

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received DEC 6 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Warner Park Historic District

and/or common Warner Park

## 2. Location

*Roughly bounded by Little Harpeth River,*  
~~Percy Warner Park and Edwin Warner Park (between~~  
 street & number Belle Meade Blvd., Highway 100, <sup>7th</sup> Chickering Rd.) ~~and~~ N/A not for publication

city, town Nashville vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Tennessee code 047 county Davidson, Williamson code 037,187

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation, James Fyke, Director

street &amp; number Centennial Park Office

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37203

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Williamson County Courthouse  
Davidson County Courthousestreet & number Court Square  
Public Squarecity, town Franklin Tennessee 37064  
Nashville Tennessee 37201

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title none has this property been determined eligible?  yes  nodate N/A N/A federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Warner Park Historic District is a 2,664 acre land area located in southwest Davidson County that was acquired and established as a park from 1927-1930 by the Nashville Board of Park Commissioners under leadership of Percy Warner and Edwin Warner. It is a large natural area of rugged, wooded hills, meadows, and floodplains. Over 28 miles of roads follow the natural contour of the land to provide access to scenic areas and points of interest. Man-made features, built to blend with and accentuate the natural environment, include a number of features constructed by WPA funds and workers, such as limestone rock walls, overlooks, bridges, and entrance gates; bridle paths and hiking trails, a steeplechase course; and picnic shelters, maintenance buildings, and cabins. Other notable landscape features of the park are the formal sandstone entrance gates and a large alle' of limestone rock walls, terraces, and steps. Several farmhouses remain which were located on the land at the time of its acquisition for Warner Park and adaptively used for park-related purposes. The park is bounded on the north by the L & N Railroad Line, Highway 100, and the Tennessee Botanical Gardens and Fine Arts Center; on the west by Devon Farm (NR 1974), and the Little Harpeth River; on the south by Old Hickory Boulevard; and on the east by Chickering Road and Page Road. Warner Park retains integrity of design, location, setting, materials, feeling, and association. While there are a number of elements not nearly 50 years old, such as a golf course, restroom facilities, a baseball field, and a few maintenance buildings, they do not greatly detract from the park's integrity. These elements were built with sensitivity and in keeping with the intent and purpose of the park at its origin.

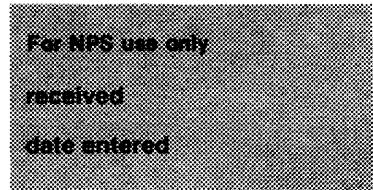
The Warner Park Historic District is comprised of the 2,058-acre Percy Warner Park and the 606-acre Edwin Warner Park. Both parks were originally part of one park, the Percy Warner Park. In 1937 the 606-acre tract of land acquired under leadership of Edwin Warner was named for him and made a separate park by the Nashville Board of Park Commissioners. However, the parks are commonly referred to as Warner Park and were developed and continue to be administered as a single entity.

Warner Park is by far the largest of the 70 city-owned and operated parks in Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, comprising 40% of the total land area of all city parks. It is the only natural or wilderness type city park in Nashville; over 50% of the park is unmaintained woods—a natural environment with a wide variety of active plant and animal populations. (The park merited listing in 1980 on the Tennessee Register of Natural Areas.)

Warner Park is located in the portion of Middle Tennessee known as the Nashville Basin, among numerous hills and ridges lying outside the Highland Rim. The park's interior consists of wooded hills which reach 400 feet above the floodplains, hollows, wet weather springs, and scenic ridgetops. Drives, bridle paths, and hiking trails access the rugged interior of the park. On the park's perimeter are level meadows and floodplains, some of which have been developed into active recreation facilities, including two golf courses, four picnic areas, a nature center headquarters, a steeplechase and equestrian center, and a maintenance center. In the 55 years since the park's establishment, residential and commercial development has slowly encircled the park. Three residential subdivisions adjacent to the park are under construction and another 300 acre tract of land adjacent to the park is for sale for development purposes.

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The built environment of the park was designed and constructed to blend with the natural environment and provide a feeling of continuity. The location and construction of each built feature demonstrates a sensitivity to the natural topography of the land. Formal entrance gates and a more rustic type alle' are significant landscape features planned and built to introduce visitors to the park, make the transition from an urban setting to a natural setting, and conform to the contours of the land. The formal main entrance gates, located at the intersection of Belle Meade Boulevard and Page Road, are constructed of smooth-dressed Sewanee sandstone blocks and are topped with stone eagles. The architect of the project was Edward E. Daugherty of Nashville. The gates were dedicated in 1932 and have been maintained in excellent condition since. Immediately inside the gates is the very large, multi-tiered limestone alle', designed by Bryant Fleming of Ithaca, New York. The alle' is comprised of mortared limestone columns, steps, terraces, and curving walls. Completed in 1933, the alle' provides scenic views of the front entrance and introduces the scenic drive system of the park. The bulk of the alle' remains in good condition; water erosion on parts of the upper third of the alle' has caused need for repair.

Acting as a unifying theme throughout Warner Park are many examples of work designed, constructed, and funded by the Works Progress Administration between 1935 and 1941. These contributing components of the built environment include seven limestone entrance gates, two limestone bridges, 8.6 miles of dry-stacked limestone rock retainer walls, 230 stone pillars outlining the park, 9½ miles of bridle trails and 5 miles of hiking trails. The principal material of construction used in all of these projects is limestone blocks, quarried from within park boundaries. The stone entrances and bridges, and approximately 75% of the rock walls have maintained a high level of integrity. The remainder are in need of repair or clearing of vegetation.

The Iroquois Steeplechase, another WPA project and the only race track ever constructed by the federal government, was built between 1936 and 1941. Internationally famous sportsman William I. duPont, Jr., designed the facility to fit a naturally occurring bowl which is reputed to provide the greatest visibility of any steeplechase course in the world. The facility includes a 1½ mile steeplechase course, a mile flat track, and a frame steeplechase stable. The integrity of each remains to a great extent, having been altered very little during the 42 consecutive annual runnings.

Another contribution of the WPA to Warner Park is found in the picnic shelters constructed between 1935 and 1938. Of the 37 rustic shelters originally built, 10 have retained a high degree of integrity and 18 survive with some alteration. Those unaccounted for have been lost to weather deterioration or natural catastrophe. The rustic shelters vary considerably in size and shape but fall into four basic categories of design. The first, an open-air type, has a rectangular, mortared limestone foundation, chimney and support pedestals with Eastern Red Cedar support posts. The roofs of these structures are pyramidal-shaped and are constructed with rafters made of sassafras saplings, two to three inches in diameter, with plank decking and asphalt shingles. The second design, also an open-air type, is rounded and has cedar support posts rising from concrete slabs. These have the same type roofing as the first design. However, their roofs are conical-shaped and steeper than the rectangular type, giving them a rustic gazebo appearance. The third type of picnic shelter is rectangular or square and is usually smaller than either of the other

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two types. These have cedar support posts, concrete slab floors, and low-pitched, pyramidal roofs. This type has split log siding on two or three sides attached with one or two inch gaps between each run to provide ventilation. The fourth style of picnic shelter is small, simple, and open, with four Eastern Red Cedar support posts rising from concrete slab flooring. These shelters have sassafras sapling rafters and asphalt singled bellcast conical-shaped roofs. The gables are constructed with a vertical sassafras sapling treatment which facilitates ventilation.

The paved scenic drives of the park link together the entire system of stone entrances, the alle', steeplechase, picnic areas and other recreation facilities and points of interest. Approximately 20 miles of these roads, laid out on horseback by the Warner brothers, were completed by 1931. The WPA added 13 miles of roads from 1935 to 1941. Twenty-eight miles of these roads are still in use.

The above mentioned features of the built environment are contributing elements to the significance of Warner Park. Contributing features are those important to the historic development and character of the park, which retain integrity of design, location, workmanship, setting, materials, feeling, and association. Some of these are less than 50 years old; these however are considered contributing features because of their importance as landscape features of quality design and craftsmanship, as examples of methods of construction, and as examples of WPA work.

Noncontributing elements in Warner Park, described and listed below, are those which have lost integrity or do not possess any historical, cultural, or architectural importance, or are visual intrusions.

Contributing:

1. Main entrance gates, intersection of Belle Meade Blvd. and Page Road, 1932, smooth-dressed sandstone construction, double entrance gate system consisting of four tall square pillars capped with stone eagles and flanked by shorter square pillars capped with stone balls and by low stone walls.
2. Alle', at main entrance, 1933, roughcut limestone walls, terraces, and steps tiered to contour of hillside, arranged symmetrically with low curing walls, 875' long, 50' wide at bottom extending to 300' at middle and to 133' at top.
3. Limestone entrance gates, at seven entrances to the park (two on Highway 100, three on Old Hickory Blvd., one on Chickering Rd., and one on Hicks Rd.), most are roughcut limestone with random coursing, some are mortared without tooling and some with beaded pointing, range from square pillars on each side of a road to solid walls attached to tall pillars.

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4. Two limestone bridges, inside park, ca. 1935, roughcut random ashlar limestone with segmental arch support over creek.
5. Limestone pillars, 230 outlining the park on parts of Highway 100 and Old Hickory Blvd., 1935-1941, roughcut mortared limestone, square-shaped, connected by large iron chains.
6. Rock retainer walls, 8.6 miles of walls outlining park on Highway 100, Old Hickory Blvd., and Chickering Rd., 1935-1941, dry stacked coursed ashlar.
7. Bridle paths, 9½ miles inside park, 1935-1941, hand-graded earthwork with dirt surface.
8. Hiking trails, 5 miles inside park, 1935-1941, hand-graded formed earthwork with dirt surface.
9. Iroquois Steeplechase, Old Hickory Blvd., 1941, two oval shaped tracks (1½ mile) with wood jumping fences and hedgerows, terraced earthwork seating stands with iron railings on north side of track, 38-stall frame, gabled-roofed stable.
10. Picnic shelters, 18 at various locations inside park, 1935-1941, four types:
  1. open-air, rectangular mortared limestone foundation and pedestals, cedar posts, pyramidal roof with sassafras rafters.
  2. open-air, round, cedar posts, conical roof, sassafras rafters.
  3. square or rectangular, cedar posts, low pyramidal roof, split log siding on two or three sides, sassafras rafters.
  4. open-air, square, cedar posts, clipped gable roof, sassafras rafters.
11. Warner Park Nature Center Complex, 7311 Highway 100, includes an office (a Victorian period frame farmhouse adaptively used for park purpose) and a museum (1920s frame cottage moved in 1980 from within park to current location).
12. Residence of Superintendent of Park Maintenance, north of Old Hickory Blvd., mid-nineteenth-century, one-story, gable-roofed, frame building.
13. Workman's cottage, Vaughn Rd., 1935 by WPA, one-story, gable-roofed, L-shaped frame.
14. Farmhouse, Highway 100 (north of Old Hickory Blvd.), ca. 1920, one-story, gable roofed frame building, adaptively used for park employee residence.
15. Log house, at Chickering Rd. and Old Hickory Blvd., ca. 1830, two-story, log construction, weatherboard siding, stone chimneys, gable roof, adaptively used as residence for golf course greenskeeper, known as old Sawyer farmhouse.

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16. Fishing Lake, Highway 100, 1930, built by Tennessee State Highway Dept., earthwork dam.
  17. Six family cemeteries and a slave cemetery which predate the park:
    - A.
      1. Page family, near Chickering Road and Page Road
      2. Scott family, in Scott Hollow
      3. Northern family, near Harpeth Hills golf course and Chickering Road
      4. Betts family, north of the park nursery
      5. Knight family, east of Old Hickory Blvd. near Highway 100
      6. Reagin family, on the Nature Center grounds
    - B. A slave cemetery, (time period unknown) with a stone altar and an excess of 50 unmarked graves, at Highway 100 and Vaughn's gravel road.
  18. Three stone chimneys and foundations, 1936-37 by WPA, remains of two Boy Scout cabins and one Girl Scout cabin destroyed by fires.
  19. An abandoned limestone quarry, at Kicks gravel road near the west boundary of the park, the quarry from which limestone blocks were taken and used by WPA workers for numerous projects in the park between 1935 and 1941, now used for geology classes.
  20. Percy Warner Golf Course, west of Belle Meade Blvd. entrance, 1938 by WPA, nine-hole course.
- Non-Contributing:
1. Percy Warner Golf Course Clubhouse, Page Rd., 1960s, brick, one-story, gable and flat roof.
  2. Girl Scout Cabin, 1937 by WPA, remodeled 1970s, 1½-story, frame, covered with vertical boards, heavily altered.
  3. Restroom facilities, four inside park, 1979, vertical board siding, shed-roof, rectangular-shaped.
  4. Harpeth Hills Golf Course Complex, Chickering Rd. and Old Hickory Blvd., 1963, two-story clubhouse of stone construction, metal pre-fab maintenance barn, and 1960s one-story brick ranch-style house. 18 hole golf course.
  5. Park nursery, Vaughn Rd., 1963, 18-acre nursery with small concrete block shed.
  6. New picnic shelters, eight inside park, rectangular, gable roof, square posts with brackets, concrete flooring, 1970's.
  7. Baseball field, Old Hickory Blvd. at Vaughn Rd., mid 1950s, backstop and bleachers.

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8. Model airplane field, south of Vaughn Rd., mid 1950s, asphalt paved runways and circles.
9. Polo field, Highway 100, 1970s, grassy playing field, metal goal posts.
10. Two metal barns, north of Old Hickory Blvd. at residence of Supt. of Park Maintenance, 1963, gable roof.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) recreation

**Specific dates** 1927–1930; 1935–41 **Builder/Architect** N/A

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Warner Park Historic District, 2664 acres of rolling land in the Harpeth Hills of southwest Nashville, was developed as a park from 1927 to 1930. It is nominated to the National Register under Criteria A, B, and C for local significance in community planning, recreation, conservation, and landscape architecture. The largest municipal park in Tennessee, Warner Park was planned as a city park with special emphasis on land and wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation, and the careful integration of landscape design and man-made features into a natural area. Three prominent Nashvillians, Percy Warner, his son-in-law, Col. Luke Lea, and Warner's brother, Edwin Warner, are largely responsible for the idea and early development of Warner Park. The park is associated with other significant individuals as well. Warner Park is evidence of the Nashville park board's commitment to provide a wide variety of recreation opportunities to the public, reflecting a national trend developing during the early twentieth century. The park contains significant examples of landscape design, executed with extraordinary sensitivity to the land.

The development of Warner Park began with Percy Warner (1861–1927), one of eight children of James C. Warner who had built a successful iron smelting business in Nashville after the Civil War. Percy joined his father in the Warner Iron Company in the 1880s. In 1903 he took over the failing Consolidated Street Railroad Company as receiver. He renamed it the Nashville Light and Railroad Company and became a principal figure in the electrification of Nashville as well as a streetcar operator. His financial success in these and other ventures and his social connections made Warner one of the more visible Nashvillians of the day.

In 1925 Percy Warner was named to the city park board. He was elected chairman in 1926 and served in this capacity until his death in 1927. During his two years on the board he began to plan and develop what would become Warner Park. He was a life-long outdoorsman and nature lover, and he wanted to develop a park for Nashville that would emphasize natural area recreation and land and wildlife conservation. It was at his encouragement that his son-in-law, Col. Lea, donated 868 acres of land in the Harpeth Hills to the city as the beginning of a wilderness park.

Col. Luke Lea was also a prominent Nashville figure. Successful in business and social circles, he also published the Nashville Tennessean, served a term in the U.S. Senate (1911–1917), and rendered distinguished service as an officer in World War I. He and his wife, the former Percie Warner, visited Kansas City in 1926. Their enjoyment of Swope Park in that city further encouraged them to donate land for a park in Nashville. Lea was the principal stockholder in the Belle Meade Park Company, developing what was then, and remains today, one of Nashville's most affluent neighborhoods. In January, 1927 he donated 543 acres of his own land and 325 acres of land jointly owned by the Belle Meade Park Company and Percy Warner's Nashville Light and Railroad Company to the city for a park. The land was at the terminal point of Belle Meade Boulevard, the main thoroughfare of the developing neighborhood. In June of 1927 Percy Warner died unexpectedly. At the Leas' request the new park was named for Percy Warner. Later the same year the park board recognized Lea's contribution by naming the highest point in the park Lea Heights (now commonly known as Lea's Summit).



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Park Board Minutes, 1901-1983.

Warden, Margaret L. "The Parks and the Warners." Paper from the Public Library Series: Paragraphs from Nashville History, 11 January 1982.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2,664 acres

Quadrangle name 1. Oak Hill, TN 2. Bellevue, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	Oak Hill	B	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	Bellevue
	Zone	Easting	Northing			Zone	Easting	Northing	
C	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	Bellevue	D	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	Bellevue
E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>		F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	
G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>		H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The boundaries of the Warner Park Historic District are shown on the accompanying Davidson County property assessment maps # 129,130,142,143,144,156, 157. The boundaries were drawn to include the park boundaries and highway right-of-way on Highway 100, Old Hickory Blvd., and Chickering Rd. where WPA rock walls and pedestals, built for the park, are located.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>Tennessee</u>	code	<u>047</u>	county	<u>Williamson</u>	code	<u>187</u>
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Bob Parrish, Sandy Bevins;</u>		
	<u>David Paine, Shain Dennison</u>		
organization	<u>Metro Board of Parks and Recreation;</u>	date	<u>August, 1983</u>
	<u>Metro Historical Commission</u>		
street & number	<u>Nature, Center, Edwin Warner Park, Highway 100;</u>	telephone	<u>615-259-5027</u>
	<u>701 Broadway, Customs House</u>		
city or town	<u>Nashville</u>	state	<u>Tennessee</u>

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert E. Hagen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Comm. date 11/30/83

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>[Signature]</u>	date <u>11/20/1984</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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At this point Edwin Warner (1871-1949) entered the picture. Edwin, also a businessman, was involved in several of the same ventures as his brother Percy. He was selected to take his late brother's place on the park board in 1927. After 12 years on the board, he was elected chairman and served in that position until his death in 1949. Edwin continued to work for the development of Warner Park. His donation in 1930 of \$20,000 for land acquisition helped bring the park to approximately its present size. In 1937 the park board recognized his work by renaming 606 acres of Percy Warner Park, Edwin Warner Park. In spite of these two names, the parks were developed and have always been administered as a single entity. Today they are usually referred to by the single name, Warner Park.

The development of Warner Park built on the momentum of a rapidly growing city park system. With the establishment of the park board in 1901, the city made its first plans to provide recreational opportunities for the public. By 1925, 18 city parks had been established with a total of 540 acres. The initial Warner Park donation more than doubled the system's acreage, and the new park had grown to 2551 acres by 1930. By 1936 Warner Park stood at its present 2664 acres. It is by far the largest municipal park in Tennessee. It provided wilderness recreation and wildlife conservation resources to the Nashville community for the first time, and singly filled this role for the State until the establishment of the State park system in 1937. The first state park in Middle Tennessee was not established until 1939.

In the area of conservation, Warner Park has served Nashville as a laboratory for countless field trips and research projects of nature enthusiasts, environmental groups, and university classes and professors. The most significant of these research projects were conducted by Amelia Lasky (1885-1973), a widely published and nationally known Tennessee ornithologist. Mrs. Lasky's banding of Chimney Swifts was instrumental in establishing Peru as the wintering place of this species. Her most important work however was her study of the Eastern Bluebird, Sialia sialis. The population of this species had fallen alarmingly in the early twentieth century. From 1936 until her death in 1973, Mrs. Lasky operated a trail of Bluebird nesting boxes in the park from which she gathered meticulous records of the habits of this species. This is the oldest and longest continually operated Eastern Bluebird research project in Tennessee and one of the oldest in the nation. The data collected and published by Mrs. Lasky established her as a national authority on the Eastern Bluebird. Since her death the Warner Park nesting box program has been carried on without interruption by volunteers and more recently, by the Warner Park Nature Center staff.

Man-made features were added to the park with sensitivity. One of the first needs in the new park was a road system that would allow visitors to explore and enjoy the park. One of Percy Warner's goals in planning the park was to provide access to the park for the public in a manner that respected the rich natural integrity of the area. He and his brother, Edwin, surveyed the park on horseback and laid out a 20-mile road system to take maximum advantage of the dramatic topography of the park while causing minimal disturbance of its natural beauty. The roads laid out by the Warners were built by the city and completed by 1931. There are currently 28 miles of roads in use in the park. The additional miles were added by the WPA in a manner compatible with the Warners' original design.

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Other man-made features reflect a similar approach. At the main entrance to the park at the terminal point of Belle Meade Boulevard are gates of dressed sandstone designed by locally prominent architect Edward Daugherty. They were built in 1930 with a \$10,000 gift from Mrs. Percy Warner. Their design, monumental and extremely formal, reflects the character of Belle Meade Boulevard, with its landscaped median, and of the houses built along the boulevard. Just inside the gates an alle' climbs a steep hill. Designed in 1931 by nationally known landscape architect, Bryant Fleming of Ithaca, N.Y., and completed in 1933, the alle' sweeps 875 feet up the hill and is 300 feet wide at its widest point. Though its historical precedents and its symmetrical arrangement are, like Daugherty's gates, formal, the execution of the design is not. Built of rough, uncut fieldstone, the alle' appears to be much more a part of the hillside than something applied to it. Combining formal planning and rustic construction, the alle' provides the park visitor an elegant transition from the stiff formality of Belle Meade Boulevard and main entrance gates, to the wild and rustic nature of the interior of the park.

Also notable among the man-made features in the park are the numerous construction projects built under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration. The use of WPA funds and labor was approved by the park board in 1935. WPA projects were started in a number of city parks, but the most extensive and best examples of such work are found in Warner Park. WPA projects built in the park between 1935 and 1941 include stone entrance gates, stone retaining walls, bridle paths and hiking trails, overlooks, bridges, culverts and drainage ditches, play grounds, picnic shelters, stables, and a steeplechase course. These projects have maintained a high degree of integrity over the years since their construction. The location of each blends harmoniously with the rugged contours of the hills and hollows and the level plains of the park. The principle building material, limestone quarried within the park, ties the built and natural environment together with great sensitivity. WPA design and workmanship produced a visual continuity throughout the park consistent with Percy Warner's original intentions.

The steeplechase mentioned above is the Iroquois Steeplechase, the only racetrack ever built by the federal government. The course is named for Iroquois, the only American winner of the Epson (English) Derby (1881), who was stabled and raised at nearby Belle Meade Stud Farm. Plans for the course began in 1936 with the selection of a natural bowl in Warner Park for its site. William L. duPont, Jr., of Wilmington, Delaware, was selected by the park board to design the course. Since the completion of the course in 1941 there have been 42 consecutive runnings of the Iroquois Steeplechase.

In summary, Warner Park is unique: a wilderness park on a large scale, planned and developed to serve the needs of an urban area. It contains a number of high quality landscape design and construction projects, and is the site of significant wildlife research. It is associated with three Nashvillians whose life and works affect Nashville in a variety of ways. Though this park is not the sum of their accomplishments, it is the only remaining property associated with them.

In recent years limited funds for maintenance have contributed to the accelerated deterioration of some of the stone works in the park. The National Register nomination is part of an effort of interested parties to focus increased attention on the park and the need for concentrated maintenance efforts.