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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE TOPOGRAPHY

The present site of Minnehaha Falls is near the original mouth of Minnehaha Creek where it formerly emptied into the Mississippi River. One can observe the hard limestone formations at the upper level of the glen, underlain by softer sandstone which is eroded by the waters.

After glaciation, the Mississippi River was formed with a fall (St. Anthony Falls) near Fort Snelling. During thousands of years, this fall moved up the river towards its present location. During this period, the height on which the Soldiers' Home was built was an island of the Mississippi with a channel on each side. As St. Anthony Falls moved up the river, it split to go around the island. Since the eastern channel was the shortest and had the softest underlying stone, the eastern fall passed the north end of the island before the western fall and robbed all the water from the western channel. The abandoned western fall is the north end of Minnehaha Glen, parallel to and west of the Ford Bridge. At that time, Minnehaha Falls was 500 feet closer to the Mississippi. When St. Anthony Falls receded to its present location, about 8,000 years ago, the Western channel of the Mississippi became Minnehaha Glen.

GEOLOGY

The deep cut formed by the ancient Mississippi reveals the earth strata as it lies beneath Minneapolis and St. Paul. From top to bottom, you can see the topsoil, a layer of hard Platville \cap Limestone, and beneath that, the deep mass of St. Peter Sandstone. The south wall of the glen has remained more vertical than the north wall because it has been shaded from the freezing thawing action that has eroded the north wall. The rich alluvial topsoil on the floor of the glen has been deposited during flood season. The sand deposits have weathered from the sand-The St. Peter Sandstone was formed from almost stone walls. pure white sand deposited by the Epicontinental Sea which covered most of the Midwest and reached the Twin Cities area. Because this sandstone is not well bonded and is porous, it is easily eroded. Partly due to the sandstone's low resistance to erosion, St. Anthony Falls receded up the Mississippi at a rate of 2.54 feet per year. Many caves, some of considerable size, are found throughout the formation. The large granite and basalt boulders throughout the glen were deposited by glaciation. ECOLOGY

A variety of ecological conditions are found in the park. Plant life in the glen varies greatly from that on the high upper grounds. Oak, Elm, Basswood and Hackberry trees, Currant bushes and Grapevines are seen on the upper level. Descending into the lower level, you enter a darker, damper, more protected environment that nourishes mosses, lichens and ferns. Prints of ancient fossil plants may be seen in the limestone. Platypes also vary by the amount of sunlight available on the Plant

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Form 10-300a (July 1969)	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	Minnesota			
	NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	COUNTY			
	INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM	Hennepin			
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7. Description, continued

north-facing and south-facing slopes. The wetland plant association along the creek below the Soldiers' Home is a remnant of a time when this entire valley was covered by the same plants. As the creek cut deeper into the valley, the water level necessary to support the association decreased. The wetland plants survived at this spot because of water from springs. The main plants in the association are two kinds of cattails and Western Clubgrass with Yellow Twig Dogwood and Willows near the borders. WILDLIFE

Although the larger fauna no longer inhabit this area, many of the smaller wildlife species can be observed. Among the animals are woodchuck, chipmunks, rabbits, muskrats and grey squirrels. Some of the birds that can be seen include swallows, grackles, sparrows, warblers, orioles, wax wings, thrushes, crested fly catchers, cardinals, king fishers, terns, herring gulls, ducks and many others. Fish, particularly carp and perch, occupy these waters, as do snapping turtles, frogs and toads.

GODFREY'S MILL

The site of the grist mill built by Ard Godfrey in Minnehaha Glen is about 2500 feet below the falls. Short sections of limestone wall and the contour of the earth dam still show beneath the foliage. From the creek bank, the remnants extend about 90 feet northeast and 50 feet southwest. The ruins rise about 6 feet above the creek bed and about 2 feet above the glen floor.

STEVENS (JOHN M.) HOUSE

This clapboard and frame house was built for Colonel Stevens in 1849 just above and on the west bank of St. Anthony Falls. It was moved out of the way of progress three times, the last being in 1896 to the present site.

The plank architrave, pediment and pilasters indicate a carpenter's Grecian style. The window and door frames are starkly simple. The house is shaped like a "T", with overall dimensions of 28 feet by 33 feet. The main section is two stories high and the kitchen wing in the rear is one story. It rests on a limestone foundation and is covered by wooden shingles. The entire structure is sound and suitable for various uses, including interpretation. It is now preserved by the Park and Recreation Board.

R. F. JONES (LONGFELLOW) HOUSE

A great admirer of Henry W. Longfellow, "Fish" Jones had this replica of the Longfellow House in Cambridge, Massachusetts, built on the property beside Minnehaha Park which he had purchased

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7. Desc	cription, continued			

from the heirs of Franklin Steele. The house was built sometime after he bought the property for his Longfellow Gardens and Zoo in 1906. At was the second replica of the Longfellow House in Minneapolis; the first was built in 1888. This tenroom, two-story Georgian house has a full attic and basement. The foundation is limestone and concrete. The overall dimensions are 62 feet by 28 feet. Green asphalt shingles cover the roof, and green shutters flank the windows. The clapboard walls are painted yellow and the trim white. The fabric is in good condition, although it has been vacant since the library was removed in 1967. The Park Board is preserving the house, but has yet to decide upon an appropriate use for it. It is threatened by highway construction.

MINNEHAHA STATION

This little depot was built in the 1870's by the Minnesota Central Railway, an ancestor of the Milwaukee Road. It was situated to provide passenger facilities to the nearby zoo and park. Its size belies the volumn of traffic it handled in the early 20th century. The building itself is only 22 feet by 20 feet, and the platform measures 75 feet from end to end. The The platform is made of "Flint Company" red bricks on a cinder base. The ticket office and waiting room building is composed of dimen. sion lumber of various sizes and of jig-saw gingerbread. The Victorian taste must have been delighted by the variety of design and decoration in "The Princess", as she was called. exterior is freshly painted in Milwaukee Road colors, orange The siding with boxcar red trim and wainscoting. The asphalt roof has been recovered with cedar shingles. The interior is complete and well-preserved. The familiar iron stove, waiting room benches, ticket window, tools and posters evoke the memory of every way station in the days of steam. It is open every Sunday afternoon.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This park preserves the environment of five or six historic sites illustrating commercial, transportation, pioneering and architectural themes, and is itself an expression of inspired foresight in urban planning. The influential feature of the historic district is Minnehaha Creek with its falls and glen. This stream and cascade have attracted explorers, settlers, tourists and entrepreneurs since the beginning of recorded minnesota history.

MINNEHAHA FALLS AND GLEN

The falls was inside the first military reservation purchased by treaty from the Sioux by Lieutenant Zebulon Pike in 1805. Little Falls or Brown's (Major-General Jacob) Falls, as it was then called) was closely related to the erection of Fort Snelling, nearly 3 miles downstream, in 1819-1824. The falls was the preferred site for the sawmill necessary to build the fort, but low water in 1820-21 required that the mill be built at the Falls of St. Anthony. When Swiss immigrants refugeed from Selkirk's Colony on the Red River of the North, they were allowed to squat on government land between the fort and the creek. In 1837, the commandant reported "The white inhabitants in the vicinity of the fort, as near as I could ascertain 82 in Baker's Settlement around old Camp Coldwater and at are: Massey's Landing . . " Mass(e)y's Landing, as it is shown on Lieutenant E. K. Smith's map of 1837, was within the present park boundary. A favorite picnic spot of the garrison and its visitors, the falls was visited by Lewis Cass (1820), Stephen Long (1823) and George Catlin (1836). The falls was a popular tourist attraction in the "fashionable tour" by steamboat up the Mississippi River in the 40's and 50's. Descriptions of the falls were included in many of the travelogues of the period. In 1849, Mary Eastman's Dahcotah, or Life and Legends of the Sioux Around Fort Snelling told the story of Minnehaha Falls, "laughing waters" in Sioux. The falls has always been a favorite subject of artists and pioneer photographers, beginning with Alexander Hesler's daguerreotype in 1852. But the story of Minnehaha Falls was told to the world by one who never visited them: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The book and the daguerreotype must have excited his imagination, for we read in the Song of Hiawatha:

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> Where the Falls of Minnehaha Flash and gleam among the oak-trees, Laugh and leap into the valley.

The literary heritage of the falls is expressed today in the statue of Minnehaha and Hiawatha by Jacob J jelde, standing in the stream above the falls. Immigration and settlement of the west bank of the Mississippi was precluded by the military reservation and treaty arrangements until 1852. Ard Godfrey, a pioneer Minneapolitan, built a grist mill in the glen below the falls in 1853 or 1854, but the size and power of St. Anthony's Falls eclipsed the location. The miller vacated the glen in 1862 but the remains of a stone and earth dam of the mill pond are still visible beside the creek.

MINNEHAHA STATION

The Minnesota Central Railway Company extended its line from Fort Snelling past Minnehaha Falls to Minneapolis in 1965. In the 1870's, Minnehaha Station was built along the line. This Victorian memento of railroading's hey day is the only structure of its kind in the city. It served generations of Sunday picnickers as well as the military during three wars. It is preserved by the Transportation Committee of the Minnesota Historical Society.

MINNEHAHA PARK

In 1883, the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners was established by ballot after a long and bitter campaign. The board was granted full authority to establish and support parks; they immediately engaged H.W.S. Cleveland, a noted landscape architect to draw up a master park plan. This plan emphasized the natural beauty of the river banks and lakes, recommended a linked series of open spaces, woods, vistas and recreation areas along the water ways. Enlightened Park Boards worked for decades to preserve these resources and with much success. Cleveland's master plan included the Minnehaha Falls area although it was still beyond city limits. In 1885, the State Legislature passed a bill authorizing Minnehaha State Park, but the money was never available for appropriation. In 1889, the Park Board acquired the first 120 acres by paying the costs of acquisition to the State in return for title to the property. STEVENS HOUSE

On May 28, 1896, 10,000 school children in relays towed a small wooden house over five miles from downtown Minneapolis to Minnehaha Park. This was the Stevens House, the first built in the original townsight of Minneapolis. John M. Stevens, a Canadian, served in the Mexican War as a captain but was later address ed as Colonel. In 1849, he was the assistant of Franklin Steele, sutler of Fort Snelling. At Steele's suggestion, Stevens asked

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(July 1969)	NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	Minnesota				
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for and received permission from the Secretary of War to settle on the west bank of the river, in the reservation, on the provision that he maintain a ferry for the troops. The Greek-revival house was built on the river bank below the present Great Northern Depot. This house was the crib of infant Minneapolis, sheltering the earliest social, political and religious meetings. The town, county and school district were organized and the name Minneapolis was suggested or adopted under the Stevens roof. The house was moved twice before 1896, when a reporter tracked it down; it was purchased for preservation through the efforts of the Minneapolis Tribune. A statue of Colonel Stevens stands near the house commerating his founding energy and foresight. The house, recorded by HABS, is in good condition, but not open to the public.

R. F. JONES (LONGFELLOW) HOUSE

In 1936, Longfellow Lakelet, Gardens and House, adjacent to the Northwest corner of the park were acquired. R. F. Jones had built a zoo and garden on that site in 1906. He agreed to donate the property to the Park Board in 1924, on the condition that he and his heirs be left in possession for 10 years. He died in 1930, and his heir contested the donation. After the litigation, the park board incorporated the area into its system. The house, a replica of the Longfellow House in Cambridge, was preserved as a branck library until 1967. It is now vacant and threatened by destruction. The Park Board desires to preserve it in affectionate memory of Mr. Jones, a colorful and generous personality of early Minneapolis.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Note: These changes apply to Minnehaha State Park in Hennepin County, Minnesota.

REFERENCE NUMBER: 69000369

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Hennepin

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Minnehaha Historic District

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: vicinity of Hiawatha and Minnehaha Aves., and Godfrey Rd.

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

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JUN 1 7 1988

Nina M. Archabal State Historic Preservation Officer Date