Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

USE THIS COPY FOR DUPLICATING

1. NAME

COMMON: Fairmount Park

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Extends along both East and West banks of Schuylkill River and Wissahickon Creek, from Art Museum at Spring Garden St. to Northwestern Ave.

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Pennsylvania	42	Philadelphia	101

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☒ District ☐ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☒ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☐ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☐ Restricted ☒ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☒ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☒ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☒ Entertainment	☒ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Philadelphia

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	42

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Department of Records

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Philadelphia Historical Commission

DATE OF SURVEY: 1960 ☐ Federal ☐ State ☒ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Philadelphia Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 1313 City Hall Annex

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	42

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One) ☐ Excellent ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed	
	(Check One) ☐ Altered ☒ Unaltered	(Check One) ☐ Moved ☐ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (*if known*) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Beginning with the acquisition of the five acres at Fairmount for the Waterworks and reservoir, now site of Art Museum, the Park was gradually extended by the purchase, first of Lemon Hill and Sedgley in 1856, and then by the addition of about 220 acres at Lansdowne and George's Hill in the 1860's. Still later additions have brought the Park area up to some 4100 acres along both banks of the Schuylkill and the Wissahickon. (The Wissahickon Valley is a Registered National Natural Landmark.)

In 1876 the Lansdowne and George's Hill segments became the site of the Centennial Exhibition. Memorial Hall and the Ohio House remain to remind present-day visitors of this great fair. At about the same time the Zoological Gardens (in 1874) were opened to the public. Today, the Playhouse in the Park offers Philadelphians theater-in the round, and Robin Hood Dell, the chance to hear the Philadelphia Orchestra. Picnic areas, a golf course at Walnut Lane; swimming, both indoors at Memorial Hall and outdoors at the nearby Kelly Pool; fishing in the Wissahickon, and boating on the Schuylkill, a sport made famous by the paintings of Thomas Eakins' (1844-1916), add a variety to the rural walks, bicycle paths, and other more usual features of a large urban Park.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- ☐ Pre-Columbian
- ☐ 15th Century
- ☐ 16th Century
- ☐ 17th Century
- ☒ 18th Century
- ☒ 19th Century
- ☒ 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)*

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- Aboriginal
  - ☐ Prehistoric
  - ☐ Historic
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☒ Architecture
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Commerce
- ☐ Communications
- ☒ Conservation
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Industry
- ☐ Invention
- ☒ Landscape Architecture
- ☐ Literature
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Religion/Philosophy
- ☐ Science
- ☒ Sculpture
- ☐ Social/Humanitarian
- ☐ Theater
- ☐ Transportation
- ☒ Urban Planning
- ☐ Other *(Specify)*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Despite a variety of such modern encroachments as the Schuylkill expressway, Philadelphia's Fairmount remains unequalled among American municipal parks for its combination of unusual size, natural beauty, historical importance, and the interest and merit of the buildings and sculpture it contains.

Although advice was sought from such nationally prominent landscape architects as Robert Morris Copeland of Boston and Olmsted & Vaux of New York, the park in its present form cannot be said to be the work of any one man. Nor is it easy to assign a single date to its establishment. Legislation formally setting aside a large area bordering the Schuylkill "forever, as an open public place" was not passed by the Pennsylvania Assembly until 1867, but the origins of the park are to be found at least half a century earlier in the five acres that first surrounded the Schuylkill waterworks, begun in 1812; in this sense, at least, Fairmount should probably be considered the earliest public park in America, apart from the city square and the colonial common. To protect the purity of the city's water supply and to provide for the "health and enjoyment" of its citizens, the area reserved for public use was gradually extended from this modest beginning until it became one of the largest - some would say the largest - municipal park in the world.

No longer the source of Philadelphia's water supply and now somewhat neglected, enough remains of the unusual group of late Federal and early Classical Revival buildings that comprised the Waterworks to make it clear why even Charles Dickens had kind words to say concerning its beauty and why innumerable artists have found it and the little park surrounding it to be among the most "picturesque" of American subjects. With the acreage gradually added to this nucleus came numerous other buildings, at least a dozen of which are recognized as being of primary historical and stylistic importance: "Lemon Hill" (c. 1800), one of two outstanding Federal houses in Philadelphia and one equalled by few examples in the country; "Woodford" (1750's, enlarged 1772), Judge Coleman's mid-Georgian mansion, which now houses the superb Naomi Wood collection of 18th-century furnishings; Judge William Peters' "Belmont" (main portion built c. 1775), the woodwork and plaster ceilings of which are among the handsomest of the period and the area; "Strawberry Mansion" (built 1797, enlarged 1825), now restored to something of its former grandeur by the women of the Committee of 1926; John Penn's "Solitude" (c. 1785) with its superb plaster ceiling in the Adam manner; "Sweetbrier" (1797), Samuel Breck's attractive country house, which, despite the loss

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

of its gardens and dependencies, still remains an outstanding example of the sophisticated simplicity that characterizes the best late 18th-century architecture; and of course "Mount Pleasant" (begun 1761), which has been called the "finest Georgian mansion north of the Mason-Dixon Line."

Following the Civil War, the park was extended to the west bank of the Schuylkill in time to provide the location for the Centennial Exhibition in 1876. The demolition about 1955 of Horticultural Hall, one of the two "permanent" buildings of the Centennial, was a tragic and irreparable loss to the city and to the nation, but Memorial Hall (now repaired and used as a recreation center) still stands, as does the Ohio House, the only one of the structures erected for the Centennial by each of the states to remain in situ. Nearby are the gardens of the Zoological Society (chartered 1859 and therefore said to be the first such organization in North America), which were opened on their present site in 1874 and which still retain a number of important buildings, including the original entrance pavilions designed by the Philadelphia firm headed by Frank Furness, certainly one of the most talented of Victorian architects.

Not the least of the original attractions of the little park that surrounded the Philadelphia Waterworks was William Rush's Nymph and Bittern Fountain (now cast in bronze and removed to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, nearby). Through the generosity of the Fairmount Park Association and other private groups and individuals, works of sculpture have continued to add appreciably to the interest and beauty of the expanded park. A number of these like Herman Kirn's Catholic Total Abstinence Fountain, erected for the Centennial, or the Civil War Memorial Gate (gift of Richard Smith, erected 1897-1912) are perhaps more to be wondered at than admired, but others like Randolph Rogers' Lincoln Monument (1871), Augustus ~~St.~~ Saint Gaudens' Garfield Memorial (1896), Daniel Chester French's status of General Grant, Cyrus E. Dallin's Medicine Man, or Frederic Remington's Cowboy are major examples of the work of some of America's most talented sculptors.

If only because of its appeal to young and old alike, the scholar who would study its sculpture and buildings, no less than the city dweller who would escape the heat and squalor of his surroundings, Fairmount Park probably offers more toward the enrichment of contemporary life than does any other of Philadelphia's many contributions to the arts of America.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Records in Archives of the City and County of Philadelphia.
Files of Fairmount Park Commission; Philadelphia Historical Commission
Fairmount Park: Sketches of Its Scenery, Waters, and History (1871).
Antiques (Nov. 1962), LXXXII, No. 5

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY						OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE				LATITUDE			LONGITUDE	
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	75°	15'	00"	40°	05'	00"		°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	75°	10'	30"	40°	05'	00"							
SE	75°	10'	30"	39°	57'	30"							
SW	75°	15'	00"	39°	57'	30"							

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
George B. Tatum, Professor, University of Delaware

ORGANIZATION: Philadelphia Historical Commission
DATE: 1-11-72

STREET AND NUMBER: 1313 City Hall Annex

CITY OR TOWN: Philadelphia
STATE: Pennsylvania
CODE: 42

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National ☑ State ☐ Local ☐

Name S. K. Stevens
State Liaison Officer

Title Executive Director, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Date 1/25/72

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

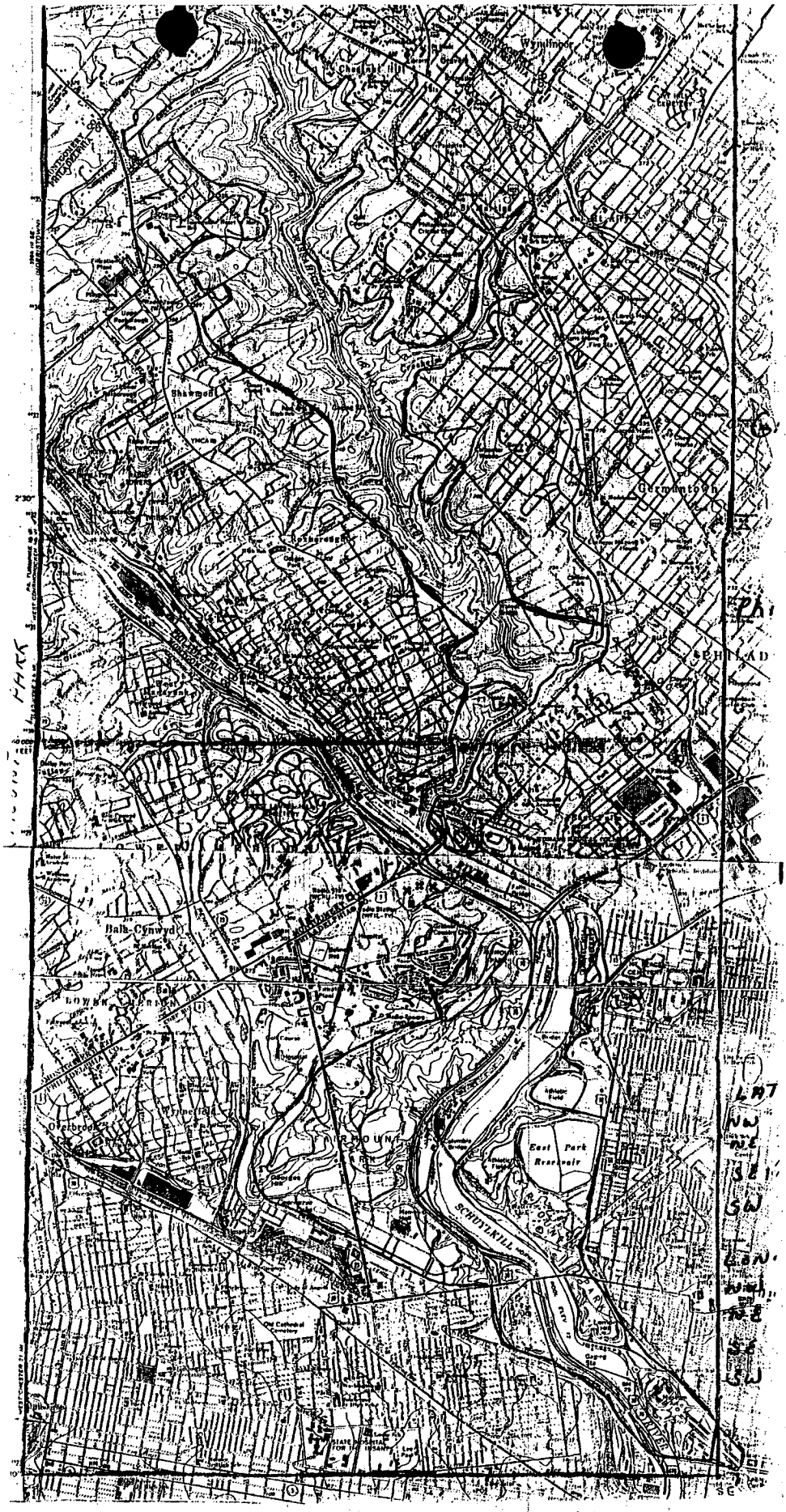
Keeper of The National Register

Date

FAIRMOUNT PARK (001364): National Register Inventory

KEY NO.	NAME	ROAD	DATE	NR STATUS	QUAD
086948	Arnest		1810	cont.	Phila.
031030	Belmont Mansion		1742-51	cont.	Phila.
093849	Boat House Row	Kelly Drive	1860-1905	**NHL**	Phila.
?	Boelsen Cottage	(part of Belmont)	?	?	Phila.
?	Catholic Total Abstinence Fount		1876	cont.	Phila.
001334	Cedar Grove		1748-50	cont.	Phila.
001337	Chanounix House (Montpelier)		1802	**NR ind.**	Phila.
?	Civil War Memorial Gate		1897-1912	cont.	Phila.
?	Cliff House (The Cliffs)		?	?	?
?	Cowboy		?	cont.	?
001365	Fairmount Waterworks	Aquarium Drive	1812-22	**NHL**	Phila.
?	Garfield Memorial		1896	cont.	Phila.
?	General Grant Statue		?	cont.	?
?	Grant's Cabin		?	?	Phila.
?	Greenland		?	?	?
?	Hatfield	Girard Ave & 33rd St	?	?	Phila.
029208	Japanese House	Lansdowne Drive	1953;1958	cont.	Phila.
?	Lansdowne		1773	?	Phila.
096431	Laurel Hill (Randolph House)		1765	cont.	Phila.
001410	Lemon Hill		c1800	cont.	Phila.
086782	Letitia Street House	Lansdowne Drive	1710;1883	cont.	Phila.
086783	Lilacs, The	West River Drive	c1775;1832	cont.	Phila.
?	Lincoln Monument		1871	cont.	Phila.
051999	Livezey House (Glen Fern)		?	cont.	Gmtn
?	Medicine Man		?	cont.	?
001417	Memorial Hall		1876	**NHL**	Phila.
001423	Monastery, The		?	**NR ind.**	?
?	Moore, Tom, Cottage	West River Drive	?	?	Phila.
001428	Mount Pleasant		1762-65	**NHL**	Phila.
030821	Ohio House		1876	cont.	Phila.
097442	Ormiston		1798	cont.	Phila.
077229	Ridgeland (Mount Prospect)		1762	cont.	Phila.
096870	Rittenhouse Town	206-10 Lincoln Drive	?	**NHL**	Gmtn
050923	Rockland		1810	cont.	Phila.
050141	Sedgley (Porter's Lodge)		?	cont.	Phila.
076781	Solitude, The		1784-85	cont.	Phila.
001477	Strawberry Mansion (Somerville)		1789	cont.	Phila.
001479	Sweetbriar		1795	cont.	Phila.
?	Thomas House		?	?	?
050709	Thomas Mill Covered Bridge	Thomas Mill Road	1855	**NR ind.**	Gmtn
?	Valley Green Inn		?	?	Gmtn
001503	Woodford		1756	**NHL**	Phila.
?	Zoological Gardens		1874	?	Phila.

Kirn, Herman
Remington, Frederick
Saint Gauden, Augustus
French, Daniel Chester
moved to site in 1883
Roger, Randolph
Dallin, Cyrus E.


Wyndmoor
Chestnut Hill
Shawmont
Germantown
Lehrenough
Bala-Cynwyd
Lower Merion
Wynnefield
Overbrook
East Park Reservoir
SCHUYLKILL
Old Cathedral Cemetery