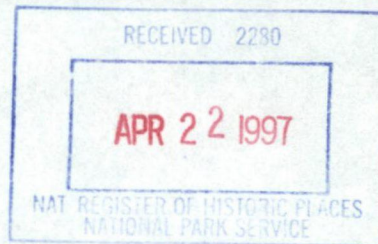


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



479

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Zilker Park Historic District

OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Zilker Metropolitan Park; Zilker Park; Barton Springs

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 2100 Barton Springs Road

CITY OR TOWN: Austin

STATE: Texas

CODE: TX

COUNTY: Travis

CODE: 453

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A

VICINITY: N/A

ZIP CODE: 78746

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Curtis J. J. J. J.
Signature of certifying official

4-16-97
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___meets ___does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

V entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5/23/97

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public-local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: District

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	7	21 BUILDINGS
	11	3 SITES
	6	15 STRUCTURES
	4	2 OBJECTS
	28	41 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 5

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation; sports facility
LANDSCAPE/park
TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related

CURRENT FUNCTIONS:

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation; sports facility
LANDSCAPE/park; garden; parking lot
TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related; road-related (vehicular)

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

OTHER: NPS rustic architecture
MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION STONE: limestone
WALLS STONE: limestone; WOOD
ROOF WOOD
OTHER CONCRETE; METAL/iron; GLASS

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-17).

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Zilker Park Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

DESCRIPTION

The Zilker Park Historic District consists of a cohesive group of resources developed between 1917 and 1947 as an urban park and recreation facility. The park, consisting of approximately 350 acres, is just south of the Colorado River near downtown Austin in Travis County. The south shore of the Colorado River and the legal property lines define the boundaries of the irregularly shaped district. The park's resources consist of numerous 1930s Civil Works Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps works together with later improvements. These surviving manmade resources, combined with natural landscape elements such as the Colorado River bank and majestic views incorporated into the park plan, characterize the district. Noncontributing elements typically post-date the 50-year cut-off for eligibility, reflecting the continued use of the park since its inception. Although Noncontributing resources outnumber Contributing resources, the park as a whole retains the historic landscape characteristics integral to its intended design and use, therefore retaining a high degree of integrity as a designed historic landscape in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Located within the present-day boundaries of Zilker Park, the Zilker Park Historic District is situated near the heart of Austin in Central Texas (see Map-29). The city straddles the eastern edge of the Balcones Escarpment, a geologic fault zone a few miles wide that separates the Edwards Plateau and the central Texas hill country from the coastal plains. The park is southwest of Austin's central business district and the state capitol complex within the inner city. With the Colorado River serving as its northern boundary, the park is otherwise enclosed by residential development.

Although historically comprised of two parks, the approximately 50 acre Barton Springs Park and the approximately 300 acre Zilker Park, the combined area now functions as one park and bears one name. The approximately 350 acre park occupies a parcel of irregular shape formed by the southeastward flowing Colorado River at its conjunction with Barton Creek (see Map-31, 32). The prolific artesian springs, for which the earlier park was originally named, have retained their historic name. The district includes within its boundaries the Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District (NR 1985), which encompasses five Contributing properties referred to in the inventory of properties.

Two transportation arteries bisect the park. The four-lane Barton Springs Road traverses it from east to west. The elevated, larger, and newer MoPac Boulevard (Loop 1; #16), an eight-lane major arterial, cuts through the park's far west end on a northeast-southwestward course. Other minor roads (#5), some paved, meander through the park and serve park amenities.

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The park exhibits varied topography as a result of the Colorado River and the presence of two creeks. Within the southeast sector flows the tree-lined Barton Creek, dry most of the year above the artesian springs. Low, gently rising floodplain with scattered trees mark the northeast and central sectors of the park. Along the riverbank in this area are several very old, majestic cypress trees. The topography of the northwest sector is eccentric and features hilly terrain covered with native oak and a dense tree canopy. Dry Creek, appropriately named for its usually dry creekbed which travels a switchback course, has in some places carved a deep ravine through this sector. The southwestern sector, through which the usually dry, upper reaches of Barton Creek travel, also exhibits eccentric topography with overgrown native vegetation and another very steep ravine.

HISTORIC APPEARANCE

In 1932, the old Barton Springs Park and undeveloped Zilker Park became one large municipal reservation, then on the southwestern edge of town as seen in a 1936 General Highway Map of Austin (see Map-30). After a development campaign in 1933/34, during which a large number of the existing historic resources were added, the park was comprised of two-interrelated sections. Active recreation was served for the most part by the playground, sports, and swimming area which was largely segregated in the southeastern sector. The naturalistic section of the park, stretching over a much larger area and including the northeastern, central and northwestern sectors, supported passive, unstructured activities like walking, nature study, picnicking, and horseback riding. The amenities and facilities built to service these two types of recreational functions were varied in purpose, scale, and material. Use of limestone, quarried on site in some cases, to a scale appropriate to the natural features in design elements were common elements of all facilities.

Dominating the playground section of the park was the 1000-foot, spring-fed pool (#48; Photo 11) with 2-story frame bath house and dance pavilion (demolished 1945). Also present by 1934 were concession stands (demolished c. 1953-1957), two ball fields with stone dugouts (#62, 63), a children's wading pool (#45), and a separate children's play area with swings. A modest bandstand (#43) was added shortly after the 1933/34 building campaign. Throughout the naturalistic section, planned for "passive" recreation, were numerous picnic sites, some of rock, comprising tables, benches, and a few large open ovens (#32, 37; Photo 8). Some wood picnic units, now gone, also existed. The area also exhibited a number of designed landscape features, such as a Mirror Pond (#17), serpentine flower beds, desert gardens, a wildflower field, Rock Garden (#40; Photo 9), and Sunken Gardens (#60; Photo 14). A prominent natural limestone outcropping at the kite field, called Rock Island (#7; Photo 3), also served as a focal point of the flat central and northeast sector. Several vistas were incorporated into the park design, all located in the naturalistic section of the park (#6, 30). The west end featured riding facilities. Pedestrian footpaths and bridle trails meandered throughout the park, especially in the northwest and southwest sectors. Roadways were laid out in gently looping patterns (#5). On the central and northeast portion of the park, roads circled the natural Rock Island and followed the river bank. In the northwestern end of the park, several small to medium sized, 1-story stone buildings offering concessions,

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Zilker Park Historic District
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shelter, and comfort stations (#24, 28; Photo 6), and influenced by rustic design principles, served park users in the west and northwestern end of the park.

Despite a large budget and numerous improvements, the park still presented a lightly-developed, open appearance at the end of the 1934 building campaign. Influencing its final appearance were park planning and design considerations. In addition, the preceding century of agricultural and industrial use of the land, particularly the former, also marked the landscape, for example, in denuding large areas of vegetation in the central and northeast sectors for cropland. The result was that by the end of the 1930s, the park appeared expansive and open with tree coverage concentrated in specific areas and long distance vistas enhancing that openness via views of the hills to the west and the city skyline to the east.

PRESENT APPEARANCE

Although the 1930s development of the park is diminished today by losses and additions, approximately 40% of the existing improvements are historic yet predominant. The presence of the modern Austin Nature Center (#18-23; Photo 5) and Zilker Botanical Gardens (#8-15; Photo 4), densification of the sports facilities, and the addition of paved parking lots (#4) have eroded the historic appearance. Losses of rock footpaths, horseback riding facilities and bridle paths, and especially of designed landscape features also contribute to the erosion of the historic appearance. A sufficient number of historic resources of good or better integrity, dating from the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting the breadth of recreational services and visitor amenities, and presenting the preferred historic designs and materials still exist to consider National Register nomination.

Alongside the historic resources are a few evolved landscape elements which defined the character of the land in the early 1930s before park development occurred, reflecting the land's prior agricultural and industrial use. Some of those elements were intentionally or unintentionally preserved during park development. For example, the northwest wooded sector still presents a good, possibly expanded, Live Oak canopy. Dispersed clusters of trees dot the parkland landscape, as they did prior to 1934, and the creek and river banks are lined, if more densely, with water-seeking pecans and cypress. The central and northeast open area, once devoted to cropland, also still exists. Thus the presence of historic recreational improvements alongside many identifiable pre-1932 evolved landscape elements, such as the 1926/46 Barton Springs Road Bridge (#1), the c. 1928/29 lamp posts (#42; Photo 10), a c. 1928/29 sand pit (#45), the 1928/29 Barton Springs Pool/Dam (#48; Photo 11), a 1929 caretaker's lodge (#53; Photo 12), and late 1920s ballfields with dugouts (#62, 63) contribute to the park's nomination to the National Register.

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Zilker Park Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

Community/Play/Athletic Facilities

Components of this property type include baseball fields (#62, 63), Barton Springs Pool/Dam (#48; Photo 11), the children's wading pool (now a sand pit, #45), and the bandstand (#43), all Contributing. All are grouped together in the active or playground area of the 1934 park and are utilitarian in design and have sustained active, often rugged use over time. Noncontributing examples display similar characteristics but were built during later stages of park development outside the period of significance, such as the modern playscape (#52) and Wright Field (#57; Photo 13).

Park Service and Maintenance Facilities

As essential elements of any municipal park, these facilities are often in inconspicuous places and/or are given some form of vegetative or manmade screening. Utilitarian in nature, their components and design stress functionality--often constructed in metal or wood frame, as in the Caretaker's Lodge (#53; Photo 12) which is screened by a bamboo fence. These properties adhere to recommended principles of utilitarian, unobtrusive design consistent with their function.

Landscape Features

Although several landscape features were originally present in the developed park, little remains of those features today. Those that do survive combine with more recent additions to give the park a visual identity as a large naturalistic municipal reservation and their designs reflect their purposes to stimulate visitor awareness and appreciation of nature. The most ambitious of these, including the Rock Garden (#40; Photo 9), incorporate artificial bodies of water into natural-looking but contrived rockwork juxtaposed against natural rock or streambeds.

Visitor and Architectural Amenities

This property type includes a variety of resources which function directly or indirectly with visitor use. Typical components may include bridges, footpaths, pergolas, fencing, railings, shelters, picnic facilities, comfort stations, concession stands, and others. Topography, use, and the philosophical desire to spread manmade improvements out over the landscape dictate their placement. Many of these resources consist of native limestone buildings, consistent with the rustic design of CCC work in Texas, also called NPS Rustic. Elements of this design seen in the district's resources include an emphasis on horizontality, appreciation of historic architecture, a desire for the building to fit naturally into the landscape, and the use of anchoring

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elements such as battered foundations. Buildings within the district are typically 1-story and rectangular in plan, such as the Zilker Park Clubhouse (#31; Photo 7) and Zilker Cabin (#34). Some feature large fireplaces on the gable ends with exterior chimneys and exposed tie beams and rafters on the interior. All exhibit evidence of ornamental iron work, in lanterns, door hardware, grilles, and occasionally light fixtures. Noncontributing buildings post-date the period of significance and display more modern characteristics, reflecting their dates of construction.

Archeological Sites

The district's primary archeological sites are part of the Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District (NR 1985). These have revealed both pre-historic and historic archeological cultural deposits and have undergone varying degrees of excavation. For further information, refer to the Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District National Register Nomination. For purposes of protecting the sites from vandalism, the locations of the district's three archeological sites (#65-67) are kept confidential and therefore not included on the district map, "Resources of the Zilker Park Historic District."

CLASSIFICATION OF RESOURCES

Resources in the district classified as buildings consist of those constructed for sheltering any form of human activity. These include clubhouses and visitor facilities as well as restrooms and concession stands. Objects consist of small scale, simple constructions that are associated with specific settings or environments or are primarily artistic in nature, therefore contributing to the design of the park. These include features such as the main entrance piers, lampposts, picnic tables, and pergolas. Sites consist of designed landscape elements, such as gardens and ponds, and also former sites of buildings or structures, such as the Rabb House Site, as well as locations for specific activities that may include associated extant features, such as the Pistol Range and ballfields. Structures consist of functional constructions used for purposes other than human shelter. These include but are not limited to roadways, gazebos and bandstands, theaters, and bridges. For purposes of this nomination, contiguous systems of roadways, footpaths, or parking lots are classified as a single structure. The district also includes an undetermined number of small scale signs constructed after the period of significance.

DEFINITION OF CATEGORIES

Contributing resources of the district maintain integrity in terms of location, setting, design, materials, feeling, and association. Contributing buildings, sites, structures, or objects date to the period of significance and reflect the historic design of the landscape and have sustained little, if any, alterations. They also relate to the historic development of the park and reflect characteristics of Depression era buildings and structures built by public works agencies. Representative examples include the 1934 Zilker Park Clubhouse (#31) and Zilker

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Cabin (#34) which both feature limestone construction and massive fireplaces at each gable end. The 1934 Rock Garden (#40; Photo 9), Rock Island (#7; Photo 3), and Mirror Pond (#17) demonstrate examples of both manmade and natural landscape features incorporated into the historic design of the park. Two Contributing Ballfields (#62, 63) and the Barton Springs Pool/Dam (#48; Photo 11) reflect active use of the park since the 1920s.

Noncontributing resources were either constructed or moved to the park after the 50 year cut-off date for eligibility and therefore do not contribute to the historic appearance of the park. These include modern amenities such as restrooms (#13), maintenance buildings (#54, 55), and structures providing automobile access (#4, 16). Other Noncontributing elements such as the Austin Nature and Science Center buildings (#18-23; Photo 5), the Zilker Botanical Gardens (#8-15; Photo 4), and the Hillside Theater (#38) reflect recent development and adaptations as Austinites continue to use and appreciate the park as a recreation facility. These types of resources could possibly achieve significance as Contributing elements relating to the historic development of the park when their dates of construction reach 50 years of age.

Although the district's Noncontributing resources outnumber Contributing elements, the Zilker Park Historic District still meets National Register Criteria as a designed historic landscape. The Noncontributing elements do not significantly detract from the overall landscape design of the park which includes large-scale natural elements that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, were incorporated into the park plan. The district's vast open spaces, large trees, majestic views, natural features, and intact historical elements combine to make the park a significant entity that retains a high degree of historic and architectural integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

INVENTORY OF PROPERTIES

Site numbers correlate to text and district map, "Resources of the Zilker Park Historic District" (see Map-31)

1. Barton Springs Road Bridge, 1926/46, Contributing Structure

2. Main Entrance Piers, 1934, Contributing Object (Photo 1)

The two Main Entrance piers flank the east end of Barton Springs Road as it traverses the park from east to west. Each pier is built upward from solid horizontal planters composed of large, limestone blocks laid horizontally. Various modern associations are present, including setback motifs, Art Deco curving bands, deep horizontal overhangs. Lettered in iron on the south pier is "Zilker Park". The yellowish Cordova limestone was quarried from Texas Quarries at Cedar Park near Austin.

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3. Footbridge, c. 1984, Noncontributing Structure (Photo 2)

Steel, single span bridge with metal railing.

4. Parking Lot System, Various periods, Noncontributing Structure

Concrete pads and curbs.

5. Road Network, Noncontributing Structure

Although the modern road network occasionally follows portions of the 1920s/1930s layout, much of the network has received re-surfacing in recent times.

6. Lou Neff Point, c. 1975, Noncontributing Object

Also the site of a CCC overlook, the site now features a wood, octagonal pergola with benches named for Barbara Louise Neff (1930-1974) after her death.

7. Rock Island, 1934, Contributing Site (Photo3)

Natural limestone outcropping running generally NW/SE near the center of the northeast sector of the park. Some trees grow near its base and out of the stone on top.

8. Austin Area Garden Center, c. 1965, Noncontributing Building

1-story, stone-veneered building.

9. Swedish Log Cabin, Noncontributing Building

19th century cabin moved to the site in the mid 1970s.

10. Esperanzo School House, Noncontributing Building

19th century log cabin moved to site in the mid 1970s.

11. Summer House, Noncontributing Structure

Modern, octagonal, small gazebo.

12. Blacksmith Shop, Noncontributing Building

1-story, frame building moved to site in recent years.

13. Modern restrooms, Noncontributing Building

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14. Zilker Botanical Garden System, 1970s-present, Noncontributing Site (Photo 4)

The system is comprised of numerous gardens, all generally in the north central area but each segregated from the others. The system includes the Vegetable, Xeriscape, Rose, Biblical, Oriental, Fragrance, Azalea, and Posey Perennial gardens. Although an important landscape element of the park, all gardens post-date the period of significance.

15. Tea House, 1970s, Noncontributing Object (Photo 4)

Wood pergola.

16. MoPac Boulevard, c. 1978, Noncontributing Structure

Elevated, eight-lane freeway.

17. Mirror Pond, 1934/35, Contributing Site

Two rock dams creating a pool between, across bed of Dry Creek.

18. Nature Labs, 1987, Noncontributing Building

1-story modern building.

19. Wildlife Exhibit Building, 1988, Noncontributing Building

1-story modern building.

20. Austin Nature and Science Center Headquarters, c. 1981, Noncontributing Building (Photo 5)

2-story modern building.

21. Visitors' Pavilion, 1988, Noncontributing Building

1-story modern building.

22. Pond System, 1988, Noncontributing Site

Two interconnected ponds.

23. Greenhouse, Noncontributing Structure

1-story, vinyl and aluminum, barrel shaped, modern building.

24. Trail House, 1870s/1934, Contributing Building (Photo 6)

1-story, masonry building with modified "U" plan and gabled roof featuring flat-arched window and door openings and double casement windows. The facade of the recessed central pen exhibits modern detailing and a

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massive exterior chimney ornamented with niches and bench. Two projecting wings embrace a courtyard paved with new flagstone. Some 19th century masonry is intact alongside 20th century repair work.

25. Outbuilding, Noncontributing Building

Small, frame storage building of recent vintage.

26. Stratford Drive bridge, Noncontributing Structure

Concrete and steel, two-lane bridge.

27. MoPac footbridge, c. 1978, Noncontributing Structure

Concrete pedestrian bridge across Colorado River.

28. Skeet Field Concession/Comfort Station, 1934, Contributing Building

Small, "T" plan, 1-story building of masonry construction with a gable roof featuring original tiles. The southward-projecting concession room appears to have been added at a slightly later date to the original rectangular building. End porches with exposed trusses allow access to restrooms. Some original, fine-quality ironwork grilles are extant.

29. Pistol Range, c. 1935, Contributing Site

The open field, once the site of a rectangular pistol-practice range, backs up to a natural slope on the north. A stone wall separates the firing range from the Skeet Field Concession building to the south. The wall is in deteriorating condition. On the west, against a taller stone wall, is an open-air gable-roofed shed in poor condition.

30. Lookout Point (Lover's Peak, Observation Point), 1934, Contributing Site

A low stone wall defines a semi-circular arc and is placed at the edge of a cliff with a steep drop below and a commanding view toward the Colorado River and downtown Austin. Squared stone piers rise at intervals above the curving line of the wall. New cedar arbor framing surmounts the piers.

31. Zilker Park Clubhouse, 1934, Contributing Building (Photo 7)

Originally built as the Boy Scout Hut, this 1-story, limestone building features a gabled roof and projecting triangular bay on main (east) elevation. Massive chimneys occur at each gable end. Exterior coursed limestone is cut in thin slabs with corners accented through massive blocks. Flat arched door and window openings and casement windows characterize the facade. Exterior walls are battered at bottom. Ornamental ironwork includes lanterns, hinges, and door handles (one shaped like an eagle, a boy scout symbol). The interior features a large lodge room, massive fireplaces on gable ends, stone benches lining some walls, original wagon wheel chandelier suspended from ceiling.

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32. Picnic Unit (Tables, benches, oven), c. 1935, Contributing Object

Large, rock, "T" plan barbecue pit with three tables and benches. The pit was inner-lined with cement, now burned off. Tables and benches composed of concrete slab tops, supported by rock legs.

33. Danny G. McBeth Recreation Center, 1955, Noncontributing Building

1-story, brick-veneered building with minor remodeling in 1985 for handicap access.

34. Zilker Cabin, 1934, Contributing Building

Probably built as a Girl Scout lodge, this rectangular masonry building features a gabled roof. South elevation is cantilevered over Barton Creek ravine. Walls are of rough squared, coursed limestone. Massive exterior chimneys dominate east and west gable ends. South and north elevations display symmetrically-placed, double casement windows. Two original lanterns are extant, one on north elevation, one on south elevation.

35. Modern Restrooms, Noncontributing Building

36. Sunshine Camp, Noncontributing Building

Modern, 1-story frame and rock building. Parts of original 1934 camp building may exist within.

37. Picnic Unit, c. 1935, Contributing Object (Photo 8)

One table with benches composed of slab concrete top supported by stone legs.

38. Hillside Theater, Noncontributing Structure

Modern frame and plywood stage with backdrops.

39. Projection Booth, Noncontributing Structure

1-story, stone, rectangular building housing projection equipment for Hillside Theater.

40. Rock Garden, 1934, Contributing Site (Photo 9)

The garden is built into a natural limestone outcropping on the slope north of Barton Springs Pool/Dam. It was designed with terraced footpaths, stone stairs, two segregated ponds of three units each. One pond system contained lilies; the other contained turtles and goldfish. Pond systems now inoperative. The terraced stonework complements the natural outcroppings and often looks natural. Vegetation is now overgrown with invasive bamboo. "Zilker Ponds" is inscribed in cursive on a concrete wall on the south bank of the westernmost pond system.

41. Moonlight Tower, Noncontributing Structure

1890s tower moved from Congress Avenue in 1960s.

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Zilker Park Historic District
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42. Lamp Posts, c. 1928/29, Contributing Object (Photo 10)

Two pyramidal piers flanking the drive descending southward toward Barton Springs Pool/Dam. They are composed of various types of native stone, including a variety of granite and some quartz. The tapered piers are surmounted with original decorative iron lanterns but are inoperable.

43. Bandstand, 1936, Contributing Structure

Small, square concrete pad with stucco exterior built into side of slope, north of Barton Springs Pool/Dam, now used for storage. The structure features separate latrines for men and women below.

44. Barton Springs Bath House, 1947, Contributing Building

(see Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District nomination.)

45. Sand Pit, c. 1928/29, Contributing Site

Rectangular concrete wading pool, of shallow and small dimensions for children. Now used as sandpit.

46. Rock Wall System, Various dates, Noncontributing Structure

Rock walls are used with some frequency in the park, especially in the pool and bathhouse areas. Most appear to be of recent vintage; some may pre-date 1947, such as the rockwork of the Zilker Amphitheater. Various masonry finishes are found on the wall system, from coursed, dressed stones to uncoursed, unfinished surfaces.

47. Concession Stand, 1960s, Noncontributing Building

1-story rock building.

48. Barton Springs Pool/Dam, 1928/29, Contributing Structure (Photo 11)

Approximately 100 x 1000' in size with depth ranging from a few inches to over 16', the pool is in the bed of Barton Creek. Although at least four springs comprise the Barton Springs system, the main spring, near the pool diving board on the south side, is largely responsible for feeding the pool. The upper and lower concrete dams (the latter with four moveable metal plates) the gravel trap dam, and southside sidewalk were constructed simultaneously. Northside aggregate sidewalk is modern.

49. Zilker Zephyr Tunnel, 1960s, Noncontributing Structure

Below-ground, concrete-block tunnel, for Zilker Zephyr train storage.

50. Zilker Zephyr Ticket Booth, Noncontributing Building

Small, rectangular modern building.

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Zilker Park Historic District
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51. Zilker Zephyr Railroad, 1960s, Noncontributing Structure

Miniature gauge railroad following the banks of Barton Creek and the Colorado River and terminating in a loop.

52. Modern Playscape, Noncontributing Structure

Children's playground of modern vintage, including swing sets, slides, fire truck, benches, sand pits, climbing equipment.

53. Caretaker's Lodge, 1929, Contributing Building (Photo 12)

1-story, masonry, "I"-plan residence with steeply gabled roof. Multicolored masonry exhibits "peanut brittle" pattern. Double-hung sash, 6/6 and 9/9. The residence is totally screened from public view by a bamboo fence.

54. Maintenance Shop, c. 1946, Contributing Building

Barrel shaped, metal building with sliding doors.

55. Maintenance Shed, Noncontributing Building

Frame shed, open on west side, of recent vintage.

56. Modern Comfort Station, Noncontributing Building

57. Wright Field, Noncontributing Site (Photo 13)

Modern Baseball diamond with metal/wood bleachers and cinder-block, 1-story concession stand.

58. Replica Log House, Noncontributing Building

Small log house with notched corners and gable roof, resting on concrete pad.

59. Modern Comfort Stations, Noncontributing Building

60. Sunken Garden, 1937/39, Contributing Site (Photo 14)

Encircling one of the springs which comprise the Barton Springs system is a system of concentric stone terraces and walls rising from the springs to a pecan grove at top. The mature pecans, some integrated into the wall system, shade the multilevel terraces. Picnic tables accommodating 250-300 persons originally occupied the terraces. Alongside the spring-fed pool at bottom is a small elevated stage for performances. The stone picnic tables are gone; the pool is dry most of the year.

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Zilker Park Historic District
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61. Modern Lift Station, Noncontributing Building

Small, rectangular, 1-story masonry building with hipped roof.

62. Ballfield with Dugouts, Late 1920s, Contributing Site

Since the late 1920s, this site has been used as a ballfield. The baseball diamond has two stone dugouts, to either side of home base.

63. Ballfield with Dugouts, Late 1920s, Contributing Site

Baseball diamond with two stone dugouts.

64. Footpath System, c. 1934, Contributing Structure

By concentrating footpaths in the southwest (Sunshine Camp), northwest (Austin Nature Center), and north central (Zilker Botanical Gardens) sectors, the modern trail system replicates to a certain extent the historic, 1930s trail system. The historic serpentine layout of trails and perhaps the trail beds in some cases are extant. The footpath system is largely unimproved. Vegetation growth is controlled by use. Unimproved footpaths were present in the 1930s development.

65. Rabb House Site, Contributing Site

(41TV689, see Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District nomination.)

66. Bridge Abutment, Contributing Structure

(41TV690, see Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District nomination.)

67. The Barton Springs Site, Contributing Site

(41TV2, see Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District nomination.)

68. Zilker Amphitheater, Contributing Structure

(see Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District nomination.)

69. Texas State Council Knights of Columbus Building, 1955, Noncontributing Building

1-story, brick-veneered building built as Knights of Columbus Regional Headquarters.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- ☒ **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 VALUE, 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: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture; Conservation; Entertainment/Recreation; Landscape Architecture

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1917-1947

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1917; 1932-1935; 1937-1939; 1947

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Page, Charles, H.; Dale, Fred A.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-18 through 8-24).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-25 through 9-27).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☒ previously listed in the National Register (*Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District*)
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☒ Federal agency (*National Archives, Civil Records Branch, Record Groups 35 and 79*)
- ☒ Local government (*City of Austin*)
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: *Austin History Center*

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Zilker Park Historic District
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Zilker Park Historic District represents the centerpiece of Austin's renowned park system. Austin resident Andrew J. Zilker deeded the land to the city of Austin in a series of three agreements that eventually led to the formation of Austin's parks system. Zilker Park evolved between 1917 and 1939, shaped by two distinct trends in American park design--the Reform Park Movement and the Depression-inspired era of public works. At the time of its creation, Zilker Park represented the latest trends in park design and conservation. Today, the park continues to inspire progressive environmental policy and remains an indelible part of Austin's recreation and conservation history. The Zilker Park Historic District achieves significance under Criterion A in the areas of Conservation and Entertainment/Recreation at the local level of significance for its association with the development and design of municipal parks in Austin during the early 20th century, through federally-funded relief, conservation, and employment programs of the Great Depression, and for its role as a popular recreation area in Austin for more than 60 years. The district also meets Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the local level of significance for its numerous elements that represent a designed landscape type relating to the Reform Park Movement design philosophy and construction methods of Depression-era public works programs.

PRE-PARK HISTORY

Farming/stockraising, industry, and recreation, in that order, were the three primary 19th-century land uses of the area now known as Zilker Park. The earliest immigrant to the area, William Barton, arrived in the late 1830s, about the time of the 1839 founding of nearby Austin. Barton came to Texas in the late 1820s, moving to present-day Bastrop and then to the Austin area a decade later. A property and slave owner from the southern United States, Barton settled on 177 acres of land straddling Spring Creek (now Barton Creek) on a labor within the league previously granted to Henry P. Hill. Without title, Barton farmed the land and raised cattle until his death in 1840. Despite his brief tenure, Barton was the first recorded Anglo-American immigrant to the springs area. He unwittingly bequeathed his name to the springs, and he typified the earliest, empresario-sponsored, resourceful settler.

Following the Bartons to the springs area, other Anglo-American settlers included Ashford B. McGill and Dr. Barclay Townsend. They too farmed, raised cattle, stayed alert to the occasional Indian presence, and likely did some gardening. Like most pre-Civil War immigrants, they also pursued other professions or skills in addition to farming, often centering around nearby Austin. McGill, who eventually built a ranch house on his land (#24), served as Travis County clerk from 1846 to 1857, while Townsend was a medical doctor.

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Zilker Park Historic District
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Although attempts were made to exploit the water power of Barton Springs prior to the war, the post-Civil War period saw modest expansion of industrial uses of both the springs and land. In the 1870s G.T. Rabb, who owned land south of the creek, leased out its water power. Michael Paggi of Austin, a Rabb lessee, ran an ice factory and grist mill on the creek. Later, Rabb sold a few acres to Jacob Stern who operated the mill under the name of Barton Springs Feed Mill.

Alongside these industrial developments, farming and stock raising persisted throughout the 19th century. The size of landholdings, however, tended to decrease during this period as first and second generation landowners divided their holdings for resale or inheritance. Despite this fragmentation in parcel size, the area generally lagged behind Austin in urban development and remained rural in character and use until well after the turn of the century. The disparity in urbanization during the latter 19th century between the Barton Springs area and Austin was apparently already recognizable in the early 1870s when one newspaper reporter, in an article devoted to the springs, refers to the area as "cow country."

The same post-Civil War reporter, however, mentions the third persistent land use of the area, that of recreation. That potential was exploited as early as the 1840s, according to J.K. Holland's reminiscences. The reporter was effusive about the area, describing the "perennial spring" as a "charming bathing place, unrivaled" even by the "far from contemptible Colorado River," with "clear and sparkling water, cool shade" and banks "lined with clean rock."

As Austin expanded and urban growth encroached upon the boundaries of the land, the actions of Austin resident Andrew J. Zilker protected the integrity of the more than 350 acre parcel and its water resources, two elements so desirable for park land. Zilker arrived in Austin as a youth in the mid 1870s where he prospered as a manufacturer of ice, serving as president of the Austin Ice Factory, Inc., until his death in 1934. Zilker gained influence in Austin politics and banking beginning in the 1890s. In 1901, he began buying land between the Colorado River and Barton Creek. By about 1913, he owned several hundred acres, including all of the parcel which later became Barton Springs Park and Zilker Park. Zilker appears to have farmed the land a bit and leased it for both industrial and recreational purposes. Michael Butler of Butler Brick Works leased two parcels, one north and one south of the river, and a swimming concessionaire rented bathing suits to the public for swimming in the springs.

MUNICIPAL PARK DEVELOPMENT

In 1917, Zilker executed the first of three transactions that together would provide this unique and substantial park land to the city. At the time of his first proposal, Austin had few parks, no park department, no recreation department, and no formal parks policy. Zilker's proposal was an ingenious three-party trade which

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resulted in the city's acquiring Barton Springs, the state's fifth largest natural springs said to produce over 17 million gallons of water daily. The trade included more than 37 acres of surrounding land.

When Zilker consummated the 1917 transaction, proponents of the 19th century pleasure ground park--a concept emphasizing large park reservations, beauty of landscape design, and passive use--conceded credibility to the equally vocal advocates of children's playgrounds and sports facilities. The Reform Park Movement of 1900 to 1930, so called because of the reforming zeal pervading the programmed philosophy of the era, sought to instill principles of good citizenship in children using the parks. It also emphasized smaller parks and facilities for children and athletics.

The 1920s development of Barton Springs Park reflected the Reform Park concept in a number of respects. It met the recommended size of 10-40 acres, it featured a generously-sized bathing facility (#48) for active play in the unique spring-fed pool, enhanced by the 1923 2-story bathing pavilion/dance hall. Ball fields (#62, 63), for active, organized sports, were laid out south of Barton Creek. The park serviced children by providing a wading pool (#45) and children's play area equipped with swings. These areas were separated, per park theory of the era, from the more active areas. Toward the end of the decade administrators talked of building a bandstand and installing a miniature train for children, and the bandstand came to fruition in 1936 (#43). Picnic units were distributed throughout the park, and trails were planned for walking. Thus facilities for children, active play, and sports, all primary considerations of the Reform Park concept, became important service elements of the 1920s Barton Springs Park.

Zilker's second proposal, consummated in 1932 and patterned after the 1917 agreement, resulted in the city's acquiring another 250-300 acres of parkland adjacent to the springs, greatly impacting the city's fledgling park system. The Zilker transaction, however, was preceded in the late 1920s by a period of significant development in municipal policy which served to magnify the importance of Zilker's second donation. Between 1926 and 1929, a remarkable series of decisions both encouraged Zilker to make his second donation and launched the city on a progressive park program which established the framework for its nationally-known park stature of today.

In 1926, the city hired the Dallas firm of Koch and Fowler to prepare a comprehensive and first city plan. Published in 1928, the plan included recommendations for the development of a system of large and small parks. Also in 1926, the city council appointed a Park Board with broad acquisition and development powers. That same year saw the construction of the Barton Springs Park area. During this period a bond election passed authorizing the expenditure of \$200,000 for park development. This may have been the city's first local bonding authorization that allocated funding for parks. In 1928, with input from the Lions Club and the National Recreation Association, the city hired its first recreation director and then established a Recreation Department. Finally, a comprehensive five-year plan was adopted for acquiring and developing park facilities for the city.

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The goal of the five-year plan was to achieve balance in the distribution of parks throughout the city and in their development as both landscaped parks and active playgrounds. Those goals were based upon recommendations in the Koch and Fowler plan calling for a parks system composed of numerous small playgrounds, larger playfields, neighborhood parks, and large, outlying reservations of 50-200 acres in size. The Koch and Fowler plan recommended that the outlying parks be developed naturalistically, retaining as much as possible of their natural topography and scenery. Relevant to the later Zilker Park/Barton Springs development, the plan also recommended that playgrounds and playfields be incorporated within the large naturalistic parks.

The need for master plans was itself characteristic of the era, according to Galen Cranz in his discussion of municipal park development in the early 20th century. In addition, the fragmentation of parks into separate playgrounds, neighborhood parks, playfields, and large outlying parks, as specified in the 1928 master plan, was also a characteristic of the expanding municipal park philosophy. Lawrence Weir, editor of a 1928 publication of a mid-1920s survey results from 4,000 municipalities, reveals this expansion philosophy in a list of multiplying park types. Among the types listed are playfields, playgrounds, neighborhood parks, and large, outlying "country" parks developed naturalistically.

The city followed the five-year parks plan, based on the Koch and Fowler recommendations, closely, acquiring and developing numerous neighborhood parks and playgrounds between 1929 and 1939. These were distributed throughout the city to meet the needs of the diverse economic and ethnic groups within the area. Some of the parks and playgrounds developed during this time include (in alphabetical order) Alice Avenue Triangle, Austin Athletic Club, Bartholomew Playground, Blunn Creek Park, Central Park Fruth, Deep Eddy Park, East 12th Street Parkway, East 15th Street Parkway, East Avenue Playground, Eastwoods Park, Hospital Park, House Park, Hyde Park Playground, Metz Park, Palm School Playground, Pease Park, Ramsey Park, Rosewood Park and Playground for the Colored, San Jacinto Park, Shipe Park, Shoal Creek Park, South Austin Park, Stacy Park, Waller Creek, West 15th Parkway, West Austin Playground, and Zaragosa Park.

Because of Zilker's second transaction, the large park outlying Barton Springs Park, now Zilker Park, also came to fruition. Yet it is doubtful that Zilker Park would have developed as it did had events far beyond the local sphere of influence not come to pass. The onset of the Great Depression precipitated a national emergency of proportions so great that federal intervention was required.

DEPRESSION-ERA PARK WORK

Parks and recreation projects were standard recipients of Depression-era federal aid for obvious reasons. They were labor-intensive, socially beneficial projects that would be of value to the greatest number of people. Four New Deal agencies and programs, some with the National Park Service (NPS) acting as a consulting

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agency, are known to have contributed to Zilker's development. They are the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) in 1933, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) from 1933-35, the Civil Works Administration (CWA) during the winter of 1933-34, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) from April to September 1934, and the National Youth Administration (NYA) in 1935. The first three accounted for the lion's share of the development. A fifth agency, the Works Progress Administration (WPA--successor of the CWA) from 1935 on, may also have provided some labor.

In May of 1933, with his appointment to the Park Board, Charles H. Page, a local architect, rose to aggressively represent the board in the Zilker improvement program. His first step was to secure the help of RFC funding for construction of stone picnic units (tables and benches) and open-air ovens (perhaps #32, 37). During 1933, RFC men also laid out pedestrian trails, roadways, and bridle paths.

Late in 1933, while the roadwork was progressing, the Texas Relief Commission, coordinator of RFC and FERA funds, opened the Texas Civil Works Administration its offices in Austin. The CWA was an emergency employment measure established by President Roosevelt in November to help stem unemployment. Four hundred million dollars were obtained from the Public Works Administration (PWA) to fund the CWA. Texas alone was to receive millions of CWA dollars, and park development was one of its several programs. Zilker Park was one of numerous park projects which the CWA funded in Texas. By the deep winter of 1933, the CWA had fully absorbed the Zilker development into its program.

In charge of Texas CWA park work was Fred A. Dale, an Austin engineer who previously served as engineer in charge of CCC park work in Texas. Dale, representing the CWA, and Page, representing the city Park Board, would be co-leaders of the Zilker Park development. Dale also would join the city Park Board in 1934, further solidifying the working relationship between municipal and federal entities. Funded in excess of \$94,000, the Zilker development was the most generously funded CWA park project in the state.

Between these two and their respective organizations, Dale and Page provided design, supervision, construction supervision, and leadership within the community *vis a vis* the City Council. The CWA drew up a master plan for the work and funded the labor required for construction. Work began in January of 1934 and extended until March 29, the official termination date of the CWA. CWA components of the park were the Sunshine Camp (original building gone or covered over); ornamental main entrance (#2); arboretum; new roads; the Boy Scout Hut (#31--now the Zilker Club House); the west-end shelter house (#24--now the Trail House); the Girl Scout Hut (#34--now the Zilker Cabin); the now inoperative but intact Rock Garden (#40) with lily ponds, turtle pools, and gold fish pond; and numerous picnic nooks (perhaps #32, 37). Construction of the Mirror Pond (#17) may also have begun under the CWA campaign.

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With the demise of the CWA in March, its Austin projects including Zilker would continue as long as FERA funding lasted. Probably anticipating termination of the CWA, D.E. Colp, chairman of the State Parks Board, had helped to arrange with the National Park Service for the establishment of a CCC camp in Austin. Established by President Roosevelt as one of the first New Deal programs in the spring of 1933, the CCC program was dedicated to reforestation and conservation activities. Park work became another emphasis of the program. When a CCC camp was approved for Austin, work at Bastrop State Park and Blanco State Park had already begun, and CWA work in Zilker Park was in an advanced stage. Through the CCC, the ambitious development already begun by the collaborating Austin Park Board and CWA in Zilker Park could reach a high degree of completion.

CCC Company 1814 arrived in Austin on April 29, 1934. Direction of the Zilker project was then divided between the CCC and the Texas Relief Commission. Dale, now representing the TRC, would continue his former role; Page of the Austin Park Board would direct the CCC work through superintendent Nottie H. Lee. The National Park Service would provide design and technical assistance and field inspectors through its Oklahoma City district office. The CCC contribution to Zilker's development through October 28, 1934, included paving park roads, general beautification, rebuilding the skeet house into a shelter (closed 1980s), converting the police department pistol range house into modern restrooms (#28), construction of the lookout on the west end (#30), and another one (demolished c. 1937) on the east end where Barton Creek and the river converge, now Lou Neff Point (#6).

Later in the 1930s, youth hired via the National Youth Administration would help to construct the Sunken Gardens (#60) on the south side of Barton Creek.

By 1939, Zilker Park had been fully developed via funding from various federal programs of the Depression era. It was the most ambitious 1930s, federally-funded park project to occur in Austin. The result was a good example of the "country" park, according to contemporary park design criteria. It was a naturalistic park in the tradition of the great 19th century pleasure grounds; its design utilized and enhanced pre-existing topographical features, including natural water bodies, broad flat areas, rugged rock outcroppings (#7), and hilly terrain. It introduced artificial water bodies (#17, 40), yet the design incorporated existing vegetation, including wooded areas in the northwest section, clumps of trees scattered throughout, a planted wildflower field of bluebonnets, and cultivated cactus gardens. Conservation of natural resources, i.e., tree surgery and drainage, had been practiced during the course of the development. Separate roadways, footpaths, and bridle paths meandered through the park. Bridle paths were located in areas not easily accessible by road, such as the northwest and southwest section, while footpaths led the pedestrian along wooded, scenic trails designed for seclusion and appreciation of nature. The park exhibited an arboretum and Reptile Institute (demolished c. late 1930s), which were recommended educational/recreational features of municipal park design. Roadways for autos were minimized, per recommended park design ideas, especially in the northwest "wilderness" section.

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The park presented a main entrance "...appropriate in scale, style, ornament and workmanship" (Weir 1928:1:191). It provided ample picnic facilities in both open and secluded spots, plus ovens and picnic tables with benches of rustic design, all as recommended. Finally, it offered maintenance and visitor-oriented features, such as concessions, caretaker lodges, and comfort stations.

In these and other ways, Zilker Park alone was a well-developed municipal park exhibiting an impressive number of amenities. By integrating Barton Springs Park, with its bathing facility, playfields, and playgrounds, into the complementary Zilker Park, per master plan suggestions, the larger, combined reservation could offer an even better array of functions and serve a greater number of persons. Critical to Zilker's development was its timing relative to pressing national events, i.e. the Great Depression and federally-funded programs, which were significantly responsible for its comprehensive, high-dollar, labor-intensive, swiftly-paced development. Additionally, the park was then ready for an influx of patrons brought to Austin for work associated with World War II.

The construction of the current Barton Springs Bath House (#44) in 1947 denotes the end of the period of significance and the 50-year cut-off for National Register eligibility. Designed by Austin architect Dan J. Driscoll, the bath house displays distinctive Moderne characteristics that signifies post-Depression era park development. Later development of Zilker Park reflects the continued use of the park as an important nature and recreational facility, with the development of the Zilker Botanical Gardens in the 1970s and the Austin Nature and Science Center in the 1980s. Although non-historic, these facilities, together with the historic amenities, continue to draw visitors and help make the park the centerpiece of Austin's park system. The development and design of the Zilker Botanical Gardens, an important and elaborate landscape element, should be further documented and considered as a Contributing site when it achieves 50 years of age.

The development of Barton Springs Park and Zilker Park together reflect a composite of late 19th and early 20th century ideas. Barton Springs Park, the earlier of the two, developed in the 1920s, reflects the Reform Park theory, itself a compromise between the 19th century emphasis on landscape principles and 20th century playground/athletic principles. The 1930s development of Zilker Park reflects the 20th century pleasure ground ideals. Planned as a complementary function to the pre-existing Barton Springs Park, Zilker Park today represents the 1920s/1930s trend toward breadth of park function and design. The Zilker Park Historic District, which encompasses these two parks and includes the Barton Springs Archeological and Historical District, constitutes a significant entity representing the history of park development and planning in Austin during the period of significance.

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Barton Springs

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Barton Springs
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Glover, Gary, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Herrera, Jacqueline, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Ludwig, Otto
Macias, Sara, Park Superintendent
Robinson, Jack
Sheffield, Beverly
Wallace, E.M.
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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: approximately 350 acres

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	14	617800	3349760	3	14	618300	3348040
2	14	619240	3348800	4	14	617900	3348420

(see continuation sheet 10-28)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-28)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-28)

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Mary Dillman, THC Historian, and Julie Adams, THC Intern)

NAME/TITLE: Julie Strong/Manager

ORGANIZATION: Heritage Marketing

DATE: March 1997

STREET & NUMBER: 900 Congress Suite 300

TELEPHONE: (512) 454-0145

CITY OR TOWN: Austin

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 78701

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet Map-29 through Map-32)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-33 through Photo-34)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: City of Austin, Parks & Recreation Department

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 1088

TELEPHONE: (512) 499-6700

CITY OR TOWN: Austin

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 78701

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UTM REFERENCES (continued)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
5	14	616980	3347860
6	14	616720	3348160
7	14	617680	3348540
8	14	617320	3348820
9	14	617260	3348960

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(Refer to Map-31, 32, and USGS Map 2 of 2) The boundaries of the Zilker Park Historic District are bounded by the western bank of the Colorado River on the northeast (A to B), the southern bank of Barton Creek (B to C), the western edge of Barton Springs Road (C to D), the northern edge of Robert E. Lee Road (D to E) and the eastern edge of Barton Hills Drive (E to F) on the southeast, and the property line from the point of its intersection with Barton Hills Drive to the Colorado River on the west (F to A), as indicated by the dotted line on USGS Map 2 of 2 and shown on Map-32.

UTM References for points A through F:

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	14	617800	3349760
B	14	619240	3348800
C	14	618820	3348600
D	14	618860	3348560
E	14	618020	3348120
F	14	618020	3348300

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Zilker Park Historic District include all property known as Zilker Park that the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department obtained between 1917 and 1934. The boundaries include all resources historically associated with the park that retain their historic and architectural integrity.

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Zilker Park Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

LOCATION OF THE ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT



NOT TO SCALE

ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

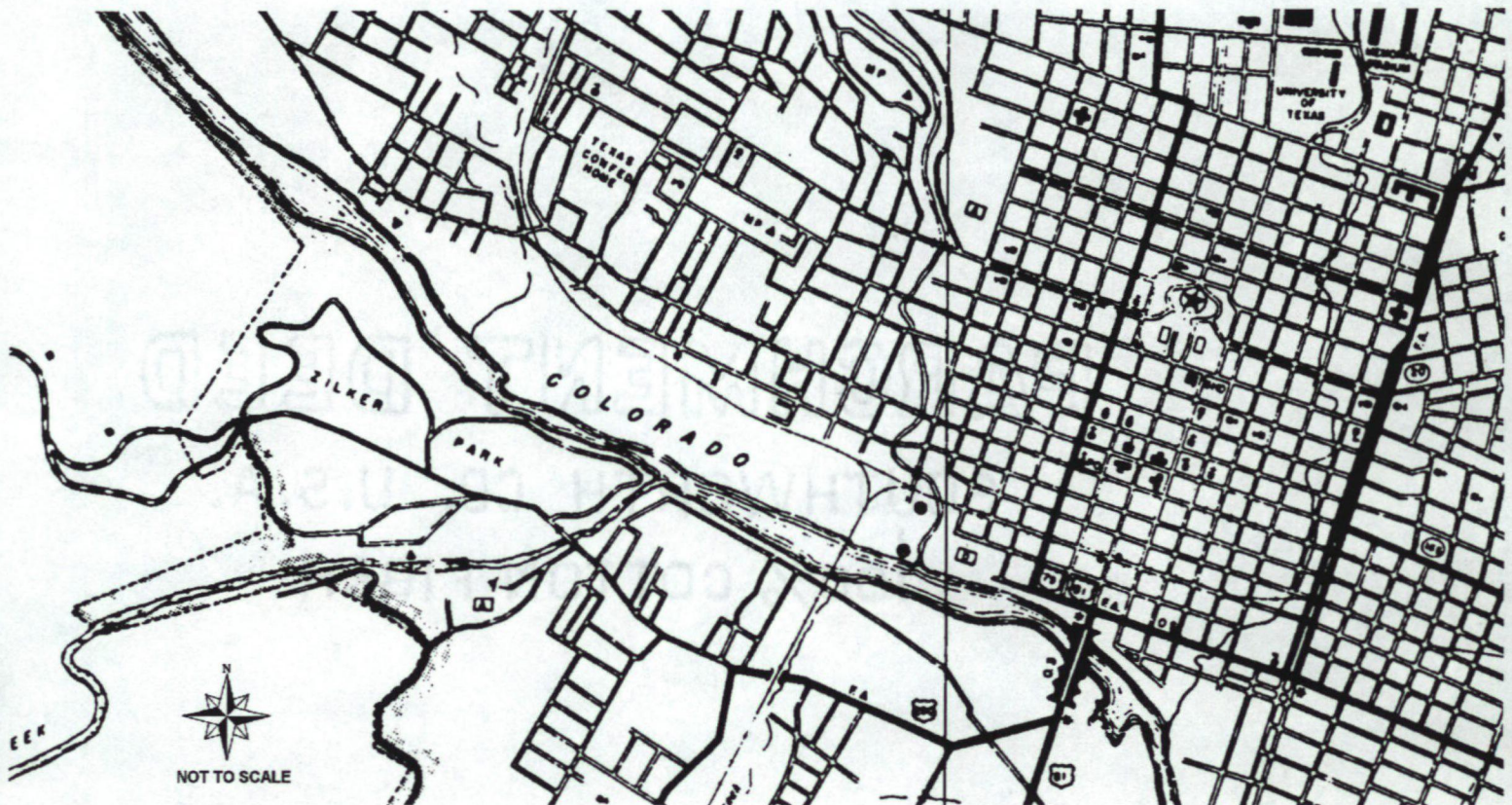
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1936 GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP, AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY
TEXAS STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT



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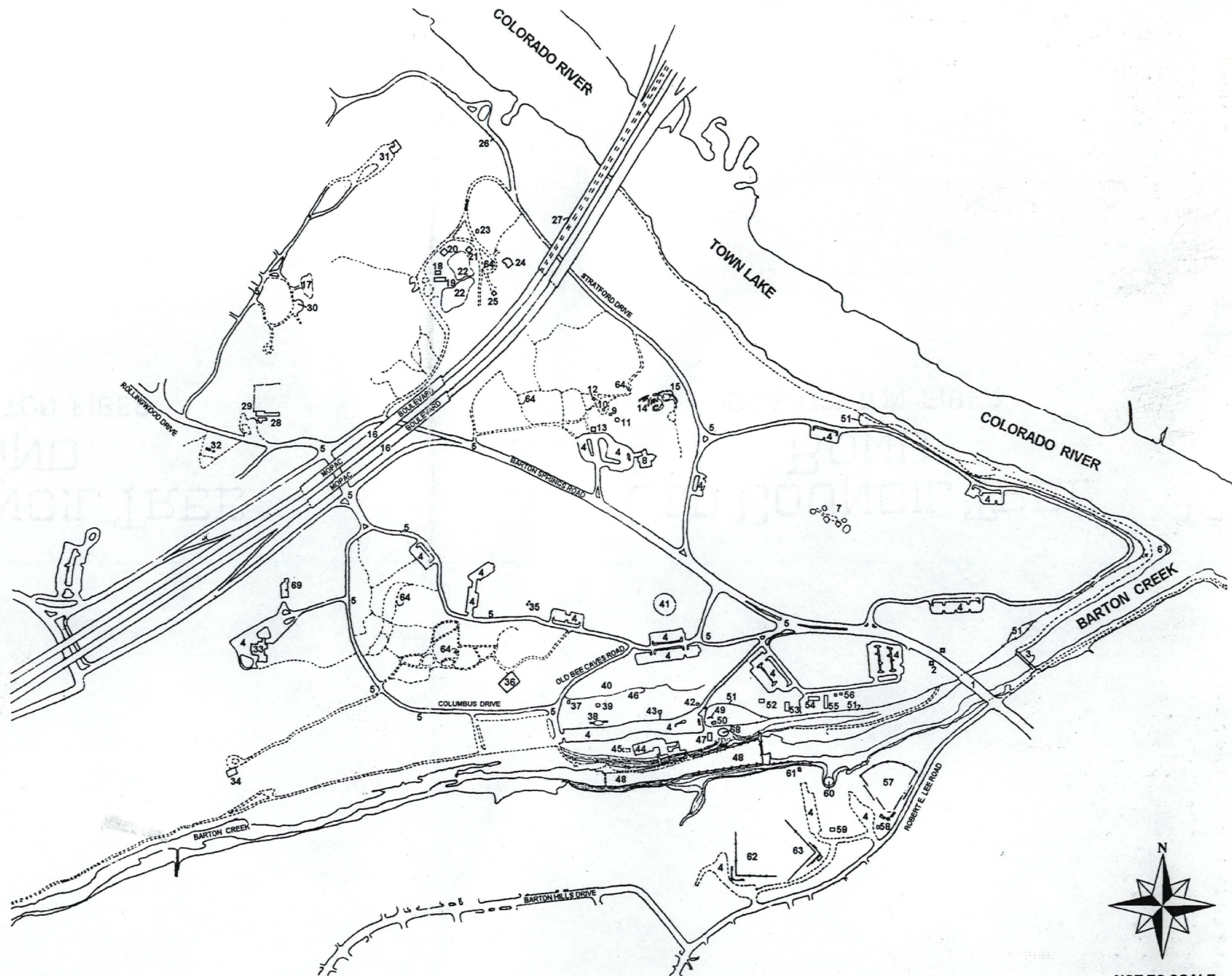
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Zilker Park Historic District
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RESOURCES OF THE ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT (see reverse)
Site numbers correlate to Inventory of Properties on pages 7-10 through 7-17.

KEY TO NUMBERS:

1	Barton Springs Road Bridge	Contributing
2	Main Entrance	Contributing
3	Footbridge	Noncontributing
4	Parking Lot System	Noncontributing
5	Road Network	Noncontributing
6	Lou Neff Point	Noncontributing
7	Rock Island	Contributing
8	Austin Area Garden Center	Noncontributing
9	Swedish Log Cabin	Noncontributing
10	Esperanza School House	Noncontributing
11	Summer House	Noncontributing
12	Blacksmith Shop	Noncontributing
13	Modern restrooms	Noncontributing
14	Zilker Botanical Garden System	Noncontributing
15	Tea House	Noncontributing
16	MoPac Boulevard	Noncontributing
17	Mirror Pond	Contributing
18	Nature Labs	Noncontributing
19	Wildlife Exhibit Building	Noncontributing
20	Austin Nature and Science Center Headquarters	Noncontributing
21	Visitors' Pavilion	Noncontributing
22	Pond System	Noncontributing
23	Greenhouse	Noncontributing
24	Trail House	Contributing
25	Outbuilding	Noncontributing
26	Stratford Drive bridge	Noncontributing
27	MoPac footbridge	Noncontributing
28	Skeet Field Concession Comfort Station	Contributing
29	Pistol Range	Contributing
30	Lookout Point	Contributing
31	Zilker Park Clubhouse	Contributing
32	Picnic Unit	Contributing
33	Danny G. McBeth Recreation Center	Noncontributing
34	Zilker Cabin	Contributing
35	Modern Restrooms	Noncontributing
36	Sunshine Camp	Noncontributing
37	Picnic Unit	Contributing
38	Hillside Theater	Noncontributing
39	Projection Booth	Noncontributing
40	Rock Garden	Contributing
41	Moonlight Tower	Noncontributing
42	Lamp Posts	Contributing
43	Bandstand	Contributing
44	Barton Springs Bath House	Contributing
45	Sand Pit	Contributing
46	Rock Wall System	Noncontributing
47	Concession Stand	Noncontributing
48	Barton Springs Pool/Dams	Contributing
49	Zilker Zephyr Tunnel	Noncontributing
50	Zilker Zephyr Ticket Booth	Noncontributing
51	Zilker Zephyr Railroad	Noncontributing
52	Modern Playscape	Noncontributing
53	Caretaker's Lodge	Contributing
54	Maintenance Shop	Contributing
55	Maintenance Shed	Noncontributing
56	Modern Comfort Station	Noncontributing
57	Wright Field	Noncontributing
58	Replica Log House	Noncontributing
59	Modern Comfort Stations	Noncontributing
60	Sunken Garden	Contributing
61	Modern Lift Station	Noncontributing
62	Ballfield with Dugouts	Contributing
63	Ballfield with Dugouts	Contributing
64	Footpath System	Contributing
68	Zilker Amphitheater	Contributing
69	Knights of Columbus Building	Noncontributing



NOT TO SCALE

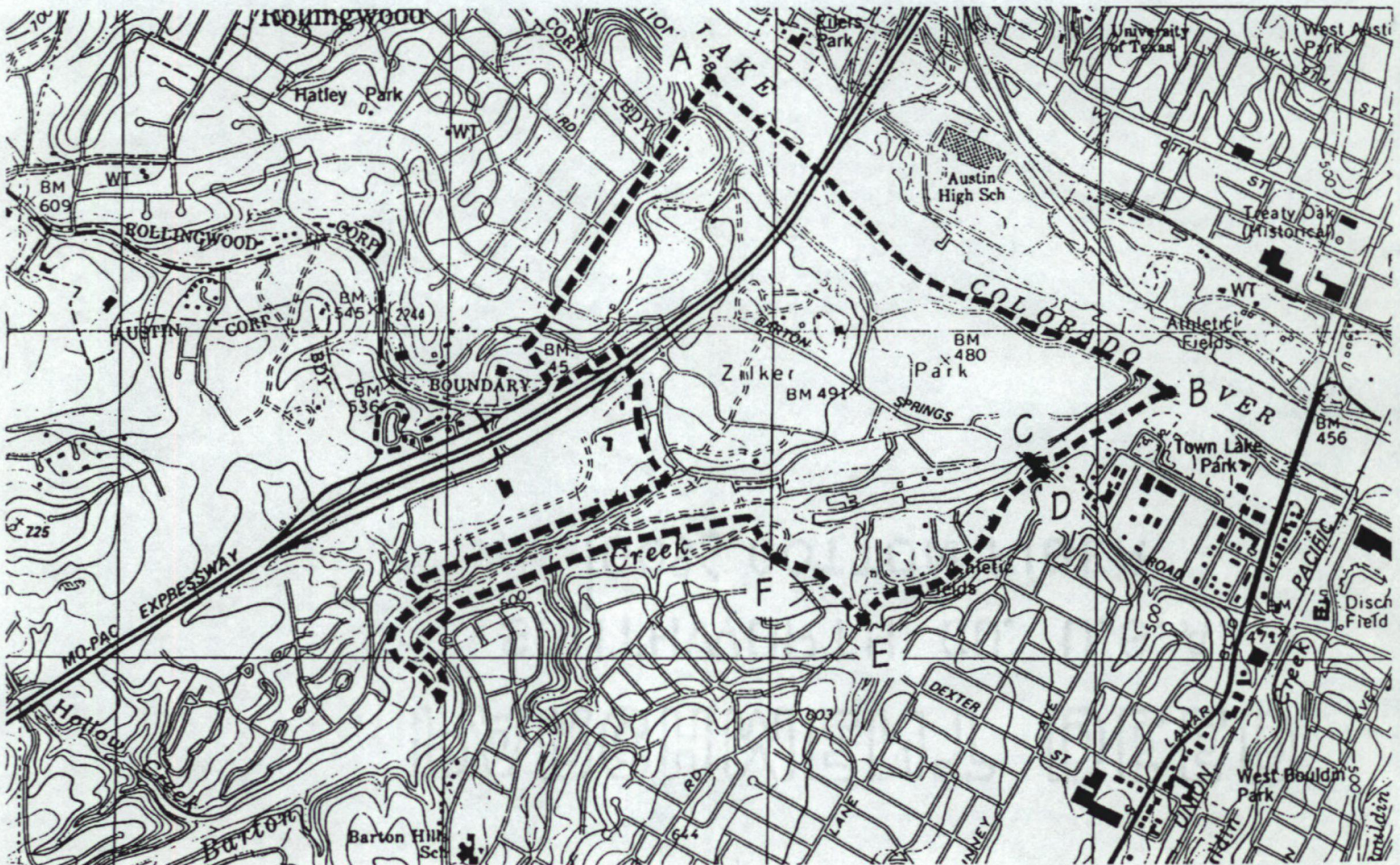
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 32

Zilker Park Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



----- DENOTES DISTRICT BOUNDARY

↑
NORTH
NOT TO SCALE

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section PHOTO Page 33

Zilker Park Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

PHOTO INVENTORY

Zilker Park Historic District
2100 Barton Springs Road
Austin, Travis County, Texas

All photos by Charles Peveto and Mary Dillman, March 1997
Negatives on file with the Texas Historical Commission

Photo 1 of 14	#2 Main Entrance Piers, Contributing Object Camera facing west
Photo 2 of 14	#3 Footbridge, Noncontributing Structure Camera facing northeast
Photo 3 of 14	#7 Rock Island, Contributing Site Camera facing west
Photo 4 of 14	#14, 15 Zilker Botanical Gardens and Tea House, Noncontributing Site, Object Camera facing north
Photo 5 of 14	#20 Austin Nature and Science Center Headquarters, Noncontributing Building Camera facing northeast
Photo 6 of 14	#24 Trail House, Contributing Building Camera facing northeast
Photo 7 of 14	#31 Zilker Park Clubhouse, Contributing Building Camera facing north
Photo 8 of 14	#37 Picnic Unit, Contributing Object Camera facing northeast
Photo 9 of 14	#40 Rock Garden, Contributing Site Camera facing north
Photo 10 of 14	#42 Lamp Posts, Contributing Object Camera facing southwest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 34

Zilker Park Historic District
Austin, Travis County, Texas

-
- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Photo 11 of 14 | #48 Barton Springs Pool/Dam, Contributing Structure
Camera facing southwest |
| Photo 12 of 14 | #53 Caretaker's Lodge, Contributing Building
Camera facing east |
| Photo 13 of 14 | #57 Wright Field, Noncontributing Site
Camera facing southeast |
| Photo 14 of 14 | #60 Sunken Garden, Contributing Site
Camera facing east |

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Zilker Park Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Travis

DATE RECEIVED: 4/22/97 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/06/97
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/22/97 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/06/97
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 97000479

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 5/23/97 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

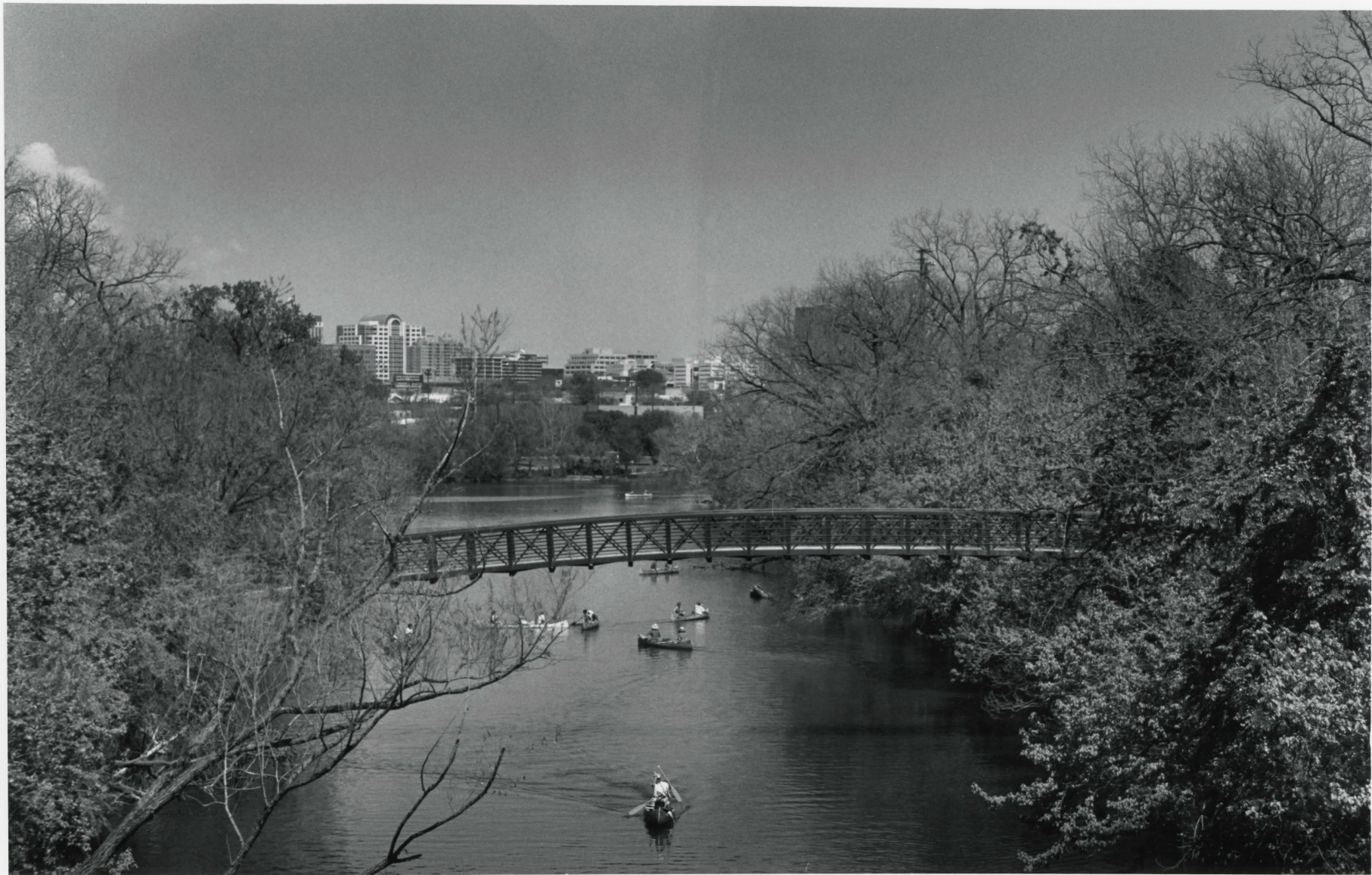
REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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



#2 MAIN ENTRANCE PIERS
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 14



#3 FOOTBRIDGE
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 14



#7 ROCK ISLAND
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 3 of 14



14, 15 ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDENS
E, TEA HOUSE

ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 4 of 14



#20 AUSTIN NATURE & SCIENCE CENTER
HEADQUARTERS

ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 5 of 14



#24 TRAIL HOUSE
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 6 of 14



#31 ZILKER PARK CLUBHOUSE
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 7 of 14



#37 PICNIC UNIT
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 8 of 14



40 ROCK GARDEN
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 9 of 14



#42 LAMP POSTS
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 10 of 14



#48 BARTON SPRINGS POOL/DAM
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 11 of 14



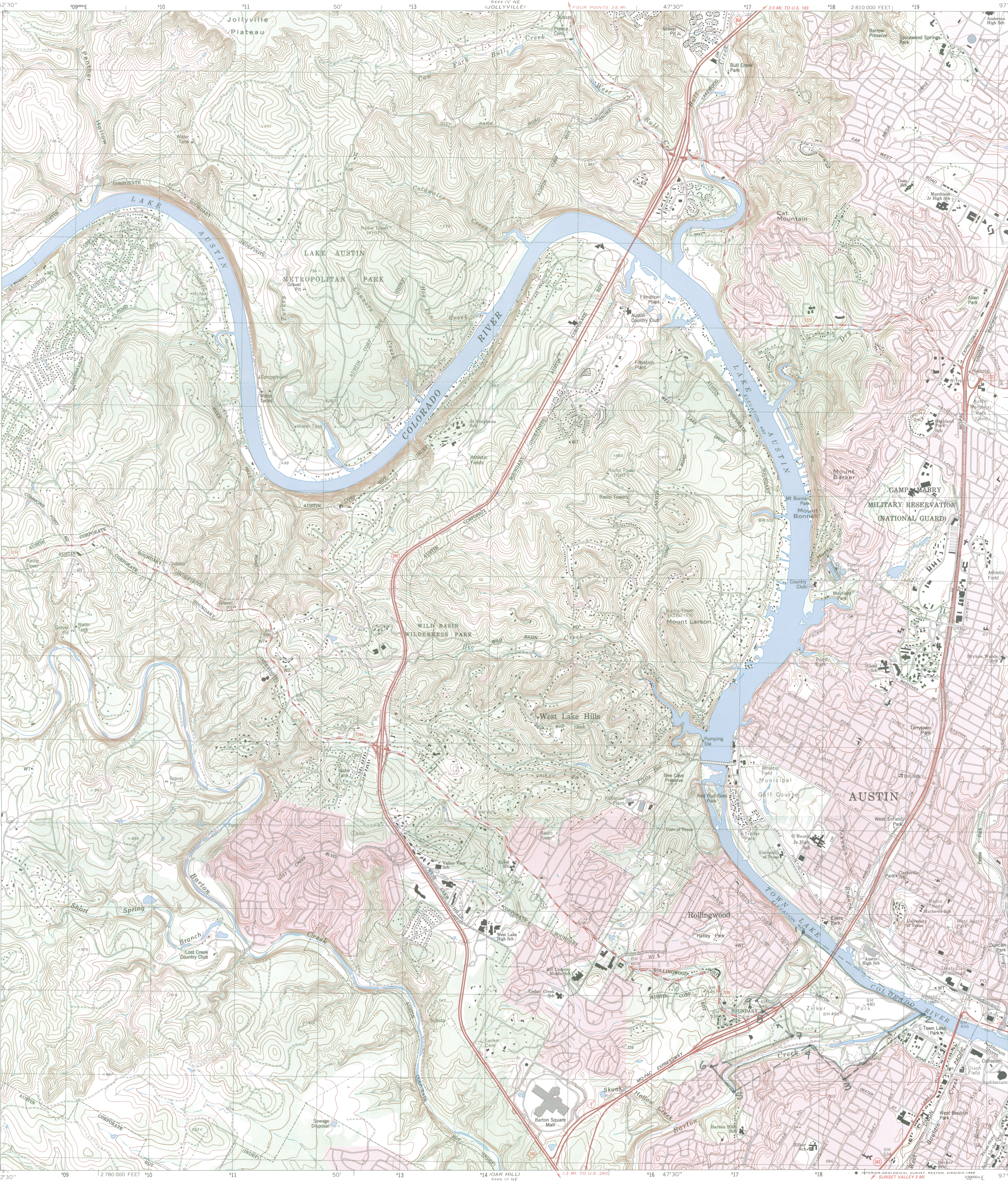
#53 CARETAKER'S LODGE
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 12 of 14



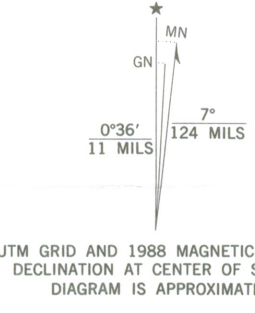
#57 WRIGHT FIELD
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 13 of 14

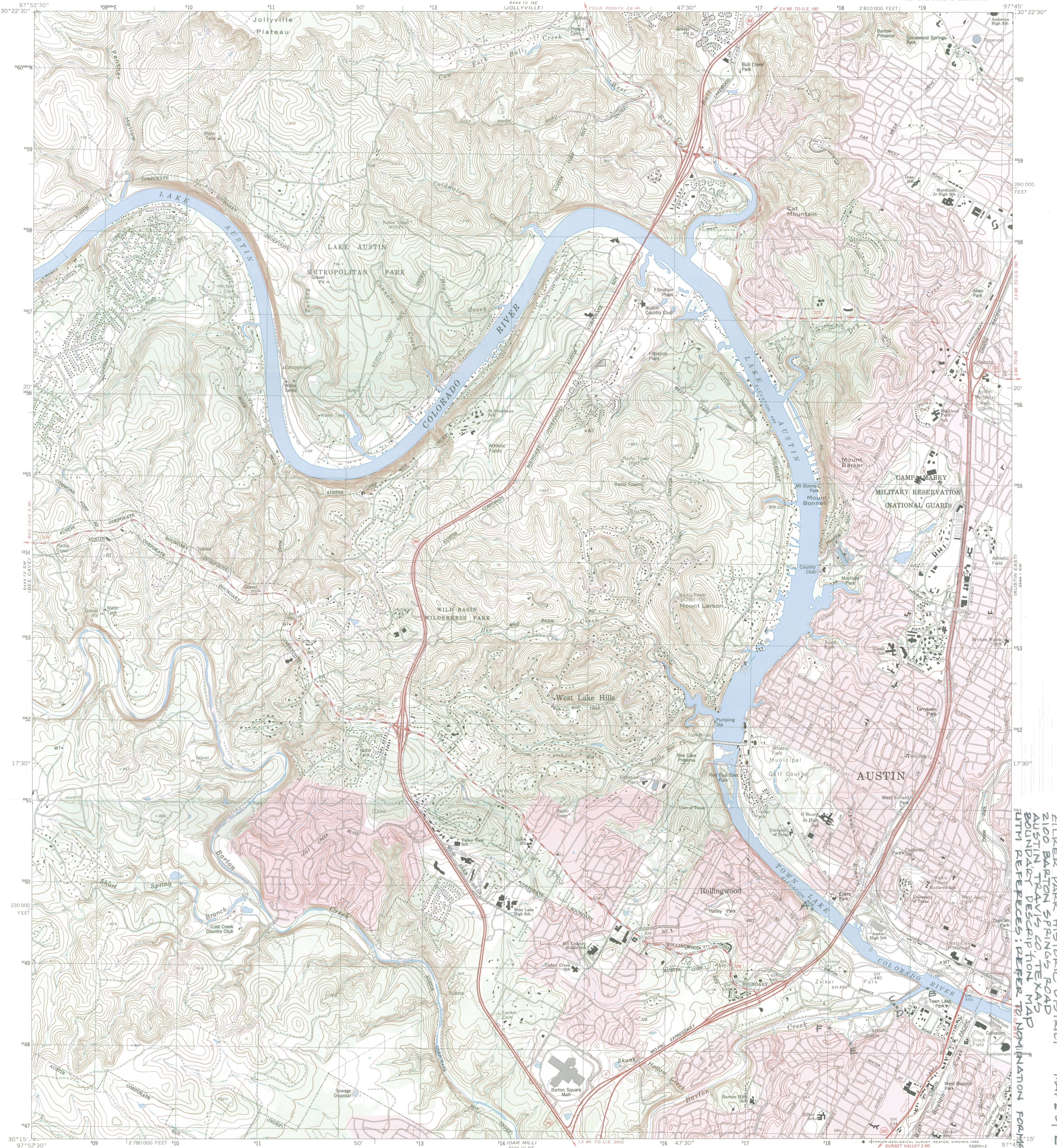


60 SUNKEN GARDEN
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN, TRAVIS CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 14 of 14

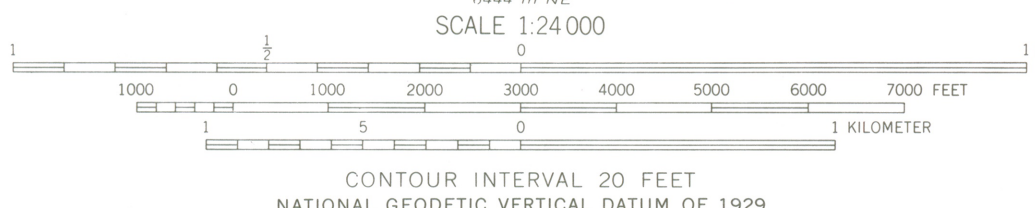
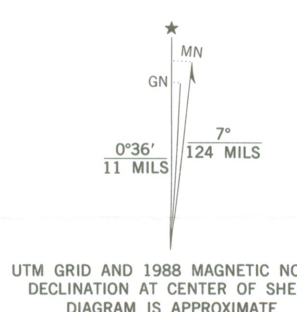


Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
in cooperation with City of Austin
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1952. Field checked 1954. Revised from aerial photographs
taken 1985. Field checked 1986. Map edited 1988
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Texas
coordinate system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 14
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 18 meter south and
28 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries
of the National or State reservations shown on this map





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Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1952. Field checked 1954. Revised from aerial photographs
taken 1985. Field checked 1986. Map edited 1988
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of the National or State reservations shown on this map



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Primary highway, hard surface	Light-dotted road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

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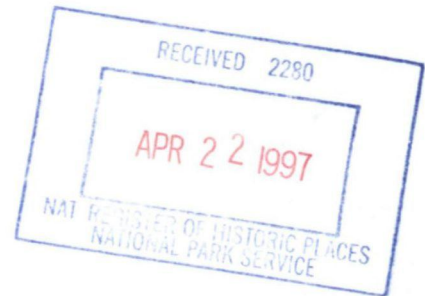
ZILKER PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
2100 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
AUSTIN TRAVIS CO, TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: DEFEER TO NOMINATION FORK
MAP 2 of 2



TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

Memorandum

TO: Carol Shull, Keeper of the National Register
FROM: Mary Dillman, THC Historian *Mary*
DATE: April 14, 1997
RE: Zilker Park Historic District, Austin, Travis County



This nomination for the Zilker Park Historic District represents nearly 10 years of research and work by Julie Strong and several THC staff members and volunteers. Zilker Park played a significant role in the history of recreation and conservation in Austin, representing the centerpiece of Austin's renowned parks system.

The historic district developed between 1917 and the present day, with a significant number of resources representing Depression-era public works projects. These manmade elements combine with natural landscape features to create a cohesive district that retains its integrity as a designed historic landscape. The park remains a significant local recreation and nature center. The nomination supports listing under Criterion A and C in the areas of Conservation, Entertainment/Recreation, Architecture, and Landscape Architecture at the local level of significance.