

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: McKinley Park **DRAFT**
Other names/site number: East Park
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: Corner of H Street and Alhambra Boulevard
City or town: Sacramento State: California County: Sacramento
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this ___ 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 ___ 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 ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

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

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>13</u>	<u>5</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	structures
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>19</u>	<u>8</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture/Outdoor Recreation

Recreation and Culture/Sports Facility

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

Recreation and Culture/Music Facility

Landscape/Park

Landscape/Garden

Landscape/Natural Feature

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture/Outdoor Recreation

Recreation and Culture/Sports Facility

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

Landscape/Park

Landscape/Garden

Landscape/Natural Feature

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement/Art Deco

Modern Movement/Other/California Style

Other - Late Nineteenth Century Picturesque park landscape

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Brick and concrete

Wood and stone

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.)

Summary Paragraph

McKinley Park is a 33-acre city park in East Sacramento. Its landscape consists of mature tree masses and open meadow areas. Important park features include: a naturalistic lake; a rose garden; a community center with an auditorium, branch of the Sacramento Public library, meeting rooms, pool and pool house; a children's playground; tennis courts; a baseball diamond; and a garden and art center.

Narrative Description

Design of McKinley Park

McKinley Park was originally known as East Park, named from its location east of the Sacramento city limits. It was created in 1872 as a destination park by the Sacramento Street Railway Company to promote use of the streetcars, primarily on weekends. Typical of late nineteenth century pleasure grounds, picnicking, musical performances, dancing, ball games, and

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

enjoying the naturalistic landscape were the primary uses of East Park. Its naturalistic design was typical of urban parks in the second half of the nineteenth century as pioneered by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux at New York's Central Park. With roots in English estate landscapes, naturalistic park design borrowed from Pastoral and Picturesque landscape theories and promoted the benefits for urban dwellers to experience rural landscapes. Trees and other vegetation were planted in random patterns calculated to emulate nature. Water features, such as lakes, were often part of the landscape.

In 1902, East Park became a city park with the encouragement of civic groups. It was renamed in honor of President William McKinley, who had been assassinated a year earlier. The growth of suburban development in Sacramento resulted in its being situated in a residential neighborhood rather than in an agricultural area on the outskirts of the city.

McKinley Park is characterized by its naturalistic planting of now-mature trees, open meadow areas, winding pathways, a formal rose garden, and a naturalistic lake – a remnant of a former slough. As McKinley Park evolved, new facilities were added, but the overall naturalistic design has been maintained.

The rise of Progressivism in the early twentieth century led to government reforms and the search for solutions to social problems. Government became actively involved in public health issues, housing, and clean water. Parks, and particularly services benefitting children, became part of the Progressive-era goals. McKinley Park became a focus of city improvements, including the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse with its auditorium, a branch of the Sacramento Public Library, meeting rooms, pool and pool house. The pool and pool house refer to a swimming pool, a wading pool, and a pool house with changing rooms and restrooms. A playground for children, a basketball court, tennis courts, and other recreational facilities also were added to the park during this period.

The growth of the residential neighborhood around McKinley Park, and the development of other parks in Sacramento, particularly William Land Park, meant a transition from a destination park on the outskirts of Sacramento to a neighborhood park within East Sacramento, which was annexed to the city in 1911. McKinley Park has grown in importance for its contribution to the quality of life for East Sacramento's neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, few records of the park's design and its evolution, including historic maps and design drawings, have been found. Evaluation of how its design evolved over time has been deduced through the analysis of the collection of historic photographs, and through study of written records and press accounts.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Park Character Defining Features

Spatial Organization

The design of McKinley Park appears to have grown over time and was not necessarily based on a master plan. One remaining natural feature is the remnant of Burns' Slough that became its Lake Kiesel. As the city's street grid was extended around it, a rectangular pattern formed its shape and became a major organizing element. Major park features, including the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse, the rose garden, the tennis courts, and the Garden & Arts Center, evolved or were added over time. They were oriented with the street grid. The other major organizing element is the relationship of trees and open space meadows. The trees are planted in naturalistic form with two large open spaces – the sports field in the northwest corner, and the baseball diamond on the east side.

The trees, meadows, and curving circulation paths follow the style of a naturalistic urban park established in the late nineteenth century. The concept was for these parks to provide a healthful, natural experience as a respite from urban life. McKinley Park's landscape of mature trees, and open meadows as sports fields comprise a naturalistic and pastoral landscape of beauty with ample shade in warm weather.

One formal element of the McKinley Park landscape that no longer exists is the palm drive entrance at the corner of Alhambra Boulevard and H Street. This diagonal entry feature followed the original line of the streetcar track into the park. Sometime between 1910 and 1913, the tracks were removed and replaced by a road lined with an allée of palm trees. The roadway was removed in the 1930s, possibly related to the construction of the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse, and replaced with lawn. Other trees were planted, which have since matured, but most of the palm trees are no longer present, resulting in the loss of this design feature. Nonetheless, a few of the palms remain.

One other formal element is the rose garden, which was established in 1928. The formal arrangement of beds and lawn paths consists of concentric ovals with radiating paths on the ends. The oval form is derived from the oval running track which previously existed at that location.

There is no complete record of how McKinley Park's design evolved and changed over time. The best available evidence is found by analysis of the collection of historic photographs. It appears that there have been minimal changes to its overall spatial organization since the end of the period of significance and, therefore, its spatial organization and overall design is a contributing feature to the historic significance of McKinley Park.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Circulation

McKinley Park's circulation consists primarily of functional pedestrian paths. A perimeter sidewalk encircles the park. This was supplemented in 1987 with a crushed granite running path adjacent to the sidewalk. Other pathways, primarily curvilinear in form, provide access to the park's interior, and a pathway encircles the lake.

Vehicular circulation and parking is primarily on neighboring streets with two exceptions. One exception is the G Street extension that was constructed about 1955 with the intention of reducing street congestion and providing parking. The other exception is the small parking lot at the Garden & Arts Center.

There is no complete record of the circulation system during the historic period or how it changed over time other than what is seen in historic photographs. The 1957 aerial photograph of the park shows that much of the existing circulation system was in place at the end of the period of significance. The circulation system is a significant feature of the park's landscape design and is, therefore, a contributing feature.

Topography

The topography of McKinley Park is mostly flat, as is much of this part of Sacramento because of its being a former flood plain of the American River. The main topographic feature is Lake Kiesel, a remnant of Burns' Slough. The average elevation is approximately 20' above sea level, with most elevations in it being between 18' and 22' with the exception of Lake Kiesel which has a water level elevation of approximately 16' above sea level.

Vegetation

The vegetation of McKinley Park consists primarily of large mature trees and expanses of lawn. Shrubs and ground covers are used as accents in key places and in foundation planting around the buildings, but most of the landscape consists of open views in the meadows and below the trees. A recent tree survey found that there are over 500 trees of approximately 70 different species present in McKinley Park¹ which would qualify it as an arboretum. Significant tree species in the park include London plane (*Platanus acerfolia*), English elms (*Ulmus procera*), several species of oaks (*Quercus* spp.), Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*), and

¹*The Magnificent Trees of McKinley Park*. Sacramento Tree Foundation. Pamphlet, no date; and 2016 McKinley Park tree survey provided by the Sacramento Parks & Recreation Department.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*). Most of the trees in the park appear to be in good condition judging by their full canopies, but there are a few trees which are clearly in decline. As with any landscape of mature and aging trees, a number of large trees have been removed in recent years.

The East Sacramento neighborhood is well-known for its tree-lined streets. McKinley Park has contributed to that with its row of historic sycamore trees (*Platanus occidentalis*) along McKinley Boulevard, a row of historic mulberry trees (*Morus alba*) along H Street, and a row of more-recently planted ginkgo trees (*Ginkgo biloba*), also along H Street. Although not part of the park, notable also is the row of Canary Island date palm trees on the south side of H Street.

Vegetation in McKinley Park appears to have evolved and changed over time. However, because of the age of some of the existing trees, it can be deduced that many were present during the period of significance. Overall, the vegetation in McKinley Park is considered as a contributing feature to its historic significance.

Horticultural Features

The rose garden is McKinley Park's primary horticultural feature. It was established in 1928 by Frederick Noble Evans, a landscape architect and the city's first parks superintendent. After Evans' death in 1946, it was formally named in his honor, the Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden.

The Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden contains over 1,200 ornamental roses and has perimeter companion beds with perennials, ornamental grasses, and shrubs. Pathways between the beds are lawn, and concrete bands edge the beds. Several steel arbors support climbing roses. Two large Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) are located at the center of the two semi-circular ends. Mature trees around the perimeter contribute to its setting. Renovations starting in 2008 and completed by 2012 include revised bed layouts, the addition of new metal arbors, and a new irrigation system. These renovations follow the overall form and design of the garden.

Dating from 1928, the Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden retains integrity and contributes to the historic significance of the park.

Another notable garden in the park is the Japanese-style garden in the courtyard of the Garden & Arts Center. The Japanese-style garden, which includes a water feature, is in need of renovation.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Water Feature

McKinley Park's Lake Kiesel was one of its earliest features. It was created from a remnant of Burns' Slough that formerly carried flood water from the American River through the site. Construction of the North Levee in 1862 cut off Burns' Slough from the direct flow of flood waters, but it remained a low area and was used for the creation of this lake in 1872. A rustic wood deck and bridge on the lake are no longer present. The island toward the north side of Lake Kiesel was added in 1988 for wildlife habitat. Renovations in 2017 include, deepening the lake from 4 feet to 9 feet, removing the rock fountains, and lining the lake with a rubberized material. Otherwise, Lake Kiesel largely retains its historic form, design, and character. The lake was named by Frederick William Kiesel, President of the California National Bank, to honor his son Frederick Birdsall Kiesel who died in infancy. A small monument with a plaque and drinking fountain remains on the east side of the lake.

Buildings and Structures

The two major buildings in McKinley Park are the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and the Iva Gard Shepard Garden & Arts Center. The Clunie Memorial Clubhouse was designed by architects Harry Devine with Starks & Flanders. Opened in 1936, the brick building with terra cotta and concrete detailing is a modernist interpretation of Spanish Colonial Revival style. The building includes an auditorium, a branch of the Sacramento Public Library, meeting rooms, pool and pool house. Renovations in 2012 and 2013 include restoring woodwork in the auditorium, refinishing doors and floors, and refurbishing walls with new paint. The Clunie Memorial Clubhouse, pool and pool house are largely unchanged from the period of significance and are considered as contributory features to the park's historic significance.

The Garden & Arts Center opened in 1958. It was designed by architects Franceschi & Mullen, in the California Modernist style. The facility contains an auditorium, meeting rooms, and an outdoor courtyard and garden. The Garden & Arts Center and the center's courtyard patio garden retain integrity from the period of significance and both are contributory features to the historic significance of McKinley Park.

Other buildings include the rose garden building, used for decades as a children's preschool facility, a rustic brick restroom near the baseball diamond, a picnic shelter and restroom near the children's playground, and a small kiosk at the tennis courts.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Small Scale Features

Small scale features include benches, picnic tables, signs, monuments, plaques, arbors, drinking fountains, and other similar features. A few of these may date from the period of significance, but others are beyond the scope of this study to inventory separately as historic features.

Individual Park Features

Individual park features are listed as being contributing or non-contributing to the significance of the property. A contributing feature adds to the historic associations, historic architectural values for which the property is significant because it was present during the period of significance, relates to the documented significance of the property, and possesses historic integrity, or is capable of yielding important information about the period.²

1. Perimeter Sidewalk. The concrete sidewalk around the perimeter of the park was constructed in the early 1940s with federal funding from the Works Progress Administration. Much of this original concrete remains although sections have been removed and replaced with contemporary accessible curb ramps. The sidewalk retains integrity and is significant as one of the park improvements of the twentieth century reform park movement and President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs. One date stamp is found in the concrete reading "A. Teichert & Son Contractors 1944." Contributing feature.

2. Tennis Courts. The early tennis courts in this location were lawn tennis and were constructed about 1920. The date of construction of the existing courts is not known, but the existing configuration of courts is visible in the 1957 aerial photograph (see Figure 3). The tennis courts are significant as one of the park's recreational facilities from the early decades of the twentieth century, and for its association with an historic recreational activity. Contributing feature.

3. Tennis Courts Kiosk. The date of the small kiosk structure at the tennis courts is unknown, yet appears to be recent construction, and is non-contributing.

4. Garden & Arts Center. The Garden & Arts Center was designed by Raymond R. Franceschi of the firm Franceschi & Mullen in 1958. The building is a low, ranch style building with stone accents, wood panels and beams, and large expanses of glass. The roof is a low angle combination of gable and shed style. A covered walkway and integral sign extend toward McKinley Boulevard. The building retains integrity and is significant as an excellent example of California Modernist architecture. Contributing feature.

² National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

5. Garden & Arts Center Courtyard Patio Garden. The courtyard patio garden adjacent to the Garden & Arts Center is integrally designed with the building and illustrates the close relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces in the California Modernist style. The patio and an original garden were part of the original building construction and include exposed aggregate concrete paving, benches, and an enclosing fence. The Japanese-style garden present today was installed about 1985, and, although after the period of significance, is a compatible feature. The courtyard patio garden is significant as an example of an outdoor space directly related to a California Modernist style building. Contributing feature.

6. Rustic Brick Restroom Building. The brick restroom near the baseball diamond likely was built during the 1930s. The building is a simple rectangle with rustic stone walls and an offset peaked roof with a chimney at one end. The restroom retains integrity and is significant as an example of park improvements dating to the reform park movement period. Contributing feature.

7. Picnic Areas. The main picnic area is south of the tennis courts and a smaller picnic area is west of the Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden. There also is a picnic area and shelter adjacent to the playground. Picnicking is an historic use in the park, but the current picnic facilities likely post-date the period of significance and there is no documentation of where picnic areas were located during the historic period. Non-contributing feature.

8. Baseball Diamond. Baseball has been played in the park since its early days in the nineteenth century. The original diamond was in the northwest corner of the park. The current location of the baseball diamond likely was established after the zoo was relocated to William Land Park in 1927, and is visible in the 1957 aerial photograph. The baseball diamond contributes to the park's significance as a facility hosting historic sporting activities that date to the nineteenth century. Contributing feature.

9. Horseshoe Pits. The installation of the horseshoe pits likely dates from the 1950s or earlier. The horseshoe pits consist of 6 sets of stakes and concrete pitching platforms with wood backboards. The horseshoe pits contribute to the park's historic significance as a traditional recreational activity dating to the period of significance. Contributing feature.

10. Rose Garden Building. The building adjacent to the rose garden was built about the same time as the rose garden, 1928. The building has some features of Craftsman architecture. Walls are vertical wood board and batten siding, topped by a hipped metal roof of low pitch with wide, unenclosed eaves and visible roof rafters. Windows are mostly dual pane vinyl replacements, but a few of the windows appear to be original, single-hung wooden casement windows. A brick chimney is located on the northern wall, opposite the building entrance. Based on historic photos, the building originally had a wooden shingled roof. An architecturally compatible eastern wing was added to the building at some point after 1928, matching the original building's

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

exterior siding and roof pattern; date of construction is unknown. Despite some modification, the building retains its original massing and architectural details. Contributing feature.

11. Perimeter Running Path. The crushed granite running path around the park was installed in 1987. Non-contributing feature.

12. Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden. The rose garden was planned in 1928 by Frederick Noble Evans, the city's first parks superintendent. Construction started by 1929. The oval shape reflects a running track that previously existed at that location. The rose garden is the most significant horticultural feature of McKinley Park. A renovation of the garden was started in 2008 and completed by 2012. Contributing feature.

13. G Street Extension and Parking Area. The extension of G Street into the park was created about 1955 and was intended to address street traffic congestion and to provide additional parking. It contributes to the significance of the park as a modification during the period of significance to integrate the park into the surrounding vehicle circulation of the neighborhood. Contributing feature.

14. Lake Kiesel. The park's lake was created about 1872 as one of the early features of East Park. It was formed from the remnant of Burns' Slough that previously connected to the American River. The lake was named in 1912 by the parents of Frederick Birdsall Kiesel after the death of their infant son. Lake Kiesel is an important feature of the park's naturalistic landscape. Contributing feature.

15. Frederick Birdsall Kiesel Monument and Drinking Fountain. The monument, with a drinking fountain and plaque, was installed in 1912. Contributing feature.

16. Children's Playground. A playground in this location may have dated as early as the 1920s and is seen in photographs from the 1930s. The current playground was constructed in 2013. Because none of the original equipment remains and there is no historic integrity, the playground is a non-contributing feature.

17. Picnic Shelter. The existing picnic shelter near the playground was part of the 2013 playground reconstruction and is a non-contributing feature.

18. Restroom Near Playground. The existing restroom building also was constructed in 2013 and is a non-contributing feature.

19. Basketball Court. A basketball court at this location dates from the 1930s, but has been reconstructed and is a non-contributing feature.

20. Clunie Memorial Clubhouse. The Clunie Memorial Clubhouse built in 1936, also houses an auditorium, a branch of the Sacramento Public Library, and meeting rooms, along with a pool

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

and pool house. The building is composed of brick walls with varying patterns, precast concrete details, and a tile gable roof at the central entry and auditorium wing. The library wing has a flat roof. The pool house has a curving wall with stepped recessed entry. Distinctive vertical rectangular windows appear throughout. The building is a modernist interpretation of Spanish Colonial Revival style. The Clunie Memorial Clubhouse retains integrity as one of the park's signature features and contributes to the park's significance for its architectural qualities, and as a legacy of the reform parks movement. Contributing feature.

21. Northwest Sports Field. The northwest lawn area of McKinley Park is significant for having hosted sporting events since at least the first decade of the twentieth century. Contributing feature.

22. Spatial Organization. The spatial organization is defined largely by the areas of trees and open spaces. It is a key design feature of the park and largely retains its integrity from the period of significance. This is evidenced when comparing Figure 2 (Existing Conditions), to Figure 3, which provides an aerial view of the park during the period of significance. The spatial organization of the park remains as it was then. Contributing feature.

23. Topography. The park's topography is generally flat except for the low area around Lake Keisel. The topography is largely unchanged and retains its integrity from the period of significance. Contributing feature.

24. Vegetation. Many of the park's trees date from the period of significance³ and the overall planting design retains integrity. Contributing feature.

25. Circulation System. The park's circulation system is composed of pedestrian pathways and is a significant feature of the landscape design. The 1957 aerial photograph shows that much of the circulation system was present during the period of significance. Contributing feature.

26. Park Light Standards. The traditional-style cast metal pole and acorn luminaire likely are from the period of significance and contribute to the park's landscape design. Contributing feature.

27. Irrigation System. The park's irrigation system may include components from different eras, but most of it likely is of modern construction and is considered non-contributing.

Park Features No Longer Present

³ Julin, Dr. Kent, ISA Certified Arborist. *Arborist Report – Assessment of Ages of Trees at McKinley Park*. May 2018.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

1872 Park Clubhouse. The original park clubhouse was built in 1872 as a two-story, wood-framed building with a large wood deck that served as an outdoor dance floor and basketball court. The building was removed in 1929.

Zoo. No physical descriptions or many photographs of the East Park zoo have been found, but a variety of animals were kept. One surviving photograph shows a pond full of alligators. The zoo was closed in 1927 when a larger zoo was created at William Land Park.

Streetcar Line into the Park. A diagonal streetcar line entered East Park and brought visitors directly to the original clubhouse. The tracks were removed sometime between 1910 and 1913.

Palm Drive. After the streetcar tracks were removed, a park road was built and lined on either side by palm trees, some of which still exist. The drive was removed and replaced with lawn, possibly related to the construction of the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse.

Rustic Deck and Bridge. A rustic wood deck and bridge at the lake are seen in early photographs and postcards. It is not known when these features were removed.

Auto Camp. An auto camp operated in the panhandle area⁴ of McKinley Park between 1916 and 1923. It served travelers on the transcontinental Lincoln Highway.

Running Track. A running track was built sometime prior to 1908. It was removed about 1928 and replaced with the rose garden which replicated its oval shape.

Statement of Integrity

McKinley Park retains much of its integrity from the period of significance (1871-1958). Its overall design framework of open meadows, tree plantings, and a lake has changed little from the early years of the park. Park features, such as the Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden, the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and pool, and the tennis courts retain integrity from the reform park era. Many of the trees that define its landscape were planted during the period of significance. The Garden & Arts Center also retains integrity from the post-WWII modernist period. Additions and changes after the period of significance are generally minor and do not detract from the overall integrity of McKinley Park.

Some contributing features have had renovations in recent years. The rose garden underwent a renovation between 2008 and 2012. Changes include revised bed layouts, the addition of new metal arbors, and a new irrigation system; however, the rose garden still retains its main

⁴ The northeast area of the park east of 33rd Street.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

character defining features from the historic period. Renovations to the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse in 2012 and 2013 retain their original character and integrity. They include restoring woodwork in the auditorium, refinishing doors and floors, and refurbishing walls with new paint. Lake Kiesel also underwent a renovation project completed in 2017. The lake was deepened to improve water quality, a synthetic liner was added, and the two stone fountains were removed. An earlier renovation added the island for wildlife habitat. Although these changes are not insignificant, overall the Lake Kiesel retains its character defining features from the period of significance and it remains a contributing feature to the significance of McKinley Park.

Evaluation of McKinley Park Relative to the Seven Aspects of Integrity

Integrity is traditionally recognized through seven aspects or qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In this section the overall integrity of McKinley Park is evaluated relative to the seven aspects. Overall, McKinley Park retains a high degree of integrity.

Location

McKinley Park retains its aspect of location as do most of the contributory features. The park occupies the same land as when it was first established in 1871 and the additional 14.5 acres purchased in 1873. As the residential neighborhoods around the park were established, the street grid was extended around the park and this changed the edges of the park, but overall the park retains its aspect of location.

Design

There is not good documentation of the original design of the park, but we know that many of the original elements still exist and the overall design and spatial organization of elements throughout the park has changed little since the early years of East Park. Additionally, with the period of significance of 1871 to 1958, it can be documented that the overall park design we see today retains integrity of design as existed near the end of the period of significance. Much of the design was based on logical site planning and as a response to natural conditions. The park's main natural feature was the remnant of Burns' Slough, and being the low spot in the park's topography, it became Lake Kiesel. The original park clubhouse was located at the front of the park to be convenient for visitors arriving by streetcars. In 1936, the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and pool was built on the site of the original clubhouse to be visible from Alhambra Boulevard. Large open meadows at the northwest corner and east side of the park were created for sports activities. A naturalistic planting design of large shade trees filled in much of the other areas of the park to fulfill the vision of a naturalistic landscape, typical of nineteenth century urban parks. The original planting design and the large open meadows for sports activities remain to this day and retain integrity.

Setting

The setting of the environment surrounding McKinley Park did change significantly since the founding of the park, but has changed little since the period of significance. The park was

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

established on land just beyond the developed city in 1871. The park was the pioneer development in what would become East Sacramento and it was a stimulus for the residential development that occurred in the early decades of the twentieth century. The residential neighborhood, with tree-lined streets and many architecturally significant homes, creates a very distinctive setting for McKinley Park that has changed little since the end of the period of significance. The park's setting is a significant characteristic of the park and it retains a large degree of integrity.

Materials

As a historic and living landscape, some of the materials that make up the park are dynamic, but overall McKinley Park retains a high degree of materials integrity. Many of the trees and plants that make of the park's landscape are old enough to be from the period of significance, and some of the oldest trees may be from the early years of the park. Much of the park's ground plane is grass as it had been during the period of significance. Some of the paved surfaces have likely changed since the period of significance, but parts of the perimeter concrete sidewalk are date stamped from 1944. Other asphalt and concrete paved areas are clearly from after the period of significance. This analysis will not go into detail of the integrity of the park's buildings, but it can be clearly stated that the brick, stone, wood and other materials of the Clunie Clubhouse, the Garden & Arts Center, and the brick restroom building, all dating from the period of significance, retain a high degree of integrity of materials. As previously stated, overall, the park retains a high degree of integrity of materials.

Workmanship

As a dynamic landscape the evidence of workmanship that has occurred for generations can be seen in the high degree of craft, skill, and workmanship in the landscape maintenance of the park. The park is maintained to a high level that is evident both today and in photographs from the period of significance. The trees and turf areas are generally in good health and condition. The Rose Garden displays a high degree of skill and workmanship in the annual display of rose blossoms. Likewise, the park's buildings are generally well maintained, were built with excellent workmanship, and have retained original materials in good condition through regular care and maintenance. Overall, McKinley Park retains a high degree of integrity of workmanship.

Feeling

Feeling is the ability of a historic property to convey or evoke a sense of the past. With its naturalistic landscape design and historic buildings, McKinley Park is clearly a product of an earlier time. The naturalistic landscape with mature trees, open meadows, and Lake Kiesel evokes the characteristics of nineteenth century urban parks that were created to provide places of nature and escape from urban pressures. The naturalistic design is intended to emulate forests, meadows, and water features as they were found in nature. The buildings also contribute to the park's sense of the past with both the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and the Garden & Arts Center distinctive products of their periods. The Clunie Memorial Clubhouse, designed in the 1930s, exhibits characteristics of a transition period between the earlier Spanish Colonial Revival style and that of the coming modern styles. The Garden & Arts Center is a product of the post-World War II California Modernist design style with its distinctive use of materials and linking of

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

indoor and outdoor spaces. McKinley Park evokes a sense of the past and retains integrity of feeling.

Association

Association is the direct link between a property and the event(s) for which it is significant. For McKinley Park it is not an event that has significance, but its continuous use as a place of recreation and escape from urban pressures. Since its opening in 1872, the park has been a destination for recreational activities, sports, and simply enjoying the park landscape. This association from the earliest days of the park remains unchanged to this day. In the twentieth century a branch library, pool, garden & arts center were added making the park even more of a destination for additional leisure activities. McKinley Park retains integrity of association.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Park Features

Existing Park Features	Type of Feature	Date Built	Historic Status	Notes
Spatial organization and forest/meadow relationship	site	1871-present	Contributing	Largely unchanged from the period of significance.
Topography	site	1871-present	Contributing	Unchanged from the period of significance.
Vegetation	site	1871-present	Contributing	Largely unchanged from the period of significance.
Circulation system - pedestrian paths	site/circulation	1871-present	Contributing	Largely unchanged from the period of significance.
Perimeter sidewalk	site/circulation	ca. 1940	Contributing	WPA project
Tennis courts	site/recreation facility	ca. 1920	Contributing	Lawn tennis courts at this location predate the constructed courts.
Tennis courts kiosk	structure	unknown	Non-contributing	
Garden & Arts Center	building	1958	Contributing	
Garden & Arts Center courtyard garden	site/garden	1958	Contributing	Japanese garden re-design ca. 1985
Picnic area (2)	site/recreation facility	unknown	Non-contributing	
Baseball diamond	site/recreation facility	ca. 1927	Contributing	Originally in the NW corner of the park, the baseball diamond was moved to its current location around 1927 with the relocation of the zoo to Land Park.
Brick restrooms building	structure	1930s	Contributing	Near baseball diamond.
Horseshoe pits	site/recreation facility	1950s	Contributing	
Perimeter running path	site/circulation	1987	Non-contributing	
Rose garden	site/garden	1928	Contributing	
Rose garden building	building	ca. 1928	Contributing	
G Street extension and parking area	site/circulation	ca. 1955	Contributing	
Lake Kiesel and fountains	site/water feature	1872	Contributing	
Frederick Birdsall Kiesel monument and fountain	object	1912	Contributing	
Children's playground	site/recreation facility	2013	Non-contributing	Original playground may date from sometime prior to 1920, but none of the original equipment survives.
Picnic shelter near playground	structure	2013	Non-contributing	
Restroom near playground	structure	2013	Non-contributing	
Basketball court	site/recreation facility	unknown	Non-contributing	Original basketball court likely dates from 1936.
Clunie Memorial Clubhouse & Pool	building/recreation facility	1936	Contributing	
Sports field (NW)	site/recreation facility	prior to 1908	Contributing	
Park light standards - Steel standards and acorn luminaires	objects	likely from period of significance	Contributing	
Irrigation system	site/infrastructure	various periods	Non-contributing	Unknown if any components date from the period of significance.
Park Features No Longer Extant	Type of Feature	Date Built	Date Removed	Notes
Original park clubhouse	structure	1872	1929	Replaced by the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse.
Outdoor dance floor/basketball court	structure	1872	ca. 1936	At original clubhouse.
Zoo	site	1870s	1927	Zoo moved to Land Park.
Streetcar line into park	circulation	prior to 1902	between 1910 and 1913	Replaced by Palm Drive.
Palm Drive	circulation & horticultural	prior to 1920	ca. 1936	On alignment of streetcar line into park, few of the palms remain.
Rustic deck and bridges at lake	small scale features	prior to 1912	unknown	Seen in historic photos and postcards.
Auto camp in panhandle	site	1916	1923	
Running track	recreation facility	prior to 1908	ca 1928	On site of rose garden.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Landscape Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

Community Planning and Development

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

Period of Significance

1871-1958

Significant Dates

- 1871
- 1872
- 1873
- 1902
- 1929
- 1936
- 1958

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

- Zeinwaldt, C. Jacob.
- Evans, Frederick Noble.
- Devine, Harry.
- Franceschi, Raymond R.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

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.)

McKinley Park has significance at the state level under Criterion A for recreation, and community planning and development. It is Sacramento's first park related to the American urban parks movement of the nineteenth century. The land was purchased in 1871 and the park was developed in 1872 as East Park, making it one of the earliest parks developed in California and the West – only San Francisco's Golden Gate Park (1871) being older. The park also is significant as one of the earliest examples of the phenomenon of "trolley parks" that were created by streetcar companies to boost ridership and to spur suburban residential development. In the early decades of the twentieth century, it was influential in the development of East Sacramento's neighborhoods, with its collection of architecturally significant houses and tree-lined streets shaded with canopy trees.

McKinley Park also is locally significant under Criterion C as a work of landscape architecture. Its naturalistic design of informal tree plantings, meadows, curving pathways, and a picturesque lake is typical of urban parks from the nineteenth century. It also is significant for its collection of recreational features added during the reform park movement of the twentieth century prior to 1940.

The period of significance is 1871 to 1958.

Period of significance is defined as the span of time during which a property achieves its significance through development, construction, and/or events. The period of significance for McKinley Park begins in 1871 with the purchase of land by the Sacramento Street Railway Company for development as a park, and continues to 1958 with the construction of the Garden & Arts Center, the last major addition to McKinley Park.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance:

To be eligible for the National Register, a property must have significance that meets one or more of the National Register criteria, and it must retain integrity from the period of significance. McKinley Park is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: association with events or activities that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history, and Criterion C: embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction that represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values.

Criterion A – Recreation, and Community Planning and Development – State Significance

McKinley Park is significant at the state level under Criterion A for its association with patterns of history related to the American urban parks movement of the nineteenth century, and as an early recreational destination developed by a streetcar company. The American urban parks movement of the nineteenth century was still in its formative years in 1871 when the land for East Park was purchased. The park was developed in 1872. The park was renamed McKinley Park in 1902, after the assassination of President William McKinley.

The idea of a pleasure ground was to provide healthful recreation for urban dwellers in outdoor areas that were designed to emulate nature in pastoral and picturesque settings. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed New York's Central Park in 1858 and that park was still in development when East Park was begun. San Francisco's Golden Gate Park was started just one year prior to the creation of East Park. Although much smaller than Golden Gate Park, McKinley Park is one of the pioneering urban parks in the West. As with both Central Park in New York City and Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, East Park was created at the edge of the expanding urban area, and as McKinley Park, has played an important role in the future growth and development of the city of Sacramento and of its park-centered residential neighborhoods.

In the context of California, McKinley Park is the state's second oldest urban park associated with the American urban parks movement of the nineteenth century. Sacramento was the state's second largest city with a population of 16,283 in 1870. A chronology of California's urban parks is provided below:

- 1868 – San Diego's Balboa Park land set aside, but the park was not developed until the twentieth century.
- 1870 – San Francisco's Golden Gate Park established.
- 1870 – Oakland's Lake Merritt, land set aside, but park not developed until years later.
- 1871 – Sacramento's **East Park**, land purchased, park developed in 1872.
- 1872 – San Jose's Alum Rock Park, land set aside.
- 1886 – Los Angeles' Elysian Park established.
- 1889 – Sacramento's McClatchy Park established as Joyland amusement park.

McKinley Park

Sacramento, California
County and State

Name of Property

- 1896 – Los Angeles’ Griffith Park land donated.
- 1903 – Fresno’s Roeding Park established.
- 1905 – San Francisco’s Mission Dolores Park established.
- 1905 – Chico’s Bidwell Park established.
- 1907 – Sacramento’s Southside Park established.
- 1907 – Modesto’s Graceada Park established.
- 1922 – Sacramento’s William Land Park developed.

Relevant also to Criterion A is McKinley Park’s facilities related to the reform park movement of the first half of the twentieth century. The reform park movement focused civic efforts to improve recreational facilities with an emphasis on healthful benefits and facilities for children. During this period, McKinley Park saw the addition of the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and pool. A children’s playground also was built adjacent to the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse.

McKinley Park also is significant as a very early example of a “trolley park” – parks developed by streetcar companies as a way to generate ridership and to stimulate suburban residential development. Trolley parks were a phenomenon throughout the United States, but the majority of these were developed from the 1890s through the 1920s. East Park, developed in 1872, was one of the earliest examples of this phenomenon. Trolley parks were developed into two distinct types. The first type was the traditional pleasure ground park, which often included picnic facilities, music and dancing venues, sports fields, and a water feature. East Park is an early example of the pleasure ground trolley park. The second type of trolley parks were developed as amusement parks, including Sacramento’s Joyland amusement park, now McClatchy Park, which included rides, midways, and food vendors.

Sacramento’s streetcar company lost interest in operating and maintaining East Park in the 1890s, but a campaign by civic groups led to its being purchased by the city. McKinley Park became the centerpiece for the residential development of East Sacramento in the early decades of the twentieth century. Architecturally diverse houses were developed around McKinley Park, including American Craftsman bungalow, English Cottage, Tudor, and Spanish Colonial, which add to the diversity of storybook neighborhood styles in East Sacramento.

Criterion C – Landscape Architecture – Local Significance

McKinley Park is significant under Criterion C as an historic designed landscape and as an example of naturalistic park design typical of the nineteenth century American urban parks. Naturalistic planting of tree groves created both forest and meadow areas. The lake provided a picturesque focal point within the landscape. Recreational facilities and attractions included a clubhouse, outdoor dancing and music venue, pathways for walking, and sports facilities for

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

tennis and ball games. There is no professional designer credited and documented with the original design of East Park and there are no plans showing its early development. Historic photographs and descriptions, and the relative age of the park's mature trees, lead to the conclusion that much of the original design survives.

In the twentieth century, McKinley Park came under professional management of the city's parks department. In particular, landscape architect Frederick Noble Evans became Sacramento's first Superintendent of Parks in 1920 and served in that capacity until his death in 1946. During his tenure, he planned the rose garden, 1928, and oversaw the planning and construction of the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and pool in 1936, which replaced the park's original clubhouse.

The Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and pool were listed in the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources in 1983 as the "Florence Turton Clunie Memorial." It is eligible for the National Register as a work of architecture from the early modernist period. The Garden & Arts Center, built in 1958, is also individually eligible as a work of architecture representative of the California style of post-WWII modernist architecture. It was surveyed for National Register eligibility; the survey recommended the property as National Register eligible.

Site History

McKinley Park originally was created as East Park in 1872 by the Sacramento Street Railway Company to provide a destination for streetcar service. In 1871, the streetcar company bought 30 acres of land just outside of the Sacramento city boundary. By 1872, a two-story park building was constructed complete with "balconies and piazzas" with views to both the Sierra and the Coast Range.⁵ The streetcar line from H Street was extended directly into the park, bringing visitors right to the park building where events, musical performances, and dances were held.⁶

A newspaper report at the time noted that the "grounds are being tastefully laid out with drives, avenues and approaches, and ornamented with trees, shrubs and flowers."⁷ A lake was planned in the park's low point and constructed from a remnant of Burns' Slough. The slough was once a source of flood waters into Sacramento from the American River. Levees were built to prevent the flooding and most of the slough was filled in and eventually developed.

⁵ *Sacramento Daily Union*. June 8, 1872.

⁶ Until approximately 1890 when overhead electric lines were installed, streetcars were pulled by mules.

⁷ *Sacramento Daily Union*. June 8, 1872.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

A zoo was part of the early East Park with “deer, raccoons and other animals.” The inspiration for the zoo was apparently the Woodward’s Gardens, a combination amusement park, museum, and zoo that opened in 1866 in San Francisco’s Mission District.⁸ The early plantings in East Park were subject to trial and error. An 1873 newspaper article noted that severe frosts killed or damaged a number of trees and shrubs, including pepper trees, acacias, oleanders, and Australian gum trees. A nursery was set up on two acres in the southwest corner of the park to grow replacement plants.⁹

While East Park was designed intentionally, there is little record of who designed the park. It may have been C. Jacob Zeinwaldt (or Zumwaldt) who is credited as East Park’s first superintendent, with early park work being done under his direction.¹⁰ Zeinwaldt was a northern California orchardist and landscape gardener. He was listed as the East Park gardener in city directories from 1874 to 1876 and had previously worked as a farmer.¹¹ In 1873, the streetcar company purchased an additional 14.5 acres at the northeast corner of East Park for picnic grounds. East Park was deemed a success and the streetcar company added extra service on Sundays to accommodate the crowds. As early as the 1870s, baseball games were a popular activity on weekends.

Maintaining East Park was costly. Eventually, the streetcar company lost interest and the park’s condition deteriorated. In 1900, the Tuesday Club, a group of civic-minded Sacramento women, urged the city to purchase East Park. The Tuesday Club hoped that city stewardship would lead to East Park improvements, particularly the addition of a large children’s playground. At the time, McKinley Park and Capital Park were Sacramento’s only large parks. Ten small public squares, however, also existed having been deeded to the city by John Sutter.¹²

In 1902, Albert Gallatin, president of the streetcar company, had been planning to sell the East Park land to be subdivided for residential development. The Tuesday Club persuaded Gallatin to reduce the price for the land from \$20,000 to \$12,500 and to allow the city to purchase the property. After much discussion, and the Tuesday Club’s promising to maintain and to improve the park, the city finally agreed to the purchase of East Park. The assassination of President William McKinley in 1901 led to the Tuesday Club’s proposing to make the park a memorial to the slain president. Their idea was not to build a memorial monument, but rather to make the park itself the memorial.¹³

⁸ Reference to Woodward Gardens is made in the June 8, 1872 *Sacramento Daily Union* article.

⁹ *Sacramento Daily Union*. February 1, 1873.

¹⁰ *Sacramento Daily Union*. November 23, 1872.

¹¹ Anderson, Christy and Mahan, William E. *Sacramento History Journal*, Volume III, No. 1, Winter & Spring 2003. P. 14.

¹² 1900 Official Map of Sacramento. California State Library.

¹³ Anderson and Mahan. P. 19.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Thereafter, under city ownership, East Park was renamed McKinley Park. Through the efforts of Tuesday Club member, Carrie Miller, the women's group managed to raise private funds for maintaining McKinley Park between 1902 and 1908.

A 1908 city map shows McKinley Park in some detail for the first time. The map shows a developed system of paths or drives, a running track, deer park, flower garden, lawn tennis, a basketball court, a baseball field, zoological gardens, and picnic grounds.

In 1911, the city annexed East Sacramento and allocated funds for the maintenance of the park. A Board of Park Directors was created in 1913 to oversee management of the park. In 1915, Sacramento engaged John Nolen, a landscape architect and urban planner from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to prepare a general plan for a park system. The plan included a series of roadways and parks in Sacramento's surrounding suburban areas. East Sacramento was among the first suburban areas to be transformed with street and utility improvements, and for residential development.

The Lincoln Highway, the nation's first transcontinental highway, passed through Sacramento. In 1916, the city created an auto camp for travelers in the park's panhandle section, the northeast area of the park east of 33rd Street. The camp hosted over 10,000 touring autos in 1919. It operated until neighborhood complaints resulted in its closure in 1923.

In 1918, George Sim was hired as Sacramento's first Superintendent of Playgrounds. He noted the poor condition of McKinley Park and began planning improvements. The 1921 park report of the Board of Park Directors noted several accomplishments, including new plant nurseries, greenhouses, a children's playground, improved driveways, six tennis courts, an outdoor dance platform, and a running track.¹⁴ During this time, landscape architect Frederick Noble Evans was hired as the city's first Superintendent of Parks.

A zoo had been part of East Park since its earliest days. A variety of exotic animals were added over the years, including two brown bear cubs, monkeys, and a lion. A pond in the zoo area was full of alligators. With the creation of a new zoo in William Land Park in 1927, the McKinley Park zoo was closed. The area of the zoo which had been designated for deer, became the baseball field, current site of the George "Butter" Cole Field. Additional tennis courts were built on the site of the zoological gardens.

In 1928, Superintendent of Parks Frederick Noble Evans began planning a rose garden for McKinley Park on the site of a running track. The rose garden maintained the oval form created by the running track.

¹⁴ Anderson and Mahan. P. 29.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

The original park clubhouse was torn down in 1929 and plans were made for a new park facility. Florence Turton Clunie (1858-1934), Sacramento businesswoman and wife of Congressman Thomas J. Clunie, donated \$150,000 for the building of a community center and pool in McKinley Park. Mrs. Clunie died in 1934, and the center that bears her name was completed in 1936. Designed by architects Harry J. Devine with Starks & Flanders, the community center included an auditorium, a branch of the Sacramento Public Library, and meeting rooms, in addition to the pool and pool house.

As previously mentioned, the H Street streetcar line extended diagonally into the park from the southwest corner. The streetcar tracks were removed sometime between 1910 and 1913, and replaced with a park drive lined with an allée of palm trees. This striking design feature demarcated the entrance to McKinley Park and dominated views of the park for many years. The roadway was later removed and replaced with lawn, likely about the time of the construction of the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse. With the growth of other trees and loss of many of the palms, the allée effect has been lost. Nevertheless, a few of the palms remain, providing evidence of this design feature of the park.

In the early 1940s, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs, built new sidewalks around the perimeter of the park.¹⁵ In about 1955, G Street was extended across the park's southwest corner with the intention to reduce street traffic congestion and to provide parking.¹⁶

In 1958, a garden and arts center was built on the panhandle section of the park. The building was designed by Raymond R. Franceschi of Franceschi & Mullen Architects. In 1972, the Garden & Arts Center was named for Iva Gard Shepard, the leader of the Sacramento Garden Club and garden columnist for *The Sacramento Bee*, becoming the Iva Gard Shepard Garden & Arts Center.¹⁷

The children's playground was improved with new playground equipment in 1976. The facility was improved again in 1994 with a community-built playground, only to be destroyed by a fire in 2012. A community fundraising effort resulted in the current playground that opened in 2013. A popular 1.1-mile crushed granite running path adjacent to the perimeter sidewalk around the park was added in 1987.

In recent years, with the city fiscally challenged to maintain park facilities, many groups, organizations, and individuals have rallied support to preserve the Frederick N. Evans Memorial

¹⁵ Anderson & Mahan. P. 34.

¹⁶ Anderson & Mahan. P. 36.

¹⁷ Anderson & Mahan. P. 36.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

Rose Garden, and the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse as valued resources for the surrounding McKinley Park neighborhoods, and the larger Sacramento community.

Starting in 2008, the Sacramento Rose Society began planning for the renovation of the rose garden, now-named Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden. With renovations completed by 2012, the Sacramento Rose Society continues to assist with training and helping to maintain the garden.

In 2012, Friends of East Sacramento, a non-profit organization, assumed renovation and management of the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse as a community center. It also took over management of the rose garden for continuing public use for weddings and other events.

With McKinley Park's origins dating from 1871, friends and neighbors throughout the City of Sacramento, East Sacramento, and East Sacramento's McKinley Park neighborhoods are committed to the preservation of this historically valued community cultural landscape resource.

Historic and Design Context

With its strategic location at the confluence of the American River and the Sacramento River, Sacramento became a boom town after the 1848 discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, the subsequent California Gold Rush, and California statehood in 1850. The settlement was selected as California's capital in 1854. By the 1870s, with a population over 16,000, Sacramento was growing into an American city and beginning to expand beyond its downtown core. The local streetcar company, looking for ways to expand ridership, purchased land and real estate interests to the east of downtown for expanding residential development.

American Urban Parks Movement: 1850 to 1900

As the country was evolving from an agrarian economy to a more urban and industrialized economy during the nineteenth century, people's lives changed. Working and living conditions disconnected them from nature and outdoor activities. Oppressive urban conditions in New York City led to the development of Central Park which was recognized for its "civilizing and humanizing influence."¹⁸ Growing cities around the country recognized the need for urban parks and their development became a national movement. In the new cities of the West, parks were seen not only for their social contributions, but also for showing that they were equals of cities in

¹⁸ David Schuyler. *The New Urban Landscape: the Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

the East. San Francisco established Golden Gate Park in 1870. Within a year, the Sacramento Street Railway Company purchased land to create a “pleasure ground,” as they were called at the time. Although McKinley Park’s development by a streetcar company was intended to gain ridership and to spur real estate development, it also provided residents a place for Sunday outings, picnicking, music, dancing, and outdoor recreation.

A pleasure ground park being created at the end of a streetcar line was not unique to Sacramento. In fact, “trolley parks” were a phenomenon of the era and there may have been up to 2,000 similar parks around the United States.¹⁹ Many of these parks started as pleasure grounds, as did East Park. A good number of them also developed into amusement parks with rides, carousels, swimming pools, and other attractions, some of which survive today. McKinley Park may be unusual in that it became a city park.

Naturalistic Park Design

The earliest urban parks and squares in the United States were often small and of formal or geometric designs. At New York’s Central Park, Frederick Law Olmsted created a naturalistic design that contrasted intentionally from the urban environment of cities. Building on the naturalistic garden style espoused by American landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing, Olmsted created a new design form and vocabulary for American urban parks. These nineteenth century parks were characterized by open meadows defined by forested areas, and accented with natural features, including rock outcroppings, lakes, streams, and waterfalls. Curvilinear pathways and drives were designed to move park visitors through the landscape with ever-changing vistas. East Park was designed in this naturalistic tradition with meadows, informal tree plantings, a small lake, and curving pathways. As in Central Park, East Park was created in the context of an urban grid of streets. The rectangular shapes of both Central Park and East Park, later as McKinley Park, contrast further with the naturalistic features within their design.

Reform Parks Movement and Progressivism: 1900 to 1940

In the early decades of the twentieth century, social reformers worked to address urban issues through the reform and growth of local government and services. As municipal lands, urban parks were often seen as places well-suited to provide social services. The Reform Park Movement resulted in new park facilities being added to parks, including playgrounds, recreation

¹⁹ Street Railway Journal. *Street Railway Parks and Pleasure Resorts*. June 1, 1901, Vol. XVII, No. 22.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

and sports facilities, pools and public buildings.²⁰ In McKinley Park, this reform movement is evidenced in the addition of tennis courts (1920), children's playground (1930s), and the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and Pool (1936).

The Great Depression of the 1930s resulted in President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs, several of which benefitted parks around the nation. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) provided funding and labor for park projects. In McKinley Park, a new perimeter sidewalk and possibly the brick restroom building were benefits from these programs.

McKinley Park in the Context of Sacramento Parks

When Sacramento's street grid was created in 1848, ten blocks distributed around the grid were reserved for public squares, having been deeded to the city by John Sutter. Eight of these squares survive today as small parks in the downtown core. The 40-acre Capitol Park, created in the 1870s, was the only other park in the city limits. Land for East Park was purchased by the streetcar company in 1871, and when East Park opened in 1872, it was Sacramento's first large park, later renamed McKinley Park in 1902. Land for Southside Park was purchased by the city in 1906, and William Land Park was created in the 1920s.

East Park was not the only Sacramento park created by a streetcar company. Oak Park, now McClatchy Park, was created in the 1890s at the terminus of a streetcar line, the goal of which was to develop the suburb of Oak Park. In 1903, a roller coaster, swimming pool, and other amusements were added by the streetcar company, creating Sacramento's Joyland amusement park. A fire in 1920 destroyed the amusement park. In 1927, a member of the McClatchy newspaper family purchased the property and donated it to the city for a public park, renamed McClatchy Park in honor of James McClatchy, founder of *The Sacramento Bee*.

²⁰ Galen Cranz. *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*. MIT Press, 1982.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

McKinley Park Chronology

Period of Significance: 1871 to 1958

- 1862 The “North Levee” along the American River is raised to 30’ cutting off the river from flooding the city and cutting off Burns’ Slough from its water source.
- 1869 The transcontinental railroad is completed with Sacramento as its western terminus, significantly boosting the city’s economy.
- 1871 Sacramento Street Railway Company purchases 30 acres of undeveloped and unincorporated land for use as East Park.
- 1871 Streetcars begin running along H Street to East Park.
- 1872 Early planting of the park includes 600 evergreen trees (pines, cypresses, and acacias).
- 1872 The streetcar company builds a two-story park building with “balconies and piazzas.” The streetcar line is extended into the park to bring visitors directly to the park building.
- 1872 Social dances and musical performances begin in the park.
- 1872 Lake Kiesel is constructed from a remnant of Burns’ Slough.
- 1873 Railway company purchases an additional 14.5-acre parcel at the northeast corner of the park for picnic grounds. Other improvements include ball grounds, shooting alleys, and a zoo.
- 1875 Baseball games are a regular activity in East Park.
- 1877 Railway company sells the site to a group of investors called the East Park Association, headed by Albert Gallatin. The park falls into disrepair and suffers from competition from Joyland amusement park in the Oak Park neighborhood.
- 1893 A formal carriage entrance at 31st and F Streets, and a graded dirt path along the edges of the park are seen on an 1893 map.
- 1900 The East Park Association has been considering subdividing the park for development. The Tuesday Club, a women’s cultural improvement association, lobbies the City to purchase East Park as a children’s playground to be named in honor of recently-assassinated President William McKinley.
- 1902 City Trustees vote to purchase the property from the East Park Association, and Albert Gallatin agrees to lower the price from \$20,000 to \$12,500. In convincing the city to purchase the park, the Tuesday Club states that they will maintain the park themselves (a fact later in dispute).
- 1904 To offset the cost of maintaining the park, the City fences off the 14.5-acre panhandle section and leases it as a cow pasture.
- 1906 Mrs. J. Henry Miller, manager of McKinley Park from 1902 to 1908, suggests the creation of flower beds in the park.
- 1908 City consults with city planner Charles Mulford Robinson on the city’s park system. He notes that McKinley Park is “very incompletely and poorly developed.”
- Circa 1910 Streetcar tracks removed from within the park and replaced with a palm-lined drive.

McKinley Park

Sacramento, California
County and State

Name of Property

- 1911 The City annexes East Sacramento into its boundaries, and allocates funding for the park's upkeep.
- 1913 City creates a Board of Park Directors to manage park-related issues, including McKinley Park's mosquito infestation.
- 1916 E Street is extended, creating McKinley Boulevard as the north border of McKinley Park.
- 1916 An auto camp is established in McKinley Park's panhandle area to serve travelers on the transcontinental Lincoln Highway.
- 1918 George Sim is hired as Sacramento's first Superintendent of Playgrounds.
- 1920 Landscape architect Frederick Noble Evans is hired as Sacramento's first Superintendent of Parks.
- Circa 1920 Tennis courts are built.
- 1920 Residential development accelerates in the neighborhood around McKinley Park.
- 1921 Report of the Board of Park Directors extolls new plant nurseries, greenhouses, a playground for children, improved driveways, six tennis courts, an outdoor dance platform, and a running track.
- 1922 City approves the purchase and development of William Land Park, creating another destination park for Sacramento.
- 1923 The auto camp is closed due to objections from neighbors.
- 1927 McKinley Park zoo is closed, and animals are transferred to a new zoo at William Land Park.
- 1928 Parks Superintendent Evans begins planning the Rose Garden in McKinley Park. The oval form reflects the running track that previously occupied the site.
- 1929 Planting in the Rose Garden begins with roses suitable for Sacramento's hot summer weather.
- 1929 Original wood frame clubhouse is torn down.
- 1936 Florence Turton Clunie Memorial Clubhouse and Pool are constructed.
- 1940 The federal Works Progress Administration (WPA, a New Deal relief agency) encircles the park with sidewalks.
- 1940 The Sacramento Rose Society (SRS) is established. Frederick Evans is among the founding members. Members provide annual winter pruning in January. The volunteer service continues to the present.
- 1946 The Rose Garden is named after landscape architect Frederick Noble Evans, Sacramento's first Superintendent of Parks.
- Circa 1954 The G Street extension cuts into the southwest corner of the park with the intention to relieve congestion and to provide more parking.
- 1958 The Garden & Arts Center is constructed, becoming the last major addition to McKinley Park.
- 1972 The Garden & Arts Center is named for Iva Gard Shepard.
- 1973 A renovation of the Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden is accomplished.
- 1976 New playground equipment is installed in the children's area.
- 1980 Baseball diamond is named in honor of George "Butter" Cole, who promoted amateur baseball in Sacramento from the 1930s.
- 1981 A proposal to install a parking lot on the park's northwest corner results in strong neighborhood opposition and the plan is defeated.

McKinley Park

Sacramento, California
County and State

Name of Property

- Circa 1985 The courtyard garden at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center is redesigned as a Japanese-style garden with stones and a small pond.
- 1986 A proposal to expand the Shepard Garden & Arts Center to add more parking is defeated by organized neighbors to preserve lawn areas and to limit traffic.
- 1987 A 1.1-mile crushed granite running track is constructed around the perimeter of the park to address muddy conditions and protect tree roots.
- 1988 An island in Lake Kiesel is built to provide habitat and nesting ground for the ducks and geese.
- 1994 A new community-built playground is installed.
- 1996 Improvements to the edge of Lake Kiesel are made to address erosion, including installation of a stone edge constructed from former Sacramento street paving stones. A new pathway around the lake also is installed.
- 1997 Accessibility improvements are made to the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse.
- 2008 Members of the Sacramento Rose Society (SRS) begin to explore McKinley Park Rose Garden Beautification and Restoration Project.
- 2009 SRS meets with the City architect to implement the proposal submitted to Sacramento Parks Department, and provides seed money for the renovation. Friends of McKinley Park Rose Garden is formed to help raise funds through Gifts to Share/McKinley Park Rose Garden Restoration Project, a 501(c)3 non-profit.
- 2009 Rose growers help to supply bare root roses, soil, and fertilizer. City provides funding for new irrigation system and paved areas, with additional community contributions from a private foundation and individuals.
- 2010 SRS members and volunteer labor, including AmeriCorps teams and the Sacramento County Sheriff's crew, provide initial planting of 800 roses.
- 2011 Due to budgetary constraints, the city proposes to close the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse.
- 2011 Planting of the renovated Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden is completed.
- 2012 Friends of East Sacramento leases and assumes operation of the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse, and establishes the Clunie Community Center.
- 2012 City completes a renovation of the Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden with a new irrigation system and accessibility improvements. Friends of East Sacramento sign a long-term lease for management of the rose garden.
- 2012 Playground is destroyed by fire.
- 2013 Playground is rebuilt. Restroom and picnic shelter also are added as part of the project.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Anderson, Christy and Mahan, William E. History of McKinley Park. *Sacramento History Journal*. Volume III, No. 1, Winter & Spring 2003.

Board of Park Directors. *Park Report*, 1921. Sacramento Room, Sacramento Public Library.

California Southland. November 1921. Article on auto camp. California State Library.

Cranz, Galen. *The Politics of Park Design – A History of Urban Parks in America*. MIT Press, 1982.

Historic Environment Consultants. *McKinley Park Rose Garden Evaluation of Significance*. 2009.

Julin, Dr. Kent. ISA Certified Arborist. *Arborist Report – Assessment of the Ages of Trees at McKinley Park*. May 2018.

LD Research & Writing. *McKinley Park Historic District Project, Phase I: Research, Writing & Recommendations*. June 2012 Draft. Unpublished research report.

Mead & Hunt. *Cultural Landscape Survey and Evaluation of William Land Park*. 2012.

Norton, Merren Gillis. *Achievements – A History of the Tuesday Club of Sacramento, California*. 1933. California State Library.

Phillips, Kerry C. *Sacramento Park Neighborhoods*. StoneBridge Properties, LLC, 2009.

RHAA Landscape Architects. *Sacramento McKinley Park Cultural Landscape Report*. January 2018.

Sacramento Daily Union and *The Sacramento Bee*. Various dates.

Sacramento Tree Foundation. *The Magnificent Trees of McKinley Park*. Brochure, no date.

Schuyler, David. *The New Urban Landscape – The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

United States Geologic Survey. *TopoView* website. <https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/maps/topoview/>. Source for historic topographic maps.

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

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 # CA-133

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

- Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center (Center for Sacramento History)
- Sacramento Public Library
- California State Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property 33

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.575043° | Longitude: -121.464160° |
| 2. Latitude: 38.578153° | Longitude: -121.462814° |
| 3. Latitude: 38.576700° | Longitude: -121.457205° |
| 4. Latitude: 38.575901° | Longitude: -121.457591° |
| 5. Latitude: 38.576436° | Longitude: -121.459637° |
| 6. Latitude: 38.574092° | Longitude: -121.460660° |



Location Map



McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

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

The McKinley Park property consists of two Sacramento County parcels 003-0010-002 and 004-0221-001. The property is bounded by Alhambra Boulevard, McKinley Boulevard, 35th Street, Park Way, 33rd Street, and H Street.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property boundary is defined by the edge of the streets surrounding the park and is measured from the face of curb inward, inclusive of existing curb and sidewalk.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Douglas Nelson, Historical Landscape Architect
organization: RHAA Landscape Architects
street & number: 225 Miller Ave.
city or town: Mill Valley state: CA zip code: 94941
e-mail doug@rhaa.com
telephone: 415-383-7900
date: May 2018

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.)

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State

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.

Photo Log

Name of Property: McKinley Park
City or Vicinity: Sacramento
County: Sacramento
State: California
Photographer: Douglas Nelson
Date Photographed: see description

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

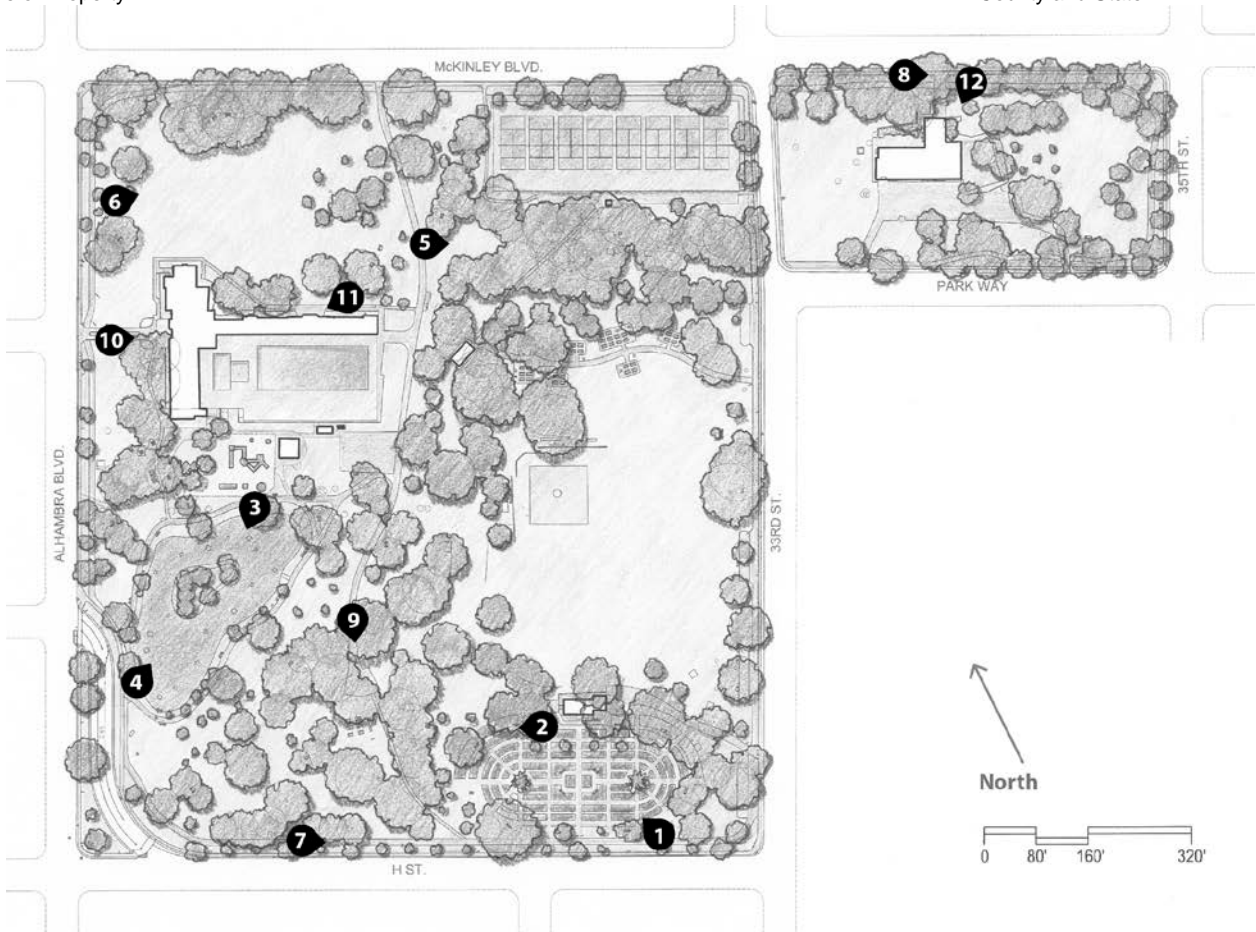
- 1 of 12. Rose Garden, looking north. April 13, 2016.
- 2 of 12. Rose Garden, looking west. April 28, 2016.
- 3 of 12. Lake Kiesel, looking southwest. April 28, 2016.
- 4 of 12. Lake Kiesel, looking northeast. April 13, 2016.
- 5 of 12. Grove of mature trees, looking east. April 28, 2016.
- 6 of 12. Sports field bordered by mature trees, looking east. April 28, 2016.
- 7 of 12. Running path along H Street, looking southeast. November 22, 2016.
- 8 of 12. Running path along McKinley Boulevard, looking southeast. November 22, 2016.
- 9 of 12. Path and picnic area among mature trees, looking south. November 22, 2016.
- 10 of 12. Clunie Memorial Clubhouse, looking east. April 28, 2016.
- 11 of 12. Pool House entrance, looking west. November 22, 2016.
- 12 of 12. Garden & Arts Center entrance, looking southwest. November 22, 2016.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State



Photograph Locations

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.).

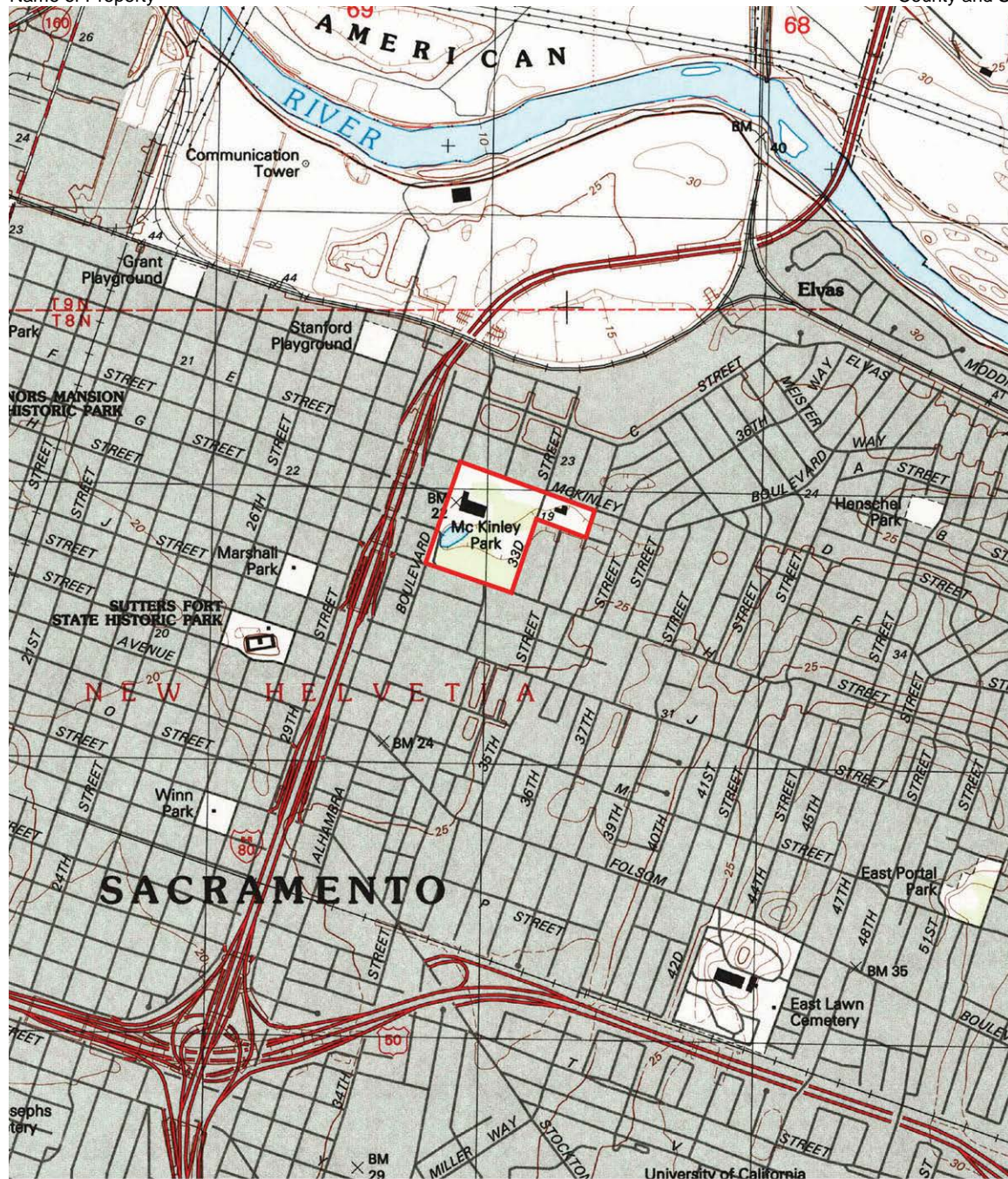
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State



USGS Sacramento East 7.5-Minute Series, 1992

Figure 1. USGS Map

McKinley Park
 Name of Property

Sacramento, California
 County and State

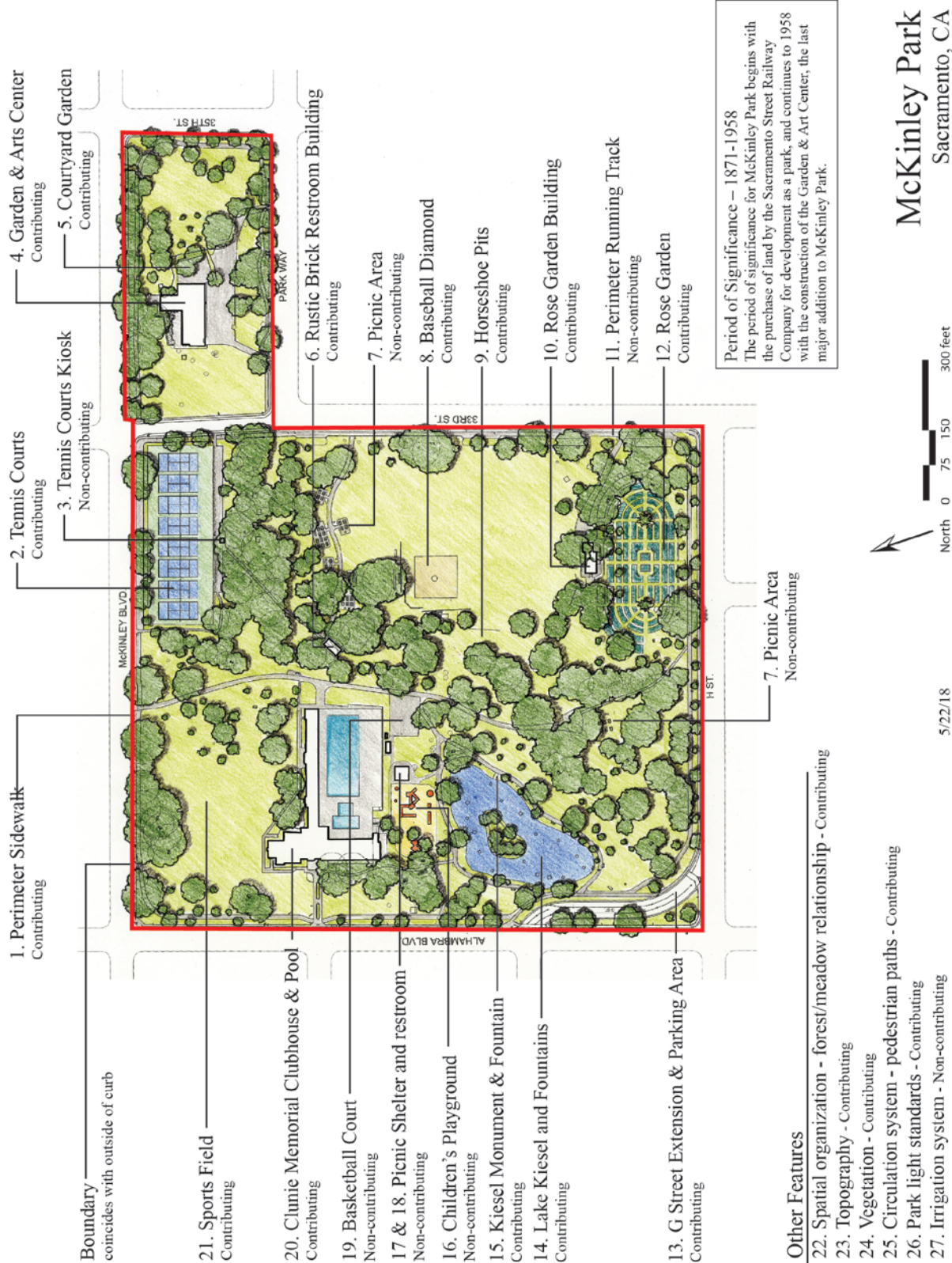


Figure 2. Existing Conditions

McKinley Park
 Name of Property

Sacramento, California
 County and State



1957 Aerial Photograph - Source: historicaerials.com

1957 Aerial Photograph
 Showing Contributing Features Present Near
 the End of the Period of Significance (1871-1958)



McKinley Park
 Sacramento, CA

5/22/18

- Other Features**
- Spatial organization - forest/meadow relationship - Contributing
 - Topography - Contributing
 - Vegetation - Contributing
 - Circulation system - pedestrian paths - Contributing
 - Park light standards - Contributing

Figure 3. 1957 Aerial Photograph

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

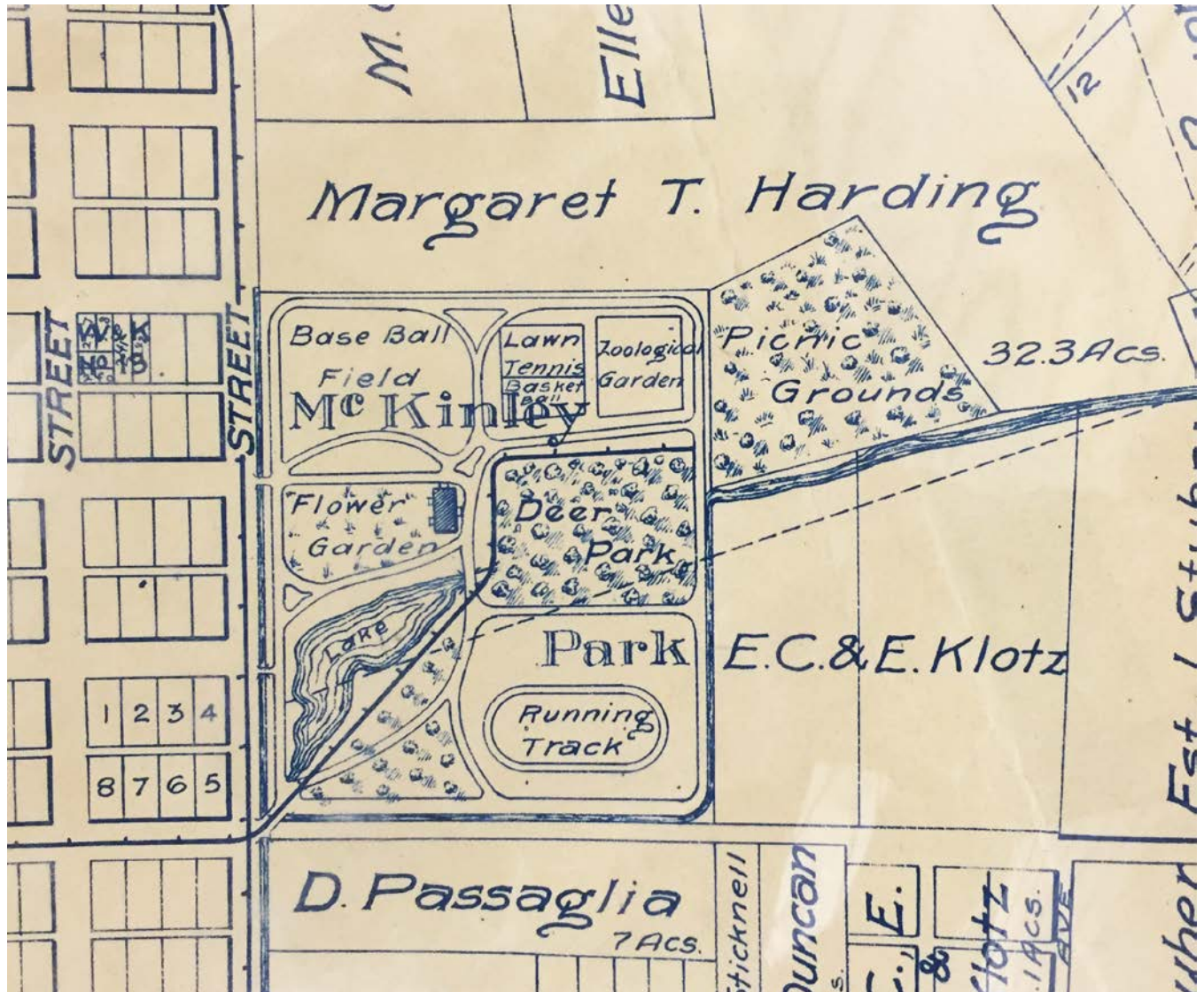


Figure 4. 1908. Official Map of Sacramento City and Suburban Tracts (detail). *California State Library*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

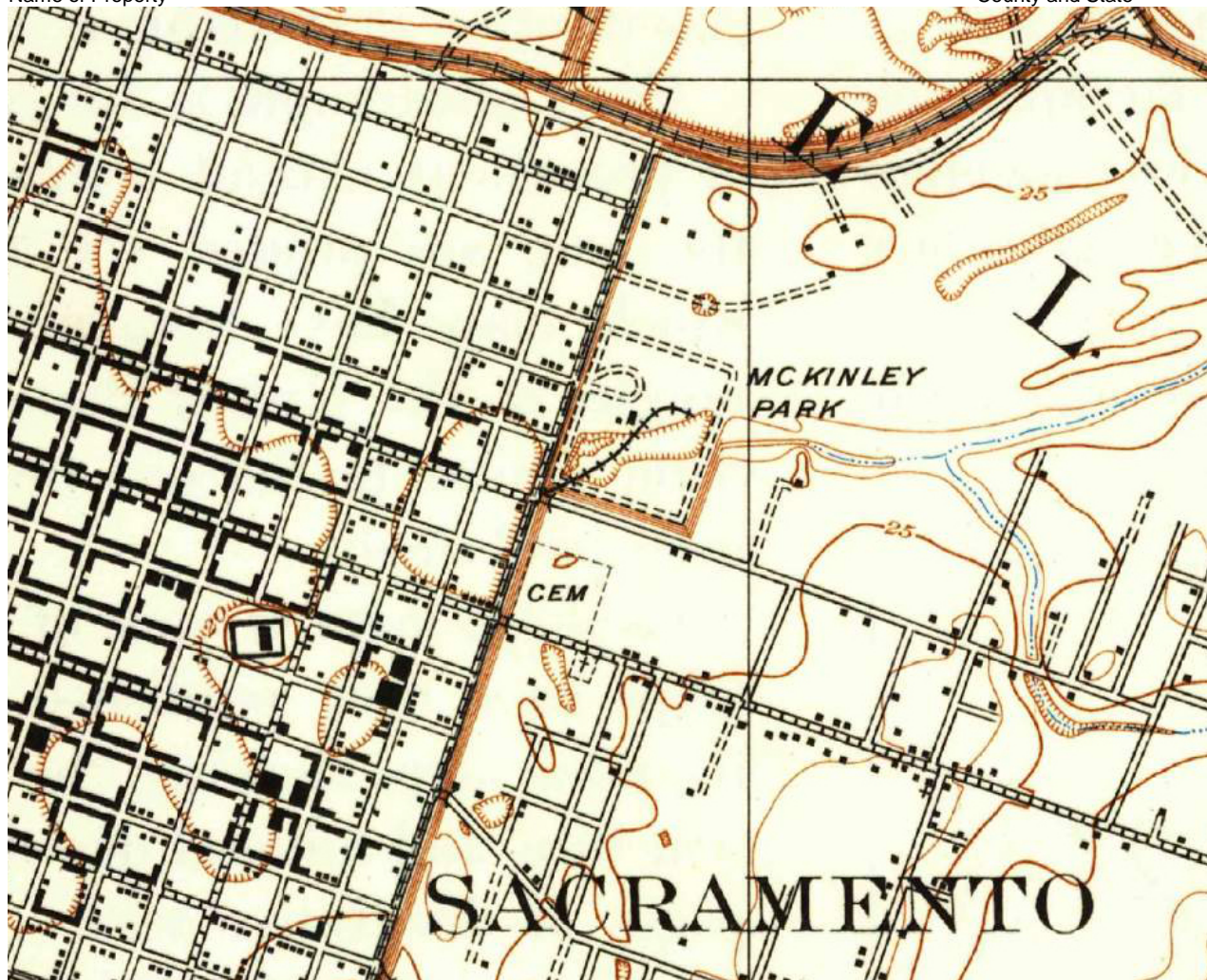


Figure 5. 1911 USGS Brighton quadrangle 1:31680 series (detail). *USGS Topo View.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 6. 1894. East driveway in East Park. *Center for Sacramento History.*

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State



Figure 7. 1906. Young Men's Institute baseball team at McKinley Park. *Center for Sacramento History.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 8. 1912. Lake Kiesel and rustic deck. *Center for Sacramento History.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 9. Undated photograph of Lake Kiesel. *California State Library.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

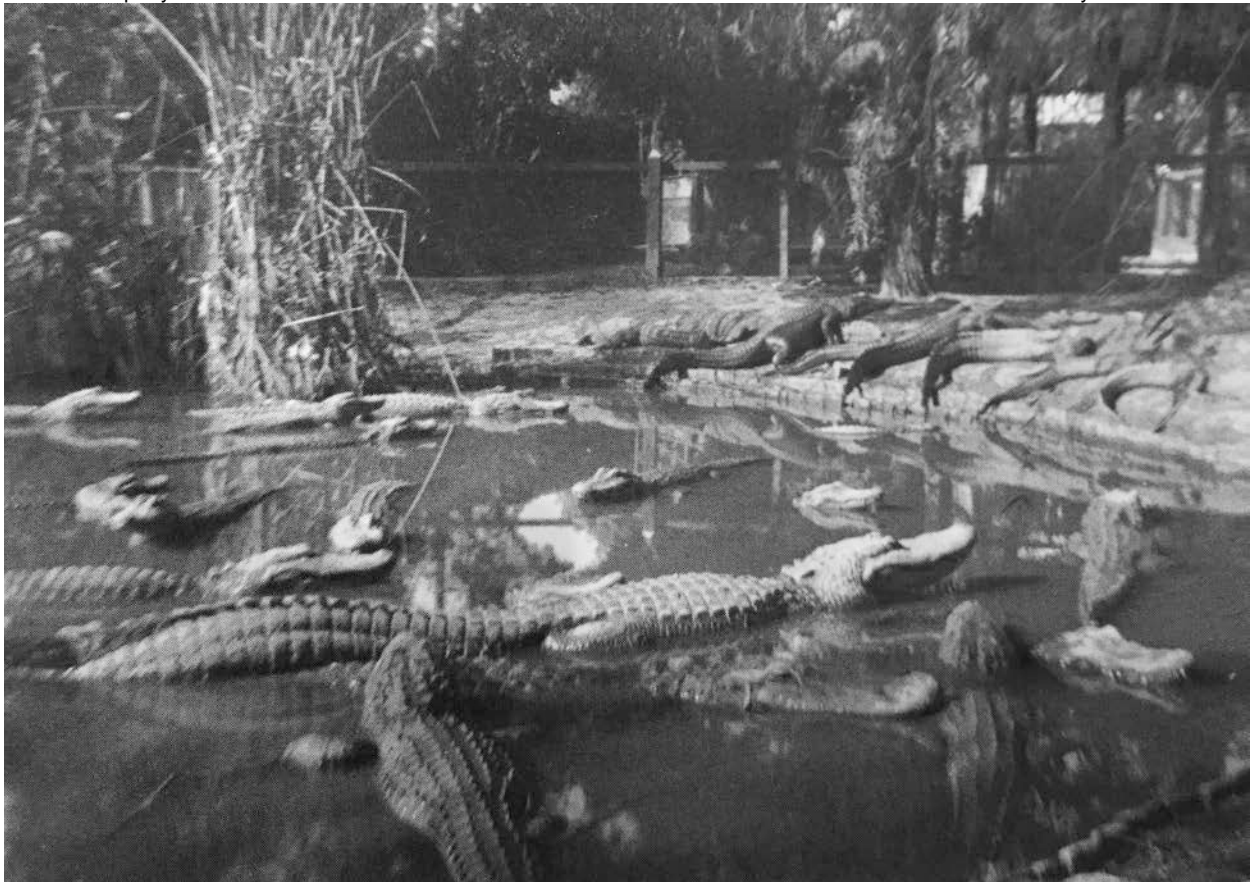


Figure 10. 1914. Alligators at the zoo at McKinley Park. *Center for Sacramento History.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

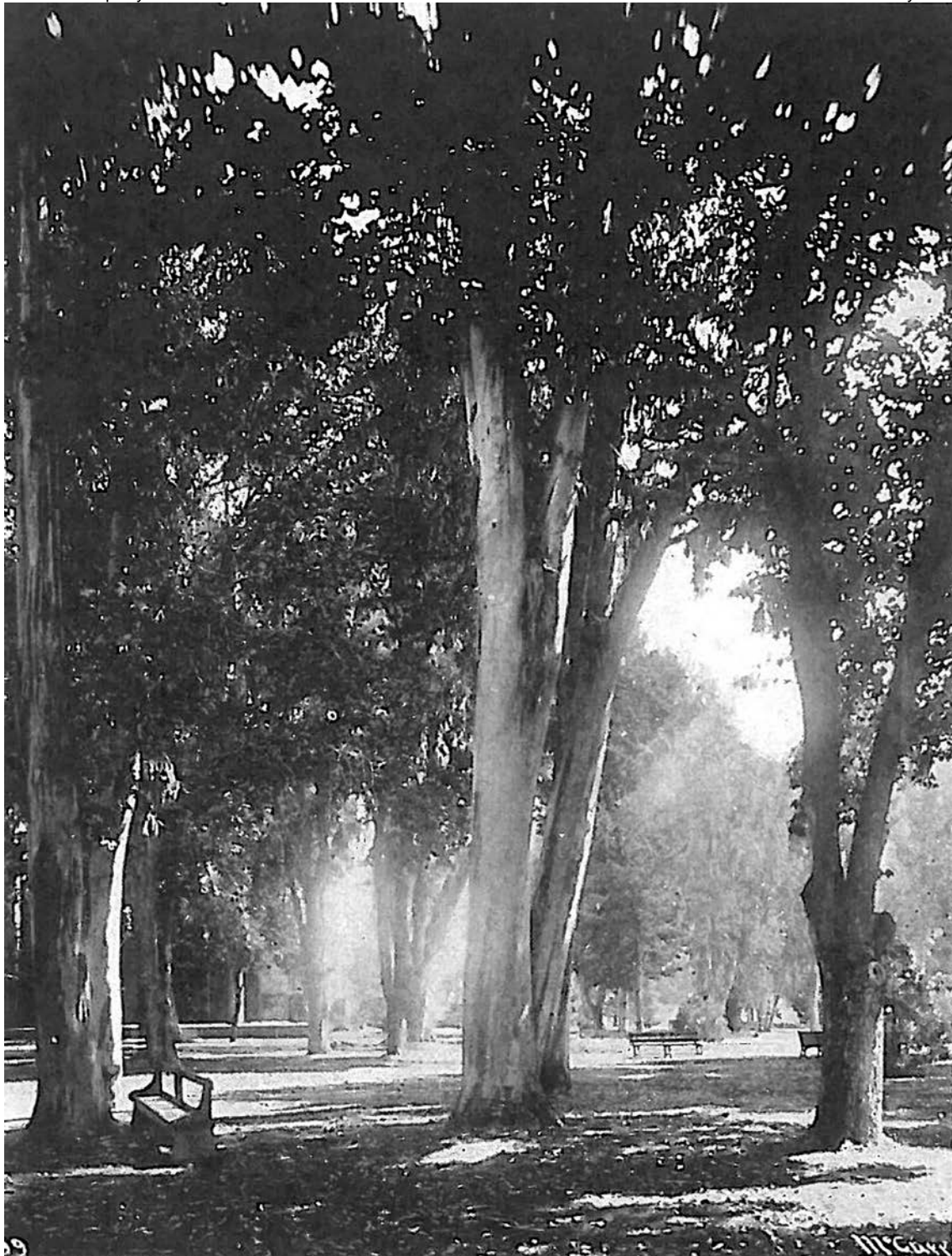


Figure 11. 1921. Eucalyptus grove. *Sacramento Public Library.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

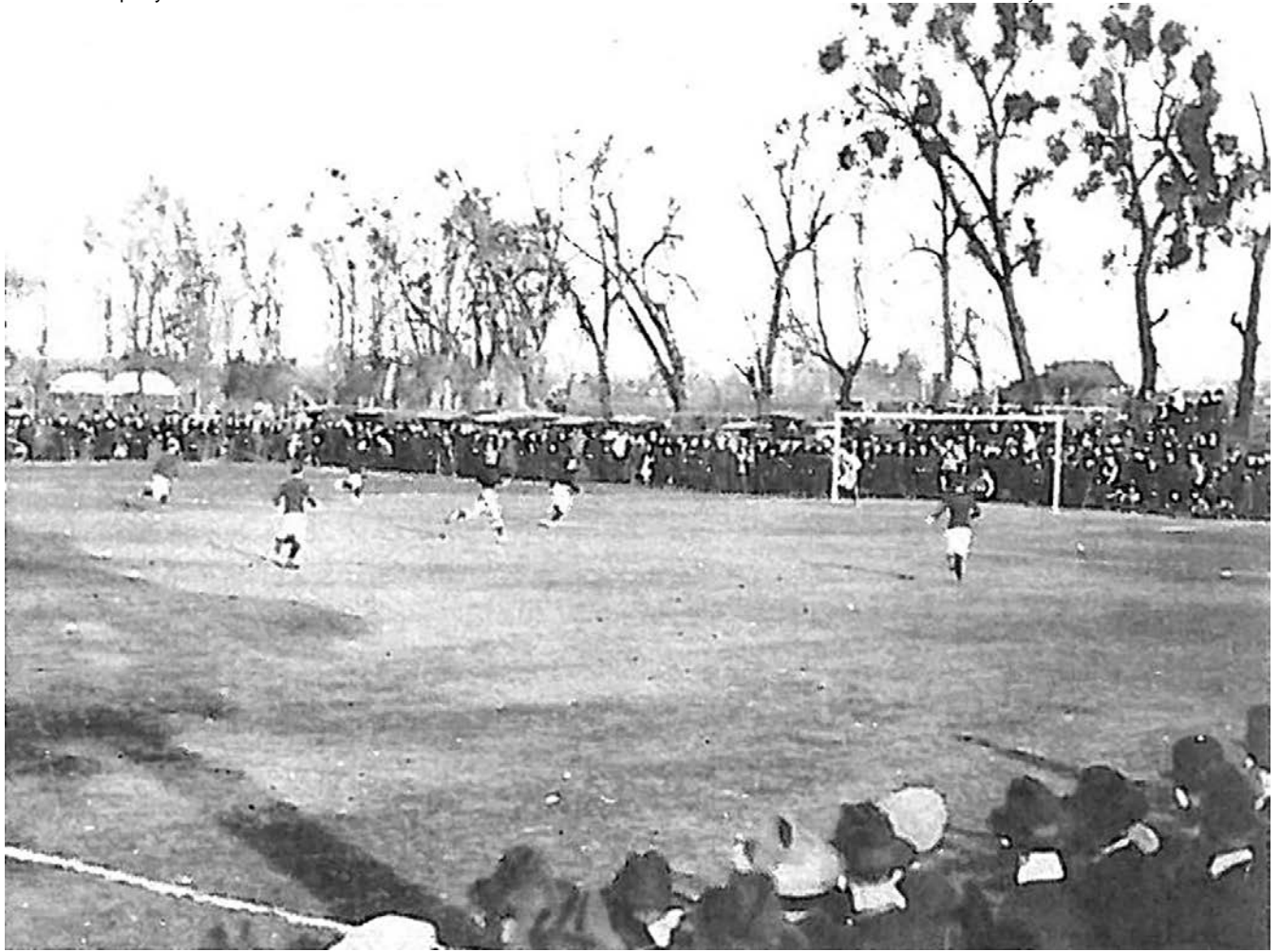


Figure 12. 1921. Soccer game at McKinley Park. *Sacramento Public Library.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 13. 1922. Baseball game at McKinley Park. *Center for Sacramento History.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 14. 1927. Lake Kiesel. *California State Library.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 15. Circa 1930. Rose Garden. *Center for Sacramento History.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 16. 1937. Rose Garden. *Center for Sacramento History.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 17. 1938. Clunie Memorial Clubhouse. *California State Library.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 18. 1938. Pool entrance and bathhouse. *California State Library.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 19. 1937. Pool and bathhouse. *Sacramento Public Library*.

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 20. 1938. Playground and basketball court at the Clunie Memorial Clubhouse.
California State Library.

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State

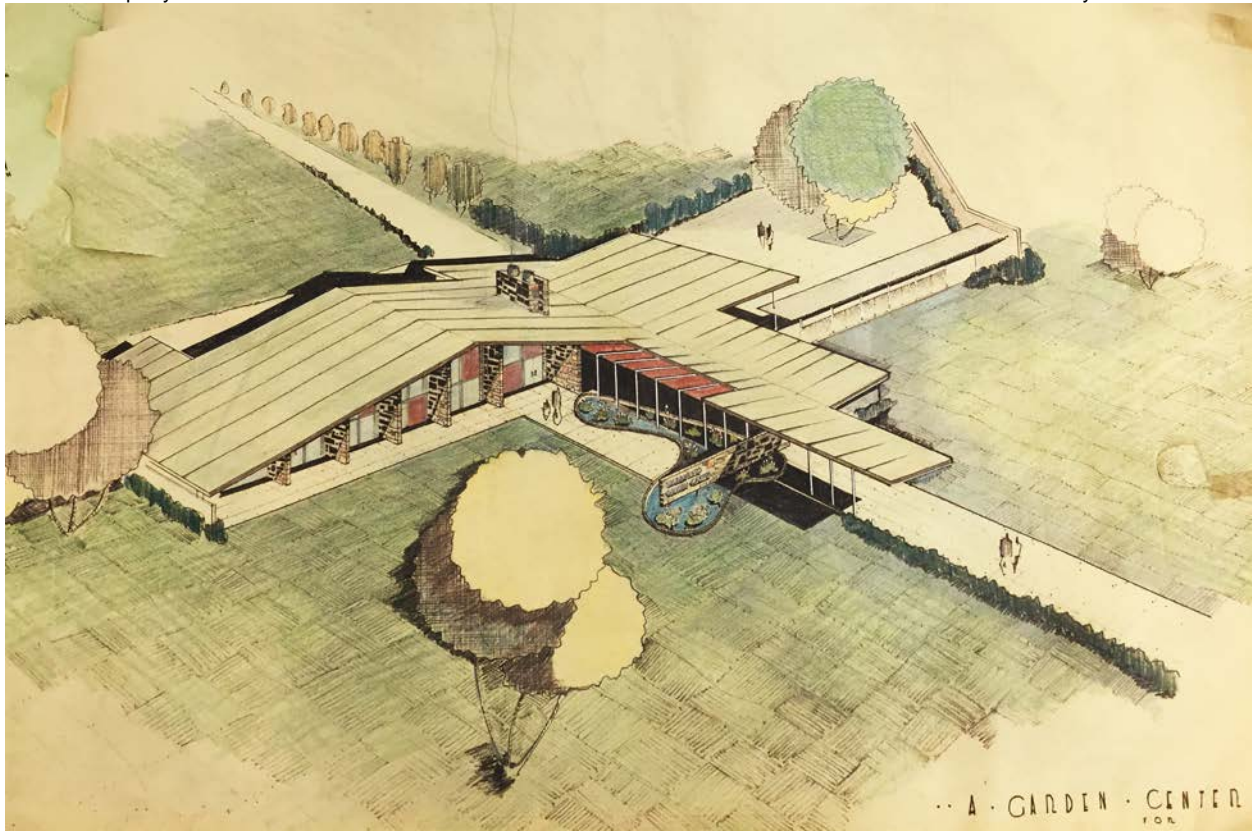


Figure 21. 1953. Architectural rendering of the Garden & Arts Center by Francischi & Mullen Architects. *Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department.*

McKinley Park

Name of Property

Sacramento, California

County and State



Figure 22. Circa 1953. Intersection of Alhambra Boulevard and H Street. Palm Drive roadway has been removed and replaced with lawn, but the allée of palms is still very prominent. The additional parking and roadway at this corner of the park is yet to be constructed. *Center for Sacramento History.*

McKinley Park
Name of Property

Sacramento, California
County and State



Figure 23. 1955. Pool and bathhouse. *Sacramento Public Library.*