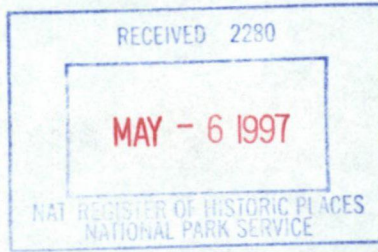


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**



544

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

**HISTORIC NAME:** Independence Park  
**OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER:** James McCullough Park

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET & NUMBER:** 1000 blk East 40th  
**CITY OR TOWN:** Houston  
**STATE:** Texas      **CODE:** TX      **COUNTY:** Harris      **CODE:** 201  
**NOT FOR PUBLICATION:** N/A  
**VICINITY:** N/A  
**ZIP CODE:** 77022

**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  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Curtis Munnell*  
Signature of certifying official

4-29-97  
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:

- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

6.4.97  
Date of Action

**5. CLASSIFICATION**

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**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Public-local

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** Site

<b>NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTING</b>	<b>NONCONTRIBUTING</b>	
	—	—	<b>BUILDINGS</b>
	1	—	<b>SITES</b>
	—	—	<b>STRUCTURES</b>
	—	—	<b>OBJECTS</b>
	1	—	<b>TOTAL</b>

**NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER:** 0

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** Historic and Architectural Resources of Independence Heights, Houston, Harris County, Texas

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: RECREATION:** Outdoor Recreation

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS: RECREATION:** Outdoor Recreation

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** NO STYLE

**MATERIALS:** FOUNDATION N/A  
WALLS N/A  
ROOF N/A  
OTHER N/A

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 7-5).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Independence Park  
Houston, Harris County, Texas

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### Description

Independence Park covers approximately eight lots in the 1000 block of East 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Independence Heights. The park is a large open space largely undeveloped with some deciduous trees grouped on the western end. Within the last year, a basketball court, baseball field, and playground equipment were added to the park. In spite of the alterations, the park is largely as set aside in 1910 by the developers.

Independence Park is a large open space in the northeast section of Independence Heights. The park covers approximately eight lots in the 1000 block of East 40<sup>th</sup> Street. It is largely undeveloped with some mature deciduous trees in the western half. There does not appear to be any historic formal landscaping nor general park development during the period of significance. Recently, a basketball court with concrete slab (western end), baseball field with chain link backstop (eastern end), and children's playground equipment (eastern end) were added by the City of Houston's Parks and Recreation Department.

The additions to the park do not detract from the largely open feeling nor the historic appearance of the space.

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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**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:** Community Planning and Development; Ethnic Heritage (Black)

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1910-1947

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1910

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:** N/A

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** (see continuation sheets 8-6).

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY** (see context statement).

**PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):** N/A

- 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 #

**PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:**

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Independence Park  
Houston, Harris County, Texas

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## Statement of Significance

Independence Park is the only public space remaining from the early years of Independence Heights. In 1910, the Wright Land Company set aside some eight lots in the northeast portion of the subdivision for a community park and named it Independence Park. The park provided important community space for church gatherings, school activities, and annual Juneteenth celebrations. Although parks were often part of white neighborhoods during this period, few African American communities had such dedicated space and few larger community parks were open to blacks. The property is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage (black) at the local level of significance.

The Wright Land Company set aside approximately eight lots in Blocks 68 and 77 of Independence Heights for a community park named, Independence Park. Developers of white subdivisions often provided land for neighborhood or community parks. When the Wright Company developed this area they generously provided these lots for residents of Independence Heights.

Independence Park became the principal meeting and public space for activities in the community. Churches, school groups, and special occasions, like Juneteenth, were often based in the park.

During the 1910s and 1920s, African Americans in Houston had few public parks open for use. Local officials enforced segregation of public spaces by custom first and then by local ordinance in 1922 (*Black Dixie*, p. 88) This legal action made Independence Park one of several public parks open to African Americans in the Houston area.

Independence Park was renamed James McCullough Park by the City Houston after annexation in 1929.

The property is significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage (black) as a rare example of public park accommodation and planning for African Americans at a local level.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
	1	15	269400	3301320		

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION** Independence Heights, Block 77, Lots 1-6; Block 68, Lots 15-16

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION** Boundary encompasses all resources historically associated with the nominated property.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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**NAME/TITLE:** Vivian Seals with assistance from Dwayne Jones, Texas Historical Commission

**ORGANIZATION** Independence Heights Neighborhood Council      **DATE:** 1/97

**STREET & NUMBER:** 3714 Yosemite      **TELEPHONE:** (713) 747-9989

**CITY OR TOWN:** Houston      **STATE:** TX      **ZIP CODE:** 77021

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**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

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**CONTINUATION SHEETS**

**MAPS** (see USGS map # 1)

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

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**PROPERTY OWNER**

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**NAME:** City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department

**STREET & NUMBER:** 2999 S. Wayside      **TELEPHONE:** N/A

**CITY OR TOWN:** Houston      **STATE:** TX      **ZIP CODE:** 77023

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Independence Park  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Independence Heights MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Harris

DATE RECEIVED: 5/06/97 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/19/97  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/04/97 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/20/97  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 97000544

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 5/49/97 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





INDEPENDENCE PARK  
1000 BLK. EAST 40TH  
HOUSTON, HARRIS CO., TEXAS  
VIVIAN SEALS, PHOTOGRAPHER  
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, NEG.  
CAMERA FACING SOUTHEAST  
PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 1

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500641