Barden Park: A Case Study in Preservation

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BARDEN PARK: A CASE STUDY IN PRESERVATION

by

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This thesis submitted by Richard E. Kelly in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final research committee.

[Signatures]

Dean
School of Graduate Studies
BARDEN PARK: A CASE STUDY IN PRESERVATION

Richard E. Kelly

The impact of the presence of a city park in a neighborhood is profound in several ways. A case in point is Barden Park in the South Side/Barden Park Neighborhood of St. Cloud, Minnesota. This paper will discuss the development of the park throughout history; the development of parks as an essential part of the American city such as Central Park in New York City, Central-Loring Park in Minneapolis, and Central-Barden Park in St. Cloud.

Barden Park, originally named Central Park in 1855, is a prime example of the origination of public parks, first in the United States and later throughout the world. Urban planners of that time were beginning to see the benefit of recreation and green spaces for people who were living in the expanding urban environments of the United States. Central Park St. Cloud followed Central Park New York which was designated in 1853. Central Park New York was the first public park of its kind in the world. Vintage postcard images of early central parks, found in the appendix of this paper, show central parks in all areas of the country. These images also show the characteristics that are common in central parks of the nineteenth century.

The contemporary definition of park is a democratic notion. We believe that parks were a public good for the benefit and enjoyment of all members of society and not only for the elite. By 1885 Central Park Minneapolis was a reality, although St. Cloud Minnesota had its Central Park thirty years before. The name Central Park St. Cloud was changed to Barden Park in the spring of 1938 in honor of Charles Barden who was volunteer superintendent of St. Cloud parks. Central Park Minneapolis was also renamed Loring Park in honor of its superintendent. The following is a list and brief description of structures and monuments that have been part of the park's landscape:

**Wood Band Stand.**
**Granite Band Stand.** It was constructed of local granite.
**Fountains.** There have been two fountains in the park.
**Cannon.** It was removed for WWII scrap metal.
**Monument/Drinking Fountain.** This monument is the water fountain that a 1925 park record indicates cost $50,000 and was "to be of granite."
**Plantings and Landscaping.** The park is filled with mature oak trees and a circular flower garden.
A neighborhood organization has been working in recent years to preserve and restore the South Side/Barden Park Neighborhood. Of all the events that have taken place in Barden “Central” Park over the years the annual St. Cloud City Band summer concerts have been the most anticipated and best attended.

In order to restore the park a historical survey of the park was compiled. St. Cloud Historic and Neighborhood Preservation Association raised the funds needed to hire a professional historian as a consultant, designated the park a local historic, and raised funds for a new fountain and other restoration following the city’s master plan for restoration of Barden Park.

December 2004

Month Year

Approved by Research Committee:

Don Hofsommer Chairperson
“Beautify Your City as You Would Your Home”
--Charles Barden, St. Cloud, Minnesota
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INTRODUCTION

The preservation and restoration of a core city neighborhood park is essential to the successful preservation and restoration of a core city neighborhood. A case in point is Barden Park in the South Side/Barden Park neighborhood of St. Cloud, Minnesota. As the park goes, so goes the neighborhood. Parks, being parts of the urban environment in neighborhoods for millennia, have served changing roles as societies have changed. I will, in this paper, discuss the development of the modern city park as an essential feature of an American city using, as examples, Central Park in New York City, Central-Loring Park in Minneapolis, and Central-Barden Park in St. Cloud, Minnesota. I will also examine the effort to resuscitate a core city neighborhood through the preservation and restoration of a core city park—citing, as an example, Barden Park in the South Side/Barden Park Neighborhood of St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Barden Park, originally named Central Park, is a prime example of the origination of public parks, first in the United States and later throughout the world. When Central Park St. Cloud, Minnesota was designated in 1855, Minnesota was not yet a state. The United States was in a period of transition known as the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution was changing the ways that people lived and the ways that cities were being designed. Urban planners of that time were beginning
to see the necessity of recreational and restful green spaces for people who were living in the expanding urban environments of the United States. Central Park St. Cloud followed Central Park New York which was designated in 1853. Central Park New York was the first public park of its kind in the world. It set a precedent for the inclusion of public parks in the new cities that were being built in the states and territories of the United States in the nineteenth century. Vintage post card images of early central parks are found in the appendix of this paper show that the concept of including a central park in cities large or small was found in all areas of the country. These images also show the characteristics that are common in central parks of the nineteenth century.
Chapter I

PARK EVOLUTION

The definition of the word park has been evolving until the present. The history of parks in America has been tied to the history of cities in America. Parks were transplanted to this country by the British colonists, grew with pioneer cities in the westward expansion, glittered in the prosperity of the Gilded Age, provided a haven to people stressed by urban life, suffered from urban flight and renewal, and have been rediscovered as an essential amenity of urban neighborhoods.

The movement toward public park development in American cities began in the mid-nineteenth century. The industrialization and maturation of existing cities as well as the platting of new cities during the industrial revolution demonstrated the need for parks as social control mechanism in the urban landscape. Older cities were experiencing challenges from increasing population density, pollution, disease, and lack of recreation and relaxation opportunities for the growing number of urban dwellers. Newly built cities in the mid-nineteenth century were experimenting with urban planning to meet these needs of the new industrialized urban populations. Parks were considered essential parts of many new city's development and were planned into the city charters of small western frontier towns as early as 1855. Out of this grew the idea of a Central Park. Central-Barden Park in St. Cloud, Minnesota is an example.
The earliest parks were neither public nor democratic. The word park (parc) can be traced back as far as 1260 in the Charter of Friduuald of Surry, England. This early reference defines a park as "...an enclosed tract of land held by royal grant or prescription for keeping beasts of the chase." The practice of keeping royal game reserves goes back much farther into ancient Sumer, Egypt and Rome. Marie Luise Gothien traced the origins of parks from the vineyards and fishponds of Sumerian King Gudea, about 2340 B.C. to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, about the ninth century B.C., and to the seventh century B.C. when flowers were first propagated in parks. Gothien stated that the park "...is in its first intention the spectacular scene for a great man's hunting ground, but is secondarily the place where feasts are given, and where assemblies, and audiences granted to the great princes, take place."  

The uses for parklands began to change from enclosed areas holding animals for sport hunting to aesthetic creations. Parks were symbols of economic, aesthetic, and cultural wealth surrounding the great homes of nobility. Under "Parks" in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Volume XI, is the following history. 

The development of publicly owned parks is a relatively recent phenomenon. The cities of antiquity had their flora and market places; the nobility of Egypt and of Rome their hunting preserves; but the setting

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3 Doell, 12.
aside of open spaces for the use of all inhabitants was a practice which followed in the wake of industrialization. Most of the early parks and gardens in Europe were associated with the seats of royalty and nobility. Constructed often on a grand scale of formal axial relationships about the palace or castle, they provided background for gorgeous functions of the court. As a rule the common people were to use such parks and gardens only on special occasions or when the owner happened to have democratic leanings.

S. M. Gold in his 1973 book *Urban and Recreational Planning* defined a park as any public area of land set aside for aesthetic, educational, recreational or cultural use. Following this modern definition, we find parks as essential features in cities large and small across America. Our contemporary definition of park is a democratic notion. We believe that parks are a public good for the benefit and enjoyment of all members of society and not only for the elite. Indeed city planners would say that parks are essential to the health and stability of urban neighborhoods. This idea of parks for everyone was first fully developed in the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century. "...it is not until the nineteenth century that we find the public park as we know it, an area of land laid out primarily for public use amidst essentially urban surroundings."  

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4 Sills, 214.


The earliest and best example of the modern urban public park is Central Park in New York City.
Central Park was not the first park in the United States. But Central Park is the prototype for a modern definition of what a park is in the modern industrial urban world.
Central Park is considered the first landscaped park devoted entirely to the general public. It is evident by the proliferation of “Central Parks” in cities across America that the Central Park on the island of Manhattan in the City of New York had a great impact on city designers and land speculators in the second half of the nineteenth century. During three years of debate it was not certain that Central Park would ever come onto existence. The debate over the park’s future ended in 1853. In that year the New York State Legislature authorized the tool of eminent domain for the city of New York for the acquisition of 700 acres in the center of Manhattan for the creation of Central Park.

Though the park was to be designed for the use of all levels of urban society, there was opposition to the park by some civic leaders and advocates of the poor and working class. Many were suspicious as to their place in such a grand park lobbied for and built by the top level of society.

Park designers quickly ran into constraints and class conflicts in attempts to develop parks. For example, the following issues and constraints had to be addressed...(a) land use conflicts, (b) traffic, noise, congestion, (c) number of users, (d) incompatibility of working class and migrants and behavior, (e) labor relations, (f) city politics, (g) ecology, and (h) social lifestyles.

Labor leaders and the working classes needed to be assured of inclusion, politicians and business leaders needed assurance of the potential growth and

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2 Jackson, 1.

investment opportunities surrounding a park. No one wanted to be left out of the park’s benefits or have their power influence or livelihoods curtailed. The conflicting desires of the separate special interest groups made it necessary for the state of New York to be the entity to finally establish the park. This gave the state credit as well as a share of the blame for creating the park. Upon the 1853 vote to establish Central Park the poor and working class residents of the Central Park area were removed.

Creating the park, however, required displacing roughly 1,600 poor residents including Irish pig farmers and German gardeners who lived in shanties on the site...and...Seneca Village ...one of the city’s most stable African American settlements....

It was typical for valued land such as the homes of poor and immigrant people to be the first areas selected for civic improvements. The costs to civic leaders to purchase these less developed areas was less than in more developed areas. Also, a well-placed park added to the property values of land in proximity to the park.

It was true that the majority of urban park boosters were the elite of their respective cities. They wanted their cities to be attractive, valuable, stable, and cohesive or at least easily controlled. Creation of urban parks was mainly a tool for social control of the working classes and poor of cities in the Industrial Age of the nineteenth century. In the tradition of European Romanticism, American Romantics believed “...that the lives of the working poor in cities would benefit if they could experience pastoral beauty and rural bliss.”

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4 Jackson, 1.

5 Taylor, 5.
inhabitants of New York's tenements was indeed a romantic notion. The social
control element of urban parks and their design was the force that made urban parks
essential for the health and stability of cities. Urban parks were the prescription for
ailing cities. It was thought that parks could be the source of fresh air, escape from the
time clock, diversion from drink and other vice, and a general remedy for all the
stresses of urban life.

Democratic Parks would also bring different strata of society together so that
the more gentile upper class could serve as role models for the lower classes.
Immigrants could learn to be proper citizens through contact with upstanding
American citizens in the equalizing atmosphere of the urban park. Parks would be the
paths for "...muting resentments over disparities of wealth and fashion... directly
assisting the poor and degraded to elevate...and direct men.from unwholesome and
destructive methods and habits of seeking recreation."6

In New York, Central Park Commission held a contest to select a design and
designer for Central Park. The winner and man in charge of the molding of the new
Central Park was Frederick Law Olmstead with the help of Calvert Vaux. Olmstead
was the park superintendent at the time. Calvert Vaux was a partner of renowned
landscape gardener and style-setter of the nineteenth century—Andrew Jackson
Downing.7

6 Taylor, 7.
7 Jackson, 1.
The principle landscape designer of Central Park, Olmstead was an outspoken advocate of accenting the nature elements of beauty in a park and the necessity of parks as social control. In 1870 he wrote:

There can be no doubt...that in all our modern civilization...there is a strong drift downward....It also appears to be nearly certain that the recent rapid enlargement of towns and withdrawal of people from rural conditions of living is the result mainly of circumstances of a permanent character....Now, knowing that the average length of...
life...in towns has been much less than in the country, and that the average amount of disease and misery and of vice and crime has been much greater in towns....It has shown...that...in the interior parts of large and closely built towns, a given quantity of air contains considerably less of the elements, which we require to receive through the lungs than the air of the country....If the great city...is to be laid out little by little, and chiefly to suit the views of land-owners, acting only individually, and thinking only of how what they do is to affect the value in the next week or the next year of the few lots that each may hold at that time the opportunities of so obeying this inclination as at the same time to give the lungs a bath of pure sunny air, to give the mind a suggestion of rest from the devouring eagerness and intellectual strife of town life, will always be few to any, to many will amount to nothing....We want a ground to which people may easily go after their days’ work is done, and where they may stroll for an hour, seeing, hearing, and feeling nothing of the bussle and jar of the streets....Practically, what we most want is a simple, broad, open space of clean greensward...as a central feature. The word park, in town nomenclature, should, I think, be reserved for grounds of the character and purpose thus described....The park should, as far as possible, compliment the town. ⁸

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Common “Central Park” amenities as seen in New York’s Central Park.

Fountain, casual gardens and walkways.

Close-up of fountain and lighting.
Walkways and lighting.

Natural wooded aesthetic.
Two views of seclusion in the city.
A PUSH FOR PARKS, MINNEAPOLIS

PLAN
FOR THE RE-ARRANGEMENT
OF
WALKS - PLANTINGS
AT
MURPHY SQUARE
BOARD OF PARK COM'rs., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

JANUARY, 1881.
A. C. Short, Engineer.

Designed By

First Minneapolis Park
The first land designated as parkland in Minneapolis, Minnesota was Murphy Square. A 1911 pamphlet titled "The Early History of Minneapolis Parks: From 1857-1893" says that Mr. Murphy "...dedicated to the public nearly 2 blocks of land for a public park." Captain Edward Murphy was an officer in the War of 1812. He came to Minnesota following his military service and made his fortune in the steamboat trade and in land speculation. After the original city of Minneapolis' plat was filed Mr. Murphy joined eighty acres of land to the city as Murphy's Addition for development. At the time he was the "...only one of the original proprietors to... dedicate a square for public use as park."

Like contemporary city developers of New York, Mr. Murphy realized that the designation of a park near his property would be a benefit to the value of his development endeavor. Also, as with New York's Central Park, he was converting what was considered unused or undeveloped property into a public and self-promoting social benefit. The park was designated, but it was several years before it was improved for public use. "Captain Murphy... designated the first park to the city of Minneapolis, but it remained a vacant tract, used only as a cow pasture or public common until 1880...." Murphy's Square is still maintained in its original form in

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10 Charise A. Nimocks, The Early History of Minneapolis Parks: From 1857 to 1893 (Minneapolis: Board of Park Commissioners, 1911), 2.

11 Atwater, 397.

12 Charles M. Loring, History of Parks and Public Grounds of Minneapolis (Minneapolis: 1915), 599.
downtown Minneapolis, but without its historic context. It is surrounded by the buildings and athletic areas of Augsburg College on three sides and Interstate 94 on the fourth side. Since visitors must travel through the college to find the park, simply marked square on some Minneapolis maps, it no longer serves its historic function of being a neighborhood park. Within the park there is a plaque commemorating Murphy Square as Minneapolis’ first park. The park retains meandering walking paths, flowerbeds, benches, trees and greenery. Students take advantage of the old park with the same benefits as its original patrons enjoyed.

Captain Murphy saw the benefit of parkland in the new city of Minneapolis, but creation of other new parks was slow to catch on in the area. The Minneapolis city government felt that parks were not necessary amenities. “The oldest residents struggled for years to secure a park. The answers always were: ‘we do not need a park so long as we can reach the woods in short time.’”13

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13 Nimrock, 4.
Murphy's Square, Minneapolis' first park.

This attitude demonstrates the early attitude toward parks in America. Parks were seen as a peaceful retreat into nature for urban dwellers. They were not yet seen as recreational grounds or needed retreats from the stresses of urban life. "Still, some citizens persisted. Even the small village should have its public park, centrally located, and land should be secured before it is occupied and covered with buildings." In this quote are three major themes: the need for parks in urban areas, the idea of a "central" park, and that parks are related to successful development of urban areas.

Park supporters led several attempts to add new parklands to Minneapolis. Mr. C. M. Loring, considered the father of the park movement in Minneapolis, reported

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14 Loring, 599.
that the first public meeting of any type that he attended in Minneapolis was regarding
the security of what would have been the city’s first park, prior to Murphy Square. He
stated that this early attempt “...was never consummated....” An 1865 attempt was
made to secure Nicollet Island as a park was defeated in an 1866 city ballot. It was
defeated by “...only 66 votes.” A third attempt to secure parkland in Minneapolis
failed by one vote on the city council in 1867.\textsuperscript{15}

The social and esthetic arguments for creation of urban parks in Minneapolis
was articulated in a May 23, 1880 \textit{Minneapolis Tribune} editorial titled “Give Us A
Park”:

We regret that Minneapolis is more in need of a park than ever now that it
has a band to discourse agreeable music on fine summer evenings...(and)
to keep down the death rates, and to be rid of wasting disease, a plentiful
supply of park is needed in every large town.”\textsuperscript{16}

The editorial also defined the ideal Victorian central city park for Minneapolis
of the 1880s as having: “ample breathing space” for between 10,000 and 20,000
people, “a pavilion in the center,” space for instruments requiring “vast space for their
finest efforts,” “green turf underfoot,” “arching bows overhead,” and the “heavenly
high dome above.”\textsuperscript{17}

The push for parkland was going nowhere in the realm of city government. A
different approach was needed. Park promoters received the backing they needed

\textsuperscript{15} Atwater, 394.
\textsuperscript{16} Nimrocks, 12.
\textsuperscript{17} Nimrocks, 10.
from the legislature of the state of Minnesota. "The fundamental act of the legislature in 1883, condemned by the city council and Knights of Labor..." set up the Minneapolis Park Commission.\textsuperscript{18} The Knights of Labor were particularly adamant in their opposition to spending city money on parks. They saw it as a class issue. Parks would not benefit their ranks. An unnamed St. Paul alderman "...branded the park as a recreation spot for the rich alone--those only who could reach it with carriages."\textsuperscript{19}

Despite the opposition, and through the strength and will of the legislature of the State of Minnesota, progress in acquiring and developing parkland in Minneapolis began. One man is credited with success of the park movement in Minneapolis. It has been said that the 1883 Minneapolis Park Commission act would not have been passed "...but for his untiring advocacy."\textsuperscript{20} This park advocate was Charles M. Loring.

\textsuperscript{18} Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, vol. XV (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society), 607.


\textsuperscript{20} Collections, 607.
Central Park Minneapolis, now named Loring Park.

Mr. Charles M. Loring "...in the minds of our people here stands most fully as the representative of our park development...." After arriving in Minneapolis, Loring made his fortune as a "wheat speculator" and in "milling." Though he was in Europe during the first meeting of the Park Commission in 1883, he was elected its first president. 21 The commission was established but there was still a need to demonstrate the necessity for parks in the growing urban landscape economically, socially, and ascetically.

21 Atwater, 407.
Loring compiled a list of proposed parklands that had been for sale over the years but that had been rejected for park use. He compared the former asking prices to the increased values of each property since 1883, “concluding that great opportunities were missed, but that missed opportunities provided hindsight to make sure park creation would finally commence.”\textsuperscript{22} The commission immediately got down to the business of park land acquisition and “...during the first two years the Board acquired by gift and purchase ten tracts for parks, the most important being Loring [Central] Park.”\textsuperscript{23}

To interpret the Victorian ideal of a park into Central Park, Charles Loring enlisted the help of Horace W. S. Cleveland. Cleveland, a student of Andrew Jackson Downing, came to Minnesota in 1872 to create the grand park plan of “great radiating circles” and “generous boulevards” for Minneapolis and St. Paul. Of this plan, only Como Park in St. Paul was built.\textsuperscript{24} Central Park would be Cleveland’s legacy in Minneapolis.

Cleveland held a common Victorian ideal in his motto “Beauty in Nature.”\textsuperscript{25} By today’s standard paths, manicured gardens, and fountains would not be considered parts of a natural park plan. But the Victorian notion of “back to nature” was more to be surrounded by green trees and grass than to be in wilderness. Loring once said that

\textsuperscript{22} Loring, 601.
\textsuperscript{23} Loring, 602.
\textsuperscript{24} Blegin, 498.
\textsuperscript{25} Blegin, 499.
Cleveland "...spoke contemptuously of those who 'washed the face' of nature, and 'combed her hair and put her in stays.'"26

By 1885 Central Park Minneapolis was a reality. It proved to be a success with the entire urban community. The success of Central Park quickly changed the position of the Knights of Labor from anti-park to pro-park. The Knights having been "...the most strenuous opponents of the (1883 Park Commission) measure sent a letter two years later supporting expansion and acquisition of parks." This letter said, "The large number of children with their parents who visited the park was evidence that they were for working people as well as for the rich."27

Loring retired from the park board in 1890. Minneapolis’ signature park, as well as the signature achievement of Loring’s tenure on the Park Commission, Central Park, Minneapolis, was dedicated to Loring on his park commission retirement with the following words.

Before his retirement the board, in spite of his remonstrance, gave his name to the gem of the [Minneapolis park] system; and Loring Park will, through the years to come, perpetuate the name and honorable service of the first president of the Park Commission.28

26 Blegin, 499.
27 Loring, 602.
28 Atwater, 408.
Flower plantings, Loring “Central” Park, Minneapolis.

Seclusion in the city.
Chapter III

CENTRAL PARK, ST. CLOUD AND CHARLES BARDEN

The Early Years

Granite Band Stand, Central Park, St. Cloud.
According to Mrs. George W. Lehrke, Secretary of the St. Cloud Park Board in 1945 "...[Central] Park was planned when St. Cloud was planned. The first park, one square block, was a gift of John L. Wilson to the new village." Mrs. Lehrke’s reference to "...the first park..." is a reference to Central Park, the original name of St. Cloud’s current Barden Park. Mrs. Lehrke also wrote that:

A square block marked "park" was about in the central of the platted area "hence the original name of Central Park" from blocks south of the ravine and about equal distance from the river and Lake George. The streets and avenues had names and these names were later changed to numbers. The park now known as Barden Park (in 1945) is the original square (2.5 acres) located between 4th and 5th Avenues and 7th and 8th Streets South.¹

For decades before amenities were added, Central Park was indistinguishable from any other block in the hard wood forest that was Lower Town, now St. Cloud’s South Side. But Barden "Central" Park expanded its public service role in 1859, not only as a place of recreation but also as a place of higher education. According to one source:

A public meeting of citizens was held March 24, 1859, to take steps toward establishing a seminary where the young people of St. Cloud might secure some of the more advanced studies in a liberal education.²

St. Cloud was a growing frontier town in 1859. Its citizens felt that their children needed to be exposed to aspects of western culture that were not readily found in Central Minnesota. Central Park’s largest neighbor, what became St. Cloud

¹ Mrs. George W. Lehrke, St. Cloud Daily Times (St. Cloud, MN, 20 September 1945).

² William Mitchell Bell, History of Stearns County (Chicago: H.C. Cooper, Jr. & Company, 1915), 1450.
State University, was not founded until ten years later in 1869. The cornerstone for the proposed 1859 “seminary” was laid on Sunday, October 25, 1860, with full Masonic ceremonies and an address by the Rev. A. J. Nelson, principal of the institution. A description of the dedication follows: the St. Cloud Institute and Pioneer Seminary building was a single room,

...30 by 50 feet with half- hectagon wings at either end, one to accommodate a teacher’s desk and other for a vestibule, over the latter being a choir loft with a belfry. The bell rang for the first time to assemble the audience which gathered for the dedication.\(^3\)

The dedication of the building took place on December 27, 1860. It was a multi-denominational service with local Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist ministers taking part in the dedication. At the dedication ceremony $67.00 was raised to complete the building. It seems that the building never was completed to the satisfaction of the community. A report from 1862 regarding the Institute stated that it had “...but one coat of plaster, was without weather boarding and the floor so full of openings as to be most uncomfortable in winter.”\(^4\)

The seminary opened with thirty-three pupils and ended the first school year with a class of eighty-one pupils. The subjects taught were German, music, mathematics and French. Incidentally, mathematics and French were taught by Lyman W. Ayer, identified in the *History of Stearns County* as the first child of European ancestry born in Minnesota.

\(^3\) Bell, 1450.
\(^4\) Bell, 1450.
The building was eventually sold to J. F. Stevenson who moved it from the northeast corner of Barden Park to his foundry. He then used it as a warehouse, ending Barden Park’s years as the center of culture and higher learning in St. Cloud.\(^5\) The removal of the Institute, and the subsequent development of the college at St. Cloud meant that the park was fully dedicated to recreation and relaxation for lower town, now known as the South Side/Barden Park neighborhood.

CHARLES BARDEN AS TOLD BY MRS. BARDEN

“Beautify your city as you would your home” was a favorite saying of Mr. Charles Barden. The name Central Park was changed to Barden Park in the spring of 1938 in honor of Charles Barden. His wife, Lydia May Barden, gave the following personal history of Charles Barden’s life in an interview to Dean Nelson on June 25, 1926.

C. H. Barden was born in Plattsville, Wisconsin, November 15, 1870, the son of Richard and Helen (Cummings) Barden. In New Orleans Richard met and married Helen Cummings and they migrated to Wisconsin settling at Plattsville. At Plattsville there were eight children born, Walter; Thomas; George; James; Hugh; William; Charles; and Stephen. Richard established a business in Plattsville making boots and shoes and was considered a very expert boot maker. His eight boys were given knowledge of the trade and a grade school, high school, and normal school education. About 1885, James, William and Stephen came to St. Cloud and established a dry goods store. They were successful so in 1892 Charles followed them and worked for them in their store....

Charles married Lydia May November 4, 1907. Lydia (May) Barden was the daughter of Gerhard and Catherine (Cloepper) May and was born in St. Cloud January 23, 1883.

\(^5\) Bell, 1450.
She was educated in St. Cloud schools and her father being a prominent citizen and editor of the Der Nordstern, she was active in the social circles of the younger citizens of that city.

Charles Barden was very instrumental in building up St. Cloud's park system. In later years before his death he was a member of the park board and superintendent of city parks. When Charles Barden took the position there were only a few small parks in St. Cloud. He worked very diligently and gave each section of the city a small but beautiful park of its own.

This was very convenient for the citizens of St. Cloud because formerly for band concerts and picnics everyone had to travel too great a distance to find a park. He was a believer of the phrase "Beautify your city as you would your home."  

FEATURES OF CENTRAL/BARDEN PARK

The citizens of St. Cloud and generations of South Side residents have made additions to the landscape of Barden Park. The following is a list and brief description of structures and monuments that have been or continue to be part of the park's landscape:

Wood Bandstand. The wooden bandstand, constructed around 1890, was a one-story, white, Victorian structure typical in many cities of the time. It is seen in several post cards of the park made in the early twentieth century. The wood bandstand was moved to St. Cloud Park prior to the 1925 construction of the Granite Bandstand, across 3rd Avenue from Jefferson Elementary School on the East Side of St. Cloud, at the time construction of the current granite band stand. It was moved by Ben Ressler at a cost of $350.00.  

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6 Lydia May Barden, interview by Dean Nelson, St. Cloud, MN, 25 June 1926.
7 Secretary P. J. Seaberger, St. Cloud City Park Board Minutes, 29 August 1924.
Granite Bandstand. This neo-gothic revival octagon-shaped structure was completed in 1925. It was designed by prominent St. Cloud architect Louis Penault. $5,000.00 was budgeted for its construction. The Barden Park Bandstand is connected historically and architecturally with the rest of the city because of its granite construction. Granite as a building material in structures is common theme throughout St. Cloud—the Granite City. This same brown granite is used across the city in various retaining walls, city parks, the adjacent Lewis/Atwood house, and local Works Progress Administration projects in the city such as the entrance to the former Whitney Airport now the Whitney Center.

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8 Seaberger, 19 April 1922.

9 Seaberger, 23 October 1924.
The band played from the open second floor platform. Band members entered the platform through a trap door in the ceiling of the storage room that is directly under the second floor playing area. The original roof was replaced to stabilize the structure and prevent further damage. Water damage was stopped, but the repairs detract from the original design and function.

**Fountain.** Post card images of the park show two different fountains in Central/Barden Park. The first had one large bowl on the top supported by sculpted herons or cranes. The second, a three-tiered fountain that sat in the circular brick and mortar lily pond surrounded by an ornamental iron railing, was a gift from C. L. Atwood, who lived in the present S.C.S.U. Alumni House. As the fountain aged, it was removed and the pool was used as a wading pool. The entire structure was later removed.¹⁰

![Original Fountain, Central Park, St. Cloud.](image)

¹⁰ Lehrke, 20 September 1945.
Cannon. The cannon in Barden Park seemed to have sprung up from the ground, by some accounts. On August 20, 1942, a picture of the cannon appeared on the front page of the *St. Cloud Daily Times* with the headline “Ancient Guns sent to Aid Allied Troops.” This story followed:

[A] ...cannon without a country will be given to the scrap metal drive in St. Cloud this week when it will be scrapped and put into active service in the form of new equipment for the allied nations. After extensive research around St. Cloud, it was found that the lone cannon in Barden Park didn’t belong to anyone, nor did it seem to come from anywhere. Perhaps there are a few old students of Stearns County who remember the placing of the gun in what was formerly Central Park....

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Three years later the mystery was evidently solved. Park Board Secretary Lehrke wrote:

A heavy iron cannon which once stood near the northeast corner of the park was removed during World War II and given to the War Production Board during a scrap iron salvage campaign. That cannon was from the Spanish battleship Viscia, which surrendered when it was beached at Santiago Harbor, Cuba when the Spanish fleet was bottled up there during the Spanish American War. The place where the cannon once stood is vacant but its memory persists.\textsuperscript{12}

Monument/Drinking Fountain. This simple monument of gray granite has the words “A MEMORIAL TO HARRY CLAY ERVIN: A Citizen of St. Cloud” written around the perimeter of its base. It was purchased from Monumental Sales for

\textsuperscript{12} Lehrke, 20 September 1945.
$52.00 in 1925.\textsuperscript{13} Most of the monument can be seen in a 1949 photo of a typical neighborhood event held in the park. This photo is of the winners of the Doll Buggy Parade held at Barden Park on July 8, 1949. According to the Stearns County Historical Society publication \textit{Crossings}:

The event was sponsored by the St. Cloud Recreational Department in celebration of the Minnesota State Territorial Centennial. The winners were identified from left to right: Marrian Wicktor (best dressed doll), Kathleen Bettendorf (best dressed buggy), Mary Pat Lerschen and Kathleen Campbell (best costumes).\textsuperscript{14}

Currently, nothing sits on top of the granite pedestal, but reports of a weather vane and later a weather ball have surfaced, but no photos have been found to verify.

\textbf{Plantings and Landscaping.} Mrs. Lehrke’s September 20, 1945 article in the \textit{St. Cloud Times} states,

"...the maple trees Mr. Barden planted in the boulevard at the Seventh Street side of their house make great torches of color each autumn.... The trees in Barden Park are mostly elm and oak. One spruce tree was planted by the Twentieth Century Club to honor Mrs. C. L. Atwood." Remember that Mr. Atwood had donated the fountain/lily pond.\textsuperscript{15}

The park still contains many mature oak trees, but has lost a significant number of trees to Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s and 1980s. Mr. Barden’s Maples have also been removed due to expansion at St. Cloud State University. The park is level and of the same grade as the surrounding area. It does not appear that the park has had any artificial earthworks and landscaping. The abundance of native trees and the

\textsuperscript{13} Seaberger, 27 May 1925.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Crossings}, Stearns County History Center (St. Cloud, MN, August/September 1995), 7.

\textsuperscript{15} Lehrke, 20 September 1945.
restrained plantings that have been added in the history of the park make it shaded, green, cool and unpretentious.

Besides trees and grass, Barden Park currently has a few white spirea bushes that are mature and bloom each spring. At the turn of the century, Barden “Central” Park was in the center of the elite neighborhood of St. Cloud. “...Lovely homes have been built across the streets and avenues on all four sides of the park....” The Victorians of turn of the century St. Cloud made for themselves a comfortable and picturesque park. Post cards of Barden “Central” Park clearly show the wooden Victorian band stand, lanterns on wooden poles scattered around the park, simple benches, and the circles of planted flowers. Two rings of flowers were maintained in the park prior to 1910. These plantings were the work of the Reading Room Society.

The Victorian gentlemen of South St. Cloud were building the business community while the women dealt with the cultural issues they felt fitting at the time. Besides working for years to build a local library...

With the passing of the years the scope of the society has broadened and other civic work has received its aid. A beautiful park system of St. Cloud became one of its chief interests....The Improvement Committee formed in April 1900, for the beautifying of Central and Empire Park...(and has)...expend about four hundred dollars in shrubbery, hedges, vines, bulbs, flowers, etc. The public school children have been encouraged in flower and vegetable gardens...women, especially members of women’s organizations, were among those early interested in improving the park. Among those who early made valiant attempts to plant beds of gladiolas and salvia in the park were Mrs. Fred Whitney, Mrs. John Bohm, Mrs. H. C. Bowing and Mrs. Martin Molltor, the park was then known as Central Park.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} Lehrke, 20 September 1945.

\textsuperscript{17} Lehrke, 20 September 1945.
One similar flower circle was replanted by the St. Cloud Historical & Neighborhood Preservation Association near a granite marker bearing the words “Reading Room Society.”

Circular flower planting, Central Park, St. Cloud.

CONTEXT

Central Park was at its peak at the turn of the century, as was the whole of South Side St. Cloud. For over the entire first half of the twentieth century Barden “Central” Park was a neighborhood park, in the center of the most influential neighborhood of St. Cloud and Stearns County. It has always been a neighbor to the University and its predecessors. It currently sits directly on the border of the university, though it had been physically separate from the University for most of its history.
Student activities seemed to have taken place on campus, on the Beaver Islands, or across the river on State Lands such as the Talahi Woods. Remnants of college bonfire pits, stairs, and bridges to the islands can still be found along the river. Today students can be seen in Barden Park enjoying Hackey Sacks, Frisbees, footballs, and books under the shade of old oaks.

For most of its existence Barden “Central” Park has been the center of a residential neighborhood that has become increasingly the center of University activity. The greatest changes to the park have also been the greatest changes to the neighborhood. The focus of the whole neighborhood has changed in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The neighborhood, including Barden Park, is sometimes seen to be part of the University, not the University and the park being part of the neighborhood as in previous generations. This has been caused by the growth and expansion of the present St. Cloud State University. In 1949 the park was three blocks from the college. By 1996 the Administration Building and Alumni (Lewis/Atwood) House were the park’s neighbor buildings to the east. The new Miller Learning Resource Center became the park’s northern neighbor in 2000. Changes in the streetscape with the growth of the University have added space to the park. The park has grown from its original one square block to include a half-circular section of city street right-of-way and state-owned land directly between the original parkland and the St. Cloud State University Administration Building. This additional land has not designated parkland. It could be added to or subtracted from the park at the will of the city council or University administration.
As well as a gathering place for the neighborhood, currently Barden Park serves as a gateway to the University. It is a stately, green, historic, stable part of the campus community. The Barden Park of today is already a unique environment in the South Side/ Barden Park Neighborhood. It is a cool, green, shaded place to lie in the grass and relax after your last spring final exams or hear live music on Thursday evenings each summer. St. Cloud State University students toss footballs in the park each fall, and hurry over the trails in the winter as a shortcut to class on cold winter days.

The University’s Physical Plant Master Plan of later years shows green spaces opened by demolished homes along Fifth Avenue South. Connected, this space would make a larger, verdant, park-like setting for the entrance to the University. This would help the University aesthetically in the South Side neighborhood. Homesteaders in the neighborhood are concerned that a family friendly image of Barden Park could be lost. A neighborhood organization has been working in recent years to preserve and restore the South Side/Barden Park Neighborhood. The image and reputation of the neighborhood is rebounding. This rebound means that the family aspect of the neighborhood, with Barden Park as the center, is again becoming more and more in demand. The University, student, city, and homesteader needs must all be taken into consideration when restoration and preservation plans for Barden Park are finally set.

THE ST. CLOUD MUNICIPAL BAND

Of all the events that have taken place in Barden “Central” Park over the years the annual St. Cloud City Band summer concerts have been, and continue to be, the
most anticipated and best attended. The band that currently plays in Barden Park is the descendant of several earlier bands that have been entertaining St. Cloud citizens for generations.

The following excerpts were taken from a history supplied by the St. Cloud City All City Band:

The first ‘City’ band for which records exist was the St. Cloud Union Bank. It was in full swing by 1887 (when St. Cloud’s first daily newspaper was launched) but it is believed that the group had been playing together for a few years before that time.

In about 1890 a band appeared on the city scene that is unique to this day. These musicians performed on bicycles! A professional bicycle racer and amateur percussionist by the name of John Boobar is recognized as the guiding spirit behind the Bicycle Band. Each of its sixteen members had to modify his bike so that he could play his instrument while carrying out some rather intricate maneuvers....

Early in the 1900s the members of the Bicycle Band put away their wheels and for the next twenty years or so several organizations called themselves the St. Cloud City Bank although no official city sponsorship began until years later. There was the Military Band, the Granite City Band in World War I, the Legion Band at the end of the war, the Brewery Band (a ten-member “Little German Band”), the Elks Band and the Eagles Band. No matter what name the band went under, its members were pretty much the same group....

In 1923 a group of local businessmen who had observed his work with the boys’ band in Bemidji invited G. Oliver Riggs to come to St. Cloud in order to organize a similar band. Mr. Riggs, as he was addressed by everybody, started with 100 boys and soon had a band of some 300 trained and strictly disciplined young musicians. Former members recall the discipline in particular.

Two hundred thirty-three members strong in 1927, the St. Cloud Boys’ Band was billed as the largest band in the world, a claim that apparently went undisputed.

Leonard and Herbert Jung, Boys’ Band members in the 1930s, later became members of the U.S. Navy Band in Washington, D.C., and returned to St. Cloud to perform with that group during the 1940s.

Tommy Pederson, a fine trombone player, was later a featured performer in the “Big Bands” of Tommy Dorsey and Gene Krupa. Clarinetist Ray Hermanson went on to play with the Washington Redskins football band during the days of “Swingin’ Sammy” Baugh....
In the middle 1930s a number of Boys’ Band “graduates” formed a new unit, which eventually became today’s Municipal Band....

It was in 1947, during the administration of Mayor Math Malisheski, that today’s band came into existence. Now supported by the city, a budget was established, uniforms purchased, rehearsal facilities arranged and a full-time director hired in the person of Eugene Neri.

During the Herty years band membership included quite a few students and a number of women. In 1947 both were excluded. Upon reflection it is reasonable that students not be allowed membership because sooner or later a conflict of schedule between school bands and the Municipal Band was bound to occur. The ban on women is not so easily explained, but cooler heads have since prevailed and today several ladies grace the band by their presence.

For many the St. Cloud Municipal Band is the group that plays at Barden Park in the summer. Over the years the band experimented with using other city parks as concert sites, even more so when the purchase of a portable band shell permitted easy mobility. These concerts were fairly well attended but in the end it was clear that the band drew best at Barden Park. Even though the old granite bandstand is no longer used, the nostalgia remains and the entire setting just seems right for a summer evening’s music. Many in the audiences have been attending these concerts for years. Each summer the St. Cloud Times gets “Letters to the Editor” from many of these folks who like to reminisce about concerts past.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. To attempt to name all of those to whom thanks should be given for providing the material upon which this piece is based would be virtually impossible. The St. Cloud Times and the Stearns County Historical Society were invaluable sources, but the vast bulk came from members of the band, past and present, without whose help this story could not have been written.

Nor would there have been any reason for it.18

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN ST. CLOUD

Historic preservation is a relatively recent priority for the city of St. Cloud. The St. Cloud General Neighborhood Renewal Plan was written in 1968. It states:

A General Renewal Plan (GNRP) is a preliminary development plan which outlines urban renewal activities proposed for the ... GNR area, provides a framework for preparing detailed Urban Renewal Plans, and indicates general land uses and development standards and rehabilitation requirements.\(^{19}\)

Major areas of concern for St. Cloud’s city planning in 1968 were: the change from being a hub for commerce and transportation to a center of learning and manufacturing, the expected doubling of St. Cloud State University from 9,000

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\(^{19}\) Hodne Stangeberg Partners Inc. Architects Planners Environmentalists, St. Cloud General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (Minneapolis: 1968), 4.
students to 18,000 students that was projected to occur by 1978, local population increases, the relocation of highways from downtown to south of town, and the creation of Crossroads Mall which lured shoppers away from the “historic downtown area.” The document uses the word historic to denote what had been considered the downtown area on the map. The document does not refer to the history of downtown St. Cloud, or the social and cultural value of the downtown.

The GNRP found six Land Use Objectives for the city: general, residential, industrial, commercial, public facilities, and circulation.

General objectives were public health and safety, land use districts, transitions between land uses, visual enhancement, and river exploitation.

Residential objectives were additional varied housing, livable qualities, neighborhood concept for family housing, and distinctive features fostered.

Industrial objectives were relocation of industry, and adequate sites facilities.

Commercial objectives were: commercial centers encouraged, adequate parking, integration of shopping, offices and public uses, retention of retail anchors, compact quality shopping downtown, enjoyable pedestrian spaces, and a strong downtown visual image.

Public facilities objectives were standards, location, support, public and private relations, and enhancement of public nodes.

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20 Hodne, 8.
Circulation objectives were efficiency, improved downtown movement, fewer streets, and pedestrian walkways. 21

Of all of the potential challenges and opportunities for the future development of St. Cloud’s “historic downtown” historic preservation does not ever appear on the plans for St. Cloud’s future as recently as 1968. Historic preservation and restoration could have been a key element in the Urban Renewal of St. Cloud and its core city neighborhoods. The implementation of the objectives of separate land use, transitions between land uses, visual enhancement, river exploitation, varied housing, “livability, neighborhood concept, distinctive features fostered, retention of retail anchors, quality shopping downtown, enjoyable pedestrian spaces, and a strong downtown visual image all could have greatly benefited from preservation and restoration being part of a long term master plan for the city and its historic resources.”

GRASSROOTS PRESERVATION IN THE BARDEN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The people of St. Cloud’s South Side neighborhood have a history of activism on behalf of their neighborhood and their city. The development of the St. Cloud Historical & Neighborhood Preservation Association, A Minnesota Non Profit Neighborhood Corporation, (SCH & NPA) is a continuation of the long history of grass roots neighborhood action on the South Side. Pride of place and a commitment to improving quality of life have been at the center of this local activism. Dori

21 Hodne, 32.
Anderson, Mary Becker, and Julianna Elchert, three residents of the South Side, who have been long-term members of SCH & NPA, shared memories of the birth of their neighborhood corporation, its achievements, and goals.

Dori Anderson has lived and raised her children on the South Side. She and her husband have both worked at St. Cloud State. Mrs. Anderson was also an active member of other organizations that eventually developed into the present SCH & NPA. She is currently the group’s secretary.22

Mary Becker, her husband and their two small children moved to the South Side in 1966. Her husband taught at St. Cloud State, and she was a member of the Faculty Wives Association. She was treasurer of SCH & NPA in its first five years as an organization. Mary Becker was buried less than a month after her interview cited in this paper.23

Julianna Elchert moved to the South Side with her husband in 1984. She grew up in St. Cloud and had always loved the beauty and history of the South Side. Within a year of her moving onto the South Side, neighboring homes were being torn down. Apartment builders who were unsympathetic to the historical context of the neighborhood were replacing the destroyed homes. Long time residents were losing faith in their neighborhood. When Elchert realized that the development policies and lack of an historic preservation ethic or ordinance in St. Cloud allowed the historic

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23 Mary Becker, interview by author, St. Cloud, MN, 10 February 2001.
housing stock of the South Side to be treated as disposable, she became a founding member and first president of SCH & NPA. 24

The majority of people who built the St. Cloud business, political and social communities built their homes on St. Cloud’s South Side. An early example of volunteer commitment was the February 12, 1880 organization of the St. Cloud Reading Room Society. This group of women from the South Side was determined to bring a free reading room, or library, to the residents of St. Cloud. A granite plaque, with the group’s name, can still be seen marking the location of a flowerbed they planted in Barden (Central) Park.

Barden Park was originally named Central Park. The park’s name was changed in 1938 to honor Charles Barden. Barden was an early city park director and benefactor to Central Park, and all of the parks in St. Cloud. He is credited with saying, “Beautify your city as you would your home.” 25 SCH & NPA adopted this motto as its own.

Decades passed as the neighborhood witnessed the growth of St. Cloud and the St. Cloud Teachers College, now St. Cloud State University. The 1960s and 1970s were a time of social activism in America. At a local level, that spirit was alive on the South Side. Imminent domain and the destruction of beautiful historic homes, which enabled growth of the State College, could not be avoided. But, when a


25 Lydia May Barden, interviewed by Dean Nelson, Barden Park File, 25 June 1936, Stearns History Museum, St. Cloud, MN.
four-lane freeway was to be directed through the neighborhood, residents got together in opposition. A 1979 account of this effort says: "A few housewives who would have been content to tend their gardens and bleach their sheets, ever so fearfully and haltingly at first...came to know the whole alphabet soup of the decision making process in government...Eventually forming NICE (for Neighborhoods Interested in our City's Environment)." In 1977 this group became the South/Southeast Neighborhoods Association. Some years later, the Southside task force was established to deal with the rapid, and negative forces that were tearing apart the fabric of the neighborhood.  

In the mid-1980s more historic homes and structures were destroyed on the South Side. Homesteaders were fleeing, and the stability for the entire neighborhood was in jeopardy. The South Side task force was a good place to air grievances and unite the neighborhood. As with NICE, a new generation of residents had to teach themselves how the city decision-making process worked to realize positive change in their neighborhood. This desire to guide positive changes on the South Side was the impetus for forming the St. Cloud Historical & Neighborhood Preservation Association.  

The first members of the SCH & NPA board of directors were: Mary Theresa Anderson, Andrew Blauvelt, Barret Columbo, Patrick Daniel, Barbara Eich, Juliana

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27 Anderson.

28 Elchert.
Elchert, Danial Hollenhorst, Barb Hormann, William Langen, Kay Larson, Bill Morgan, Robert Peters, Janna Warren, and Blair Witt. The Association's first annual meeting was held at the St. Cloud Civic Center on April 22, 1989. Annual meetings have since been held at member's homes. The issues on that meeting's agenda were: city-wide clean-up, the Heritage Preservation Ordinance, Community Education (on preservation issues), "Operation Rebuild" following the 1988 Homecoming 'riots', and the establishment of the Neighborhood-University-Community Council which is active to this day.29

The most important and challenging goal was the passage of the Heritage Preservation Ordinance. Passage of an ordinance was attempted in the 1970s, but the attempt was not successful. In October 1989 Juliana Elchert brought to the planning commission a draft for a Heritage Preservation Ordinance that she had drafted with assistance from Kay Larson and based on similar ordinances from other cities. This draft was not adopted, but was compelling enough to get city staff and elected officials to draft a passable ordinance.30

As in the earlier attempt, the city council of the mid-1980s was not inclined to pass a Preservation Ordinance. The SCH & NPA had to show the city, and themselves, that SCH & NPA could work effectively for positive change in their neighborhood. Endorsing candidates who supported the Heritage Preservation

29 St. Cloud Historical & Neighborhood Preservation Association Annual Meeting Agenda, 22 April 1989, Julianna Elchert collection, St. Cloud, MN.

30 Elchert.
Ordinance, and providing strong support for these candidacies was accomplished through: candidate questionnaires, candidate interviews, mass dissemination of support flyers, letters to the editor, and word of mouth support. This effort was an example of effective grass roots organization. All four city council candidates supported in 1989 were elected, and the ordinance was passed in 1990, starting a new era for historic preservation in St. Cloud.31

Soon, members of SCH & NPA were getting involved on the Planning Commission, Heritage Preservation Commission, Park Board, and Zoning Board. A founding member said: “We started our group as a way to find the right channels to be more effective in changing laws for our benefit, to be more effective.”32 Other city ordinance changes that this group fought for, and saw pass, were: the “Keg Ordinance” limiting the number of kegs allowed at house parties to one and requiring a permit to possess a keg, the Landlord Liability Ordinance, additional greenspace requirement for new construction in the city, strengthened setback requirements, zoning changes to lower population density in South Side, screening of parking lots, and changes in the zoning ordinance to reduce the issuance of demolition credits. The demolition credit policy was a large reason for much of the destruction of the historic housing stock in the neighborhood. SCH & NPA was also active in submitting

31 Elchert.
32 Elchert.
recommendations for both the zoning and comprehensive plans while they were being revised in the 1980s and 1990s.  

The early years of the SCH & NPA were a time of reactive and proactive measures aimed at halting the forces that were destroying the historic structures and neighborhood culture. Members of the SCH & NPA considered both preservation of history and their neighborhood as stated in the corporation's name. Members realized that an historic neighborhood needed more than preserving a few scattered buildings to survive and thrive. A neighborhood park, they understood, was one key feature in the preservation of a quality life in a historic residential neighborhood. Historic properties, they also realized, were subject to market forces; to retain an historic area then needed to maintain a viable community in that area. Without commercial and social forces keeping an area vital, a community with residents and property owners who have a personal and financial stake in preservation of an area, it would become obsolete. In America the obsolete is disposed of.

SCH & NPA goals are compatible with the goals of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO is the branch of the Minnesota Historic Society responsible for preservation of Minnesota's historic resources. SHPO's master plan for historic preservation states the following:

Our aims are high: to encourage appreciation of the State's cultural resources and promote their relevance to the vitality of today's communities; to mobilize the preservation community and enlist new partners in the process; to influence public policy and leverage the human,
financial and technology resources needed to promote historic preservation state wide.\textsuperscript{34}  

With much of the hard work of changing city policy completed, the past few years have been a time for proactive measures to enhance to quality of life for residents of the South Side. The three greatest achievements of the neighborhood corporation in the past five years have been: the annual Historic Home Tour, the Victorian Christmas Boutique, and the restoration plan for Barden Park. The home tour has featured up to six beautifully maintained and restored homes in the South Side neighborhood. Each year the tour has had over five hundred people in attendance. Money for park restoration and historic district expansion has been raised. More importantly, association members have been showing others how beautiful and special their neighborhood is, recreating a positive image of their neighborhood after years of decline and negative stereotyping. The Christmas boutique features a different home decorated for the season, and filled with the wares of local crafters. It is another opportunity to draw people into the neighborhood to see the pride that South Side residents take in their historic homes. Considerable research, neighborhood input, and Municipal band needs and desires came together, with support from St. Cloud Park and Recreation Director Larry Haws, to create a plan for Barden Park’s restoration. The neighborhood’s vision for the future of Barden Park, ‘crown jewel’

of the South Side, includes replacement of flowerbeds, fountain replacement, new pathways, benches, lighting, and a new band shell/sheltered picnic area.

SCH & NPA board members have been promoting their neighborhood vision for Barden Park's preservation and restoration.

SCH & NPA PARK PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION PRIORITIES

**Restore the original roof of the granite bandstand.** It is the central architectural feature of the park. The bandstand was originally built to promote the granite industry in St. Cloud; this is the Granite City. It also is a constant symbol of and advertisement for the annual summer band concerts.

**Replace the fountain as depicted in early post card views.** The calming sound and graceful look of a fountain would set a calm mood for the park.

**Replant flower circles.** The plants should be Minnesota-hardy perennials that could have been found at the time of the original plantings. Simple circles as seen in early post cards of Central Park, as well as written accounts, could be guides in replanting circular flower beds.

**Leave the monument/drinking fountain as it is.** More monuments could be added as the community felt appropriate in the future. It is a small park, so the scale of any new monuments must be considered.

**Replace or expand the children's play equipment.** This is a family and university neighborhood. Though not in the larger numbers of earlier generations,
local children as well as children from neighborhood schools and day care centers, use
the park daily.

**Plant young trees.** It is important to have trees of different ages in the park. Many trees lost to Dutch elm disease were not replaced. Hardwood trees, such as oak, elm and maple that were found naturally in the park could be replanted.

**Replace park benches and lights as in old post card images.** Being that this is the 1990s and not the 1890s, benches would need to be secured to the ground.

Other association projects of the past five years have included: street clean-up days, neighborhood/Greek Society picnics, neighborhood watch formations, annual meetings to discuss issues and bind friendships, park flower planting days, flower pot sales, and rootbeer float sales at municipal band concerts in Barden Park. Showing others how special and beautiful their neighborhood is has been a source of pride for St. Cloud Historical & Neighborhood Preservation Association. Mrs. Anderson summarized the motives of herself and neighbors by saying, “We do what we do to make the neighborhood a good place for people to live.”

In 1999 a section of the South Side became the first Local Neighborhood Historic District in St. Cloud. This was a proud day for the Association. Indeed, before the finalization of the local historic district boundary, people in the neighborhood testified to that they believed the proposed district needed to be expanded. Public hearings with the St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Commission succeeded in expanding the district boundary a few blocks. SCH & NPA members

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35 Anderson.
were not satisfied with the historic district that represented, and protected, only about a sixth of their neighborhood.

The Association raised the capitol needed to hire a consultant and prepare for local historic district designation a larger section of the South Side neighborhood as well as a separate local historic district designation for Barden Park and the historic homes on the park’s south and west borders. The Board of directors who made the commitment to propose the district expansion to the St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Commission included: Dori Anderson, Mary Theresa Anderson, Jean Bauerly, Martha Blauvelt, Al Buckner, Joyce Buckner, Beth Cragle, Juliana Elchert, Barb Hormann, Richard Kelly, and Marge Pryately.

The following document was prepared according to State of Minnesota Local Historic District and National Historic Register Guidelines as a draft document to be used by the Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of St. Cloud, Minnesota, as an application for designation of Barden Park and its intact residential borders as a local historic district. The document follows the standard format for district nominations and is intended to document the historic significance that makes the proposed site eligible for and worthy of historic district status. See appendix for the Barden Park Historic District designation form.

The Heritage Preservation Commission for the city of St. Cloud (HPC) voted to set a first public hearing for both the Southside Local Historic District Expansion and Barden Park Local Historic District at their March 2002 meeting. The Barden
Park Historic District proposal was passed by the HPC at their May 2002 meeting. It was adopted by the city in July 2002.

A PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION PLAN FOR BARDEN PARK

The future of Barden Park is important to St. Cloud State University and the Southside neighborhood. In 2000 the differences in vision for the park’s future were made evident. A Barden Park task force was convened comprised of local residents, University administration, park department staff, city council members, park commission members, and planning office staff. After several meetings a stalemate was evident. Then St. Cloud Planning Director, Patty Gartland, suggested that a consultant be hired to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the park and the wants and needs of those with an interest in the future of Barden Park.

A Public visioning meeting was conducted by the planning consultants Dahlgren, Shardlow and Urban in the fall of 2001. Participants were asked to list all of the strengths and opportunities they associated with the park. They were then asked to list the weaknesses and threats they associated with the park. Out of these comments and discussions it was determined that Barden Park's top three strengths are Historic Significance, Potential to Beautify, and the weekly summer St. Cloud City Band Concerts. The top three weaknesses and threats to the park were determined to be “Border Issues” with SCSU resulting in loss of identity and loss of character if
boundary is erased, lack of amenities for gathering such as benches, and that trees had
not been replaced after the Dutch elm losses of the 1970s.36

Out of these findings and further debate and discussion by the Steering
Committee came the following master plan for the park’s future.

The impact of the presence of a city park in a neighborhood is profound in
several ways. The preservation and restoration of a core city neighborhood park is
essential to the successful preservation and restoration of a core city neighborhood, a
case in point is Barden Park in the South Side/Barden Park Neighborhood of
St. Cloud, Minnesota. As the park goes, so goes the neighborhood. Parks, being parts
of the urban environment in neighborhoods for millennia, have served changing roles
as societies have changed. This paper has discussed the development of the modern
city park as an essential feature of an American city such as Central Park in New York
City, Central-Loring Park in Minneapolis, and Central-Barden Park in St. Cloud,
Minnesota; and the effort to resuscitate a core city neighborhood through the
preservation and restoration of a core city park-Barden Park in the South Side/Barden
Park Neighborhood of St. Cloud, Minnesota.

36 Barden Park Master Plan Steering Committee Memo, 11/07/01.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


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**INTERVIEWS**


Barden, Lydia May, wife of former St. Cloud Park Director Charles Barden. Interviewed by Dean Nelson, 25 June 1936. Stearns History Museum Collection, St. Cloud, MN.

Becker, Mary, founding member and former treasurer SCH & NPA. Interviewed by Rich Kelly, 10 February 2001. St. Cloud, MN.


Masters, Sarah, board member and Barden Park Restoration Committee chair SCH & NPA. Interviewed by Rich Kelly, 21 February 1995. St. Cloud, MN.

APPENDIX A

Views of Central Parks across the United States
Views of Central Parks across the United States.

Central Park, Bowling Green, Kentucky. Note fountain, walkways and lighting.

Central Park, Winona, Minnesota.
Note fountain, flower plantings and natural wooded aesthetic.

Central Park, Galveston, Texas 1905. Four years after the devastating hurricane. Note walkways, monument, and flower plantings.

Central Park, Painesville, Ohio.
Note bandstand, flower plantings, monuments, walkways and natural wooded aesthetic.
Central Park, Pomona, California.
Note fountain, walkways and natural wooded aesthetic.

Central Park, Davenport, Iowa.
Note walkways and circular flower plantings.
APPENDIX B

Barden Park Historic District Study
Barden Park Historic District Study

Prepared by
The St. Cloud Historical and Neighborhood Preservation Association

April 2002
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Barden Park Historic District Study

Summary of the Planning Process

In 1998, the St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Commission began work on St. Cloud's first local historic district nomination. The Southside Neighborhood Historic District was created in the fall of 1999. At this same time, the St. Cloud Historical and Neighborhood Preservation Association (SCH & NPA) began work on Phase II of the Southside Historic District and the Barden Park Historic District.

Background

The people of St. Cloud's Southside/ Barden Park neighborhood have had a history of activism on behalf of the area and the city. Pride of place and commitment to improving quality of life have always been at the center of this local activism. The present-day SCH & NPA is a result of over a century of southside groups working to improve their neighborhood and city.

An early example of this commitment was the February 12, 1880 organization of the St. Cloud Reading Room Society. This group of women from the Southside/ Barden Park area was determined to bring a free reading room to their neighborhood. The membership included many of St. Cloud's pioneers and prominent families. The names Tileston, Waite, Foley, Mitchell, Eastman, and Molitor are only a few of the names represented. A granite plaque with the group's name may still be seen marking the location of a flowerbed they planted in Barden (Central) Park.

During the 1960s and 1970s social activism was taking place in the Southside/ Barden Park area. The destruction of beautiful historic homes, which enabled the growth of the state college, could not be avoided. But, when a four-lane highway was to be directed through the neighborhood, residents joined together in opposition. The South/Southeast Neighbors Association, a forerunner to SCH & NPA, was formed.

Some years later, the Southside Task Force was established to deal with the rapid and negative forces that were tearing apart the fabric of the neighborhood. Southside homes were razed to accommodate University expansion, and many homeowners were fleeing, causing a destabilization of the neighborhood. A new resident group was formed to create positive change in the neighborhood.

The St. Cloud Historical and Neighborhood Preservation Association held its first annual meeting at the St. Cloud Civic Center on April 22, 1989. Issues on the agenda included a city wide clean-up, the Heritage Preservation Ordinance, community education of preservation issues, "Operation Rebuild" to follow the 1988
Homecoming Riots, and the establishment of the Neighborhood-University-Community Council, which is still active.

Members of the SCH & NPA became involved in the Heritage Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, Park Board, and Zoning Board. As a group they have rallied for the election of local politicians who support preservation, fought for a local keg ordinance and Landlord Liability Ordinance. SCH & NPA also fought for additional green space requirements for new construction projects, strengthened setback requirements, zoning changes to reduce population density in the Southside area, screening of parking lots, and changes in the zoning ordinance to reduce demolition credits (this policy was a large reason for much of the destruction of the historic housing stock in the neighborhood).

SCH & NPA spent much of its early years reacting and halting the forces that were destroying the neighborhood. With much of this work completed, they have spent the past few years protecting the neighborhood and enhancing the resident's quality of life. Achievements of this proactive work include the annual Historic Home Tour, the Victorian Christmas Boutique, and a restoration plan for Barden (Central) Park. Additional projects of the past five years include street clean-up days, neighborhood/Greek Society picnics, neighborhood watch formations, park flower planting days, flowerpot and root beer sales, as well as the annual SCH & NPA meetings. These activities have proved to be a source of pride for neighborhood residents, as well as creating a positive image.

The Planning Process

The 1999 creation of the Southside Neighborhood Historic District was a proud moment for the SCH & NPA, however; only a fraction of the Southside neighborhood was included within the boundaries. In order to create a larger district that more closely reflects the original Southside residential area, SCH & NPA raised the money needed to hire a consultant to create the Southside Neighborhood Historic District, Phase II.

Emily Schill, an independent contract historian, undertook the Phase II study. This Barden Park Historic District Study was undertaken when the State Historic Preservation Office suggested that Barden Park be spilt from the Phase II district expansion. Members of SCH & NPA drew up preliminary boundaries and edited drafts. The Stearns History Museum staff provided support during the research process.

Following a review of *St. Cloud's Historic Contexts* (1992), *Southside Neighborhood Historic District* (1999), The South Side Historic District Phase II Study, and historic sites survey files, research was conducted in a variety of archival sources. Local
histories, historic maps, photographs, and other archival materials from local collections were reviewed.

The Historic District Preservation Plan

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The creation of historic districts is in keeping with the *St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Plan*, adopted in 1998. A primary goal of this plan is the identification and protection of buildings, sites, districts, and structures that have historical, architectural, or cultural significance. The nomination of the Barden Park Historic District as an additional St. Cloud local heritage preservation district, is the fulfillment of the goals and objectives outlined in the adopted *Heritage Preservation Plan*.

The creation of historic districts also implements the goals of the *City of St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 1993. The land use goal recognizing St. Cloud’s history, character and uniqueness, as well as the urban design goal of identifying and protecting historic community resources, is met through the support of the Barden Park historic district.

Land Use Plan Considerations

The land use element of the *Comprehensive Plan* identified important considerations that coincide with the Barden Park Historic District. Specifically, the plan urged “careful preservation and rehabilitation of historic qualities and features” (page 132).

One of the primary impacts on the proposed Barden Park Historic District is the encroachment of the St. Cloud State University campus, which is located directly east of the district. The *Comprehensive Plan* notes, “any further geographical expansion of the University west of 5th Ave. or north of 4th St. S. is not in the interest of the city of St. Cloud and should be opposed” (page 144).

Also a significant concern is the conversion of single-family homes to rental units and rooming houses. The *Comprehensive Plan* notes that these homes were never intended for rental purposes and oftentimes shows signs of poor maintenance. The plan goes on to suggest protection and preservation, as well as encouraging owner occupancy. While historic district status tends to support improved maintenance and owner occupancy, these issues will continue to be a concern throughout the proposed expansion. Although student rental housing can be well maintained, it can also lead to unsympathetic renovations and expansions, as well as severe overcrowding of dwellings not intended for such heavy usage. St. Cloud State University has experienced rapid expansion over the past several decades, yet they have not built additional student housing units. This has created a pressure for off-campus student housing in the immediate area. This pressure has led to the creation of “slip-in”
apartment buildings, in which a single-family dwelling is demolished and replaced
with a higher-density apartment building. These modern replacements have different
design, massing, and setbacks than surrounding properties, interrupting neighborhood
streetscapes.

Another significant issue is parking. The large numbers of occupants per dwelling and
the over-flow of University parking have had negative effects on the proposed district.
Many back yards and side yards have been paved to accommodate the demand for
student parking. These changes detract from the character of a historic district. The
streets and avenues surrounding the University are crowded with student traffic and
vehicles, creating a hazardous atmosphere for children and pedestrians. These
crowded streets also detract from the historic character of the neighborhood. While
student housing is likely to continue in this area, it is important to arrest the
conversion of residences into student rentals and rooming houses, not only for the
above mentioned reasons, but for the parking requirements.

Care and consideration should also be taken in the replacement of garages. Although
not all garages in the district are contributing, new garage construction should match
the scale, materials, massing, and setbacks of existing garages. This practice will help
to create more uniform streetscapes.

Nonconforming uses are also a consideration. In the event that a nonconforming
building or use is damaged, every effort should be made to preserve the building with
rehabilitation that reflects the original character of the district. If a building must be
demolished, any new construction should complement the character of the district in
terms of massing, architectural features, height, and setbacks.

St. Cloud Historic Design Review Guidelines

The St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Plan adopted review guidelines that serve as the
basis for the Heritage Preservation Commission's building permit review for
properties that have been individually nominated or are located within historic
districts. These guidelines are based in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards
for Rehabilitation. Three major principles are:

If possible, damaged buildings elements should be repaired rather than replaced.

The reversibility of any changes as well as the visibility of alterations
from the street should be considered.

If replacement is necessary, new elements should match the originals
as closely as possible.
The design review guidelines address restoration and rehabilitation of buildings with specific guidelines in seven categories: masonry walls and foundations; wood-sided walls; roofs and chimneys; windows; entries; porches and steps; exterior trim and architectural features. Additional guideline sections deal with religious and commercial building rehabilitation, and new construction additions. The Heritage Preservation Commission design review committee will rely on these guidelines while responding to permit requests regarding individually nominated, or historic district properties. The design review committee may meet with property owners to determine acceptable alterations before permits are requested. These guidelines should be available for property owners planning any rehabilitation work.

CITY OF ST. CLOUD HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY
   Historic Name: Barden Park Historic District

   Other Name/Site Number

2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY
   Street and Number: Please see Boundary Map, page 10
   
   ___X located on original site   ___ not for publication

   ___ moved/date:___

3. OWNERSHIP
   (Multiple)

   Owner’s Name:

   Street and Number:

   City: State: Zip:

4. CLASSIFICATION

   Ownership of property: ___ private
   ___ public
   ___X both
5. **FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: Domestic/ Single-Family Dwellings, Neighborhood city park

Current: Same

6. **DESCRIPTION**

(See Continuation Sheets)

Architectural classification (style)

- Late Victorian
- Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
- Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements

Materials:

- foundation:________________________
- roof:______________________________
- walls:____________________________
- other:____________________________
7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(See Continuation Sheets)

Applicable local designation criteria:

Related local context (s):

Areas of significance: __________________________
________________________
________________________

Period (s) of significance: _________ to _________

Significant Dates: __________ __________ __________

Significant person (s) __________________________
________________________
________________________

Cultural affiliation: __________________________

Architect/Builder: __________________________

Designation Form: Page 3

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES
(See Continuation Sheets)

9. GEOGRAPHIC DATE

Acreage of Property:

Legal Description: (see city map) of the Curtis Survey.

10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title:

Organization: St. Cloud Historical & Neighborhood Preservation Association

Street and Number:
11. **APPROVAL DATES**

Heritage Preservation Commission: May 2002

Planning Commission

City Council
City of St. Cloud  
Heritage Preservation Commission  
Local Historic District Nomination Continuation Sheet

6. Description

District Name: Barden Park Historic District

Location:  
The district is bound by Seventh Street South on the north between Fourth and Fifth Avenues. Fourth Avenue forms the eastern boundary, the southern property line of the houses adjacent to Eighth Street South form the southern boundary. The alley separating Fifth and Sixth Avenues South between Seventh and Eighth Streets South forms the western boundary. Also included is the property at the south west corner of the intersections of Fifth Avenue South and Eight Street South.

Total Number of Properties Within District: 8

Non-contributing Properties: 0

Number of Contributing Properties Previously Listed on the National Register of Historic Places: 0

City of St. Cloud  
Heritage Preservation Commission  
Local Historic District Nomination Continuation Sheet

6. Description

The Barden Park Historic District is a residential area consisting of nine buildings located south of St. Cloud’s Commercial Historic District (NRHP, 1998), and southwest of the Southside Neighborhood Historic District (local nomination, 1999). The district contains approximately two city blocks, as shown on the attached Barden Park Historic District map (see page --). The district is bound by Seventh Street South on the north between Fourth and Fifth Avenues. Fourth Avenue forms the eastern boundary, the southern property line of the houses adjacent to Eighth Street South form the southern boundary. The alley separating Fifth and Sixth Avenues South between Seventh and Eighth Streets South forms the western boundary. Also included is the property at the south west corner of the intersections of Fifth Avenue South and
Eight Street South. All blocks were platted as part of the Curtis Survey, with twelve lots per block and a central north-south alley. One garage is classified as non-contributing because of recent construction date.

Built between 1882 and the 1950s, the contributing properties in the district represent nearly a century of architectural styles. These include the early Gothic Revival, American Four Square, Neo Classic, Folk Victorian, Queen Anne and the Ranch style of the 1940s. The district contains several of St. Cloud's older surviving residences. These include the 1882 Gothic Revival Raymond House at 801 Fourth Avenue South and the 1884 Hyde House (also known as the Eastman House) at 711 5th Avenue South. The district also contains one yellow brick dwelling, a brick type unique to the St. Cloud area. This district is the eastern portion of a much larger residential area that once extended from present-day downtown to Lake George and Tenth Street South. The neighborhood's northern portion was removed to make way for the De Soto Bridge approach and an expanding downtown. The eastern portion was razed to make way for University expansion. The remaining northeastern portion has been locally designated as the Southside Neighborhood Historic District. The southeast portion of this original area is included in Phase II of the Southside Neighborhood Historic District.

Streetscape Characteristics

Fifth Avenue South

Fifth Avenue South defines the center of the district from Seventh Street South to Eighth Street South. Both the east and west sides of the street are included in the district. The east side of Fifth Avenue is dominated by Barden Park. The street carries a large amount of traffic, providing access to the University from Highway 23 (Division Street) and Tenth Street South. This street contains a number of architectural styles, ranging in construction dates from 1884 to 1908.

Seventh Street South

Seventh Street South is the northern boundary of the district, but it contains no properties. It is heavily used by University students and is congested with parking.

Eighth Street South

Eighth Street South is the southern most street of the district and contains two properties. It is heavily used by University students and is congested with parking.
Representative View

![Barden Park Bandstand](image)

Descriptions

A description of properties in the historic district follows. Corresponding inventory forms for selected properties are on file in the Planning Office at St. Cloud City Hall and in the State Historic Preservation Office. All information found on the properties and residents was gathered from survey forms, subsequent surveys, and the Stearns History Museum.

Fourth Avenue South

801
Raymond House
1882

This one-and-one-half story home is one of the few remaining examples of a Gothic Revival center gable cottage in St. Cloud. It is of wood frame construction with a veneer of cream colored brick that is unique in St. Cloud. The home retains Gothic Revival elements such as its second story lancet windows, window hoods, two over two windows with wood storms, original porch trim and fascia, and twin centered chimneys. There is a one story bay on the first floor of the south face. An attached garage was added to the west end of the home on the 1980s. The owner used care in matching the brick veneer and window hoods, as well as the scale and massing of the original home design when constructing the garage addition. The home's battleship grey paint job was removed by the current owner.
Not much is known of the original owners of the home, Mary and Anthony Raymond. They owned the home from 1882 until 1895. It was a rental property from 1895 until it was purchased by its current owner, Mark Ochu, in 1973. The following statement sums up why the St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Commission recognizes this home as an official St. Cloud Century Home. "This house is an excellent, very rare, and well preserved example of a style which is not common in Minnesota. It merits careful preservation." This home being threatened by the expansion of St. Cloud State University prompted the St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Commission to list it as one of the Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties in St. Cloud for 2001.

**Fifth Avenue South**

Barden Park
Not Surveyed

Barden Park is the oldest park in the city, being planned when the city of St. Cloud was platted. The square block that is Barden Park was a gift from John L. Wilson to the entire village. Originally the park was called Central Park, because it was of equal distance from Lake George to the west and the Mississippi River to the east. Until the area surrounding the park became built up with homes, the park saw little activity. Empty lots in the area provided a natural park and playground area.

The park was once the site of a seminary that predated the Normal School/University. On October 25, 1860, the cornerstone was laid for the St. Cloud Institute and Pioneer Seminary. The building opened with 33 pupils and ended its first year with 81. Mathematics, French, German, and music were among the subjects taught. Eventually the building was sold to J. F. Stevenson, who moved it from the site and used it as a warehouse. Eventually the building was lost, and the park became simply a park.

Local women's organizations were influential in the improvement of Central/Barden Park. The St. Cloud Reading Room Society was responsible for planting shrubbery, hedges, vines, bulbs, and circular flowerbeds in Central/Barden Park. The first bandstand in the park was of wood frame painted white. During the 1920s the old bandstand was replaced with a granite version that was to be both ornamental and of service. Granite was chosen to give publicity to the local granite industry to all tourists. A heavy iron cannon from the Spanish battleship Visica once stood near the northwest corner of the park. It was removed during a World War II scrap iron salvage.

The name Barden Park was given to the park in honor of Charles H. Barden. Barden, a native of Ireland, came to St. Cloud in 1892. For many years he was a member of the St. Cloud Park board, supervising city parks and starting a tree nursery without
pay. He was instrumental in building the St. Cloud park system and believed that each section of the city should have their own park.

Along with his wife Lydia May, Charles Barden lived across from Central Park at 626 Fourth Avenue South (University expansion required that this home be demolished). Barden passed away in December 1926. In the spring of 1938 the name of Barden park was given to the park located across from the Barden home.

The park has changed over the years. It has grown to include a half-circular section of state-owned property on the east side. A three-tier fountain and lily pond donated by C. L. Atwood was converted into a wading pool for children, and has been removed completely. The granite bandstand remains, and continues to dominate the park landscape. Today the park is filled with mature oak trees, many pre-dating white settlers, and a spruce tree planted to honor Mrs. C. L. Atwood (ancient elm trees were lost in the 1970s and 1980s). A small children’s playground and picnic area have been added on the south end.

University development has encroached upon the park, with University buildings located on two sides. Students commuting to and from the campus and relaxing during class breaks now dominate the park. However, local residents continue to enjoy the park. The St. Cloud Municipal Band continues to provide free neighborhood concerts for area residents, and the St. Cloud Historical & Neighborhood Preservation Association is working to preserve the park.

This park is significant as the first park platted in the city of St. Cloud. Its proximity to the University places it in danger. Local historic district status would provide the park with protection from further University expansion and development.

701
Jones House
1908

This two story home is of wood frame construction with a gambrel roof sloping to the front porch. There is an original enclosed porch on the front flanked by Doric columns. It has been enclosed with aluminum combination windows. An enclosed room on the back of the house is original being that it has the same stone foundation work as the rest of the house. This room may have been an enclosed porch at one time. There is a two story bay on the north facade and one story bay on the north from a stair landing to the ceiling of the second floor. The windows are double hung one over one. At the rear of the property there is a contributing single car garage with a hip roof.
This home was built in 1908 for Simeon A. and Mary G. Jones. Mr. Jones was affiliated with Jones Brothers Granite located north east of the Northern Pacific Depot in St. Cloud. He was in business with his brother Marshall E. Jones who also lived on Fifth Avenue south.

711
Hyde House-Eastman House
1884

This home is two-and-one-half stories of wood frame construction with a rough faced granite foundation. The April 24, 1884 issue of the St. Cloud Times stated that the Hyde's new dwelling "...will be of the cottage style, heated by the Ruttan System, and will cost about $2,000.00." The cottage style being under the larger category of Gothic Revival. The house was originally sided in clapboard. In 1929 the exterior stucco and brown brick veneer were added to update the homes appearance. Original design features that remain are the lancet windows in the attic, the pediment over the front door and the complex stepped gable to hip roofline. There is a porte-cochere on the north face of the home, a wrap around one story porch on the north and east face, a two story bay on the south face, and an attached garage with a gable roof on the west. Chimneys are of the cream brick common in St. Cloud construction.

The home was built for Cornelius and Christiana Hyde. Mr. Hyde was one of the eight instructors at the St. Cloud Normal School, now St. Cloud State University. He taught courses in music, penmanship, and bookkeeping. The Hydes left the home in 1894 after Mr. Hyde was appointed assistant in the office of the state superintendent of public education. After the Hydes departure, the house was rented. The first renter was Daniel W. Bruckert who was a lawyer and mayor of St. Cloud. The second renter was Merchants National Bank and Benton Power and Traction Company president Charles M. Hertig. The home was sold to Alvah and Alice Eastman in 1899. Mr. Eastman was the editor for the Daily Press and Press-Times. He was also a Minnesota State Representative. This home is recognized as an official Century Home by the St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Commission.

723
Cranston House
1904

This Neo Classic two story home is of wood frame construction clad with wood shingles and a granite foundation. It has a hip roof with hip dormers on the north and south faces. There is a large central front bay with an overhanging gable. A porch with doric columns covers the front facade of the home. This front porch has been enclosed with screen. A porch on the rear facade has a hip roof and turned newel
posts and spindles. There is also a cellar door on the rear of the house. The windows are double hung two over two with original wood storms and screens. Wood lattice surrounds the lower sections of the porches.

This home was built in 1904 for Mr. and Mrs. John A. Cranston. Mr. Cranston was superintendent of the St. Cloud school district "...for a number of years prior to 1906..." according to his 1941 obituary. From 1906 to 1931 he was the superintendent of the Santa Ana, California school district. Following the Cranstons were James and Florence Johnson. Mr. Johnson was a shop foreman for the Great Northern Railroad. Following the Johnsons were Lee and Mamie Luther. Mr. Luther was a bookkeeper for Tenvoorde Ford, the oldest operating Ford dealership in the world.

727
Quickstad House
1897

This shingle-sided, vernacular, intersecting L shaped gabled home is of wood frame construction. There is a one story flat roofed addition to the south west rear corner. The windows are two over two with a few six over one replacement windows added at a more recent date. There is a box bay with a steeply pitched hip roof on the south face of the first floor. There is a stone retaining wall along the east and south perimeter of the property that is different from the cut stone W.P.A. era granite walls that are found around St. Cloud. This wall is made of smaller, naturally rounded, large gravel stones.

This house was built in 1897 for Christian and Bertha Mae Quickstad. Mr. and Mrs. Quickstad were both born and educated in Norway. They were married in St. Cloud on January 6, 1881. Mr. Quickstad worked for Hussy N. Thursdale as an interior decorator. He decorated the St. Joseph Church and the college at St. Joseph, the state reformatory in St. Cloud, and theaters in St. Cloud. He was noted for his stencil work.

801
Lynch House
1913

This is an American four square with clapboard siding. The front face has a one story open porch with square columns, under which is an offset box out front entry. The house has mostly one over one double hung windows with aluminum storms. The roof is hip with flared edges and dormers on the north, east, and west sides. The foundation is of granite. The rear of the house has upper and lower open porches, and a boxed out bay with a piano window. There is a non-contributing cinderblock garage at the rear of the property.
This home was built for John and Maggie(Margaret Connelly) Lynch. Mr. Lynch was an engineer for the Great Northern Railroad for forty-two years out of a fifty-five year employment with the company. It was said that he never missed one of his runs in all of his years as an engineer. After his death in his home in 1927, his obituary labeled him as the “Oldest Railroad Man in St. Cloud.” The Lynches were married in 1884 and had three children. Ms. Lynch was a member of the Daughters of Erin.

Eight Street South

420
Hirt House
1943

The walls of this one story ranch style home are of poured concrete veneered in stone on the north, east and west faces. It has brick veneer on the south face as well as a portion of the east face. The north facing front of the home has a boxed out, gable roofed entrance. The eastern gable end is faced with clapboard, while the north and west gable ends are of stone. The interior of the attached, one car, east facing garage is lined in glazed tiles. These tiles and the bricks on the southern face were both leftovers from the construction of Washington Elementary school located two blocks west of this home. There is a small bay on the west face with iron trim at the windows, curvilinear iron rails flank the steps of the front entrance, and there is iron trim in the north facing picture window. The windows in the home are casements with four horizontal panes each.

This home was built by and for Edward Hirt. Mr. Hirt joined his father in the construction trade in the Hirt and Son Contracting Firm. The firm was responsible for construction of some of St. Cloud's outstanding buildings such as the St. Cloud Orphan's (Children's) Home, First Presbyterian Church, Shoemaker Hall on the St. Cloud State University campus, the old Stearns County Jail, and a large number of schools, churches and post offices throughout central Minnesota.
7. Statement of Significance

Areas of Significance:

A. Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city of St. Cloud;

B. Its embodiment of a distinguishing characteristic of any architectural type, period, form, or treatment in the city of St. Cloud.

C. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city of St. Cloud.

(St. Cloud Heritage Preservation Ordinance)

Related St. Cloud Historic Contexts:

- Commerce
- Religion
- Agriculture & Industry
- Granite
- Government
- Cultural Development
- Residential Development

Period of Significance: 1855-1945
City of St. Cloud
Heritage Preservation Commission
Local Historic District Nomination Continuation Sheet

Statement of Significance:

St. Cloud’s Barden Park Historic District is significant under Heritage Preservation criteria A, C, and D. This residential district represents one of the oldest areas in the city used solely for residential purposes. Its proximity to the central business district, schools, and churches made the area a perfect location for many to settle. This district was home to St. Cloud’s wealthy and elite, as well as middle and working class laborers. The area housed a diverse group of individuals who occupied a range of dwellings. A variety of architectural styles, residents, and community leaders are represented in this district.

The Barden Park Historic District is significant under St. Cloud Preservation Ordinance criteria A, because of its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city of St. Cloud.

Barden Park Historic District is located entirely in St. Cloud’s historic Lower Town, an area devoted to residential development. St. Cloud began as three villages located along the west bank of the Mississippi River. These settlements were divided by two great ravines, which have since disappeared. Upper Town, the northernmost settlement, was claimed and settled by General Sylvanus B. Lowry, and active democrat and reputed slaveholder from Tennessee, in 1853. Middle Town was platted in September of 1855 by John L. Wilson, and was settled primarily by German Catholics, most of who were shopkeepers or tradesman.

St. Cloud City, also known as Lower Town, was founded not long after Middle Town, when George Fuller Brott, a New York developer came to the area. In 1854 Brott purchased a claim to land south of Wilson’s settlement. By 1855 Brott’s settlement was platted and the name St. Cloud City was chosen for the new development. At first Lower Town flourished, growing faster than Middle Town. This was partly due to advertising in New England and the Mid-Atlantic that lured settlers to Minnesota. Many of Lower Town’s early residents were Protestants and Yankee merchants.

Development in Lower Town was soon halted by a combination of problems. The first of these occurred when it was discovered that Brott had claimed title to the property before the government conducted a survey. Upon completion of the survey, the claim was found to already have been granted to the St. Paul and Pacific Railway. Businesses and landowners, worried about the fate of Lower Town, stopped improvements to property and in many cases moved to Middle Town.
The other problem facing Lower Town was the number of German farmers who had settled in the area. Yankee merchants ran many of the Lower Town shops. German farmers, however, preferred to conduct business with fellow Germans. They took their business to the German shopkeepers in Middle Town, disregarding the shops in Lower Town. This slowing of commerce, coupled with the questionable claim, caused many businesses to close. The previous business sites were converted to living quarters, causing Lower Town to become a predominately residential area and advancing the commercial status of Middle Town. With the exception of St. Cloud State University, this area has remained predominantly residential.

In 1856 the three settlements united and incorporated to form St. Cloud. The town prospered during the 1850s and 1860s due to the Burbank Brothers and the Red River ox cart trail that brought the fur trade through central Minnesota. This prosperity allowed the community to develop and attract a railroad line in 1866. By the mid-1870s, St. Cloud had grown to over 3,000 and was a thriving community.

An 1869 map entitled Bird's Eye View of St. Cloud shows how the city had developed in a short period of time. Middle Town contained the central business district and a large concentration of dwellings. Upper Town, still separated by the northernmost ravine, contained scattered houses. Lower Town, also separated by a ravine, was predominately a residential settlement. A footbridge crossed the ravine at Sixth Avenue, most likely just north of the district boundary. An additional footbridge was located at Third Avenue. Wagon bridges were located at Washington Avenue (Fifth Avenue) and Eighth Avenue.

According to the 1869 map, the northernmost blocks of Lower Town contained the highest concentration of buildings, with a small cluster also located off Ninth Avenue, across from Lake George. Additional residences were also scattered throughout the settlement. Lower Town also contained a large number of institutional buildings: the Normal School (forerunner to St. Cloud State University), the St. Cloud Seminary, the Baptist church, the Methodist church, and the Congregational church. The proximity to downtown and the convenience of the churches and schools made the southside a popular place for people of all classes to settle.

During the 1880s, St. Cloud transformed from a frontier town into a complex, urban-commercial center. Brick buildings replaced wood frame structures in the downtown commercial district. Modern electric lights were installed on public streets, streetcars made an appearance, limited telephone service became available, and the first postal delivery was made. Several local banks had been established in the community, creating a wealthy class of residents. By the turn of the century St. Cloud had become one of the six urban centers in Minnesota that boasted the largest populations and the most buildings.
St. Cloud's success and development forced land use changes. As downtown merchants and shopkeepers became more successful, they were able to move out of their businesses and into homes. The expanding commercial center also began to crowd many of the early residences built in the downtown business district, causing many owners to relocate. As a result, residential areas began to be separated from downtown. The southside neighborhood allowed for easy access to downtown, as well as the Normal School and several churches.

The earliest residences in the southside were small wood-frame dwellings constructed in the 1860s and 1870s. These homes were relatively simple and plain, lacking exterior ornamentation. During the 1880s, when more people began to settle on the southside, larger and more elaborate homes were constructed, oftentimes replacing earlier residences. These homes followed the popular architectural styles and frequently included ornate details. While the Richardsonian mansions of the Southside Neighborhood Historic District set a standard for development in the northern portion of the neighborhood, the southern portion became an eclectic array of housing styles and sizes.

While architect designed homes were being constructed off Fourth Street (404 Ninth Avenue and 402 Sixth Avenue), smaller and relatively simple homes were being built just around the corner. In 1891 the Majerus House, a Second-Empire masterpiece, was constructed on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Fourth Street South. At the same time, Alfred E. Bowing constructed a simple one-and-one-half story home for his family on the corner of Eighth Avenue and Fifth Street South.

This portion of the southside neighborhood was home to the upper and middle classes. It was a neighborhood in which a banker or lawyer lived near a granite cutter or quarryman. The diversity that allowed this neighborhood to thrive is still present today. Doctors and professionals live near students and young families. Residents still enjoy the proximity to the revitalized downtown, the neighborhood parks and churches, and the University.

The Barden Park Historic District is significant under St. Cloud Preservation Ordinance criteria C, because of its embodiment of a distinguishing characteristic of any architectural type, period, form, or treatment in the city of St. Cloud.

The Barden Park Historic District is also significant in St. Cloud because it contains a visual inventory of the residential architectural styles constructed in St. Cloud from the 1880s through 1945. The district contains examples of styles that are rare or well preserved and not found in other areas of the city. Both upper and middle class residences are represented in the district bordering the city's oldest park.
The earliest structure in the district dates to 1882 and was executed in the Gothic Revival style, which is relatively rare in St. Cloud. A later cottage style Gothic Revival home is also present in the district. There is a Folk Victorian, an American Four Square, a Neo Classic, a uniquely regional composite with Dutch and classic elements, and a Ranch all represented in this small district. These homes are significant as examples of the residences constructed by the middle and working classes in the southside neighborhood. They are also significant as examples of some of the earliest housing styles in St. Cloud’s southside neighborhood.

While many of the middle classes built smaller Folk Victorian homes, many of the affluent and wealthy chose popular architectural designs of the late 1800s. The families that built these homes tended to be more affluent than those who had previously built in the area.

The Barden Park Historic District contains a collection of homes that represent residential development on St. Cloud’s Southside. It includes intact middle and working class homes built by St. Cloud’s pioneers and families responsible for building an industrial and commercial city. Many of these homes are architecturally significant and are among the few remaining examples of a particular style. One is constructed of yellow brick, a material unique to St. Cloud. These homes represent a diverse and rich residential neighborhood.

The Barden Park Historic District is significant under St. Cloud Preservation Ordinance criteria D because of its identification with persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city.

An analysis of the residents of the Barden Park Historic District reveals a concentration of St. Cloud’s pioneer settlers and community and business leaders from the 1880s through the 1950s. Although this area was not the only neighborhood that community leaders chose to reside in, data gathered suggests that the Barden Park Historic District as well as Phase I and II of the Southside Neighborhood Historic District attracted many prominent local residents.

*St. Cloud’s Historic Contexts* provides a framework of the city’s growth and development. Therefore, this discussion will identify some of the residents of this district who fit within the established contexts of agriculture and industry, commerce, and government.

**Old Settlers**

Many of St. Cloud’s earliest settlers chose to make the southside neighborhood their home. This area was an ideal choice for many reasons, including: proximity to the Mississippi River, a major transportation route; proximity to the downtown central
business district; and proximity to the many churches that had established themselves in the area. (See section 6: Description.)

**Commerce**

Many of St. Cloud’s early business leaders and shopkeepers chose to live in the southside neighborhood. The location was close enough to the central business district that it was convenient for merchants and professionals to travel between work and home, but it was also a separate residential area removed from the bustle of the busy business district. The granite industry also proved to be very lucrative for St. Cloud and the surrounding areas. Many St. Cloud residents were involved in the industry at some level. This is also true of district residents. In addition to the above mentioned businesses, downtown St. Cloud was filled with local merchants who resided in the southside neighborhood.

**Services and Professions**

District residents were involved in the building industry, newspaper publishing, education, interior design, and railroad.

**Government**

Not only was St. Cloud’s Southside home to local business leaders, it was also home to local and state government leaders.

**City of St. Cloud**

*Heritage Preservation Commission*

*Local Historic District Nomination Continuation Sheet*

8. **Bibliography**


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“Only 7 of the Pioneers are Left” St. Cloud Daily Times 15 July, 1903: 3.


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City of St. Cloud  
Heritage Preservation Commission  
Local Historic District Nomination Continuation Sheet

Appendix

Barden Park Historic District  
Property Addresses

(Contributing detached garage is shown in parentheses. Attached garages are included as part of the dwelling.)

Fourth Avenue South

801

Fifth Avenue South

701 (garage)  
711  
723  
727  
801 (non-contributing garage)  
Barden Park

Eighth Street South

402

NAME  
Addresses by Date

1850-1859

1855  Barden (Central) Park  Originally named Central Park

1880-1889

1882  801 Fourth Avenue South  Raymond House
1884  711 Fifth Avenue South  Hyde House

1890-1899

1897  727 Fifth Avenue South  Quickstad House
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>723 Fifth Avenue South</td>
<td>Cranston House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>701 Fifth Avenue South</td>
<td>Jones House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>801 Fifth Avenue South</td>
<td>Lynch House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-1949</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>420 Eighth Street South</td>
<td>Hirt House</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX C

Revised Goals (12/11/01)—Barden Park Master Plan Project
REVISED GOALS (12/11/01)
BARDEN PARK MASTER PLAN PROJECT

Goals are broad, long-range statements toward which planning efforts are to be directed.

**Goal #1: Improve Barden Park as a landmark, recreational resource and community gathering place.**

- Improve the overall aesthetics of the park by updating landscaping, trails, lighting, play equipment, benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, restrooms and call box.
- Incorporate a permanent or semi-permanent band platform for outdoor concerts in the park.
- Incorporate a fountain within the park.
- Improve park maintenance and explore alternative maintenance options (garden club, volunteer help, etc.).
- Encourage park usage by all residents.
- Maintain residential character along borders of the park.

**Goal #2: Preserve and improve the historic nature of the park.**

- Evaluate restoring the existing granite band shell to its original design.
- Incorporate interpretive elements within the park that illustrate the park's history.
- Ensure new park elements respect the historical character of the park.
- Explore the option of acquiring "Historical Site" designation from the City of St. Cloud and/or the State of Minnesota.
- Apply for Grants-in-Aid funds for historical properties through the Minnesota Historical Society and explore other funding options.

**Goal #3: Strengthen relationship with Saint Cloud State University (SCSU).**

- Encourage/pursue collaboration between neighborhood groups, City of St. Cloud and SCSU.
- Utilize SCSU's expertise and resources.
- Encourage the University to maintain residential scale and character along the southern border of the park.

**Goal #4: Improve pedestrian, vehicular, bicycle and other transportation systems within and around the park.**

- Improve pedestrian safety within and around the park.
- Provide accessible parking for park users.
- Incorporate bicycle trail connections from 7th Street South to 8th Street South.
APPENDIX D

Diagram of Barden Park—Phasing Plan
Phasing Plan

Legend
- Short Term (1-5 years)
- Mid Term (6-10 years)
- Long Term (11-15 years)

Funding Sources:
1. Park Bonding
2. State Grant

Barden Park Master Plan
St. Cloud, MN
Prepared by: Dahlgren, Shandt & Linde, Inc.
January, 2002

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