

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Fayette City Park Swimming Pool

other names/site number Fayette WPA Pool and WWI Memorial

2. Location

street & number Memorial Park [n/a] not for publication

city or town Fayette [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Howard code 089 zip code 64093

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date 7 March 97

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].

[] determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].

[] determined not eligible for the
National Register.

[] removed from the
National Register

[] other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1 0 buildings

0 0 sites

0 0 structures

0 0 objects

1 0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

n/a

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

Recreation and Culture/sports facility

Current Functions

Recreation and Culture/sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Modern Movement/Art Deco

Materials

foundation concrete
walls brick
concrete
roof concrete
asphalt
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Howard County, Missouri

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☒ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1936-1949

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bintz, Wesley, Civil Engineer, Designer

Sheets, M.A., Superintendent of Construction

Narrative Statement of Significance

See continuation sheet [x].

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

See continuation sheet [x].

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

#

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

#

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository:

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone 15	Easting 526360	Northing 4333470	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debbie Sheals
organization Private Consultant for the Fayette Area Heritage Association date 2-22-99
street & number 406 West Broadway telephone 573-874-3779
city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65203

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FOP for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Fayette (David Dews, City Manager)
street & number 117 S. Main Street telephone (660) 248-3502
city or town Fayette state MO zip code 65248

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Fayette City Park Swimming Pool
Howard County, Missouri

Description

Summary: The Fayette City Park Swimming Pool is located in the northwest part of Fayette. It sits just a few hundred feet south of the intersection of Park Road and Besgrove St., in the Fayette City Park. It is an Art Deco style building which was opened for use in 1936. The building has polychromatic brick walls and ornamental poured concrete railings. The pool itself sits above ground; the locker rooms wrap around the exterior of the pool at the ground level, with the roof of the locker rooms serving as the sun deck for the pool. The sun deck is made of concrete and surrounded by grooved concrete and pipe rail balustrades. Several of the exterior balusters of the sundeck are topped with tapered concrete light standards. There is a two story entrance hall on the north end of the building which contains the main entrance and reception area. A poured concrete sign bearing the words "Fayette City Park Swimming Pool" runs along the facade just above the front doors. The building features multi-light metal windows throughout, and all exterior walls are built of buff and red bricks.

The women's locker room is on the east side of the building and the men's in on the west. Public rooms are located near the entrance on the north, and mechanical systems are at the south end of the building. The pool today appears much as it did on opening day; neither the building nor the site has seen any significant changes, and the pool exhibits a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The period of significance for the building runs from 1936, when it was placed in service, to 1949, the arbitrary fifty year cut-off date. It is the only building or structure on the site being nominated, and is a contributing building.

Elaboration: The pool sits just west of Park Road, on a level terrace near the top of a large hill in the Fayette City Park. (See Figure One.) The park, which was created at the same time as the pool, occupies roughly thirty acres of open rolling land in the northwest part of town. There is a baseball diamond south of the pool and an observatory to the southwest; neither are very close to the pool building. The property being nominated here includes only the pool and a small part of the land immediately adjacent to it.

The pool building is a roughly egg shaped, one story structure with a rectangular two story entrance hall on the north. The building has two toned brick walls and a concrete foundation. The entrance hall has a symmetrical facade, with a central entrance flanked by banks of large metal casement windows. (See photos 1 and 5.) The double doors of the entrance are sheltered by a flat semicircular canopy of concrete which has scalloped edges. The wide concrete nameplate spans the space between the first and second floors. The second floor has three large sets of casement windows, and an ornamental flag pole and base are centered along the top wall. The corners of the two story part of the building are accented with heavy square piers, between which are set small rectangular windows. Vertical bands of buff brick accent the piers, which are topped with flat concrete caps. Molded square concrete insets add variety of texture and color in several locations.

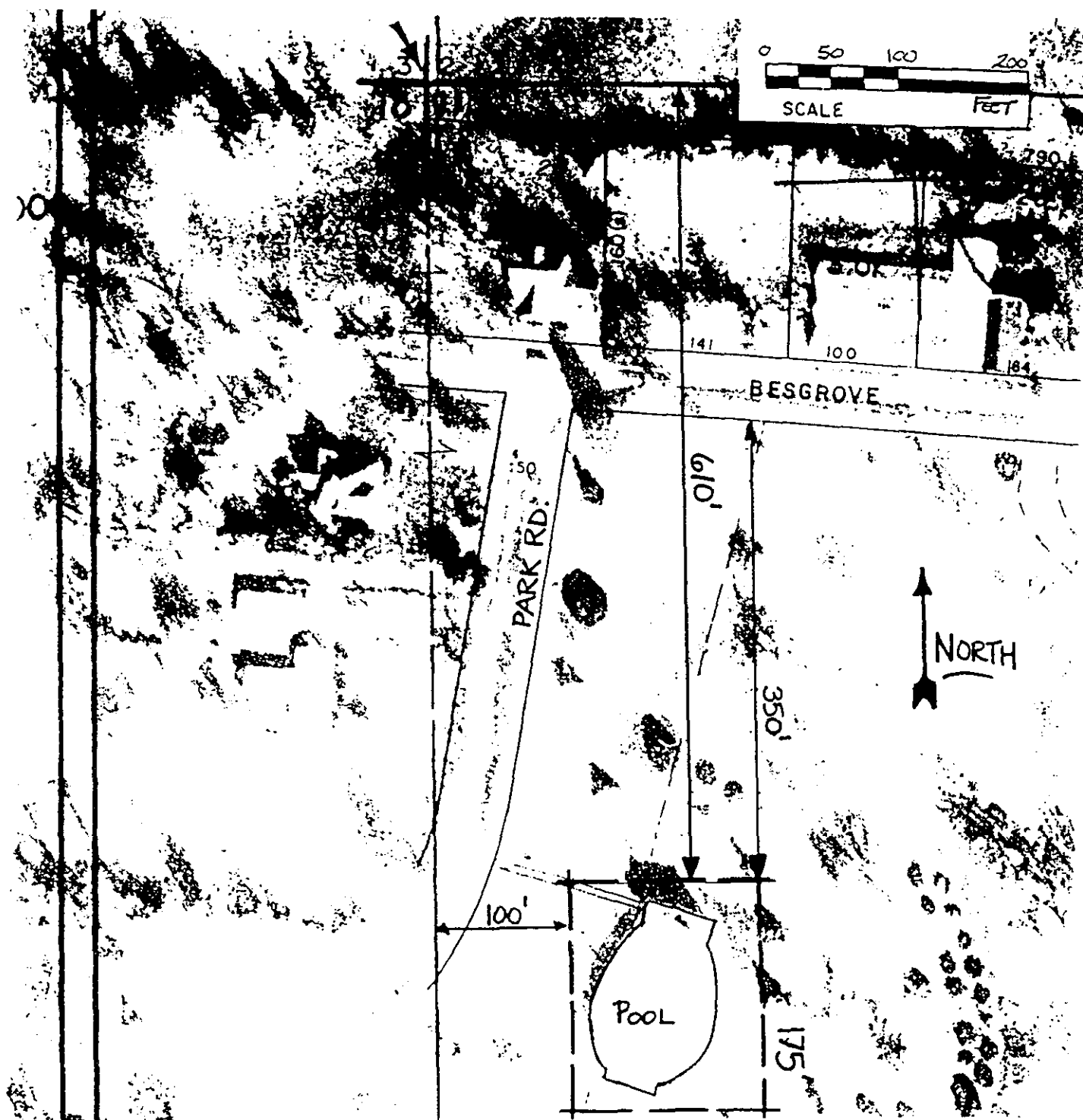
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Fayette City Park Swimming Pool
Howard County, Missouri

Figure One. Site Plan and Boundary Map.
Based on Howard County Tax Map 12-1-11-2.



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Fayette City Park Swimming Pool
Howard County, Missouri

There is a large bronze plaque next to the front door which gives information about the pool building project. It reads:

FAYETTE CITY PARK
SWIMMING POOL

--

FAYETTE, MISSOURI
DANIEL C. ROGERS, MAYOR
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
H.M. HACKLEY
I. E. SCHNELL
W. GRAY BROWN
E. Z. LOGGET
V. W. PHILLIPS
THOS. F. HOWARD
M.D. SETTLE, CITY CLERK
C.D. SLAGLE, CITY ENGINEER

--

BUILT BY
CITY OF FAYETTE
& WORKS PROGRESS ADMIN.
M.A. SHEETS, SUP'T. CONST.

--

WESLEY BINTZ
CONSULTING ENGINEER, CIVIL
SWIMMING POOL DESIGNS
"BINTZ POOL" PAT. NO. 1,572,563
LANSING, MICHIGAN

--

1936

The front portion of the building has experienced some structural problems, and large strap metal braces have been wrapped around the upper corners of the entrance hall in an effort to address the problem. (A more comprehensive treatment is being investigated.) The installation of the straps constitutes the only notable alteration to the facade of the building.

The curving side walls of the building are built of the same buff and red bricks used on the front section. The long horizontal lines of the walls are relieved by vertical accents in the form of concrete columns, between which are set multi-light metal windows similar to those used on the front. The windows have been covered on the exterior with corrugated plastic panels, but remain largely unchanged, and visible from the interior. (See photos 6 and 12.) The wall surfaces between the columns are of red brick, into which are set buff brick rectangles which have square concrete medallions at each corner. (See photo 8.) The vertical lines of the columns are continued by the grooved concrete balusters and tapered light standards of the pool deck. The light standards are intact and appear to be operable, although the original globes are all missing.

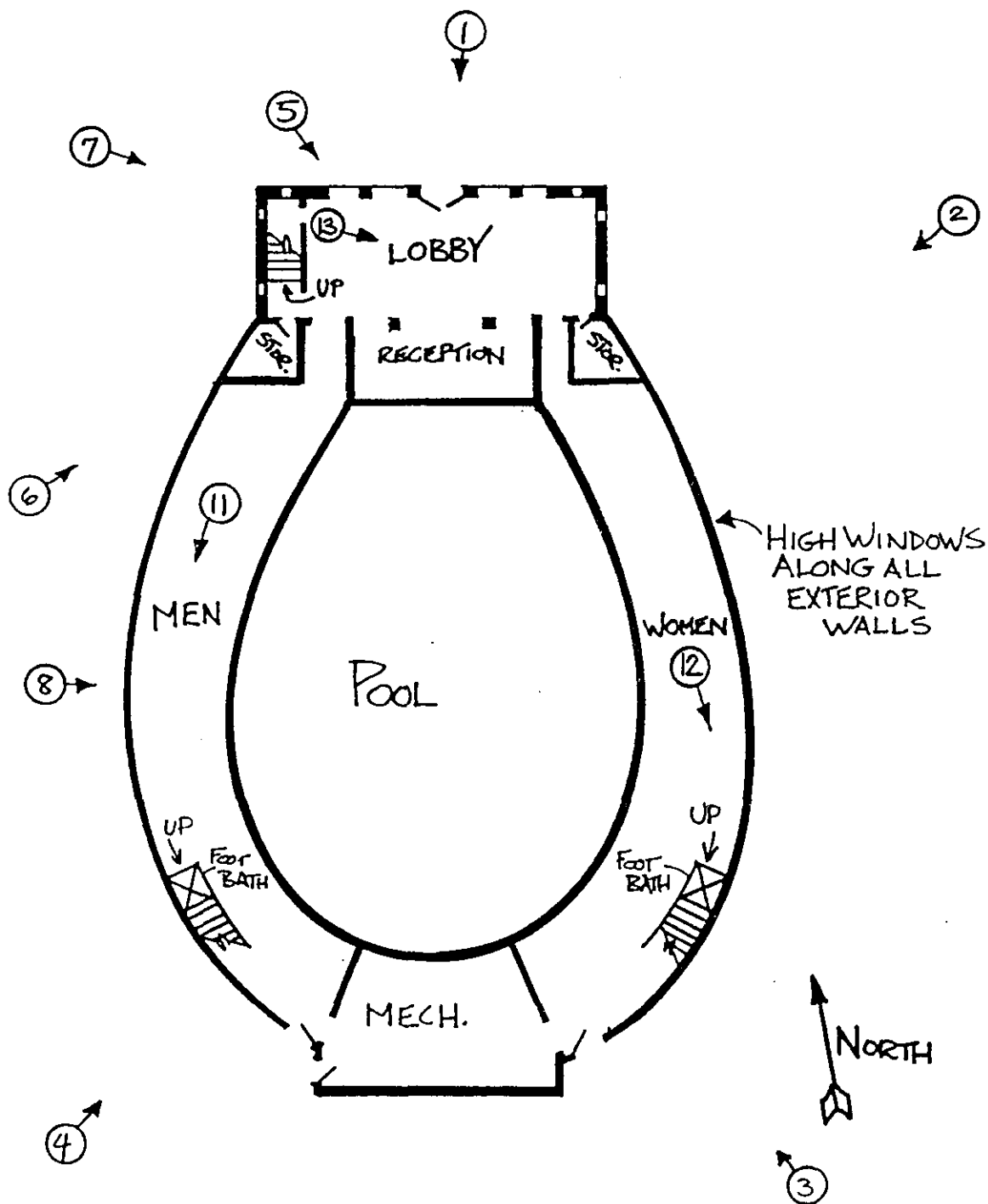
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Figure Two. Sketch plan of ground floor plan.
Drawn by Debbie Sheals, approximate scale: 1"=25'



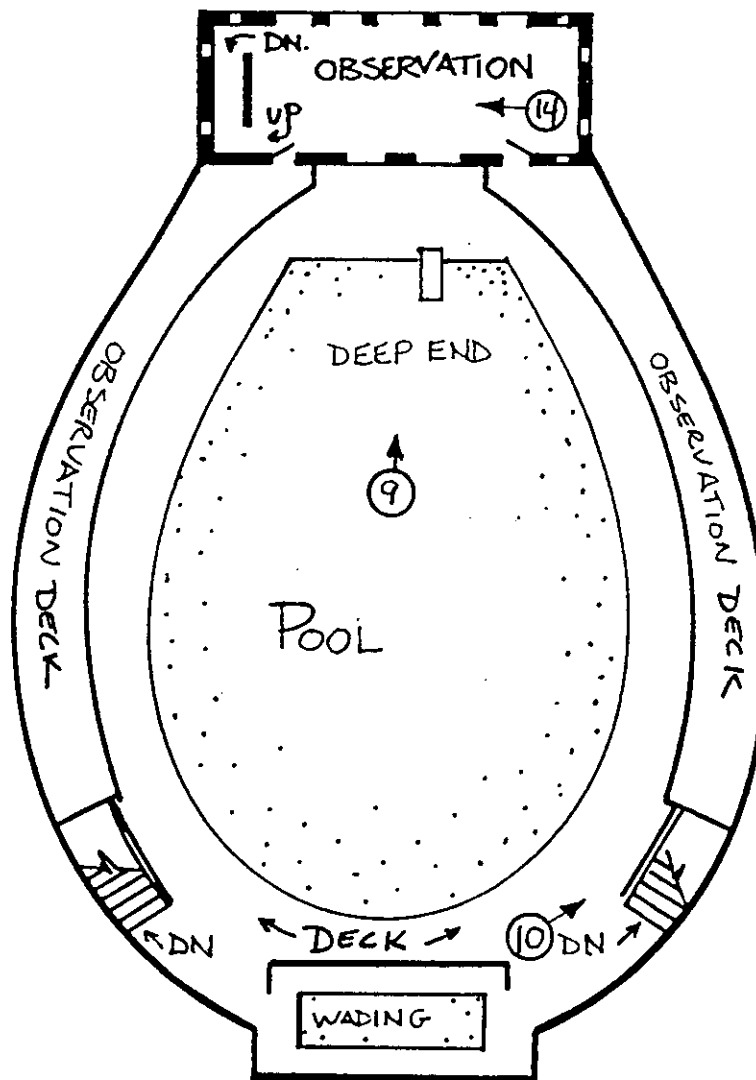
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Figure Three. Sketch plan of second floor and pool deck.
Drawn by Debbie Sheals, approximate scale: 1"=25'



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The main entrance to the building opens onto a small entrance lobby, which contains a reception area, stairs to the second floor, and doorways into the locker rooms. The reception area has a counter for pool attendants and small storage areas. The second floor of the entrance structure provides access to the pool deck for non-swimmers. It contains a single open room with large casement windows overlooking the pool and park, and doors which lead to the pool deck. A second set of stairs leads up to a rooftop observation deck. The walls of the second floor room are all faced with buff brick, and there are several niches in the walls which are topped with segmental brickwork arches. (See photo 14.)

Swimmers enter the pool through the locker rooms. The locker room entrances are on either side of the reception desk. From there swimmers pass dressing, showering and restroom areas to reach stairs at the south end of the building which lead to the pool deck. The men's locker room is very open, with simple rows of benches, while the women's area has some individual dressing stalls. A small square trench runs the length of each locker room, presumably to drain excess water. It appears that the trench was originally topped with a grate, which is now missing. Poured concrete footbaths are located at the bases of the steps to the pool deck. A rectangular extension along the south wall of the building houses the mechanical equipment for the pool. (See Figures Two and Three.)

Interior finishes throughout the building are relatively sparse. Floors and ceilings, as well as some walls, are of unfinished concrete, and the locker rooms have modest wooden benches and stall dividers. (See photos 11 and 13.) Most of the simple original light fixtures remain in place, several with globes intact. (An original globe is visible in photo 14.) The surface of the exterior walls of the locker rooms are more ornamental; a simpler version of the polychrome brick pattern found on the outside of the walls is repeated within. (See photo 12.) The reception area and locker room interiors have seen few alterations, and most rooms areas are in good condition. There are some problems in the second floor observation room, which appear to be related to a long-term roof leak. Water stands on the floor and moss is growing along the east wall. A planned architectural study and preservation plan should address that problem in the near future.

The pool deck is distinguished by grooved concrete balusters which echo the graceful curve of the pool and locker room walls. (See photo 10.) One set of balustrades runs along the exterior of the building, while a second set divides what was originally an observation area from the main deck. (All parts of the deck are now used by swimmers.) The exterior balustrades have matching grooved concrete horizontal bars, and every third post is topped by a light standard. The inside balustrade has vertical pipe rails between matching concrete posts. Similar piping is used for pool ladders and lifeguard stands. (See photo 9.)

The pool itself is roughly egg shaped and painted white. It is approximately 60 feet wide by 90 feet long. The shallow end, which is on the south, is the widest part of the pool. The north wall of

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**Fayette City Park Swimming Pool
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the pool, which is the only straight section of pool wall, has a small diving board set to one side. (The pool originally had a high dive and slide.) There is also a small rectangular wading pool at the south end of the deck, over the area occupied by mechanical systems. The wading pool is surrounded by a concrete and pipe rail balustrade which matches the others.

There have been very few alterations to the pool deck. The only physical deterioration of note is a moderate amount of spalling of the concrete, which has exposed metal reinforcing rods in a few places. The pool structure in general is in good condition and very little changed from the period of significance. The building continues to serve in the function for which it was built, and it retains a high level of integrity, both inside and out. △

Statement of Significance.

Summary: The Fayette City Park Swimming Pool, in Fayette, Howard County, Missouri is a fine example of small scale Depression-era civic architecture. It is significant under Criterion A, in the area of ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION, and under Criterion C, in the area of ARCHITECTURE. The pool was built to serve as a centerpiece in the development of Fayette's first city park in 1936, and is significant as a long-lived recreational facility built by a partnership of public entities during the Great Depression. Funding for the construction project came from the City of Fayette, the Works Progress Administration, Howard County, and the state of Missouri. Architecturally, the building is distinguished by Art Deco styling, as well as its unusual above-ground pool design. The design of the pool was executed by Wesley Bintz, a civic engineer from Lansing, Michigan, who used his patented "Bintz Pool" design for the Fayette pool. The facility opened on July 4, 1936, and remains in use in its original function. The period of significance thus runs from 1936 until 1949, the arbitrary fifty year cut-off point. The building exhibits a very high level of integrity, and has seen no major alterations since the time of its construction. It is significant for its long contribution to the social and recreational history of the community, and as a rare intact example of Art Deco architecture in Fayette. The building is a commemorative property, although not exclusively so; the entrance hall was built to serve as a World War One memorial. The commemorative aspects of the property are secondary to the pool's architectural integrity and long history of service.

Elaboration: Fayette, which is the county seat, was laid out in 1823.¹ The town grew to its present size relatively early in its history, and its population has not changed significantly in the last century. The decision to create an official city park in Fayette came more than a century after the town was incorporated. In 1935, the Fayette Board of Aldermen agreed to begin acquiring land for a park, at the urging of the Chamber of Commerce and other interested citizens. On June 18 of that year the Fayette paper reported that the "park proposal that has been under lively discussion by the Chamber of Commerce and the subject of various petitions was considered at length by the

¹ National Historical Company, History of Howard and Cooper Counties, (St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1883) p. 178.

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aldermen" at their regular meeting that week.² A park committee was formed, and inquiries as to available land were started.

Although the initial park plans did not include a pool, the decision to build one was apparently made early in the process. The mayor of Fayette at the time, David C. Rogers, had just the week before served as the keynote speaker for the opening of a new pool in Slater, MO, and it was noted in the above article that a delegation from Fayette had also been invited to the opening of one in Higginsville a few days later. It is likely that those events encouraged Fayette leaders to add a pool to their plans for the new park as well.

Another deciding factor in the planning process appears to have been the availability of federal assistance with construction costs. Depression era government aid programs were being widely utilized in Missouri at that time, on projects which ranged from hand dug ditches for water mains to skyscrapers for public offices. The two main federal sources of construction assistance for communities in the mid-thirties were the Public Works Administration, or PWA, and the Works Progress Administration, or WPA.

In most cases, PWA aid came in the form of direct grants and low interest loans for construction costs related to public works projects. Typical PWA projects included buildings such as courthouses, schools, and recreational facilities, as well as things like road and infrastructure improvements. The WPA, on the other hand, focused primarily on providing employment for workers who would otherwise be on the relief roles. WPA projects therefore tended to be labor intensive. As of December of 1935, nearly two thirds of the average WPA project budget was devoted to wages. On the average, WPA funds covered more than 80% of the total project cost, with 86.4% of that funding going to cover payroll expenses.³

Both programs had a major impact upon Missouri, and buildings financed under their auspices can be found in all parts of the state. By the end of 1940, for example, 361 PWA construction projects had been completed in Missouri, with a total expenditure of over 40 million dollars.⁴ PWA projects near Fayette included the Higginsville pool just mentioned, which was financed with a PWA loan and grant.⁵ WPA funds also had a significant impact. In 1935, the year the pool was started, Missouri ranked 11th in the nation in the number of WPA workers, with more

² "Council Proceeds With Park Plans," Fayette Democrat-Leader, June 21, 1935, p. 1.

³ Works Progress Administration, Report on the Works Program, (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1936) p. 28.

⁴ John M. Carmody, First Annual Report: Federal Works Agency, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1940) p. 322.

⁵ C. W. Short, and R. Stanley Brown, Public Buildings: Architecture Under the Public Works Administration, (Washington D. C.: U. S. G. P. O., 1939) p. 685, and "Council Proceeds With Park Plans," p. 1.

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than 100,000 Missourians on WPA payrolls.⁶

Mayor D. C. Rogers, who was active in the politics of municipal administration on a statewide basis, would naturally have been quite familiar with such programs. At the time the park project was being planned, Rogers was the president of the Missouri Mayor's Association. He was instrumental in arranging a large meeting of that group in Fayette just weeks after the park project got underway. The keynote speaker was M. S. Murry, the new head of the Missouri Works Progress Administration. It is logical to assume that Rogers would have pursued the subject of federal aid for the park project while Murry was in the area, especially since he had recently attended the opening of the PWA funded Higginsville pool.

Whatever the influencing factors, it is known that by the fall of 1935, the construction of the pool had become an intricate part of the park project, and the WPA had committed to helping with the funding. On November 15 of that year the local paper reported that forty men had started on the "park and swimming pool project, twenty on each job." (An additional twenty men were put to work extending a nearby water main.) According to the paper, "Plans are to proceed at once with the building of the swimming pool. Blueprints will soon be submitted to the council for approval and the actual work begun."⁷

A week later, the Board of Aldermen and other officials heard what the paper described as "an interesting and intelligent discussion of swimming pools," by "nationally known swimming pool designer" Wesley Bintz of Lansing, Michigan. Bintz apparently made quite an impression. He was hired that same evening, and the paper featured a long complimentary account of the presentation. The report included a fairly detailed discussion of the pool design and noted that

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen, and the several visitors who heard the entire proceedings were elated over the fact that Mr. Bintz contacted the City of Fayette at such an appropriate time. His preparedness and experience assures that work can go forward as expected by the WPA. All were well pleased with the pool offered to Fayette.⁸

It appears that everyone involved was impressed with the above-ground design for the pool, which was said to make it much less expensive to construct than had been expected. Bintz was confident that he could stay within the approximately \$16,000 budget set for the pool project, and still end up with a pool big enough to suit the needs of the community. The article noted that earlier estimates had rarely been less than \$20,000, and that the PWA pool in Higginsville had run nearly \$40,000. Even the pool in Slater, which was constructed of used materials, had cost around \$12,000.

Wesley Bintz was an experienced pool designer who designed and supervised the

⁶ Works Progress Administration, p. 10.

⁷ "Men at Work on Local WPA Projects." Fayette Democrat-Leader. November 15, 1935, p. 1.

⁸ "Swimming Pool Plan Accepted," Fayette Democrat-Leader. November 22, 1935, pp. 1 and 3.

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construction of pools in several states. He later published a promotional booklet which included photographs of more than a dozen of his more notable above-ground pools, including the one in Fayette, as well several in other states.⁹ Also, the City of Canton, Illinois had a Bintz pool very similar to the one in Fayette at one time; that structure was demolished in 1992.¹⁰ The Canton pool had a nearly identical shape and layout, as well as the same type of grooved concrete railings and light standards. It differed from the Fayette pool in that it lacked the large entrance structure, and had the added feature of an underwater observation window in the deep end.¹¹

Promotional literature put out by Bintz in the mid-1940s shows that he was still designing pools very much like the one in Fayette, and listed several of the advantages of building a pool above grade. (See Figure Four.) In addition to reducing costs in general, the above-ground design eliminated the need of "an unsightly fence around the pool," and allowed attendants to service pipes and other systems from inside the bath house. The design also used less land and saved on excavation costs. Finally, the clients "got a really beautiful architectural structure, different from anything people around these parts have ever seen."¹² (See Figure Four.)

Bintz did not limit himself to the above-ground plan however; he also designed at least two in-ground pools in Illinois which were similar to the Fayette pool in shape and railing design. Both of those pools appeared in national publications on the design and construction of swimming pools. A photograph of a Bintz pool at the Edgewood Valley Country Club in LaGrange, Illinois was included in a swimming pool booklet published by the Portland Cement Association in the late 1950s, and a nearly identical pool at the Ravisloe Country Club in Homewood, Illinois was featured in a 1938 advertisement for sterilizing equipment.¹³ The Edgewood pool has since been demolished, but the one in Homewood is still in service.

Bintz not only designed the Fayette pool, he also played an active role in its construction. His contract with the city required construction supervision as well as building plans, and he was required to make at least eight trips to Fayette while the pool was under construction. Board of Aldermen meeting records from that period show that he took that responsibility seriously. He appeared before them at least six different times to update them on the project and discuss various

⁹ The booklet was until recently in the possession of Sarah Morrow, mayor D. C. Rogers' granddaughter, who remembers the contents well.

¹⁰ Lori Timm, "Canton's one-of-a-kind pool swims into the sunset," Peoria Journal-Star, Sept. 13, 1992, p. B7.

¹¹ "Big Creek Park 'Bintz' Swimming Pool, Canton, Illinois." Promotional flyer reprinted from 1944 Swimming Pool Data and Reference Annual. (From the files of the Canton Park District.)

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Earle Collins, ed., 1938 Swimming Pool Data and Reference Annual, Vol 6. (New York: Hoffman-Harris, 1938) p. 4, and Portland Cement Association, Concrete Swimming Pools: Financing, Design, Construction and Operation, (Chicago: Portland Cement Association, ca. 1959) p. 7.

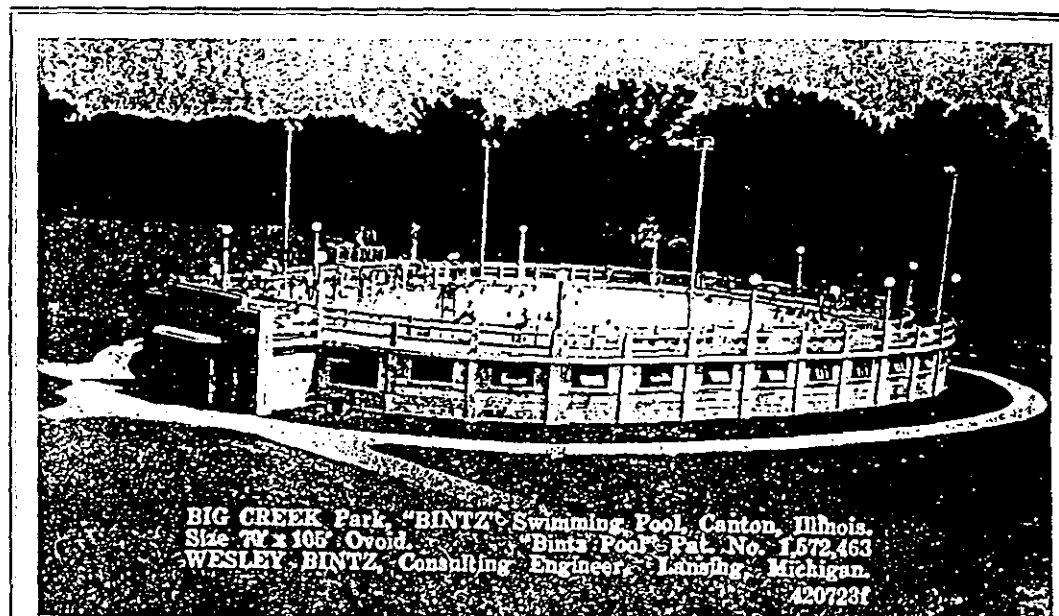
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Figure Four. Promotional flyer reprinted from 1944 Swimming Pool Data and Reference Annual.
(From the files of the Canton Park District.)



Canton, Illinois has had quite a time with their swimming pools. They built one in 1911, and it went haywire. Poor professional service is always expensive. They tried to fix it up about 1940. No Luck. Finally abandoned it. Then they employed some professional service to get out Plans and Specifications for a swimming pool. After they were all set to go ahead, they heard about BINTZ POOLS.

Well, investigation found that they had better start over again, and so they did. They threw \$2500 and the Plans and Specifications for a Sunken pool out the window. And are they glad? Why not, they saved about \$14,000 and got a better swimming pool.

This is what they got: A pool 70' x 105' Ovoid, a concrete floor around the pool 14'-6" wide with an area of over 5,000 sq. ft. A unique swimming pool that attracts people for miles around, fully equipped with steel lockers, filter plant, admission stand, toilets for the public, as well as the bathhouse, and other facilities too numerous to mention. Cost \$40,000.00.

And a unique feature is the Underwater Observation window that can be had with this particular type pool. This underwater window, 15' x 14", allows spectators to watch the bathers and swimmers, or the swimming coach, to see learning to swim, under the water. It is quite a feature with the top of the water forming an impenetrable ceiling thru which light streams but then which is a curtain wall. And if you really want to see a sight like none other, like a look when they have the underwater lights on. Of course it is a beautiful sight

then from anyplace, but especially from this underwater observation window.

Now, along with all these fine advantages, the Park Board got a lot of other things: First they saved about \$15,000 cash over what a similar pool of the conventional type would have cost. 2. They have no unsightly fence around the pool. 3. The pool is up and out of frost action. 4. The sewer is about eight foot shallower. 5. They can service all their inlet pipes, outlet pipes, scum gutter drains, underwater lights, etc., from this bathroom area. 6. They saved a lot of ground space, that was required by the usual bathhouse. 7. They saved a lot of excavation and didn't have to mar the landscape with a lot of grading. 8. Got a really beautiful architectural structure, different from anything people around these parts have ever seen, and—space doesn't permit mentioning them all.

And then, with the Ovoid shaped pool,—not round—with parallel squared ends, they got these advantages: 1. About a 10% larger pool. 2. Wall about 10% shorter thereby saving construction cost. 3. 25% more water of the proper wadable depths. and 4. Better pool for aquatic meets—for both spectators and swimmers.

Pools like this in other parts of the Country show they stand up much better than the Conventional sunken pool and bathhouse, and Canton is surely proud of their deal. It cost them a little extra for not doing their overighting first, but being stubborn would have been very costly. "Drop around and see us sometime" is their motto. They are proud of their swimming pool. Why not?

Published by courtesy of

WESLEY BINTZ, B. C. E., M. S. in E.

Consulting Engineer, Civil

Swimming Pool designs and construction only

LANDING 15, MICHIGAN

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technical issues.¹⁴ He participated in discussions of everything from filter systems and locker selections to wall treatments and other design issues.

He also attended at least one of those meeting to discuss the construction of the "head house" or entrance hall of the building, which was not included in the original plan. One month after Bintz was hired, he appeared with representatives from the Howard County chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Legion to present plans for the entrance hall, which the local groups wanted designated as a memorial for those who served in World War One. Bintz had plans and cost estimates ready for that meeting, and the Board approved the addition the same night.¹⁵ Bintz estimated it would add about \$2,300. He was very close; later records show that the final figure came in at \$2,380.¹⁶

The D.A.R. and American Legion arranged for the Howard County Court to pay for the addition with money from a fund which had been established by state law in 1919 to finance war memorials in each county. The state law which created the fund did so in "appreciation of the services rendered by the citizen soldiery of Missouri in the war against Germany and her allies."¹⁷ The act allowed for the exact nature of the monument to be determined by the appropriate county court or municipality. Once an appropriate monument was identified, the local group was to raise at least \$250 in matching funds before applying for state aid.¹⁸ It is not clear who put up the matching funds in this case, as the newspaper articles infer that all of the money came from the county court. The more than 15 year lag-time between the passage of the law and the Fayette project was not all that unusual; a 1925 survey of projects completed under that law identified only 16 cases in which the fund had been utilized.¹⁹

The memorial plans called for the second floor of the entrance hall to contain commemorative tablets, presumably in the niches that are built into the walls there. Those niches are empty today, but there is a large bronze plaque still in the ground floor entrance room which commemorates area soldiers who served in "the Great War." The plaque is not permanently affixed, and appears to have been originally mounted elsewhere, presumably on the second floor.

The addition of the head house was the last change in the plans, and work progressed smoothly throughout the first half of 1936. The city hired Fayette resident M. A. Sheets to serve as the foreman for the project, and a government engineer was appointed to supervise the work for the

¹⁴ Fayette City Records. Board of Aldermen Minutes, various dates 1935-1936.

¹⁵ "War Memorial for Park is Planned," Fayette Democrat-Leader, Dec. 20, 1935, p. 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, April 7, 1936.

¹⁷ RSMo 184.250.

¹⁸ National Register Nomination for Leo Ellis Post#22 American Legion Building, Mercer County, MO, 1995, p. 8.2.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

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WPA. Mr. Morris Phillips, who worked briefly on the pool in 1936 and still lives in Fayette, remembers Sheets, and recently described him as the "ramrod" of the project.²⁰ Sheets was apparently one of the more experienced construction professionals on the job, with the bulk of the labor being provided by relatively inexperienced WPA workers. He served as the foreman throughout the project, and even stayed on for a while as the park manager after the construction was finished.²¹

Although the local paper and minutes from the Board of Aldermen meetings indicate that the City had trouble finding other skilled workers for the construction project, they were able to hire a good brick mason. The Aldermen hired Andrew Gantner to serve as chief brick mason on the project in December of 1935, at the same meeting in which they decided on the use of brick for exterior sheathing. Gantner received 75 cents an hour for his work, a sum which put him at a higher rate of pay than even Mr. Sheets.²² They were not as lucky with carpenters; a late newspaper article noted that only one carpenter was doing finish work on the pool, as the "City has tried to employ additional carpenters without success."²³ Board of Aldermen minutes from that period also record that Bintz had requested more skilled workers earlier that same month.

The shortage of skilled workmen notwithstanding, the design and final form of the pool reflected many of the latest trends and developments in pool design. Bintz was obviously aware of recommended standards and design issues, which included such things as locker room layout and general principals of orientation, as well as the complex engineering principals related to any type of pool construction.

The general layout of the Fayette pool shows an attention to the needs of both bathers and observers. The design of the locker rooms made them both easy to use and sanitary. The locker rooms are arranged with changing facilities near the front, and shower and toilets near the rear pool entrances. One 1938 article on bathhouse design noted that "showers and toilets are generally grouped around the entrance to the pool, and should be so arranged that their use is suggested to the public."²⁴ The footbaths at the base of the stairs, which were designed to hold antiseptic solution that would control the spread of athlete's foot, were also standard equipment at the time. They followed the suggested form of "being constructed so that (the swimmer) cannot jump over it, but is forced to take at least two steps through it."²⁵

The plan and orientation of the entrance hall also shows forethought. It was recommended

²⁰ Telephone interview with Mr. Morris by Debbie Sheals, Jan. 5, 1999.

²¹ Fayette City Records. Board of Aldermen Minutes, Nov. 19, 1935-June 29, 1936.

²² Ibid, Dec. 17, 1935.

²³ Fayette City Records. Board of Aldermen Minutes, June 12, 1936.

²⁴ A. J. Boase, "Bath House Suggestions," in Collins, p. 45.

²⁵ F. C. Roberts, "Fundamentals of Pool Sanitation," in Collins, p. 58.

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that the bathhouse be placed where it would block prevailing winds, so as to "add to the general comfort of the bathers" and "assist in lengthening the swimming season."²⁶ The placement of the entrance hall on the north end of the Fayette pool addressed that need nicely. Literature of the time also stressed the necessity to accommodate "the growing demand for spectator galleries," which should be "accommodated by providing two distinct circulatory systems."²⁷ Again, the entrance hall fills the bill, with a separate set of stairs to the second floor and rooftop observation galleries, which allowed spectators access to the pool deck without having to go through the locker rooms and foot baths.

It should also be noted that the Fayette pool was built relatively early in the history of modern pool design. Although the existence of public baths or swimming pools goes all the way back to ancient times, the municipal swimming pool in America is a relatively recent development. Of the 8,000 pools in use in the United States in 1938, 80% were built after 1920, and more than 50% after 1925.²⁸ The rise in popularity is closely linked to advancements in sanitation and filtration technology. The first American standards for pool sanitation were not developed until 1915, and it was the late 1920s before specialized pool filtration and sterilization equipment became widely available.²⁹ City records show that Bintz played an active role in the selection of the pool filtration equipment, and that he carefully inspected it once it had been operating for a while.³⁰ The equipment he selected was apparently of good quality, as much of it continues to be used today.

The modernity of the layout and engineering principals used for the pool are reflected in its Art Deco styling, which was popular for pools of the day and used in some degree in all of the Bintz pools identified above. One source noted that "for public swimming pools, where a simple architectural style is desirable, bath houses designed in the modern manner are increasing in popularity."³¹ That "modern manner" would today be referred to as Art Deco or Streamline Moderne.

Art Deco has been described as "a style that consciously strove for modernity and an artistic expression to compliment the machine age."³² The Art Deco style was widely used for commercial

²⁶ Boase, p. 44.

²⁷ "Recreational," Architectural Forum, October 1936, p. 368.

²⁸ Frederick Luehring, Swimming Pool Standards, (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1939) pp. 33-34.

²⁹ Luehring, p. 29, and M. Alexander Gabrielsen, ed. Swimming Pools, (New York: Hoffman Publications Inc., 1969) p. 12.

³⁰ Fayette City Records. Board of Aldermen Minutes, April 7, 1936, and Sept. 1, 1936.

³¹ Boase, p. 44.

³² John C. Poppeliers, et. al., What Style Is It?, (Washington D. C.: The Preservation Press, 1983) p. 88.

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and civic architecture in America in the 1920s and 30s, with isolated examples continuing into the 1940s.³³ Although designs in the style began appearing many years earlier, the origins of the title "Art Deco" go back to a 1925 exhibition in Paris, the *Exposition Internationale des Art Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, which celebrated modern design in a wide range of subjects. The term Art Deco itself was first used in a French retrospective of that show which was mounted in Paris in 1966. It entered the English lexicon in 1968, with the publication of Bevis Hillier's book of the same name.³⁴

Art Deco is one of two main "modern" movements which were in vogue in the early decades of this century. Art Deco scholar David Gebhard refers to the two schools of thought at the time as high style "modernist" or International Style, and popular "Moderne," which he divides onto the closely related Art Deco and Streamline Moderne sub-styles. Architects and designers from both schools of thought shared a desire to emphasize the future rather than the past, including a disdain for exact copies of elements taken from historic architecture. The literature for the 1925 Paris exposition, for example, stated that "reproductions, imitations and counterfeits of ancient styles will be strictly prohibited."³⁵

There were, however, different opinions as to just how far those principals should be carried. Practitioners of the International Style sought to totally distance themselves from all connections with architecture of the past, including the use of classical forms or applied ornamentation of any kind. Designers of "Moderne" styles, on the other hand, embraced the concept of decoration, and felt free to utilize classical principals, albeit in a new manner. As Gebhard put it:

the Moderne styles were based upon fashion and taste, not upon any functional or moral imperative; and whereas the modernists eschewed traditional forms in the search for entirely new forms, the Moderne designers played freely with historical precedent, sometimes abstracting traditional forms beyond recognition.³⁶

Art Deco has also been referred to as Jazz Moderne, or Zigzag Moderne, titles often used when the style was in vogue in the 1920s.³⁷ The Art Deco movement was very widespread, and applied to all facets of design, including the decorative arts, industrial design and architectural interiors. In architecture, the style was widely utilized for everything from giant skyscrapers to modest apartment buildings, the only notable exception being single family houses, which for the most part continued to favor Colonial Revival styling.

³³ David Gebhard, *The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America*, (New York: John Wiley and Son, Preservation Press, 1996).

³⁴ Barbara Capitman, et. al., *Rediscovering Art Deco, U. S. A.*, (New York: Viking Books, 1994) pp. 1-2.

³⁵ Poppeliers, p. 88.

³⁶ Gebhard, p. 4.

³⁷ Patricia Bayer, *Art Deco Architecture*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 1992,) p. 7.

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The Art Deco style was frequently used for the buildings erected via public works projects of the depression, partly as a function of timing. Gebhard noted that: "With the onset of the depression, commercial construction ground to a halt and public buildings, many of them funded by the PWA and built by WPA labor, became one of the principal vehicles for Art Deco. These buildings.....constitute a subset of the Art Deco known as PWA Moderne."³⁸

Art Deco is the earlier of the "Moderne" styles; it was popular throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s. The Streamline Modern style, which came into its own in the 1930s and continued into the 1940s, was similar to Deco, but exhibited more of a horizontal emphasis, frequently teamed with smooth surfaces, curved lines and geometric glass block windows.

Defining characteristics of the Art Deco style vary somewhat according to the author discussing it, but there are some common principals. There is an overall vertical emphasis, and futuristic as the buildings appear to be, most use classical patterns of composition. And, as the name implies, ornament or decoration is always present, and most often of a stylized or geometric nature.

Classical elements of composition which are frequently found on Deco buildings include traditional proportions, balanced, symmetrical plans and elevations, and even stripped down or abstracted classical ornamental elements such as columns and pilasters. The use of such classical design frameworks has been attributed to the fact that most of America's leading Deco architects were schooled in the Beaux-Arts tradition, which was strongly based on the principals and forms of classical architecture.³⁹ Gebhard wrote: "Whether the project was a PWA funded post-office or public school building in a small mid-western community or a towering slab skyscraper in New York City, the classical ideals of solidity and mass remained paramount" as did the tendency to use "classical- inspired proportions."⁴⁰ And, from Capitman, "the popularity of Art Deco may be explained by the quality of its underlying classicism."⁴¹

The plan and massing of the Fayette pool building are typical of the Art Deco style in that there is both a vertical emphasis and an attention to basic classical forms. The basic long low horizontal silhouette of the pool part of the building is broken at regular intervals by the vertical lines of the concrete light standards, as well as pattern of the columns and brickwork on the side walls. Also, the entrance hall has a very strong vertical emphasis, in both physical form and the patterning of the light colored brick ornamentation. (See photos 1-7.) Classical ideals of form are evident in the balanced, symmetrical facade and simple vertical fluting along the corners of the of the entrance hall. Such fluting was commonly used to loosely reflect the vertical lines of classical columns and pilasters; Gebhard noted that often, "vertical fluting along an exterior surface

³⁸ Gebhard, p. 7.

³⁹ Gebhard, pp. 4-5, and Bayer, p. 8.

⁴⁰ Gebhard, p. 4.

⁴¹ Capitman, p. 3.

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constituted the only residue of a classical column."⁴²

The most notable feature of the Art Deco style is of course the use of decoration. As one author put it: "the lack of any outstanding ornament, polychromy, distinctive lettering or ornamental metalwork generally disqualifies (buildings of the period) from being classified under the Art Deco rubric."⁴³ The Fayette pool exhibits several of those decorative features, one of the most notable being the polychromatic brickwork of the walls. The combination of buff and red brick creates a lively patterning that is accented by three dimensional concrete medallions in several places. As noted, that patterning is also used to give the building an overall vertical emphasis. The continuation of the pattern on the inside of the walls in the locker rooms shows an attention to interior ornamental detail as well. The semi-circular flat concrete canopy and inset concrete sign over the main entrance to the building are also typical Art Deco types of ornamentation.

The concrete railings of the pool deck provide one of the most striking decorative features of the building. The railings, which are set into tapered concrete balusters, follow the sweeping curves of the pool outline. (See photo 10.) Each of the railings and the balusters are incised with three ornamental grooves, and the pattern of the balusters is repeated in the concrete columns of the side walls. (See photo 8.) That same three-line pattern is used on the curved concrete flag pole brackets which are centered over the main entrance to the building. (See photo 5.) The use of a tripartite decorative scheme has also been strongly identified with the Art Deco style. One discussion which focused specifically on American Art Deco noted that it was common to see the "reduction of most designs to groups with three elements—the Art Deco 'Rule of Threes'."⁴⁴ Bintz must have been especially fond of that particular motif, as each of the other three known pools designed by him had nearly identical railings and light standards.

The pool opened for business on July 4, 1936, to instant popularity. Mr. Morris Phillips, who worked on the building and spent long hours swimming there once it opened, remembers that it was packed into the evening hours nearly every day that summer. The local paper reported that as many as 282 people used the facility on a single day, and that there were many days in which attendance topped 200. From an article which ran on August 7th:

This record of attendance shows that the pool is well liked. Everyone who has gone has found it a fine pool with good water and the appearance is certainly a credit to the community. Many say it is the most beautiful swimming pool they have ever seen and visitors are envious of Fayette, wishing they had as fine a place to swim and find relaxation from excessive heat.⁴⁵

⁴² Gebhard, p. 6.

⁴³ Bayer, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Capitman, p.3.

⁴⁵ "Swimming Pool a Popular Spot," Fayette Democrat-Leader. August 7, 1936, p. 1.

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The building today appears very much as it did that summer, and it continues to function as it has for the last two thirds of a century. It is the city's main public pool, and opens each year from Memorial Day to Labor Day. It also appears that the pool is one of few surviving Bintz patented above-ground pools in the Midwest. The newspaper article which covered the demolition of its twin in Canton, Illinois referred to that one as "one-of-a-kind," and noted that it was "believed to be the last of its type in the Midwest."⁴⁶ The Illinois pool was obviously not quite the last of its kind, but the Fayette pool may be. It is in any event a rare survivor. It remains an important part of the community, and reflects both the popular architectural styling of its day and the long years in which it played an important role in the social history of the community. △

⁴⁶ Timm, p. B7.

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Phone Interviews

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Morris Phillips, Fayette, former WPA worker and patron of the pool. Conducted by Debbie Sheals,
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Verbal Boundary Description: A parcel 175 feet by 140 feet, containing just over one half acre, described as : Beginning at the northwest corner of Section 11, T50N, R16W, proceed south along the western edge of Section 11 six hundred and ten (610) feet; then proceed east one hundred feet to the point of beginning; then proceed 175 feet south; then proceed 140 feet east; then proceed 175 feet north; then proceed 140 feet west, to the point of beginning. See also Figure One: Site Plan and Boundary Map, Based on Howard County Tax Map 12-1-11-2.

Boundary Justification: The boundary of the nominated property includes the pool and a small parcel immediately adjacent to and around the pool. The boundary of the property has been drawn to exclude the remainder of Memorial Park, which has undergone a number of alterations and does not represent or reflect the areas of significance or period of significance of the pool.

Photographs

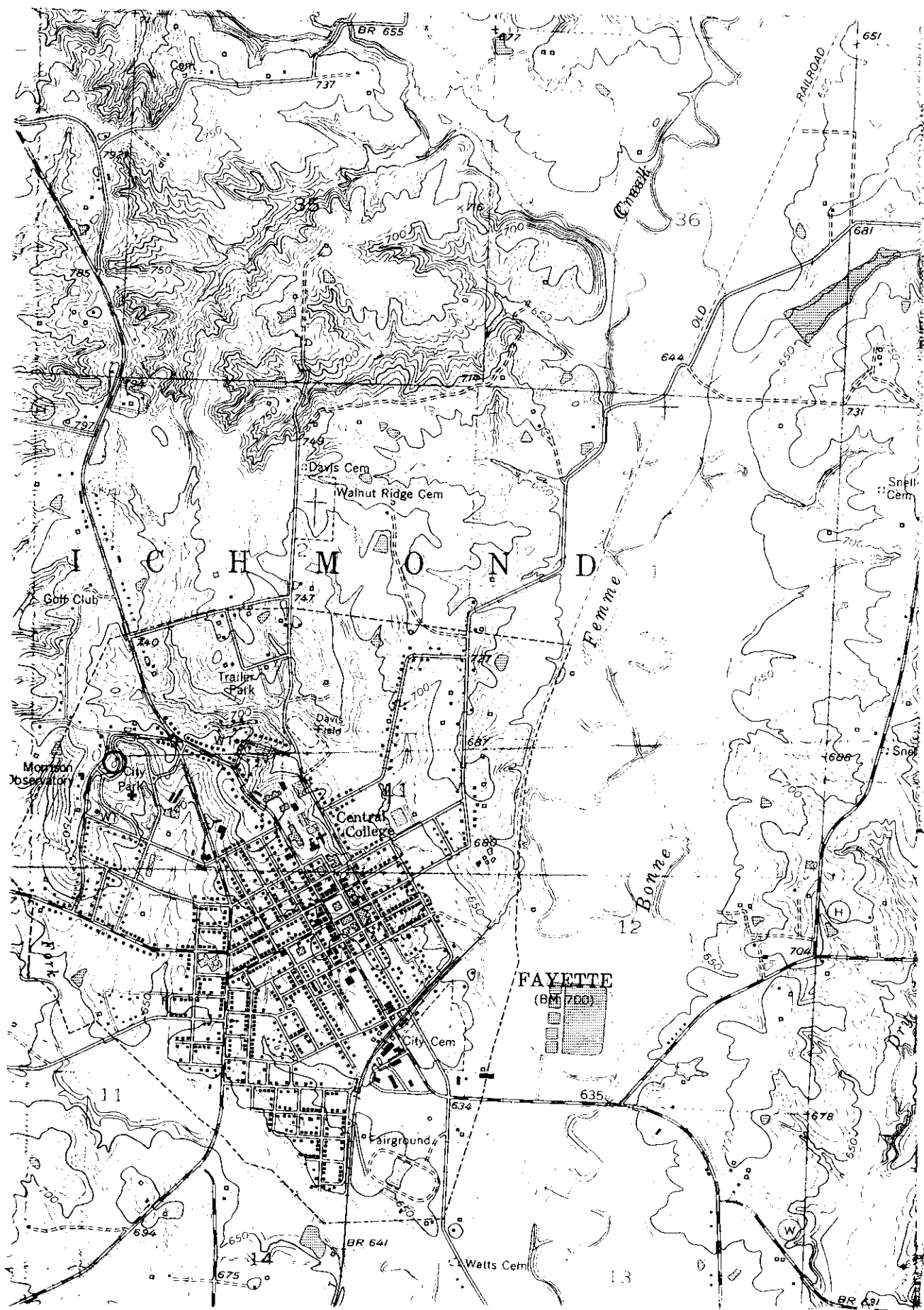
The following information is the same for all photographs: See Figures One and Two, (floorplans), for camera angles.

Fayette City Park Swimming Pool
Fayette City Park, Fayette
Howard County, MO
Debbie Sheals
September, 1998

Negatives on file with Debbie Sheals, 406 West Broadway, Columbia, MO 65203

List of Photographs See plans for indication of camera angles.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Facade, north elevation. | 9. Second floor, from pool deck, with ladders and guard chair. |
| 2. Northeast corner. | 10. Balustrade detail, east side of pool. |
| 3. Southeast corner. | 11. Interior, men's locker room, looking south.. |
| 4. Southwest corner. | 12. Interior, women's locker room, looking south. |
| 5. Southwest corner, entrance. | 13. Interior, entry lobby, looking east. |
| 6. Pool deck and entrance building, looking northeast. | 14. Interior, second floor room, looking west. |
| 7. Northwest corner, entrance. | |
| 8. West elevation detail. | |

















EXTRA
PHOTOS

