

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

John Chavis Memorial Park

Raleigh, Wake County, WA3867, Listed 4/19/2016
Nomination by Mary Ruffin Hanbury and Jeffery J. Harris
Photographs by Mary Ruffin Hanbury, February 2014



Amphitheater and Carousel House



Picnic Shelter

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: John Chavis Memorial Park

Other names/site number: Negro 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: 505 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard

City or town: Raleigh State: NC County: Wake

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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

<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting official:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Title :</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
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

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	sites
<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: park

LANDSCAPE: street furniture/object

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument/marker

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE: park

LANDSCAPE: street furniture/object

LANDSCAPE: Parking lot

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

RECREATION AND CULTURE: monument/marker

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

RECREATION AND CULTURE: work of art

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: rustic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

walls: STONE, WOOD: weatherboard, BRICK

roof: SYNTHETICS

other: WOOD: log, 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

John Chavis Memorial Park is an approximately 26 1/2 acre, irregularly shaped park located in Southeast Raleigh, approximately eight-tenths of a mile southeast of the State Capitol at Union Square. It is bounded on the north, and west by single family residential development; to the east by Chavis Heights, a HOPE 6 mixed income residential development which replaced an early public housing project; and to the south by Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., an arterial road. The park has a narrow portion at the northwest, but further south the park's boundaries expand toward the east, incorporating a broader area. Chavis Way, a paved city street, bisects the northern portion then turns east and south to form the eastern boundary of the park. A paved drive from Chavis Way extends south into a paved parking area. A small stream (known variously as Garner Branch, Chavis Branch, Rocky Branch Creek, and Little Rock Creek) and paved greenway run through a wooded area along the western side of the park. Along the western side of the park are four picnic shelters, an amphitheater, the original carousel house, and two stone-faced bridges. At the northeast corner of the park is a running track bordered to the east, north, and west by mature oaks. The central portion of the park, accessed either by the northern drive and parking area or by an entrance from Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, contains a community center, playground, pool area, tennis courts, carousel, and a small parking area. At the southeast corner of the park is a baseball diamond, bordered by maple, cedar and oak trees. The park's topography

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

is generally rolling with graded areas for playing fields and parking. The stream has steep embankments on either side. Current plantings are a mix of mature trees and shrubs with more recent formal beds and planters. There is no known documentation on the plantings pre-existing the development of the park.

Narrative Description

The current day Chavis Park consists of six parcels as indicated on the map entitled Chavis Park Parcels. All but Parcel 2 are being nominated to the National Register.

Parcel 2 was condemned by the Housing Authority of the City of Raleigh in March of 1982 and transferred to the City of Raleigh in October 1982, thus is not historically a part of the park but is added by accretion. **This parcel is not part of the National Register nomination.**

Parcel 1 was sold to the City by the State in 1951. It had been owned under the aegis of the North Carolina Institution for the Education of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind which acquired the land in August 1902. The deed transferring the land to the city states that the City may keep the land "so long as the lands are used for public park, recreation, or amusement purposes." Should the land use change, the property will revert back to the state of North Carolina.

Parcel 3 was sold to the City by the State in 1951. It had been owned under the aegis of the North Carolina Institution for the Education of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind which acquired the land in April 1897. The deed transferring the land to the city states that the City may keep the land "so long as the lands are used for public park, recreation, or amusement purposes." Should the land use change, the property will revert back to the state of North Carolina.

Parcel 4 was transferred to the City of Raleigh in May of 1970 through a quitclaim deed that acknowledges that the "City of Raleigh has had possession for park purposes" of the parcel since July 1949.

Parcel 5 is owned by the State of North Carolina and has no deed book reference in city property data but is described as "10 (sic) 51&51 NC Inst Deaf and Blind."

Parcel 6 is owned by the State of North Carolina and was sold to the state and the Institute for the Education of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind in February 1903.

Organization of the Park into Major Areas

In describing the park, it is helpful to partition it into component areas based on proximity and use. For the purposes of describing and later understanding the evolution of the park, it will be divided thus: northwestern section, stream area, track, central core, and ballpark.

Northwestern Section

The northwestern section of the park is approximately 5 1/2 acres. It is the only portion of the park bisected by Chavis Way, after which point the road forms the remainder of the park's northern border. The section is bounded on the north by East Lenoir Street. It is surrounded largely by single family residential development on the east, west, and north and by the stream

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

area of the park to the south. Two tributaries of a small stream, flowing south, intersect in this portion of the park at a point west of the original carousel house and the stream continues into the Stream Area. The steep embankments of the stream and its tributaries as well as dense growth along its banks renders the small stream difficult to see.

Formal circulation elements in this area include Chavis Way, a typical paved, two lane city street with curbs and gutters and poured concrete sidewalks on either side that continue the length of Chavis Way through the park; a portion of the city's greenway system which is a narrow paved path with no curbs or gutters; a paved parking lot; and a meandering paved footpath that leads from the western boundary of the park at Worth Street to the park's northern parking lot. The greenway path runs south from East Lenoir Street close to the western boundary of the park, terminating at Worth Street. A second paved pedestrian route cuts across the southern edge of this area from Worth Street at the park's boundary, east along a ridge, across the stream, providing access to picnic areas to the north and south. This path has a branch that cuts north to Chavis Way, west of the carousel house with a connection to the paving around the carousel house. It has two smaller paths that cut north from it directly to the paving surrounding the carousel house. The path also has a loop to the south, providing access southwest to the amphitheater and southeast to the playground (to the southeast) before the main path terminates at the park's northern parking lot. The paved parking lot with a three ranks of parking and two north-south driving lanes, extends south from Chavis Way to the plaza containing a new carousel house.

Given the multiple intersections of stream tributaries and vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, this area also has the most bridges/culverts of any section. There are two original stone faced bridges in this section--a vehicular one on Chavis Way which is near the picnic shelters, and a pedestrian bridge which was formerly a vehicular bridge, on axis with Worth Street.

The bridge on Chavis Way (1937) is composed of an arched corrugated metal culvert through which the stream passes, over which has been built stone walls that very likely serve as retaining walls for material that fills the void on either side of the steep embankment creating a level surface between them for the road bed. The walls extend above grade as a parapet with stone piers, square in plan, on each of end of both. The masonry is a random uncoursed stone with squeezed mortar joints. The stones are generally of similar size and brown to buff in color. They are rough faced.

The now pedestrian bridge (1937) is similar to the vehicular bridge in material and material treatment with brown to buff rough faced stones randomly laid with squeezed joints. A masonry deck (high above the stream level) rests on stone abutments with angled stone wing walls. The faces of the bridge deck and the wing walls all extend above grade and as with the vehicular bridge there are stone piers, square in plan, at the termini.

The northwestern section contains two historic (1937) picnic shelters. The smaller of the two lies south of Chavis Way, and directly north of the fork of the stream. The open shelter sits on a square poured concrete slab and has a hipped roof with flared eaves, clad in composite shingle.

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

The roof structure is supported by nine rough-hewn log posts set in a grid--eight along the perimeter and one in the center. A log plate runs the perimeter supported by the perimeter posts and the diagonal log upbracing on those posts. The plate supports both a grid of rough-hewn joists that tie into the center post as well as a structural system for the roof above including rafters made of sawn boards. The grid of logs creates a decorative set of exposed faux "rafter tails" along the eaves while the smaller structural rafter tails are contained within a relatively narrow fascia. Radiating from the center post in a cross pattern are four tables with holes to accommodate the center post and the four perimeter posts at their termini. The tables are constructed of plain sawn wooden boards and there are two sets of backless "L" shaped benches that service them which are permanently affixed in the concrete.

The second picnic shelter (1937), the largest of the four in the park, sits southwest of the first, across the stream. It is also an open air structure on a rectangular concrete pad with a gable roof with overhanging eaves clad in composite shingles. It also has a grid of rough-hewn log posts--four at each gable end, six along the sides, and four centered under the ridge in the interior. The central posts support a central log beam that runs from gable end to gable end and supports a series of smaller rough-hewn posts that extend up from it to a log ridge board. Intersecting with central log beam are transverse log beams extending from the center posts to the perimeter posts. From the ridge board extend rough-hewn log rafters that support the roof structure. The rafters are exposed beneath the eave. The gable ends are clad in horizontally stacked rough-hewn logs. The shelter has a stone chimney centered at the north gable end. The chimney is made of irregularly coursed rough faced rocks with a brick course at the shoulders. Some of the stones below the shoulders are larger (approximately 6-10 "high and up to 18" in length). The firebox is clad in brick with a steel lintel. The stack has one set of shoulders at the north and south and the stack rises outboard of the logs in the gable end though pierces the roof inboard of the fascia. Three fixed wooden backless benches are in alternating bays on the east and west exterior bays. Freestanding picnic tables of recent vintage with attached benches are arrayed within the shelter.

The original carousel house (ca. 1940) remains south of the curve in Chavis Way and east of the stream and historic picnic shelters. The carousel itself has been relocated into a new house further south.

This frame, one story octagonal carousel house has a two tiered hip roof system. Each face of the upper wall has a bank of four, eight-light fixed wooden windows flanked by German siding. Both roofs are clad in composite shingles and have exposed rafter tails. The lower portion has sixteen bays—two for each of the octagonal faces above. There is German siding in the bays which are divided by posts that define the windows into the carousel area. Each bay is finished with metal interior shutters and chain link fencing affixed on the exterior. Each bay has a brick wall below the openings laid in common bond and divided by concrete piers that support the posts above. Two bays at the south side of the building have a projecting framed entrance pavilion with a brick base wall. Two single leaf doors, each with transoms that have been subsequently boarded, provide entrance and egress. The area immediately around the carousel house is paved in poured concrete.

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

The interior is an open volume of space. Wooden framing is exposed. Diagonal braces rise from posts set on the concrete bases to support additional bracing that supports an octagonal interior structure with radiating spokes and posts to bear the roof structure above. It is reinforced with metal tie rods and turnbuckles. The entrance pavilion has German siding on its interior walls and the two exterior doors flank a frame and wire "cage" that housed the ticket taker.

At the north entrance of the park, at East Lenoir and east of Chavis Way, is a stone bench known as the War Mothers Memorial. The bench with a seat and back of irregularly coursed, undressed stone has a central, flat dressed stone in the center of the bench back that is carved thus:

ERECTED BY THE
AMERICAN WAR MOTHERS, CHAPTER I, OF
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 4, 1945
IN MEMORY OF OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF WAKE COUNTY,
WHO SERVED IN THE U. S. ARMED FORCES IN WORLD WAR II

The bench has squeezed joints. Some have been re-worked. The area between the bench and the sidewalk that runs beside Chavis Way to the west, is paved in concrete.

The topography of this section of the park is varied. The stream has steep embankments. The two picnic shelters are on a lower plane than the street level or even the carousel. There is a split rail fence west of the carousel to protect visitors from the steep change in grade. It is unclear as to whether the site was graded as part of the original design or whether the design was laid out to accommodate the pre-existing topography.

There is little formal landscaping in this area. There is a small grove of red tips behind the War Mothers Bench and some walnut, pecan and hollies west of Chavis Way. Mature trees along the greenway include basswood, oak, sycamore, walnut and a few birch. There are elms and oaks on the north side of Chavis Way as it turns to the east. North of the carousel (and south of Chavis Way) are maples, Japanese maples, birch and a single dogwood. There are three large oaks in a clearing west of the larger picnic shelter.

Original planting plans have not been found. Early aerial photographs of Chavis Park show some mature trees along the stream beds at the west side of the park but little else and most intentional plantings appear to come from later within the period of significance than from an original design.

Stream Area

The Stream Area is the western portion of the park including the stream as it flows south from the pedestrian bridge at Worth Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. It includes an additional tributary flowing from the west and joining the primary waterway near the southern

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

border of the park. This area contains the continuation of the greenway as it begins again, paved as previously in the northwestern section, as a spur from the southern end of Cape Avenue. Structures in this area include two frame picnic shelters (ca. 1971), a bridge and a culvert. These two shelters are smaller than those in the northwestern area and sit on circular concrete pads. Octagonal hipped roofs clad in composite shingles are supported by eight wooden, squared posts at the perimeter and a central metal post. Interior framing is planed lumber joists, radiating from the central metal post, supporting posts that brace the rafters above. One shelter is east of that portion of Cape Avenue that runs north/south. The other is further south along the greenway path.

The bridge over the southern tributary to the stream is a metal girder bridge on poured concrete abutments with wing walls. The bridge has cast metal rails with vertical members demarcating panels with diagonal bracing and parallel horizontal metal rails that cross all panels on the interior face.

The greenway divides near the park boundary. The western path slopes up to grade at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and the eastern spur passes through a concrete box culvert beneath the road to the other side.

The stream embankments are steep and essentially divide the stream area of the park from the other sections. With the exception of a set of steps from the ridge at the southern portion of the northwestern area, the stream area of the park can only be accessed from the west and south.

The stream has been restored through an environmental effort to decrease erosion through a natural stream buffer. The stream banks thus are overgrown and there are a number of mature trees providing shade and cover that spring from the stream and embankment area.

The change of grade and mature trees along the stream visually and physically isolate this portion of the park. Though early photographs show that the steep grade and some trees existed from the 1930s, by the 1950s there is additional tree cover along the stream and the current growth is part of a planned remediation. There does not appear to have been any changes in the stream bed over time beyond the buffer remediation.

Track Area

The track area is the northeast section of the park. It includes the northern parking lot, a long rectangular paved lot that extends south from Chavis Way, to the west and the running track to the east. In that lot is in the former right of way for Chavis Way, prior to its re-routing, it maintains the even grade. The lot has poured concrete curbs.

The track is at a higher grade than the surface parking lot and it is divided from the lot by a large grassy berm planted with a border of oaks. Along the northern side of the track, the grade evens out and approximates the level of Chavis Way at the north. Along the east, the perimeter road rises in elevation and there is a grassy berm from the road level down to the graded track area.

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

The northern and eastern side of the track are also bordered with a row of mature oaks. The track has sprint lanes along its eastern side and a roughly oval walk/run track to the west. It is paved in plexipave. There are lights for the track and several modern wooden and metal benches along it. There is a low chain link fence along part of its northern and western boundary to protect visitors from the change in grade. The area that now houses the track has in the past served as both a baseball and football field. Aerial photos from 1944 show bleachers and in 1954 funding was appropriated for a grandstand. Neither bleachers nor grandstand remain.

Central Core

The Central Core area contains the amphitheater, playground, pool area, tennis courts, community center, carousel, a sculpture, a parking lot and the entrance drive at the south of the park from Martin Luther King Boulevard.

The amphitheater is south of the original carousel house and the east-west ridge that is on axis with Worth Street that runs along the southern portion of northwestern area, west of the playground and east of the stream and the stream area. Fifteen, broad but shallow, stone steps descend to the west from the level of the playground to a rectangular shaped relatively flat grassy area at a lower grade. The steps are flanked by low sloping stone walls with piers at both ends of each. A low retaining stone wall with buttresses curves from the northern side of the steps to the west along the ridge. Several mature hollies stand on the ridge shielding the amphitheater area from the paved path to the north above. A second stone retaining wall with triangular buttresses stretches south from the stairs. A series of crepe myrtles are planted on the embankment between the amphitheater and the playground area. The stonework in the amphitheater is buff-colored, uncoursed, undressed stone laid in a random pattern. The mortar is flush.

The playground area, which is flat, stands where the original pool once was. It is set in sand with a variety of slides, swing sets, climbers and other equipment, none of which are historic. There are a number of benches on the perimeter of the area as well as trash cans. There is a curving paved concrete path to the south and west of this area. A split rail fence divides the play area from the crepe myrtles along the berm leading down to the amphitheater area and protects visitors from the change in grade. At the north the path divides and forms a small plaza along the ridge south of the carousel house, where there had been an extension of Worth Street. The plaza area contains three round, poured concrete planters. The planters have a corrugated, Brutalist treatment with a vertical corduroy type pattern. This treatment is repeated in a retaining wall on the south side of the ridge near its western end protecting a set of wooden steps down to the southern picnic areas and stream area.

East of the playground is the north parking lot that extends south from Chavis Way. South of the playground is the pool area. The pool area is contained within a black metal fence approximately eight feet tall. The fence terminates at two pool structures. These one-story concrete block structures (ca. 1975) northeast of the pool area have gable roofs clad in composite shingles. They house locker rooms, an office, a vending area and the pool equipment room. Interiors are utilitarian with concrete floors. Northwest of the pool area is a shallow rectangular

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

splash pool with modern splash pool equipment. To the south is a Z-shaped pool with a slide. The pools are concrete, in-ground pools. The entire pool area is paved in concrete and in the center of the paving there is inscribed a large circle from which radiate wavy panels in alternating colored concrete, looking something like a sun pattern. On the east and south side of the pool area outside the perimeter fence are crepe myrtles.

This concrete sunburst pattern is echoed in the plaza northeast of the pool area, at the south end of the parking lot. The plaza, in addition to having a wavy radiating concrete paving pattern, has a central round grassy area. To its north are curved brick retaining walls that accommodate concrete steps down from the parking lot level and continue along on the east side at the plaza, albeit at a lower level.

East of the pool area are tennis courts (ca.1960) to the north and the carousel and carousel house to the south. Two tennis courts with a perimeter chain link fence lie south of the track and north of the carousel. The courts have been in this location since as early as 1959 however these courts are asphalt and earlier courts were clay. There is a set of poured concrete steps rising from the southeast corner of the north parking lot to a concrete path that runs along the northern boundary of the courts, extending east to Chavis Way. A spur from this path runs south between the courts and the community center intersected by a path from the community center to the south side of the courts and to the carousel. The courts are on grade with the track, but higher than the areas to the south and west. The grade slopes down from the courts on these sides.

The one story carousel house was built in 2013 to contain Chavis Park's No. 2, Special Three Abreast, Allan Herschell Carousel, which was moved from the original carousel house in the northwestern area. The new carousel house is climate controlled. The exterior walls are glazed allowing for natural light into the house and providing maximum visibility for the carousel from the exterior. The dodecagonal hipped metal roof has translucent panels, overhanging flared eaves with posts marking each section that have fixed faux flags. The house is designed to look like a tent or similar temporary circus structure to reflect its use-- "In keeping with the Chavis Park machine's origins as a traveling carousel, HagerSmith [architects] produced a design that evokes the feel and appearance of a carnival tent." (HagerSmith, accessed January 7, 2014).

The carousel (ca. 1916) is best described by the Herschell company's catalog,

thirty-six hand-carved horses (outer row studded with jewels) and two beautifully carved double-seat Chariots. Passenger capacity 48 persons. All horses are jumpers. Horse Hanger pipe and platform hanger pipe is encased in polished Brass. The Cornice, Shields and panel Picture Center are highly decorated works of art and are wired for 196 lights. Oil paintings and hand carvings combine with bright colors to produce a beautiful and practical machine. Standard equipment includes: Wurlitzer Military Band Organ with Drums and Cymbals...(Little, p. 2)

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

"The round carousel structure has a wooden frame, a center iron pole, and a plank floor. Horses are mounted with an iron pipe through the center of each, connected to the engine mounted in the center. Bare electric light bulbs outline the lower edge of the outer cornice and each of the oval vignettes in the picture center" (Little, p. 2). The carousel was restored in 1982.

The carousel in the carousel house sits on a plateau above the pool area and below the community center and the slopes on all sides are landscaped with small as well as tall decorative grasses.

The Community Center (1961) and a surface parking lot to its south, lie east of the carousel and tennis courts. The historic core of the one-story building is a gable-roofed, brick-veneered structure containing a gymnasium. Subsequent additions on the south, east (pre-1971), and west (built between 1993-1998) provide for a lobby with controlled access, meeting rooms and an expanded interior circulation network. The lobby is at the southwest corner of the building, accessed by three sets of concrete steps with brick retaining walls and plantings between them; and by a poured concrete ramp that climbs north and then turns and continues south along the west side of the building to a concrete exterior terrace shared by the steps. The lobby has a curved glass exterior wall along this corner of the building. Halls extend from the lobby to the north to a large meeting room and to the east before turning north again to service meeting rooms. There is a secondary entrance to the building at its southeast corner. The east elevation is largely glazed with big fixed windows. The north elevation has projecting wings at the east and west flanking the north elevation of the building's original core. The east wing has two banks of four, four-light windows. The central portion of the north elevation has no fenestration and a series of brick buttresses. The west wing has a band of clerestory windows lighting the large meeting room within. The east elevation, north of the lobby entrance pavilion also has no fenestration. There are a few windows on the south elevation. The community center has a landscaped berm with a retaining wall to its south. Below that is a sidewalk and surface parking lot. The lot is accessed from a drive north from Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and the vehicular circulation pattern continues one way through the lot to Chavis Way at the east.

Glimpses of the Promised Land, a sculpture by Mike Roig was commissioned by the Raleigh Arts Commission and installed in 2006. It stands south of the carousel house and west of the south entrance drive. The steel structure has a base of three triangular steel supports which hold a number of stainless steel abstracted birds circling the base on a series of metal tubular ellipses. The south entrance drive (ca. 1995) was created in response to recommendations from a 1994 Master Plan prepared by Edward D Stone, Jr. and Associates. The paved road with curbs and gutters begins at Martin Luther King Drive and connects southern parking area that was pre-existing but expanded during the creation of the drive to the pre-existing parking area immediately south of the community center and exiting on to the current Chavis Way. This drive provided access from a major arterial road and re-oriented the park.

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

Baseball Field Area

At the southeast corner of the park is a baseball field. Home plate is at the northeast of the area. It is bounded by a chain link fence and has dig out areas as well as bleachers for observers outside of the fenced area. There is an informal row of cedar to the north of the ball field; oaks, sycamores and a few hollies to the east; maples and crepe myrtles to the southeast and oaks and cedars to the west. The plantings are not visible in early aerial photos of the site. A 1950 Sanborn map indicates that this was the area where the Veterans Annex, temporary housing for military personnel, was located

Resource Inventory

Contributing resources date to the period of significance and have retained sufficient historic integrity. Noncontributing resources post-date the period of significance or have been altered to such an extent that they have not retained historic integrity and no longer resemble their historic appearance.

Resource Code

C= contributing **NC= noncontributing**
B = Building **St = Structure** **Si = Site** **O = Object**

C-St Vehicular Bridge on Chavis Way, buff stone ca. 1937

C-St Pedestrian Bridge over stream buff stone ca. 1937

C-Si Track and Field though the athletic field was reconfigured in the 1970s, the area was set aside for recreation is ca. 1937. Bleachers and a later grandstand have been demolished but the markings for the football field and baseball diamond are visible in aerial photos and the track itself marks the outline of the inner edge of the grandstand.

C-Si Ballfield 1959 aerial views show a formal ball field on the site, in the same orientation as the present day

C-B Old Carousel House octagonal frame carousel house on brick base with clerestory windows ca. 1940

NC-B New Carousel House dodecagonal hipped roof carousel house 2013

C-St Carousel ca.1916, placed in Chavis Park 1937

C-St North Picnic Shelter hipped roof picnic shelter with log framing 1937

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

C-St Gable Roofed Picnic Shelter picnic shelter with stone chimney and log framing. 1937

NC-St Picnic Shelter octagonal hipped roof, frame picnic shelter ca.1987

NC-St Picnic Shelter octagonal hipped roof, frame picnic shelter ca.1987

C-St Amphitheater stone amphitheater ca.1937

NC-St Tennis courts are asphalt, not the original clay courts ca.1959

NC-St Splash pad concrete infant pool converted to splash area ca.1972

NC-St Swimming Pool concrete in ground pool ca.1972

NC-B Pool House/ lockers one story concrete block building ca.1972

NC-B Pool House/mechanical one story concrete block building ca.1972

NC-Si Pool plaza sunburst pattern poured concrete plaza part of the 1971 master plan ca.1972

NC-Si Ridge plaza sunburst pattern poured concrete plaza part of the 1971 master plan ca.1972

NC-O Sculpture *Glimpses of the Promised Land*, installed 2006

NC-B Chavis Park Community Center 1961, east addition pre 1971, west addition between 1993 and 1998

C-O War Mothers Memorial Bench stone bench with inscription contributing, 1945

C-Si Designed Landscape Aspects of the 1937 design including bridges, placement of resources such as the historic picnic areas, carousel house and amphitheater, and playing fields still read on the landscape, 1937

NC-Si Designed Landscape(s) Aspects of later landscape design including the redirection of Chavis Way and shortening of Worth Avenue, the addition of the large planters on what was Worth Avenue, placement of new carousel house and replacement and redesign of the pool area date to after the period of significance, 1971, 2013

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
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.)

Entertainment/Recreation

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Landscape Architecture

Social History

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

Period of Significance

1937-1965

Significant Dates

1938

1961

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

Derick, G. Robert

Jerry Turner and Associates

Edward D. Stone and Associates

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.)

John Chavis Memorial Park meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A for entertainment/recreation, and ethnic heritage: black, and social history; and Criterion C for landscape architecture at the state level. Its period of significance ranges from 1937 to 1965. Located in southeast Raleigh, this park of currently 26 1/2 acres was developed in 1937 as a "separate but equal" recreational facility for African Americans. Built with contributions from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and with solid backing from the local government and civic organizations, the park is one of a few segregated recreation facilities built in North Carolina during this period with federal funding confirming the complicity of the federal government with southern Jim Crow policies. The park was designed by G. Robert Derick, a National Park Service landscape architect, and it retains several resources that reflect the design movement in recreational facilities to use rustic materials which has been studied by historians and named "parkitecture." Despite the eventual integration of Raleigh's public facilities in the 1960s, the park has continued to be a focal point for the African American community in Raleigh.

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Parks in Raleigh and the History of Chavis Park

The City of Raleigh has had a history of urban parks and open spaces dating back to the 1792 eponymous Christmas Plan of the City of Raleigh which reserved Moore, Burke, Caswell, Nash and Union Squares within a larger orthogonal grid. Union Square, also known as Capitol Square, houses the State Capitol within an Olmsted designed park landscape. Burke and Caswell Squares were destroyed when the land was developed to house state government functions. Moore and Nash Squares remain as public parks.

In 1887, Wake County businessman and philanthropist Richard Stanhope Pullen donated a tract of the former Early Farm to the City of Raleigh. Though unfinished, the park was opened to the public in the spring of 1888 and named, in honor of its donor, Pullen Park. Pullen Park housed the city's first public swimming pool, established in 1891. The pool, originally only for men, featured nude bathing. However, women were eventually allowed to swim on specific days, and with bathing suits. According to Carson Dean, in his article "Richard Stanhope Pullen and Raleigh's First Public Park, 1887-1920",

[a]lthough in the first decades of its existence [,] Pullen Park functioned primarily as a recreational retreat for the capital's upper- and middle-class white citizens, it was open to anyone who possessed both a means of getting to the park and the free time to enjoy its scenery and attractions. Stanhope Pullen stipulated in the park's deed that his gift was to be 'used perpetually for the recreation and pleasure of the inhabitants of [Raleigh].' The document does not include any mention of race. From the mid-1890s, and well into the twentieth century, Jim Crow laws excluded African Americans from using some of Pullen Park's facilities, such as the swimming pool; yet, at no time were members of Raleigh's black community denied access to or use of the park's open spaces. (Dean, p. 181)

However, given the exclusion from certain amenities and cultural norms and practices, it is reasonable to assume that African Americans may not have felt welcome there and generally avoided the park.

Private parks also proliferated in the city. Brookside Park which was north of Oakwood Cemetery dated to the 1880s, and in 1912 Carolina Power and Light opened Bloomsbury Park, then outside the city limits, at the end of the streetcar line on Glenwood Avenue near where Carolina Country Club currently stands. These private parks were generally exclusive and discriminatory.

In 1934, land was purchased west of Raleigh, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and WPA built shelters and camping areas in what was to be Crabtree Meadows Creek Demonstration Area (RDA). The RDA program established by an executive order under Franklin

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

D Roosevelt allowed federal funds to buy "marginal" lands, generally in proximity to population centers, to be restored and re-forested for use as recreation centers. The park was developed on private holdings including some farms. It was designed with separate entrances and circulation patterns for whites and African Americans. The Reedy Creek area was developed for African Americans. The park was later renamed William B. Umstead State Park and remained segregated until 1966.

There is little information about the impetus for the development of Chavis Park. Perhaps the availability of federal funds prompted the movement to establish the park. When Raleigh's government began to develop a plan for what is now Chavis Park, they received a number of letters of support for establishing recreational facilities for African Americans. Most noted that the dearth of recreational facilities available to African Americans as well as the fact that Pullen Park was not entirely open to African Americans.

H. B. Branch, secretary of Raleigh Chamber of Commerce wrote the following:

This project is especially important in view of the fact that recent developments and improvements at Pullen Park has created a recreational center of unusual merit for the white people of the community. An adequate development of this kind should be made available for the colored people of the community. We feel sure that this worthy project would improve juvenile delinquency in the colored race in Raleigh as well as provide a place the colored people in general deserve and would appreciate. (Branch p. 1)

A. G. Spingler, Chairman of the (Raleigh) Recreation Board, added "[a]bout one-third of our population is negroes, and the State has given us the use of about 23 acres of land located in the center of the section of Raleigh where most of these people live. They have no swimming pool or other recreational grounds for supervised play. The white people now, thanks to the National Government, have a fine swimming pool and play ground in Pullen Park." (Spingler p.1).

And most explicitly State Senator Carroll Weathers of Wake County, who had supported the lease of state lands on which part of Chavis Park stands to the city, resulting in State Bill 339 Chapter 215 of the Public Laws of 1935, wrote a letter that acknowledged the inadequacy of facilities for African Americans. He stated that,

[w]e now possess adequate park facilities for white people at Pullen Park. Obviously, there should be adequate and proper provision for a suitable park for the colored race. I think that the Public Park for Negroes would be of infinite value in affording the proper means for recreation of Negro children..... Furthermore, it seems to me that having a suitable Public Park for Negroes in the Eastern section of our city would remove the necessity of attempting to provide facilities for both races at Pullen Park. Thus Pullen Park could be devoted to recreational activities for white people solely, which seems a wise course. (Weathers p.1)

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

Carroll Weathers' Bill authorized the lease of property that had belonged to the North Carolina Institution for the Education of the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind, a segregated school which served African Americans and that had been demolished, to the City of Raleigh. It reads in part "Whereas, the said property has been abandoned by said Institution and is not now being used, and has not been used for many years for any purpose, and has no buildings thereon, and has no substantial market value; and whereas the property is located in the heart of the Negro section of the City of Raleigh, and the City of Raleigh is interested in converting the same into a public park for the negro race, to meet a much felt need in said City...."

It continues,

That the lease herein authorized to be made shall stipulate that such lease is made to the City of Raleigh upon the condition that the said land shall be used as a public park for the people of the Negro Race of said City, and that the cost of laying out, preparing and maintaining such property as such public park shall be borne or provided for exclusively by the City of Raleigh, or by means of such Federal aid as the City of Raleigh may be able to obtain for such purpose ; and with the further limitation and proviso that if said land shall during the term of such lease cease to be used for such park purposes, then said lease shall be deemed to be forfeited, and shall be cancelled, and the said land shall revert to the State of North Carolina.

The original lease term was twenty- five years.

Raleigh City Council meeting minutes from May 25, 1935, indicate that the city's Director of Public Works was asked to gather data for an application for relief projects. Three days later, on May 28th, the council authorized and directed Commissioner Ferguson to "appoint Mr. G. Robert Derick, a landscape architect with the National Park Service, as Landscape Artist to prepare plans for the Negro Park." On June 12, 1935, the State of North Carolina entered into a lease with the City of Raleigh for land that would become Chavis Park.

The initial application from the City of Raleigh to the WPA, dated August 14, 1935, describes the project thus:

This project provides for the development of a recreational park for colored people. The area of the proposed park is slightly in excess of 24 acres lying in the center of the negro population within the City limits and about 1/4 way between 2 negro colleges, Shaw University and St. Augustine. It is in Raleigh, the capital city of N. C., and will be within 8 blocks of the business section of the City; and consequently easily accessible (sic) to the public. At present there are no recreational facilities or supervised playgrounds for our large colored population, and this will provide a recreational center for a great portion of our citizenship which is now entirely without such facilities.

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

The application estimated a total cost of \$130,237.94 for the project including labor and materials, the bulk of which (\$124,986.19) was requested of the federal government. The property had been surveyed by Roy Williamson, the city engineer and plans, presumably by Derick, were expected in sixty days.

The justification given for the project in the application for federal aid was that it

would serve a long felt need which has now become acute in this community. It will make available to a large colored population facilities for supervised recreation, the benefits of which will not be confined to the City of Raleigh alone, but will extend into a large adjacent territory. The site is ideal, and a reasonable outlay for improvements of grounds and the construction of a swimming pool will represent an investment in human nature, which would unquestionably pay high dividends in improved health and morals.

In October, the project (though with a lower budget) appears to have been approved at the state level for the WPA according to files from the National Archives and Records Administration (WPA Project files, project # Project #65-32-3892). However, on November 12, 1935, the Raleigh Council minutes state that the "Board discussed the Negro Park project, and it appearing that the continued delay in getting this project out of Washington was jeopardizing its consummation, authorized Commissioner Ferguson and Mr. Beckwith to go to Washington and take the matter up personally." On November 14, 1935, "Commissioner Ferguson reported that he had been able to locate the Negro Park Project in the Comptroller General's Office in Washington, and that it has been placed in line for approval within the next day or so by the Comptroller-General." On November 25 the project was assigned an official project number (65-32-3892) and its budget was \$63,267.07 including labor and materials. A revised project proposal was submitted by the City to the WPA in July 1936.

The park was discussed by the Raleigh City Council again on October 16, 1936. Their minutes state "Mr. Ferguson submitted the following letter relative to continuation of work at the negro park, and was authorized to proceed upon an estimated increase of \$1,500 over and above the originally estimated sponsor's contribution, the additional \$1,500 to be treated as emergency expenditure."

On March 13, 1937, "[a] committee from certain colored Civic Associations appeared before the Board (Raleigh Council), and asked if the Board would be willing to have a contest among the colored civic, religious, and educational associations, to name the new Negro Park. The Board assured them of its co-operation in the movement to select a suitable name for the park." The Negro Citizen's Committee of Raleigh, NC (a precursor to the present day Wake Citizen's Association) petitioned the City of Raleigh to rename the park for John Chavis (c.1763-1838).

A free man of color, Chavis was an ordained Presbyterian minister who left his mark in Raleigh with the establishment of a school in his home in 1808. He taught both black and white students

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

subjects that included Latin and Greek. Chavis's teaching and preaching were curtailed in the wake of the Nat Turner rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia in 1831. Chavis's death in 1838 is shrouded in some mystery though it is generally believed he was beaten to death (<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newnation/4986>).

Additional paperwork submitted to the North Carolina WPA office in 1937 described the park as having a swimming pool, baseball diamond, and tennis courts. On July 4, 1937, the park had its grand opening. On May 10, 1938, the park was dedicated as John Chavis Memorial Park. According to an article in the News and Observer, over 3000 people attended the dedication. State WPA Administrator George W. Coan presented the park to the City and attendees. He spoke of the importance of recreational areas and that the park would be a legacy for future generations. He also outlined efforts of the WPA that had benefited the African American community including employment, education and the construction of similar parks in three other North Carolina cities. (*Crowd at Chavis Park Dedication*, May 11, 1938).

In 1939, Chavis Heights, a segregated public housing community, was developed adjacent to the park by the U. S. Housing Authority and the City of Raleigh. In 1941-42, temporary military housing for African Americans, Veterans Annex, was constructed on a portion of the park and subsequently demolished. Unpublished sources suggest it may have been built even earlier to house Civilian Conservation Corps workers (Little, p. 6). To date there is no records found to substantiate any work by the CCC on Chavis Park. Following the departure of the troops, the temporary housing served as apartments and as a recreation center until they were demolished in 1953 in anticipation of a new recreation center completed in 1961. In 1945, the War Mothers Memorial Bench was installed by the War Mothers Association. The War Mothers Association is a national non-profit established in 1917. Its members are mothers of those who have served in the military during times of conflict. In the 1950s, improvements were made to the park including the introduction of a miniature train similar to one installed contemporaneously in nearby Pullen Park. The train was later removed, sometime after 1971 given its reference in that 1971 Master Development Plan, discussed below. Despite the construction of the community center, news reports and interviews suggest that the 1960s were a period of disinvestment and that the park suffered from neglect and lack of funding for maintenance. High school and college sports teams stopped using the facilities at Chavis Park during the 1960s, though no reason is provided in Raleigh city records. The 1971 Master Development Plan suggests that newer athletic facilities at Ligon School were often used instead of those at Chavis Park.

In the 1970s, complaints continued about conditions at Chavis Park. A June 27, 1973 article in the Raleigh Times noted litter, broken glass, malfunctioning plumbing and a section of bleachers severely damaged by fire; the location of these bleachers is not noted in the article. Perhaps in response to citizen complaints, the city commissioned a master plan for Chavis Park by Jerry Turner and Associates, published in 1971. The plan not only addressed the decline of the park, but it also proposed departures from the park's original design with the following suggested changes: a new circulation system; removal of the stadium, also known as the grandstand and bleachers; removal of the ball field; conversion of the tennis courts to basketball courts; demolition of the bath house; the filling in of the original pool; the introduction of a new ball

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

field and football field; and the removal of the miniature train. Most of the changes were instituted though it is unclear whether the tennis courts were converted to basketball courts and later back to tennis courts or whether they remained tennis courts and the basketball function was addressed in the later community center. The changes to the park were not universally embraced by the African American community. The elimination of the Olympic-Sized pool and removal of the train are decried to this day. (Willaims, Rich-Ballentine interviews).

In 1994, Edward D. Stone and Associates developed another master plan which included an addition to the recreation center, an addition of children's pool, reconfiguration of the parking and re-orientation of the park entrance to Martin Luther King Boulevard. This plan was authorized by City Council and implemented in response to changes and development in neighborhoods surrounding Chavis Park.

In 2004, the adjacent Chavis Heights housing project was demolished and redeveloped using HOPE6 funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2013, the Herschel No 2 Three Abreast carousel was moved from its original location to a new carousel house, because of concerns that the original house was not climate controlled. The new carousel house was designed by HagerSmith Design PA to evoke, "the feel and appearance of a carnival tent." (<http://www.hagersmith.com/projects/chavis-park-carousel-house>). The relocation of the carousel from its historic carousel house prompted an unsuccessful petition drive by citizens to prevent the change, because they did not want the carousel to be moved from its original house and location in the park.

Park Planning and Design and the Role and Influence of the Federal Government--National Park Service, Works Progress Administration, Department of the Interior

In her National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks," Linda McClelland outlines a design ethos with its roots in the works and theories of A. J. Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted and others that came to dominate park design in America in the first half of the twentieth century, in part through the influence of the National Park Service (NPS) both in the design of national parks, and in its role in the design and development of state and local parks throughout the country. The standards developed by the NPS "ensured that man-made construction in the parks was inconspicuous and harmonized with the natural setting. Naturalistic practices in construction, often described as "rustic," called for native materials of timber and rock and methods of pioneer craftsmen and woodsmen" (McClellan p. E-1).

McClellan suggests that Henry Hubbard and Theodora Kimball's An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design and Frank A. Waugh's The Natural Style of Landscape Gardening, both published in 1917 had broad reaching effects. According the McClellan, "many of Hubbard's ideas would be translated directly into the National Park Service's principles for park design," including, "natural coloration of park structures, (and) use of native stone in rustic steps and bridges" (McClellan p. E-19). Waugh was a professor at Massachusetts Agricultural College, now University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and many of his students and colleagues

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

promulgated these design aspects, or at the very least were clearly exposed to them through their academic association with Waugh. Waugh consulted with the United States Forest Service and later the NPS for his former student Conrad Wirth. As a result, Waugh wrote "a handbook Landscape Conservation, for Emergency Conservation Work in state parks; this was first published in 1935...He applied his style of natural gardening to the work of recreational development in national forests and later state parks" (McClellan p. E-26).

McClellan also outlines how the art and crafts movement, and publications including *The Craftsman* championed design aspects such as "the use of native materials such as log and stone" which influenced park design. By 1919, when the National Park Service instituted its first program of landscape design, there existed a firmly rooted tradition of landscape gardening and rustic architecture"(McClellan p. E-37).

In the wake of the great depression, landscape architects who had previously been involved in resort and subdivision design, as well as the design of large estates found themselves without work. As the economy failed, real estate development came to a standstill. According to Ethan Carr, in his book, Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service, "by 1933, unemployment among American landscape architects probably approached 90 percent" (Carr p. 249). Carr posits that New Deal programs were the salvation of the profession and its practitioners, and those programs placed them at the center of the re-shaping of the American landscape not only through large projects at established national parks, but also through a state and regional movement to use parks and public works to employ workers and improve the country's infrastructure.

The American Society of Landscape Architects and its president Harry Hubbard established a legislative committee headed by Earle Sumner Draper to explore how the emerging programs, which Ethan Carr does not enumerate, and landscape architects could be mutually beneficial. In 1934, Albert Taylor, managing editor of *Landscape Architecture* magazine states "practically every landscape architect who is not otherwise employed in private practice...is now employed in Government work" (Carr p. 251).

Carr notes the shift from Beaux Arts design practices during this period, "New Deal conservation and work relief projects...recalled an older tradition of public park planning....Many landscape architects now needed to expand their practice beyond residential design, in what amounted to a return to the Olmstedian roots of their profession" (Carr, p. 254).

The New Deal, through the National Park Service, placed landscape architects who were now re-thinking their design vocabulary, in a position to have tremendous impact on public works, particularly parks. As Carr notes, "[the National Park Service] entailed the planning and design of hundreds of state, county and even municipal parks in almost every state and territory...the National Park Service cooperated and provided direct technical assistance to state park and other planning agencies in forty-seven states, twenty-six counties, and sixty-nine cities" (Carr, p. 257).

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

The New Deal investment in public parks reinforced an outdoor recreation movement that had been gaining momentum since the 1920s. The confluence of federal money, National Park Service design aesthetics and a national interest in outdoor recreation shaped a park philosophy for state and local parks. Indeed "[s]cenic preservation remained a major goal for state parks as it was for national parks; but state park design, done in cooperation with local park authorities, incorporated a wider and more varied range of recreational uses within a smaller area" (Carr, p. 265).

The section of the National Park Service that provided technical and design assistance to state and local parks continued through a series of name changes, from "branch of lands," to "branch of recreational land planning," to "branch of recreation, land planning, and state cooperation," and finally "branch of planning." Through these nominal transitions, the primary leadership was under Conrad Wirth, who joined the federal service in 1931 as assistant director in charge of the Branch of Lands. Like many of those active in the New Deal programs, including G. Robert Derick the landscape architect for Chavis Park, Wirth was a graduate of what Massachusetts Agricultural College. Wirth "quickly established official relationships with local governments that made it possible for the National Park Service to 'cooperate'--that is, provide extensive planning and design assistance--without suggesting that local authorities were being bypassed or overruled by a federal bureau" (Carr, p. 266).

Wirth also was emblematic of the "marriage" of scenic designs with functional recreation. The development of state and local parks with scenic and recreational features relieved pressure for development of the pristine grand landscapes of many national parks. Through the New Deal, the National Park Service and Wirth, through the branch of planning, indelibly shaped the American landscape and developed a design and cultural ethic that allowed for "opportunities to realize the full potential of park planning in the United States" (Carr, p. 272).

Carr posits,

[o]f all the contributions made by professional landscape architects to the manifold social and economic experiments of the New Deal, perhaps no physical expressions more completely captured the aspirations, innovations and characteristic spirit of the era to a greater degree than the hundreds of state and local parks built by the Civilian Conservation Corps and designed by the National Park Service in cooperation with local park authorities. This field of park design--state park and recreational planning--was not so much expanded by the New Deal as created by it (Carr, p. 279).

Wirth used his role to bring the influence of architect Herbert Maier an architect and Park Service administrator to the forefront for the design of state and local parks. Maier developed a series of handbooks on rustic design in parks entitled Park and Recreation Structures. He had been involved with design in national parks since the 1920s, but Wirth positioned him to expand his influence through Wirth's work with state and local governments. In 1934, Wirth had Maier

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

addressed a national conference of state and local park authorities and presented Maier not as an example of regulatory design requirements, but as a design professional and a resource.

Working with Albert Good, Maier developed a series of publications highlighting rustic structures and park designs that enhanced and protected scenic vista and landscapes. The influence of Maier and Good's publications and their promulgation through supporters such as Wirth cannot be underestimated. "By 1935, architectural construction for "natural" parks quickly moved toward a common standard of "rustic" construction"(Carr, p. 285). The books were meant as inspiration, but Good warned against them being used as a type book and urged that local construction be influenced by local factors.

Little is known about the Chavis Park's landscape architect G. Robert Derick. He graduated from Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1920 and likely used the alumni network and connections with colleagues such and Waugh and Wirth to get his work for WPA funded projects. He is noted in Raleigh City Council minutes to be working on Moore Square, he is an architectural designer for Crabtree Creek RDA, and he is credited with the landscape and gardens for Grosvenor Gardens (1939) courtyard style apartments also in Raleigh.

Derick's designs at Chavis Park, notably the bridges, rustic picnic shelters, and amphitheater, are clearly part of the movement later termed "parkitecture" that developed in the National Park Service in the early twentieth century and spread to state and local parks through the WPA and their involvement in the funding and design of these facilities. (Harrison, p. 367)

The Raleigh Little Theater complex designed by William Henry Deitrick and Thad Hurd, another WPA funded project in Raleigh, (1939-40) also uses rough stones in the outdoor amphitheater.

Derick's choice of natural materials in a rustic, unfinished states, such as rough faced rock and logs, is clearly influenced by national trends in park design. Rock faced bridges which are not coursed with irregularly shaped and colored stone and the design of structures with exposed log framing, and oversized stone chimneys are clearly part of a vocabulary Derick learned through his association with the National Park Service and is brought to bear on the designs at Chavis Park. Indeed given his participation at Crabtree NRA, he has clearly used the same architectural style developed by the National Park Service at Chavis Park. Derick's surviving work at Chavis Park is a good example of the presence of national trends in park design, influenced by federal programs and parks in a local park.

Segregation

Following the end of Reconstruction, and as white southerners fully regained rule of southern states, there was a concerted effort by white southerners to nullify the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, and a determination as to how best to control the lives of African Americans. During this post-Reconstruction period, sometimes referred to as the era of Redemption, white Southern Democrats devised a two part strategy to execute that nullification effort and circumscribe the lives of the millions of African Americans who were still less than

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

one generation out of bondage: the creation of laws that would restrict the daily lives of African Americans (and separate them from whites), and the disenfranchisement of African American men.

The white Southern Democratic strategy effectively to nullify the 14th Amendment, specifically the Equal Protection Clause of that amendment, and to exercise full control of African American movements and actions, required the codification of racial segregation in every aspect of life in the former Confederacy. And in those areas where specific legislation did not address an issue, then social custom filled those gaps. The ultimate goals of these laws were to restrict or dictate the contact between whites and African Americans. Segregation laws, also known as “Jim Crow” laws, required separate facilities and services throughout the South. These laws required separate public schools, public accommodations, separate recreational facilities and the like. There were efforts to challenge Jim Crow laws through the courts. The most consequential of these challenges was the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). The state of Louisiana imposed Jim Crow rules that required trains and street cars to create separate cars that were designated by race. Homer Plessy, an African American man, challenged the law, and his attorneys argued that it violated the 13th and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution (the 13th Amendment granted citizenship to the formerly enslaved Africans in the United States). When the case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, it upheld the constitutionality of Louisiana’s law, and essentially argued that the law comported with the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, because relatively equal facilities were provided to the races. This ruling provided constitutional sanction to the concept of “separate but equal,” and similar laws rapidly appeared and passed throughout the South.

Robert Weyeneth, in his article “The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past” sets forth a methodology of understanding the physical aspects of formerly segregated spaces. Segregation, he posits, was achieved through either separation or partitioning; the former by having exclusive spaces dedicated to a single race, and the latter involved dividing spaces that were used by both blacks and whites (for example, lunch counters or buses). One aspect of separation was temporal separation (for example, parks open to one race at a specific day or time) and another was duplication. Chavis Park is an example of duplicative separate resource, a park to mirror Pullen Park.

Chavis Park was built with local and federal funds in an era when national parks were struggling with the issue of integration in federally owned parks. In the 1930s, with national parks (that previously were largely in the West) opening in southern states, local Jim Crow legislation presented a challenge to the design and operation of the parks. While private parks and recreation areas existed for African Americans, publicly funded parks were often discriminatory in their attendance policies. These issues came to the forefront with the establishment of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina (dedicated in 1941) and Shenandoah National Park in Virginia (established 1935). Generally, the federal government attempted to respect local laws and customs; however, Jim Crow laws in the South limited the ability of African Americans to use and enjoy these parks funded by tax revenue. In 1935, T. Arnold Hill of the National Urban League wrote the following to the Secretary of the Interior: “Few needs of the great mass of

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

Southern negroes are so completely underserviced as those of recreation” (quoted in Young p. 657). He noted that because state and local parks in the South denied African Americans equal access, then federal parks should consciously admit/include them. In 1937, the NAACP protested separate accommodations in Shenandoah National Park.

In 1938, William J. Trent Jr. of Greensboro, North Carolina, became Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes’ Advisor on Negro Affairs, and he fought not only for the ability of African Americans to use national parks, but also to do so in an integrated fashion. Movements to integrate national parks drew the ire of the state politicians throughout the South, perceiving them as a threat that could undermine the existing Jim Crow model. Federal actions focused on separate but truly equal accommodations through a demonstration of a non-segregated picnic area in Shenandoah National Park in 1941, was the start of a cautious movement towards quietly integrating some facilities. The entrance of the United States into World War II and concerns at the federal level about “negro morale” fueled initial attempts to integrate parks, and in June 1942, the director of the NPS informed superintendants of southern parks that national parks would no longer be segregated.

In Raleigh, the parks that were largely funded by the federal government, The Crabtree Creek Recreation Demonstration Area (RDA) and Chavis Park were not subject to the integration directive. Crabtree Creek RDA was turned over to the state of North Carolina in 1943 and renamed Crabtree Creek State Park. In 1950 a portion of the Crabtree Creek State Park was designated as Reedy Creek State Park with facilities for African Americans and in 1955 the Crabtree Creek State Park was renamed William B. Umstead State Park. These two contiguous parks were not integrated until 1966. Chavis Park was operated by the city on land leased from the state.

Other North Carolina cities developed local segregated parks, some with WPA assistance. High Point, Winston-Salem and Charlotte built parks and swimming pools for African Americans with federal funds, and there were applications for other projects such as a swimming pool in Tryon that were attempted, but not funded. Fairview Park in Charlotte was a condemned by the local board of health and closed in 1940. The site has been redeveloped. In High Point there was a movement as early as 1933 to provide recreational facilities for African Americans. In 1935 the city purchased land for a park and in 1936 applied for WPA funding to develop the park. The park opened in 1938 with a 50 meter swimming pool, a bath house, baseball fields, tennis courts, a wading pool and picnic shelters. None of these original structures remain. R. D. Tillson, class of 1921 at Massachusetts Agricultural College, settled in High Point and had a successful career in landscape architecture and planning. He designed the WPA funded park for African Americans in that city.

In Winston-Salem, three WPA funded African American parks were built, Happy Hill Park, Kimberley Park, and a park at the 14th Street School. The parks were built with citizen contributions. A.L Butner gave the site for Kimberley Park and an additional \$1,500 and James A. Gray donated \$22,000 to the construction of the parks. A newspaper article from 1941 described them,

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

At Happy Hill... a community center has been erected, twin outdoor bowling alleys, a concrete skating rink, outdoor ovens, a baseball diamond, and two tennis courts have been built. At Kimberley, the buildings include a community center, three outdoor ovens, two shelter buildings, twin bowling alleys, a roller skating rink, and an amphitheater. At Fourteenth street, the structures include three shelters, several ovens, bowling alleys, skating rink and auxiliary buildings. The swimming pool and bathhouse already in existence at this site have been renovated. Tennis courts are available at all the Negro parks, but it was not necessary to build new ones at Kimberley or Fourteenth street because some were already in use at these two places. (*Centers are Now Nearly Completed*, October 29, 1941)

At Kimberley Park, three rustic picnic shelters remain as do stone steps with a retaining wall. One of the shelters appears to have had a grill and chimney which has been demolished. All three have tapered stone piers supporting gable roofs clad in composite shingles. Two have rustic wooden structural members, the largest of the three has finished dimensional lumber trusses. At Happy Hill, two rustic structures remain. As at Kimberly, they have tapered stone piers. The smaller one has rustic wooden bracing members. The larger one has a cross gabled roof, with a smaller gabled ell terminating at a chimney with a grill. Built in a slope, the larger structure has later, dimensional lumber rails. At Fourteenth Street there remains a set of stone steps with retaining wall. This park is adjacent to the former Atkins High School, a Rosenwald School. Two other WPA funded parks in Winston-Salem provide some additional insight as to integrity. Lockland Park has one small open structure with a hipped roof. While the earlier roof structure has been replaced with finished dimensional lumber, it retains a rustic log railing between the log columns. Miller Park's picnic shelters are similar to those at Winston-Salem's Jim Crow parks with tapered stone piers. Some retain rustic unfinished roof framing and log rails between the stone piers.

Architectural and design aspects of the Jim Crow era are rapidly disappearing. Buildings with dual entrances (such as those at Raleigh's Cooper BBQ restaurant) are rare. Yet throughout the South, this was a dominant theme in design and use of space. What Weyeneth deems as "alternative spaces," places that African Americans built or claimed for themselves in the absence of governmental or cultural support, are often threatened with neglect or deterioration. Signage and partitions that once divided black and white have been removed or covered over in some senses almost literally to "whitewash" this period in our history. In Raleigh, segregated public housing units have been destroyed. Yet Chavis Park, which was purposely built for African Americans remains.

With the ending of legalized segregation with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the opening of recreational facilities and parks to all citizens regardless of color, there was an unfortunate trend that emerged as the South moved toward greater racial integration. Across the South, many segregation era buildings, accommodations and facilities developed for African Americans experienced neglect, abandonment, destruction or disinvestment, particularly from municipalities

John Chavis Memorial Park

Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina

County and State

and states. Since there was no longer a reason to maintain a dual system, there seemed to be no reason to maintain those structures or facilities. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, there were a number of African American historic places that were lost or abandoned.

In June 1973, the Raleigh Times noted the history of segregation at the public parks in Raleigh, “Until the early 1960s, Raleigh parks were segregated. Chavis was the park for black people; Pullen was for whites;” and that by 1973 “Chavis is still largely a black people’s park while Pullen is used by both races” (Hall). The article also noted the discrepancies in funding for the two parks less than three miles apart: “The lingering effects of segregation may still be one of the causes of differences between them.” (Hall) The article quotes Frank Roberts, then director of recreation at Chavis Park, who grew up using the park: “Any dual system that merges into a unitary system is going to leave some scars...The scars are going to be both tangible and intangible. Tangible in terms of the physical facilities you have to deal with and intangible in terms of the effect of the old system had on peoples’ minds” (quoted in Hall).

A 2008 News and Observer article documents disparities into this century. “The comparison with Pullen on Western Boulevard stings residents. Built in the 1880s, Raleigh's oldest park, Pullen still draws a huge regional crowd, especially schoolchildren in big yellow buses. Compare the money either approved or planned for each park out of Raleigh's last two park bonds in 2003 and 2007: \$9.5 million for Pullen and \$1.4 million for Chavis. A review of budgets going back to 2000 shows that Pullen regularly gets more than \$1 million a year, much of it for the palatial aquatic center, while Chavis hovers closer to \$100,000” (Shaffer).

Chavis Park has remained a touchstone for the African American community in Raleigh even after integration and despite dis-investment. The presence of the historically black Shaw and St. Augustine universities, the coordination of the federally funded projects for African Americans that were and are Chavis Heights and Chavis Park, and the close proximity of locally funded segregated schools the Crosby School (1897), the Garfield School (1910), the consolidated Crosby-Garfield School (1920) on Lenoir Street and nearby Ligon High School (1953), all helped to reinforce a strong sense of community among the African Americans who lived, played and studied in the community surrounding Chavis Park. This community is noted in the August 14, 1935 WPA funding application as a rationale for the location of Chavis Park.

Oral history interviews and published sources relate a long list of activities that happened at Chavis Park, though often without specific dates: Shaw and Saint Augustine University football and baseball games; the post-Christmas Parade party; the WRAL TV teen dance show “Teenage Frolics”; Easter Egg Hunts; appearances by Angela Davis, H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael; church picnics; school reunions for Ligon and Washington high schools; Ligon High School sports events; Washington High School football games; family reunions; Ligon High School homecoming parades; Shriners parades; Civil Rights marches and meetings; outdoor gospel shows; African American sorority events; church homecomings; and Raleigh Grays and Raleigh Tigers Baseball games. Many interviewees spoke of their learning to swim in the Olympic-Sized pool, and having access to tennis facilities, which at one point was considered a sport for whites and people of privilege.

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

Reunions of former Chavis Heights residents are now regularly held at Chavis Park. Despite, or perhaps because of, the displacement of long time residents, and the destruction of a traditional African American neighborhood with the demolition of the public housing project in 2004 and 2005.

The park was a place where African Americans were allowed to use all the facilities--restrooms and water fountains were not designated by race. African Americans traveled from as far as Virginia and South Carolina to use the park as there were so few resources of this size and quality open to African Americans.

Raleigh resident Rosia Butler described it-- "And that's how I grew up, during segregation. And when this thing, when the park came, it was like freedom. That you could come and enjoy, and know that you were safe, that you had a place where you didn't have somebody to tell you, you couldn't come over here or whatever"(Butler, interview 10/24/13).

Chavis Park is a rare surviving example of a duplicative resource provided by the government to the African American community to avoid integrating "whites only" parks (Weathers). As such, it is a powerful tool for demonstrating through a physical resource the lengths that were taken to keep African Americans separate from whites through the use of "separate but equal" recreational facilities. That it has continued to be embraced and used by Raleigh's African American community, and not rejected for its association with the Jim Crow era, is a powerful testimony to the community's sense of ownership of the site.

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

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John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): WA3867

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 26.54

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Latitude: 35.772733° | Longitude: -78.631099° |
| 2 Latitude: 35.772239° | Longitude: -78.630931° |
| 3 Latitude: 35.771477° | Longitude: -78.630914° |
| 4 Latitude: 35.771320° | Longitude: -78.630063° |

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

5 Latitude: 35.771016°	Longitude: -78.630050°
6 Latitude: 35.770932	Longitude: -78.628401°
7 Latitude: 35.768116°	Longitude: -78.628466°
8 Latitude: 35.768415°	Longitude: -78.632001°
9 Latitude: 35.768794°	Longitude: -78.631639°
10 Latitude: 35.772648°	Longitude: -78.631975°

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

The property boundary is all that outlined in white in the accompanying map entitled Chavis Park.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses all the property historically and currently associated with the park.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mary Ruffin Hanbury and Jeffrey A. Harris
organization: Hanbury Preservation Consulting
street & number: PO Box 6049
city or town: Raleigh state: NC zip code: 27628
e-mail maryruffin@hanburypreservation.com
telephone: (919) 828-1905
date: December 26, 2014

John Chavis Memorial Park
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

Additional Documentation, Photographs

The following information pertains to all photographs for John Chavis Memorial Park,
505 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Raleigh, Wake County NC

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

Location of Negatives: North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC

- 1 War Mothers Memorial Bench, view to east, February 18, 2014.
- 2 Vehicular Bridge, view to east, February 18, 2014.
- 3 Chavis Way, view to east, November 20, 2014.
- 4 Track and Field, view to northwest, November 20, 2014.
- 5 North Picnic Shelter, view to the northwest, February 18, 2014.
- 6 Old Carousel House, view to southeast, February 18, 2014.
- 7 Pedestrian Bridge, view to south, October 30, 2014.
- 8 Gable Roofed Picnic Shelter and Pedestrian Bridge, view to northwest, February 18, 2014.
- 9 Gable Roofed Picnic Shelter Detail, view to northeast, February 18, 2014.
- 10 Amphitheater, view to southeast, February 18, 2014.
- 11 Play Equipment with Pool House in background, view to southeast, February 18, 2014.
- 12 New Carousel House with Pool House to right and Community Center to left, view to southeast, February 18, 2014.
- 13 Carousel, Interior New Carousel House, view to southeast, November 20, 2014.
- 14 Community Center, view to northeast, February 18, 2014.
- 15 Sculpture *Glimpses of the Promised Land*, view to south, February 18, 2014.
- 16 Ballfield, view to south, February 18, 2014.

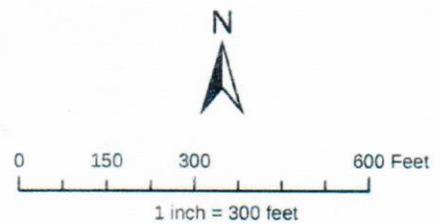
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain 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.



**John Chavis Memorial Park
Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina
Areas per narrative description**

- A: Northwestern Section**
- B: Stream Area**
- C: Track Area**
- D: Central Core**
- E: Baseball Field Area**



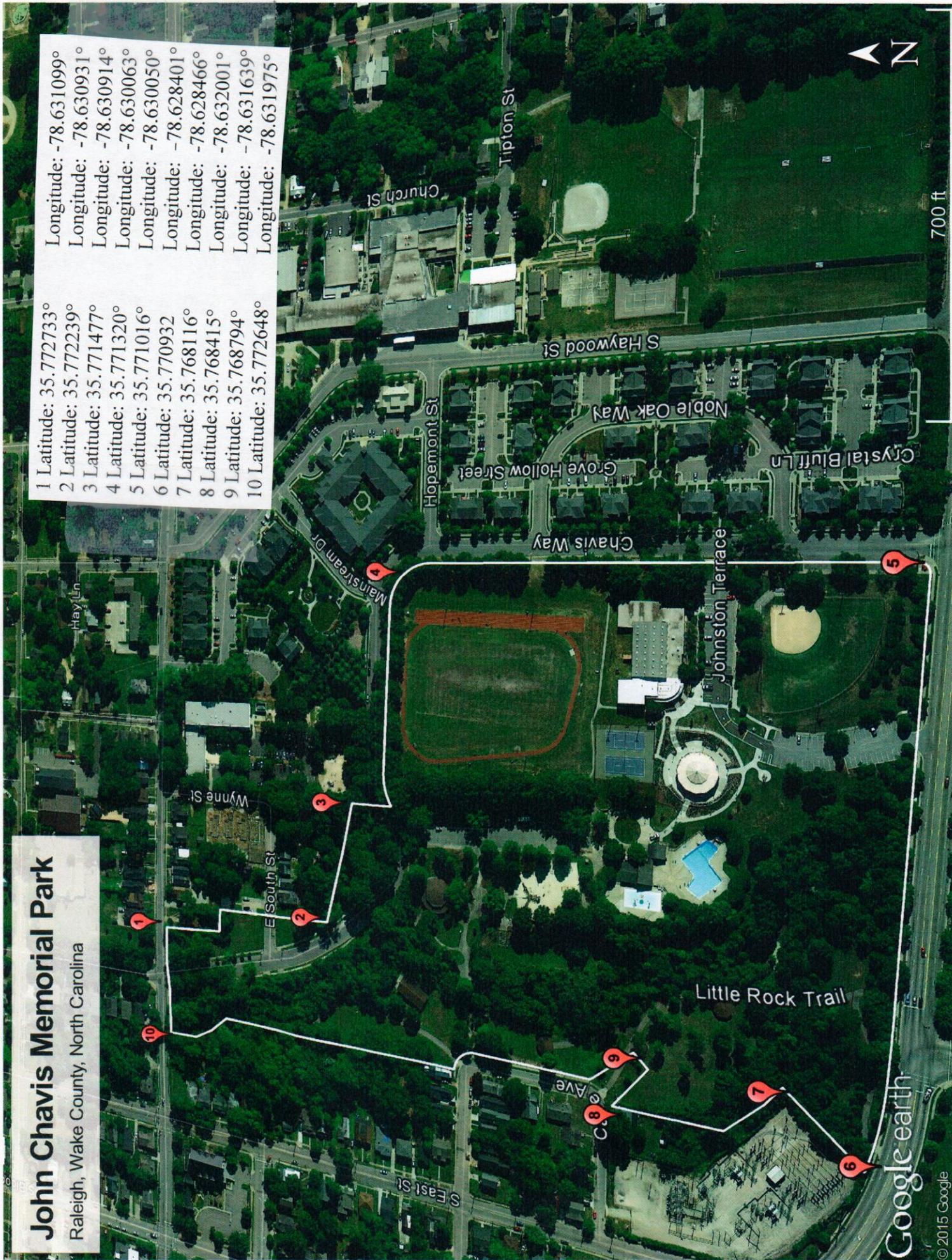
Disclaimer
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John Chavis Memorial Park

Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina

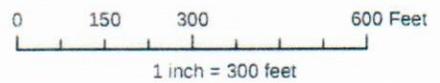
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- 7 Latitude: 35.768116°
- 8 Latitude: 35.768415°
- 9 Latitude: 35.768794°
- 10 Latitude: 35.772648°

- Longitude: -78.631099°
- Longitude: -78.630931°
- Longitude: -78.630914°
- Longitude: -78.630063°
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- Longitude: -78.628466°
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- Longitude: -78.631975°





**John Chavis Memorial Park
Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina
Legal Parcels**

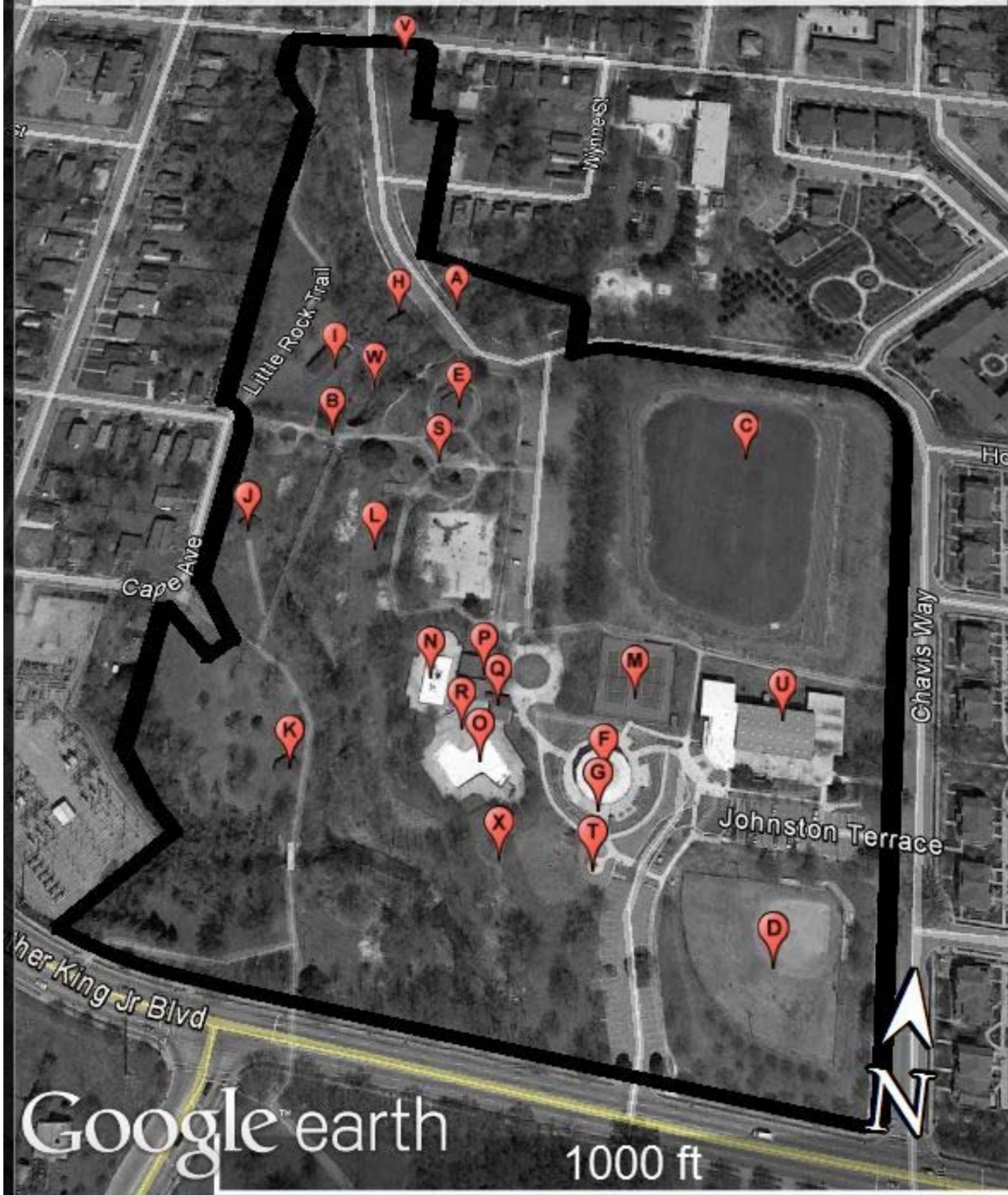


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3/2014

John Chavis Memorial Park

Raleigh, Wake County, NC
Resources Map



Legend

NC-Noncontributing
C- Contributing

— National Register
Boundary

A	Vehicular Bridge	C	M	Tennis courts	NC
B	Pedestrian Bridge	C	N	Splash pad	NC
C	Track and Field	C	O	Swimming Pool	NC
D	Ballfield	C	P	Pool House/ lockers	NC
E	Old Carousel House	C	Q	Pool House/mechanical	NC
F	New Carousel House	NC	R	Pool plaza	NC
G	Carousel	C	S	Ridge plaza	NC
H	North Picnic Shelter	C	T	Sculpture	NC
I	Gable Roofed Picnic Shelter	C	U	Chavis Park Community Center	NC
J	Picnic Shelter	NC	V	War Mothers Memorial Bench	C
K	Picnic Shelter	NC	W	Designed Landscape	C
L	Amphitheater	C	X	Designed Landscape(s)	NC