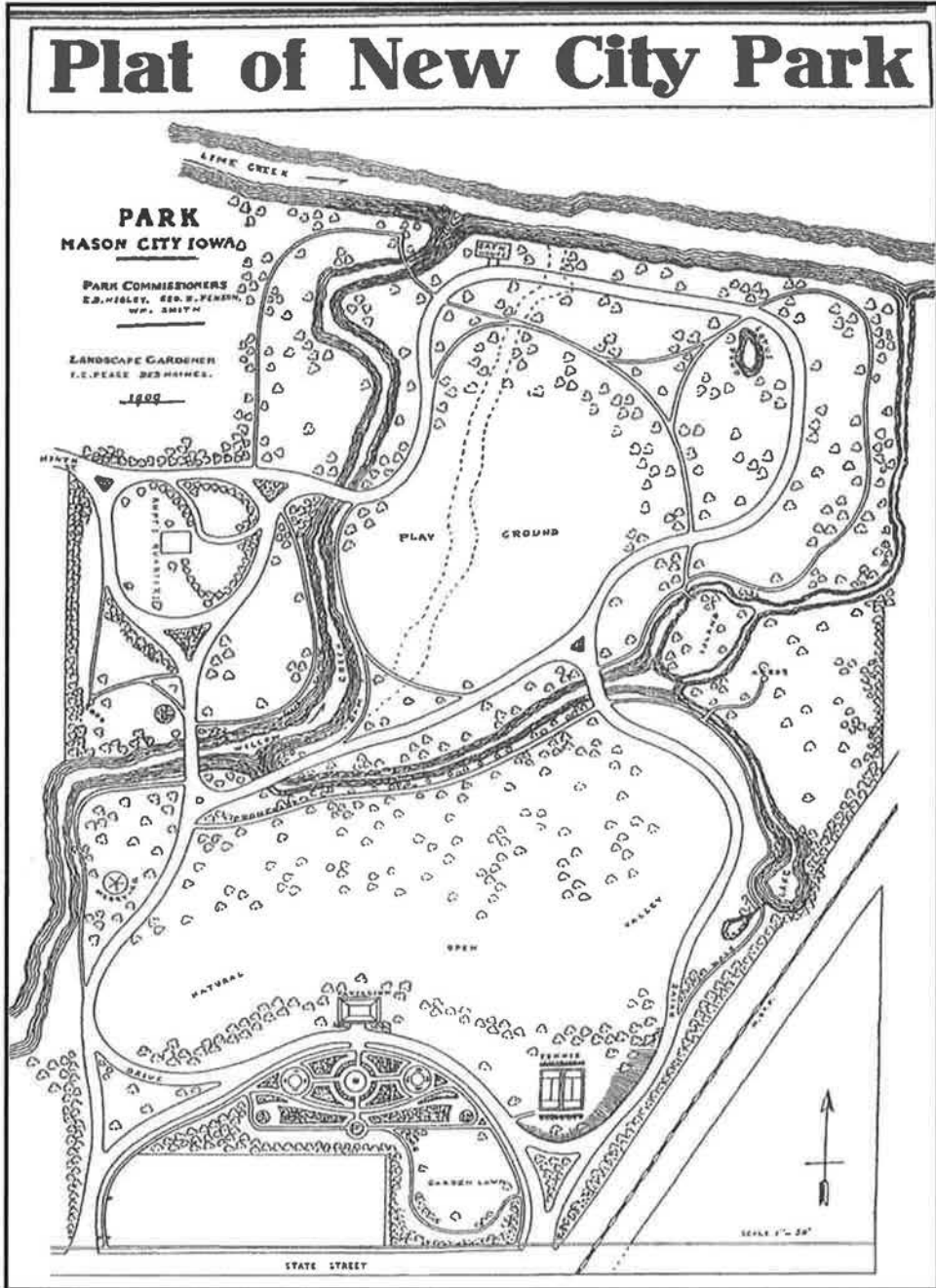


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 22



Map #3 – Proposed East Park Plan by F.E. Pease, *Mason City Daily Globe Gazette*, 2 Sept. 1909.

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

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

East Park Historic District
-----
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
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County and State
N/A
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number      Photos      Page     23    

**Name of Property:** East Park Historic District  
**City or Vicinity:** Mason City  
**County:** Cerro Gordo  
**State:** Iowa  
**Photographer:** Barbara Kooiman, Architectural Historian  
**Date Photographed:** 18 June 2013  
**Location of Original Digital Files:** State Historical Society of Iowa, 600 East Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Photo #1 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0001)  
 East Park signage at N. Virginia Avenue entrance, near southwest corner of park. Facing north.

Photo #2 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0002)  
 East Park, N. Virginia St. entrance, facing north.

Photo #3 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0003)  
 East Park WPA- era tennis courts, facing northeast.

Photo #4 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0004)  
 East Park, Shelter #1, north and west facades, facing southeast.

Photo #5 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0005)  
 East Park, Shelter #1, south and east facades, facing northwest.

Photo #6 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0006)  
 East Park, Willow Creek Bridge, facing northwest.

Photo #7 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0007)  
 East Park, Willow Creek near western edge of park, facing east.

Photo #8 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0008)  
 East Park, stone bridge, east facades and back of band shell, north and west facades, facing southeast.

Photo # 9 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0009)  
 East Park, stone bridge, east facades, facing northwest.

Photo # 10 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0010)  
 East Park Bandshell, west and south facades, facing northeast.

Photo #11 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0011)  
 East Park, Shelter #2, south and east facades, facing northwest.

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number      Photos      Page   24  

Photo #12 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0012)  
 East Park, Shelter #3, west and south facades, facing northeast.

Photo #13 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0013)  
 East Park, barn near deer pen, west and south facades, facing northeast.

Photo #14 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0014)  
 East Park Maintenance Building, east and south facades, facing northwest.

Photo #15 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0015)  
 East Park Maintenance Building, west and south facades, facing northwest.

Photo #16 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0016)  
 East Park Garage north facade, facing south, with east façade of Maintenance building on right.

Photo #17 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0017)  
 East Park, facing southeast corner of deer pen, facing north.

Photo #18 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0018)  
 East Park, Willow Creek Vehicle Bridge with spillway, south façade, facing northeast.

Photo #19 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0019)  
 East Park, Willow Creek retaining walls, facing south from vehicle bridge.

Photo #20 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0020)  
 East Park Shelter #4, west and south facades, facing northeast.

Photo #21 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0021)  
 East Park, Sledding Hill addition, facing southeast.

Photo #22 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0022)  
 East Park, northern section, from northwest corner of Deer Pen looking east toward Shelter #4.

Photo #23 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0023)  
 East Park, west side of Willow Creek at Winnebago River, facing northeast.

Photo #24 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0024)  
 East Park, Willow Creek, near where it joins the Winnebago River, facing south.

Photo #25 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0025)  
 East Park, Duck Pond with Gazebo across water, facing north.

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

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

East Park Historic District
Name of Property
Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number      Photos      Page   25  

Photo # 26 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0026)  
 East Park, Duck Pond and island, with gazebo across water, facing northwest.

Photo #27 of 36(IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0027)  
 East Park Gazebo, west façade, facing east.

Photo # 28 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0028)  
 Rustic stone seating east of Gazebo, west façade, facing southeast.

Photo #29 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0029)  
 Rustic waterfall feature near Gazebo, near Duck Pond, facing north.

Photo #30 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0030)  
 East Park, north of Gazebo, facing north.

Photo #31 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0031)  
 East Park, "Heart stone" bench on south side of Duck Pond, facing southwest.

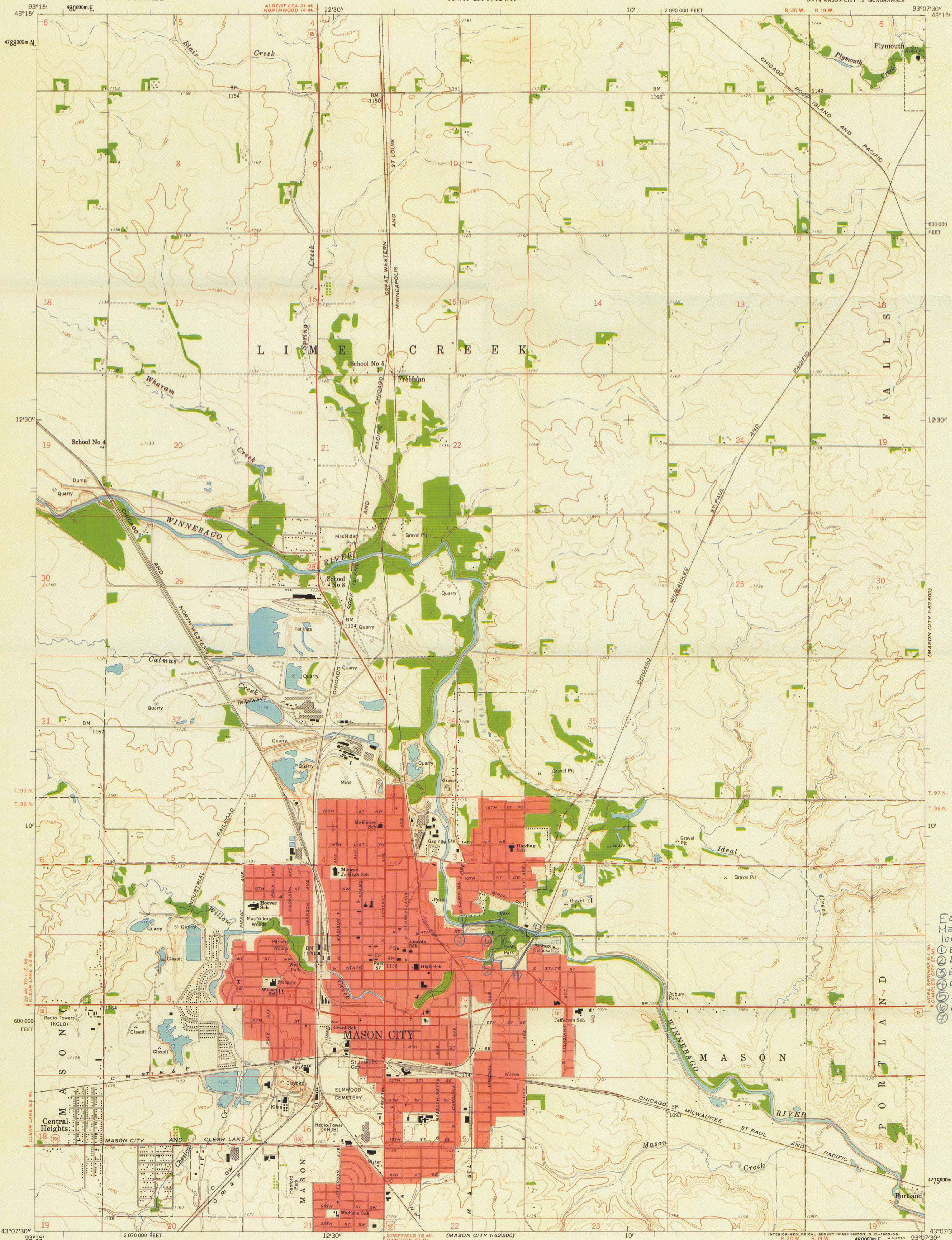
Photo #32 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0032)  
 East Park, Locomotive, facing northwest.

Photo #33 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0033)  
 East Park, Locomotive under shelter, west and south facades, facing northwest.

Photo #34 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0034)  
 East Park, area west of Locomotive, including shelter on right, restroom in middle, Prairie  
 Playground on left, facing west.

Photo #35 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0035)  
 East Park, Prairie Playground, facing south.

Photo #36 of 36 (IA\_Cerro Gordo County\_East Park Historic District\_0036)  
 East Park State Street Entrance, facing northwest.



East Park Historic District  
Mason City, Cerro Gordo Co.  
Iowa (Zone 15)  
① E 484557 N 4778203  
② E 484987 N 4778243  
③ E 485372 N 4778108  
④ E 485137 N 4777703  
⑤ E 484867 N 4777723  
⑥ E 484887 N 4778113  
⑦ E 484532 N 4778128

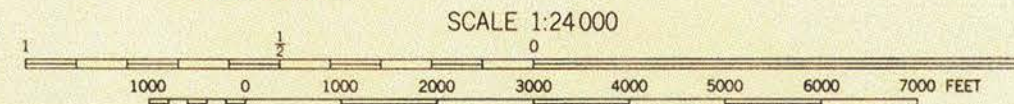
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods  
Aerial photographs taken 1957. Field check 1959

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Iowa coordinate system, north zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only  
landmark buildings are shown

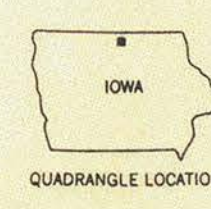
TRUE NORTH  
MAGNETIC NORTH  
APPROXIMATE MEAN  
DECLINATION, 1959



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER 25, COLORADO OR WASHINGTON 25, D. C.  
AND BY THE IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

USGS  
Historical File  
Topographic Division



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
U. S. Route ——— State Route ———

MASON CITY, IOWA  
NW 1/4 MASON CITY 15' QUADRANGLE  
N 4307.5—W 9307.5/7.5  
1959

U.S.G.S.  
FILE COPY  
TOPOGRAPHIC DIVISION

FEB - 2 1961  
2995

A blue rectangular sign with white text is mounted on two stone pillars. The sign reads "EAST PARK" in a white, serif font. The pillars are made of stacked, irregularly shaped stones in shades of tan and brown. The sign is flanked by green foliage, including a large leafy plant in the center and various shrubs at the base. The background consists of a lush green lawn and a dense line of trees under bright sunlight.

EAST  
PARK



THIS PARK  
ALLOWS  
BEER AND  
WINE ONLY

PARK IS DESIGNATED  
AREA ONLY  
UNAUTHORIZED  
VEHICLES ARE NOT  
ALLOWED TO ENTER

KEEP  
RIGHT

SPEED  
LIMIT  
15







1

SHELTER

THIS PARK  
ALLOWS  
BEER AND  
WINE ONLY





















TICKETS NOT POSTED FOR  
ALL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES





STOP

STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF DALLAS

WINDMILL  
SEVEN























MURPHY GAZEBO

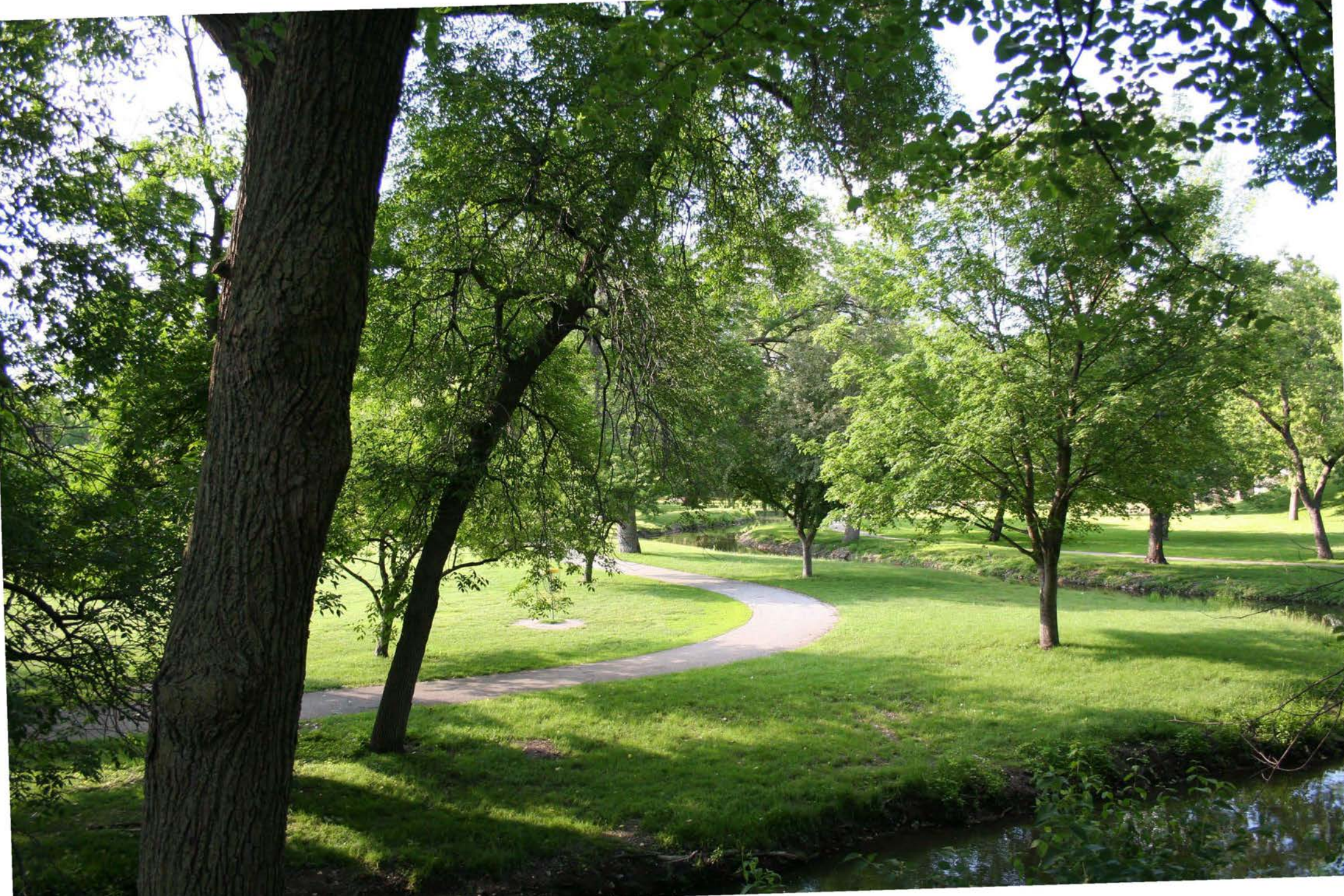














GVA





RAILROAD  
CROSSING

Jeep









EAST  
PARK



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY East Park Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Cerro Gordo

DATE RECEIVED: 8/29/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/29/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/14/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/15/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000855

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 10-15-14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

CLG NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG Name Mason City, Iowa Date of Public Meeting January 2, 2014

Property Name East Park

1. For Historic Preservation Commission:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature *John Groninga* Date 1-21-14

Print Name John Groninga

Title Chair, Mason City Historic Preservation Commission

Reason(s) for recommendation:

*I concur with the consultants findings with the exception of Shelter House Number 3 which has been significantly altered from its original form as discovered from recently discovered photos.*

2. For Chief Elected Local Official:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature *Eric Bookmeyer* Date 1-22-14

Print Name Eric Bookmeyer

Title Mayor

Reason(s) for recommendation:

*This would be of value to our citizenry and a source of pride.*

3. Professional Evaluation:

- Recommendation of National Register eligibility
- Recommendation of National Register ineligibility

Signature *Ralph J. Christian* Date 2/6/14

Print Name RALPH J. CHRISTIAN

Title IOWA SHPO HISTORIAN

Reason(s) for recommendation:

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR  
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR



August 26, 2014

Paul Loether, Chief  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye Street, N.W.-- 8th Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

- Parker's Woods Park Historic District, North Jackson Avenue between 1<sup>st</sup> Street Northwest and 4<sup>th</sup> Street Northwest, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa
- East Park Historic District, Roughly Bounded by N. Carolina Avenue, the Winnebago River, N. Kentucky Avenue, the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks, E. State Street, N. Virginia Avenue and Fourth Street NE, Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Foster Hill".

Elizabeth Foster Hill  
National Register

ARTS  
COUNCIL

PRODUCE  
IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL  
MUSEUM OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

STATE  
HISTORIC  
SITES

STATE HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA  
HISTORICAL  
FOUNDATION