

# Chapter Two: Contributing Features

## Introduction

This chapter begins with a description of the environmental and cultural contexts of the study area, followed by a summary of its physical history from 1867 to 1957. A detailed description of the area during the period of significance, from 1957 to 1958, is presented next. An extensive section follows that describes the existing character of the site, organized into four character areas. The final section presents an analysis of changes that have occurred within the study area from 1958 to the present and their impact on the historic character of the site.

## Environmental Context

Little Rock developed on the south bank of the Arkansas River at the geographical transition between the Mississippi Alluvial Plain, the Arkansas River Valley, and the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains. Most of the city, including the study area, lies within the Mississippi Alluvial Plain. Here the soil is composed of deep layers of sediment deposited during the past two million years by the activities of the Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers, hence the prevalence of farming in this area.<sup>1</sup> However, the composition of soils underlying the Central High School site is described as “Urban Land,” a classification used for areas that have been heavily developed and likely augmented over time by material imported from surrounding areas.<sup>2</sup>

Water activity over time has cut through the sedimentary soils of the Little Rock area, creating a rolling landscape of hills and streambeds. The neighborhood around Central High School developed along a low ridge between two tributaries to Fourche Creek, several miles to the south of the study area. Located on the western edge of this ridge, the school occupies one of the highest points in the neighborhood and sits almost at the same elevation as the Arkansas State Capitol building. With the exception of its western edge, the topography of the study area is relatively flat.

From east to west, the high school site falls approximately sixty feet in elevation, draining towards the western tributary of Fourche Creek. There are no known intermittent or perennial streams flowing from the site and no known springs, although one report mentions the possible existence of a perched water table underneath the high school building.<sup>3</sup> This has not

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<sup>1</sup> *Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Inventory* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, revised 2003), 11-12. (*Cultural Landscape Inventory*)

<sup>2</sup> Soil Survey of Pulaski County, 1975. Referenced in the NPS Central High Visitors Center Comprehensive Site Assessment Report, Terracon Consultants, Inc., 2004, 12-17.

<sup>3</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 3.

1 been substantiated by any other information and Facilities staff of the Little Rock School  
2 District have not witnessed any evidence of its existence.<sup>4</sup>

3 Native vegetation of the Little Rock area includes a mixture of pines and hardwoods, but  
4 within the developed part of the city and indeed at the Central High School site, the native  
5 palette has been augmented by non-native species that thrive in urban soils. It is likely that  
6 most of the vegetation on site today was planted or seeded after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century  
7 when it was developed as West End Park and after Central High School was constructed.

## 8 **Cultural Context**

9 Little Rock, located close to the approximate geographical center of the state, is the capital of  
10 Arkansas and its largest city. It is also the seat of Pulaski County. In 2006, the City of Little  
11 Rock was estimated to have a population of 184,422. Together with North Little Rock, a  
12 separate municipality located across the river from Little Rock, and the immediate region  
13 surrounding them, the metropolitan area has a population of 652,834. Little Rock has shown  
14 little growth in population within the city limits since 2000, when it was estimated at  
15 183,133. In 2000, the racial makeup of the city was 55.1% Caucasian and 40.4% African  
16 American, with the balance composed of other races.<sup>5</sup> The population of the study area in  
17 2003 was estimated at around 5,000, with around half making an income between \$0-14,000  
18 and 92% being African American.<sup>6</sup>

19 The economy of Little Rock is based on a mix of public and private, and commercial and  
20 industrial companies and institutions. Major private employers include Arkansas Blue Cross  
21 and Blue Shield, Entergy, Raytheon, The Sharper Image, Siemens, and Timex. One of the  
22 largest public employers is the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and its  
23 associates, the Arkansas Children's Hospital, located at the northeast corner of the study area,  
24 and the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System. Large private employers with  
25 headquarters in Little Rock include Alltel, Dillard's, Windstream Communications, Acxiom,  
26 Metropolitan National Bank, Rose Law Firm, Nuvell Financial Services, Central Flying  
27 Service, and Stephens, Inc.<sup>7</sup> While employment patterns of the study area are not known, it is  
28 relatively close to the State Capitol complex and the Arkansas Children's Hospital, which are  
29 large local employers.

30 The entire study area is located within a Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone as  
31 defined by the Small Business Administration. This program encourages economic  
32 development and employment growth in distressed areas by providing access to more Federal  
33 contracting opportunities. This comes in the form of required percentages of HUB-qualified  
34 small businesses in many federal contracts.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Steven St. John, Little Rock School District, telephone conversation with Laura Knott, 15 April 2008.

<sup>5</sup> "Little Rock (city), Arkansas," U.S. Census Bureau web site, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/05/0541000.html> (accessed May 6, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> "HUBZone Program," United States Small Business Administration web site, <https://eweb1.sba.gov/hubzone/internet/index.cfm> (accessed May 6, 2008).

1 The study area is also located within the Pulaski Empowerment Zone, an area of 17.2 square  
2 miles in downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock designated by the U.S. Department of  
3 Housing and Urban Development for economic development through federal tax incentives.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4 *Historic Designation*

5 Little Rock Central High School was added to the National Register of Historic Places on  
6 August 19, 1977 and designated a National Historic Landmark on May 20, 1982. The Little  
7 Rock Central High School National Historic Site was established as a unit of the National  
8 Park Service on November 6, 1998. These designations recognize the nationally significant  
9 role represented by the school in the desegregation of public schools in the United States.

10 The school is located within the Central High Neighborhood Historic District, which was  
11 listed on the National Register on August 16, 1996.<sup>10</sup> This designation recognizes the local  
12 architectural significance of the residential buildings in the neighborhood, most of which  
13 were constructed between the 1890s and the 1940s. Because the period of significance ends  
14 in 1947, this designation does not address the national significance of the role of the school  
15 and its neighborhood setting in desegregation.

16 There is no locally designated historic district identified in this area by the City of Little  
17 Rock, so no special local zoning regulations apply to development in the neighborhood.  
18 However, plans are currently underway to create a local historic district around the Central  
19 High School site.<sup>11</sup> This may include a special zoning ordinance that will affect development  
20 and permit review in the area.

#### 21 *Land Use and Zoning*

22 Because the study area is located entirely within the city limits of Little Rock, it is subject to  
23 all city development controls and zoning ordinances, with the exception of properties owned  
24 by the National Park Service. The area is mostly residential with some commercial and light  
25 industrial uses.

26 Zoning within the study area generally reflects land uses and is primarily residential (*Figure*  
27 *2-1*). The Central High School property and a few of the residential lots within the area are  
28 zoned R-4, Two Family District, which permits duplexes. Other residential lots are zoned R-  
29 3, Single Family District, which allows development on small lots, and R-5, Urban  
30 Residence District, which permits apartments.

31 A small number of lots located along S. Park Street to the east of the school, a large lot to the  
32 west at Jones and W. Fifteenth Streets, and two other lots further to the east are zoned POD,  
33 Planned Office District, for office development as the intended principal use, but allowing  
34 for commercial and residential use with special permits. The residential lots to the east of the

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<sup>9</sup> Pulaski Empowerment Zone web site, <http://www.empowerpulaski.com/index.htm> (accessed May 6, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Minyard, City of Little Rock, telephone conversation with Laura Knott, January 5, 2008.

1 school were zoned POD in January 2006 in order to allow the owner to use the houses as a  
2 bed and breakfast and gallery space.

3 Only a few lots in the study area are zoned for offices. Two lots towards the northeast of the  
4 area are zoned O-2, Office and Institutional District, which allows large tract office and  
5 institutional development and provides for high-rise office development. The lot occupied by  
6 Bullock Temple on S. Park Street, as well as a number of other lots to the north and east  
7 concentrated at the intersection of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive and W. Eleventh Street,  
8 are zoned O-3, General Office District, which allows for the development of freestanding  
9 offices serving a wide range of public needs.

10 Commercial zoning in the area is concentrated primarily along W. Twelfth Street, Dr. Martin  
11 Luther King, Jr., Drive, and Wright Avenue. Two lots and west of the study area are zoned  
12 PCD, Planned Commercial, which is used for commercial mixed use development. One lot is  
13 zoned C-4, Open Display Commercial District, which allows for development of a range of  
14 uses requiring open display of merchandise such as automobiles, mobile homes, and building  
15 materials. A small number of lots in the study area are zoned C-3, General Commercial  
16 District, for general sales and service uses, are located throughout the area. One of these lots  
17 is 1600 S. Park Street; it is not known if this is a mapping error or if plans have been made in  
18 the past to open a business on that lot.

19 Centennial Park, located between W. Fifteenth and W. Sixteenth Streets is zoned PR, Park  
20 and Recreation District, which indicated parks that are included in the adopted City Master  
21 Plan.

## 22 *Transportation*

23 The study area is accessible from Interstate 30, which runs from north to south about two  
24 miles east of the site, and Interstate 630, located approximately one-half mile north of the  
25 site. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive is a major artery that leads south from the State  
26 Capitol complex to the eastern end of the neighborhood and beyond. It intersects with Wright  
27 Avenue, which forms the southern boundary of the study area. The western boundary is  
28 formed by the tracks of the Union Pacific railroad. Smaller local and collector streets form a  
29 grid within these boundaries. The northern boundary, W. Eleventh Street, is one of these  
30 local streets.

31 Some of the streets in the neighborhood area have names with historic associations related to  
32 the Civil Rights Era, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, Daisy Bates, and Charles  
33 Bussey Avenue, named after the first African American mayor of Little Rock. These names  
34 reflect a local consciousness of the history of the area.

35 Two planning documents that may affect future management of the site are the Master Street  
36 Plan and the Bicycle Plan.<sup>12</sup> The Master Street Plan organizes and provides design standards

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<sup>12</sup> “Little Rock Master Street Plan, City of Little Rock web site,  
<http://www.littlerock.org/CityDepartments/PlanningandDevelopment/subsection.aspx?PageID=74> (accessed  
December 1, 2007).

1 for all streets within the city limits. According to this plan, Wright Avenue, which forms the  
2 southern boundary of the study area, is a minor arterial. Minor arterials provide connections  
3 to and through urban areas, have a 90 foot right-of-way, four lanes, and carry a high volume  
4 of traffic. This stretch of Wright Avenue is zoned for both commercial and high-rise  
5 apartment use.

6 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive and Daisy Bates are both considered collector streets,  
7 which connect traffic from local streets to arterials or to activity centers, with the secondary  
8 function of providing access to adjoining property. The other streets within the study area are  
9 considered local, which function primarily to provide access to adjacent property.

10 The Bicycle Plan classifies Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, Daisy Bates, and Jones Street  
11 from W. Thirteenth to Daisy Bates as “Class II”, indicating that the existing street surface is  
12 to be used for a bicycle route, but that striping to create lanes on both sides of the street are to  
13 be added for safety at a minimum of six feet from the curb.

#### 14 *Neighborhood Planning*

15 There is no current Neighborhood Action Plan for the Central High School area. One was  
16 initiated but there were many points of disagreement between neighborhood residents and the  
17 Planning Department, so the Plan was put on hold in December of 2005. In January 2006, a  
18 document was developed by neighborhood residents called “The Central High School and  
19 Capitol Hill Neighborhoods Design Overlay District.”<sup>13</sup> The document, which has not been  
20 adopted by the City of Little Rock, was developed as one of the many initiatives introduced  
21 by the joint efforts of the Central High and Capitol Hill Neighborhoods to counteract a trend  
22 of continuing degradation of the community with a plan to redevelop the physical  
23 environment and attract more people to live and work in the area. The boundaries of the  
24 suggested overlay are proposed as Interstate 630 to the north, Woodrow Street to the west,  
25 Roosevelt Road to the south, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive to the east.

26 The Design Overlay District document outlines several design principles, including the  
27 preservation of a mix of building types, scales, and spacing; a diversity of house types to  
28 accommodate different kinds of groups; increased density and introduction of more civic  
29 amenities in commercial areas; consolidated parking accessed from alleys; inclusion of  
30 planting as part of neighborhood and commercial area design; and maintenance of existing  
31 front porches and sidewalks. Many of these principles contributed to the management and  
32 design guidelines in Chapter Three of this report.

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<sup>13</sup> Central High Neighborhood, Inc. and Capitol Hill Neighborhood Association with William Asti, “The Central High School and Capitol Hill Neighborhoods Design Overlay District,” 2006 (Blanche McKee research materials, Little Rock Central High School NHS Archives, Little Rock, AR).

## 1 **Site History**

### 2 *Overview of Neighborhood Development, 1867 to 1957*

3 The first permanent settlement in Little Rock occurred around 1820, when the Arkansas  
4 Territorial government chose the site to be the capital. In 1835, Little Rock was incorporated  
5 as a city. In June 1836, the State of Arkansas was created and Little Rock remained the  
6 capital.<sup>14</sup>

7 The city grew slowly, developing into the state's commercial center through its port on the  
8 Arkansas River. By the 1860s, the city's population topped 5,000 residents.<sup>15</sup> Demographic  
9 changes after the Civil War and during reconstruction as well as the arrival of the first  
10 railroad in 1871 increased the city's population to 25,000 by 1887. With this increased  
11 population, the city began to expand beyond its original boundaries to newly platted  
12 additions west, south, and east of the city. Streetcars, first used in the city in 1877, helped  
13 fuel the development of these new suburban areas.<sup>16</sup>

14 The study area includes two of these mid-nineteenth century additions: the 1867 Centennial  
15 Addition and the 1873 Park Addition. These additions were developed incrementally as  
16 individual subdivisions were platted within them at different times.<sup>17</sup> A central feature of the  
17 Park Addition was West End Park, now the site of Central High School. This park was  
18 privately developed in 1885 by the Little Rock Traction and Electric Company, one of the  
19 city's streetcar operators, and was located at the end of the Ninth Streetcar line.<sup>18</sup> The park,  
20 as was typical in the late nineteenth century, was developed as an amenity to draw  
21 prospective buyers to the area.

22 West End Park, then the largest park in the city, was described in 1890 by a visitor's guide  
23 as:

24       ...well shaded and beautifully rolling. It is also commodious, covering about  
25       six blocks. A good well supplies abundant water. There are refreshment  
26       stands, a large covered dancing pavilion, a small artificial lake for boating,  
27       and a track for bicycle races with an amphitheater for viewing the same.<sup>19</sup>

28 The park was established to stimulate development in the area because, although the  
29 surrounding land was subdivided in the 1860s and 1870s, only a few individual houses had

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<sup>14</sup> Guide Publishing Company, *The City of Little Rock. Guide to the "City of Roses" for Visitor and Citizen* (Little Rock, AR: Guide Publishing Co., 1890), 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> Subdivisions within the Study area and Centennial Addition include Allis and Dickinson's, Aikens, Parish's, Barton and Edgerton's, and Fulk's Subdivisions (Sandra Taylor Smith and Anne Wagner Speed, *Little Rock's Central High School Neighborhood Historic District* (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1999), 3-6).

<sup>18</sup> Guide Publishing Company, 17-18.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 49-50.

1 been built by the time. Large-scale residential development of the area did not happen until  
2 the 1890s, after the park was established.<sup>20</sup>

3 While the 1888 Higgins *Map of the City of Little Rock, Arkansas* does not show individual  
4 dwellings, it does indicate that the Centennial and Park Additions were being developed  
5 (*Figure 2-2*). This map shows West End Park and identifies several commercial, light  
6 industrial, religious, and institutional buildings within the study area. These include a sash  
7 and door blind manufacturing facility at the northwest corner of Spring and Thirteenth  
8 Streets, a Methodist Episcopal Church on Marshall Street north of Thirteenth, and a brick  
9 yard on Battery Street south of Thirteenth. Streetcar lines are shown running along W.  
10 Fourteenth Street (now Daisy Bates), High (now Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive), and  
11 Thirteenth Streets. The street and block pattern shown on this map is largely the same as  
12 exists today, except that this map indicates that Fifteenth Street once extended west to S.  
13 Park Street, whereas today it ends at Schiller Street. In addition, this map does not show  
14 West Sherman, now called South Schiller Street, which extends through W. Twelfth Street to  
15 W. Sixteenth Street.

16 Sanborn Map Company’s fire insurance map coverage of the study area during the nineteenth  
17 century is limited. It was not until 1897 that portions of the West End were even depicted by  
18 the company (*Figure 2-3*). Most of the houses are described in the map as one-story, frame  
19 dwellings with front porches and a fairly uniform setback. Light industrial enterprises shown  
20 on these maps include the Tipton and Hurst Greenhouses (at W. Fourteenth Street—now  
21 Daisy Bates —and S. Park Street, now the site of the NHS Visitor Center), the J. H.  
22 Pritchard Lumber Company, and the L. H. Whitcomb Planing Mill on the south side of  
23 Twelfth Street between Schiller and Spring Streets.<sup>21</sup> Stores were distributed throughout the  
24 neighborhood, including on S. Park Street at W. Fourteenth Street and at Sixteenth Street.  
25 Several of these stores were built on the street right-of-way, with no setback. Institutions  
26 shown on the Sanborn maps include the Centennial School (1864, now demolished) at  
27 Fifteenth and Wolfe Streets, and the Ebenezer M. E. Church on Marshall Street south of W.  
28 Twelfth Street. This map also shows Fifteenth Street extending to S. Park Street whereas  
29 today it ends at Schiller Street. At least some public utilities were available to residents of the  
30 study area by this time, because fire hydrants are shown at most intersections.<sup>22</sup>

31 By the time the Sanborn Map Company surveyed the neighborhood in 1913, most of the  
32 properties had been developed, although there were still empty lots, particularly between W.

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<sup>20</sup> Sandra Taylor Smith and Anne Wagner Speed, *Little Rock’s Central High School Neighborhood Historic District* (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1999), 18.

<sup>21</sup> Tipton and Hurst advertised themselves as “Rose City Green Houses,” with a specialty of finer roses, as well as general greenhouse and bedding plants (Guide Publishing Company, *The City of Little Rock. Guide to the “City of Roses” for Visitor and Citizen* (Little Rock, AK: Guide Publishing Co., 1890), 40). Another greenhouse within the Study area specializing in growing roses was the Edward Coleman greenhouses at W. Fourteenth and Wolfe Streets. These are not shown on the 1897 Sanborn maps. Coleman’s operation grew from two small green houses in 1897 to eight greenhouses in 1890 (Guide Publishing Company, *The City of Little Rock. Guide to the “City of Roses” for Visitor and Citizen* (Little Rock, AR: Guide Publishing Co., 1890), 87-89).

<sup>22</sup> “Little Rock, Arkansas – 1897,” Fire insurance map, Sanborn Map Company.

1 Sixteenth Street and Wright Avenue at the southern edge of the study area (*Figure 2-4*).<sup>23</sup> A  
 2 comparison of Sanborn maps shows that the period between 1899 and 1914 marked a major  
 3 growth period for the neighborhood. Thirty-eight percent of the buildings surveyed in 1996  
 4 for the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District nomination were noted as being  
 5 constructed during this period.<sup>24</sup>

6 The majority of houses shown on the 1913 Sanborn map were one-story to two-story, wood-  
 7 frame houses, with front porches. Two-story houses were concentrated along the west side of  
 8 Schiller Avenue south of W. Fourteenth Street (now Daisy Bates), and along Battery Street.  
 9 The National Register nomination for the neighborhood reports that forty percent of the  
 10 houses were built in the Craftsman style, typically including low-pitched and gabled or  
 11 hipped roofs, deep eaves, decorative eave brackets, asymmetrical elevations, front porches  
 12 located under the main roof—usually supported by tapered, square columns, double-hung  
 13 windows, and, often, hand-crafted stone or wood work. About 27% of the homes in this area  
 14 were of the Colonial Revival style, usually two-story with symmetrical elevations, gabled  
 15 roofs with ridges running parallel to the street, accented doorways—usually with columned  
 16 porches, and evenly spaced windows. Other architectural styles represented within this  
 17 historic district include Queen Anne, American Foursquare, Plain Traditional, English  
 18 Revival, Spanish Revival, and Minimal Traditional.<sup>25</sup>

19 Original prices for these houses varied widely; modest, one-story houses sold for \$2,000 or  
 20 less, while on more affluent streets, such as Summit, Marshall, Wolfe, or Battery, larger,  
 21 two-story houses sold for \$5,000 to \$7,000.<sup>26</sup> The range of prices reflected the local mixture  
 22 of economic classes. By the early twentieth century the area had been settled by both  
 23 working- and middle-class families. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, businessmen, cooks,  
 24 clergymen, chauffeurs, maids, and barbers all lived in the area. Furthermore, the presence of  
 25 the railroad in the area drew railroad company employees to the West End. Incomes allowed  
 26 a measure of comfort and most of these residents were homeowners.<sup>27</sup>

27 The study area attracted a mixture of white and African American families. Families of both  
 28 races resided on Jones and Dennison Streets, and S. Park Street (labeled as Park Avenue on  
 29 the Sanborn map).<sup>28</sup> However, the majority of African Americans in the area lived in the  
 30 Dunbar neighborhood.<sup>29</sup> Development in the Dunbar neighborhood accommodated the

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<sup>23</sup> “Little Rock, Arkansas – 1913,” Fire insurance map, Sanborn Map Company.

<sup>24</sup> Smith and Speed, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Sandra Taylor Smith, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form Central High School Neighborhood Historic District* (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1996), 5-13; Central High School Neighborhood Historic District List of Contributing Structures (N.p.: n.p., n.d.) provided by NHS staff April 2008 (provided in Appendix A).

<sup>26</sup> Smith and Speed, 15.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> The Dunbar Neighborhood is currently being surveyed to become a National Register Historic District. The proposed district boundaries are: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to the west, Roosevelt Road to the south, Chester to 22<sup>nd</sup> to State to Charles Bussey to the alley between Gaines and State Street on the east, and IH 630 to Chester to Daisy Bates Drive to the north. This description came from the Request for Qualifications for a

1 dramatic increase in Little Rock’s African American population following the Civil War and  
2 continued to grow in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, gradually moving into what was known as the  
3 Centennial Addition, between 9<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> streets. Racial composition was more mixed south  
4 of 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

5 The Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School was constructed in 1929 at the center of the Dunbar  
6 neighborhood (*Figure 2-6 and see Figure 1-2*). It was funded in part by Julius Rosenwald,  
7 president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, as part of a nationwide program to improve  
8 public education for African Americans in the early 1900s. Dunbar was one of 338  
9 Rosenwald schools built in Arkansas.

10 Retail developments within the study area as indicated on the 1913 Sanborn map were  
11 located primarily on corner lots and were typically one-story tall. Many were situated along  
12 Wright Avenue at the southern edge of the study area and there was a store at each corner of  
13 the intersection of W. Twelfth and Battery Streets. The Sanborn map also indicates that the  
14 larger industrial works shown in 1897 were no longer in operation, but light industrial uses,  
15 such as the Tipton and Hurst Greenhouse at the corner of W. Fourteenth Street and Park  
16 Avenue (now S. Park Street) and another greenhouse on the south side of W. Thirteenth  
17 Street east of the railroad, were still operating. In addition, a blacksmith shop occupied W.  
18 Twelfth Street west of Kramer, a carpenter shop on W. Fourteenth Street west of Summit,  
19 and a bottle works was at the rear of a property on Battery Street south of W. Seventeenth  
20 Street. Bakeries were located on Wright Avenue east of Wolfe and on W. Fourteenth Street  
21 east of Wolfe.

22 By 1913, there were more churches shown in the study area than in 1897. These included the  
23 Jerusalem Baptist Church on Park Avenue (now S. Park Street) north of W. Twelfth Street,  
24 the Asbury M. E. Church at the intersection of Schiller Avenue and W. Twelfth Street, the  
25 First Church of God on Marshall Street north of W. Thirteenth Street, and St. Bartholomew’s  
26 Catholic Church on Marshall Street north of W. Seventeenth Street.

27 The only public school indicated on the 1913 Sanborn map within the study area was the  
28 Centennial School, located on the block bounded by W. Fifteenth, Wolfe, W. Sixteenth, and  
29 Battery Streets. Arkansas Baptist College, a historically African American college, was  
30 founded in 1884, but did not appear on the Sanborn map until 1913. This college is shown  
31 south of W. Sixteenth Street and east of Marshall Street at the eastern edge of the study area  
32 and included a dormitory, a manual training building, and the college building. The Little  
33 Rock Sanitarium and Annex building were also within the study area, along Wolfe Street  
34 between W. Twelfth and W. Thirteenth Streets.

35 Only the western end of West End Park is shown on the 1913 Sanborn map. After 1907, the  
36 Little Rock Traction and Electric Company had sold West End Park to the City of Little  
37 Rock for \$30,000 and it was renamed “Civitan Park.”<sup>30</sup> By this time, the bicycle track that

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“Historic Preservation Consultant—Dunbar Survey,” provided by the Little Rock Planning and Development Department, January 2008.

<sup>30</sup> C. Allan Brown, “Report on the Historic Cultural, and/or Design Significance of the Landscape Setting of Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas” (nd), 2.

1 had been at the western end of the park was replaced with a baseball field. This field was  
2 known as Kavanaugh Field, although the 1913 Sanborn map shows it as Highland Baseball  
3 Park. Kavanaugh Field was home to the Little Rock Baseball Association in the early  
4 twentieth century.<sup>31</sup>

5 John Nolen, noted Cambridge, Massachusetts planner, prepared a *Report on a Park System*  
6 *for Little Rock, Arkansas* in 1913 in which he recommended a full size baseball diamond for  
7 West End Park, complete with a grandstand, bleachers, tennis courts, and a field house.  
8 These active recreation spaces were to be in the western half of the park, while the eastern  
9 section of the park would remain open woodland with winding paths. It is not known if  
10 Nolen's suggestions for the park were ever implemented.<sup>32</sup> It is this site that would later  
11 become the site for the construction of Central High School (see details, below). Thirteen  
12 residences and four commercial structures are shown abutting the west side of this park in  
13 1913, where Quigley Stadium would later be constructed, and east of Jones Street.

14 Another report indicates that many streets within the study area were still unpaved into the  
15 1910s. By 1914, only portions of Summit, Schiller, W. Sixteenth, W. Seventeenth, W.  
16 Eighteenth, W. Nineteenth and W. Twentieth Streets were paved and this done as part of a  
17 Little Rock street improvement district project.<sup>33</sup>

18 The 1939-1950 Sanborn map of the area indicates that changes in neighborhood buildings  
19 and structures in the decades since 1913 had incremental but steady (*Figure 2-5*).<sup>34</sup> Larger  
20 lots were subdivided and formerly vacant lots developed. Within the study area, 47% of the  
21 houses and other buildings were constructed after 1913 and by 1950, few empty lots  
22 remained in the neighborhood.<sup>35</sup>

23 Most houses indicated on the 1939-1950 Sanborn were one-story to two-story, wood-frame  
24 houses, with front porches. The taller houses were concentrated along the west side of  
25 Schiller Avenue, south of W. Fourteenth Street (now Daisy Bates) and along Battery Street.  
26 There were also a small number of houses indicated as having brick or stone veneers over  
27 their frame structures.

28 The 1939-1950 Sanborn map shows more duplexes than the 1913 Sanborn. Some of these  
29 buildings were shown as single houses in 1913, but had been divided by 1950, a common  
30 occurrence in response to the economic hardships of the Great Depression. The map also  
31 shows new purpose-built apartment houses, like those the northeast corner of W. Fourteenth  
32 Street (now Daisy Bates) and Battery Street.

33 Stores within the study area still were located primarily on corner lots and were typically  
34 one-story tall. There were rows of connected stores on W. Fourteenth Street (now Daisy  
35 Bates) west of Bishop Street and along High Street (now Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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<sup>31</sup> Smith and Speed, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Brown, 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Smith and Speed, 12.

<sup>34</sup> "Little Rock, Arkansas – 1939-1950," Fire insurance map, Sanborn Map Company.

<sup>35</sup> Smith and Speed, 18.

1 Boulevard) north of W. Sixteenth Street. Both sides of Battery Street between W. Eleventh  
2 and W. Twelfth Streets had large concentrations of commercial enterprises, including filling  
3 stations, an auto repair shop, a bake house, and a pressing room. Wright Street also remained  
4 a commercial corridor. The Tipton and Hurst Greenhouses were still depicted at the northeast  
5 corner of W. Fourteenth (see above) and S. Park Streets.

6 A concentration of light industries, such as a planing mill, a woodworking shop, and a  
7 lumber yard, repair shops, and stock yards for the Arkansas Power and Light Company, a  
8 mattress factory, the Garrett Brothers Greenhouses, and the Robinson Lumber Company  
9 occupied the area between Jones Street and the railroad tracks.<sup>36</sup>

10 The number of churches in the study area increased between 1913 and 1950. Several new  
11 congregations appeared on the 1939-1950 Sanborn map, including the Second Baptist  
12 Church, Temple Missionary Baptist, the Church of Christ, and the Central Church of Christ.  
13 Some churches shown on the 1913 Sanborn had expanded their buildings by 1950. The  
14 Asbury M.E. Church built an adjoining educational building in 1948. The former First  
15 Church of God had become a Seventh Day Adventist Church and had added a school and  
16 several classroom buildings. St. Bartholomew's Roman Catholic Church had built a new  
17 church, a meeting hall, two residences, and a high school constructed in 1948.<sup>37</sup>

18 The Little Rock Senior High School (now Central High School) had been constructed in  
19 1926-1927 (see details, below) and other schools were constructed or improved between  
20 1913 and 1950. West Side Junior High School (between W. Thirteenth, Wolfe, W.  
21 Fourteenth Street, and Marshall Streets), had been built in 1922 and a cafeteria and  
22 auditorium added in 1936, replacing eight houses shown in the 1913 map. The Centennial  
23 School had received a two-story addition in 1934. The Arkansas Baptist College had added  
24 three additional classroom buildings and ten small residences along W. Seventeenth Street.<sup>38</sup>

25 By 1950, the Baptist State Hospital had replaced the Little Rock Sanitarium along the block  
26 between W. Twelfth, Wolfe, W. Thirteenth, and Marshall Streets. The core of this brick six-  
27 story hospital building was constructed in 1924 and a boiler room was added in 1944.<sup>39</sup>

28 Comparison of the Sanborn maps from 1897, 1913, and 1939-1950 suggests that while  
29 development within the study area for this report was slow in the beginning, major growth  
30 occurred after 1913 and the area was almost completely developed by 1950. An aerial  
31 photograph from 1957 confirms the dense urban neighborhood quality of the area  
32 surrounding the school at the time of the crisis of 1957-58 (*Figure 2-7*).

### 33 *The Physical History of Central High School, 1926 to 1957*

34 After the City of Little Rock bought West End Park, it served as a baseball park until  
35 construction began in 1926 on the Little Rock Senior High School, now known as Central

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

1 High School. The school was built to serve the needs of Little Rock’s white high school  
2 students, a population that had outgrown the capacity of existing local white high schools.<sup>40</sup>  
3 The new school was built on the eastern end of the former West End Park and faced east,  
4 toward S. Park Street.

5 The Neo-Gothic Revival, buff-brick building was designed by Little Rock architects George  
6 R. Mann, Eugene John Stern, John Parks Almand, George H. Wittenberg, and Lawson L.  
7 Delony. Designed to accommodate 3,000 students, this 150,000 s.f., four-story building was  
8 devised as a generally Y-shaped plan divided into five distinct sections: the dominant central  
9 portion contained a 2,000-seat auditorium and extending from this portion were four  
10 classroom wings, two to each side, that wrapped around a central reflecting pool in the  
11 building’s foreground (*Figure 2-8*).<sup>41</sup> The school plan and elevation were organized  
12 symmetrically around a central axis that bisected the pool and central building. John  
13 Highberger of Memphis, the landscape architect for the project, designed his composition as  
14 a sunken plaza with the reflecting pool on this axis and contained within the Y-shaped plan  
15 of the building (see *Figure 2-8*).

16 When completed in 1927, Little Rock Senior High School was the second-largest building in  
17 the state, after the State Capitol, and the largest high school in the United States. It cost \$1.5  
18 million to construct. Shortly after it was completed, the American Institute of Architects  
19 declared the building “America’s Most Beautiful High School.”<sup>42</sup> In her 1927 dedication  
20 speech, the School Board President, Lillian McDermott, explained that the school would be a  
21 place where "ambition is fired, where personality is developed, where opportunity is  
22 presented and where preparation in the solution of life's problems is begun" (*Figure 2-9*).<sup>43</sup>

23 Eight years after the school was completed, the Works Progress Administration (WPA)  
24 began construction on the 12,000-seat Quigley Stadium, located on the west end of the  
25 school property. The project was part of the larger WPA recreation projects program, which  
26 was responsible for the construction of thousands of auditoriums, stadiums, athletic fields,  
27 swimming pools, bathhouses, golf courses, playgrounds, and bandshells throughout the  
28 United States.<sup>44</sup> The WPA operated in Arkansas from 1935 – 1943 and received over \$117  
29 million in federal funds. Quigley Stadium was one of several large stadiums built by the  
30 WPA in Little Rock, including a 25,000-seat football stadium at the University of Arkansas.

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<sup>40</sup> These earlier high schools include: Sherman High School (1869, at Eighth and Sherman Streets); the Scott Street School (1885, at W. Fourteenth and Scott Streets); Peabody High School (named for philanthropist George Peabody, 1890, at Capitol and Gaines Streets); Little Rock High School (1905, W. Fourteenth and Cumberland Streets) (National Park Service, *Special Resource Study of Little Rock Central High School* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, August 1998), 3.

<sup>41</sup> James Sheire, “Little Rock High School,” *National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1982).

<sup>42</sup> *Special Resource Study*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> "Little Rock Central High School," Little Rock Central School District web page, <http://www.lrsd.org/display.cfm?id=132> (accessed January 8, 2008).

<sup>44</sup> “Camp Ouachita Girl Scout Historic District, Lake Sylvia, Perry County.” Arkansas Historic Preservation Program web site, [http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/historic-properties/\\_search\\_nomination\\_popup.asp?id=300](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/historic-properties/_search_nomination_popup.asp?id=300) (accessed May 5, 2008).

1 Such structures are now monuments to President Roosevelt's ambitious federal relief  
2 initiatives, which helped to stimulate the economy after the Great Depression.<sup>45</sup>

3 Quigley Stadium was completed in 1937 at a cost of \$10,000 and subsequently named for  
4 Earl Quigley who coached Little Rock High School's Tigers from 1916-1946.<sup>46</sup> As the  
5 state's largest stadium at the time, it hosted—in addition to high school teams—numerous  
6 college and university teams, including the Arkansas Razorbacks.

7 In the late 1940s, shortly after the close of World War II, the school district acquired two  
8 Army barracks and assembled them into one building on the school grounds, the original  
9 Campus Inn. The building was used as a snack bar to help accommodate overflow from the  
10 school cafeteria.<sup>47</sup> In 1951, just a few years after the construction of the Campus Inn, the  
11 Tiger Fieldhouse was added to the school to accommodate the basketball team. The building  
12 was connected to the northern wall of the central wing of the school and its buff brick veneer  
13 matched the high school building.<sup>48</sup>

14 Central High School, Quigley Stadium, the Campus Inn, and the grounds of the high school  
15 and streetscape surrounding these two buildings, provided the setting for the events that  
16 occurred in 1957 and 1958. The front of the school, facing S. Park Street, was the stage in the  
17 summer of 1957 for early demonstrations by segregationists protesting Central High School's  
18 planned integration. It was here and within the surrounding streetscape, those on September  
19 4, 1957, nine African American students, known now as the "Little Rock Nine," attempted to  
20 enter Central High School, but were turned away by the National Guard (*Figure 2-10*). It was  
21 in this setting that, after being stopped by soldiers at the corner of W. Fourteenth Street and  
22 S. Park Streets, Elizabeth Eckford, continued south along S. Park Street to Ponder's Drug  
23 Store (*Figure 2-11*). It was from the bus stop across the street from Ponder's Drug Store  
24 (Capel Building) and the high school that she made her escape from the angry crowd (*Figure*  
25 *2-12*).

26 It was also within this setting that the nine students made a second attempt, on September 23,  
27 1957, to enter the school, moving through the formal front garden and up to the terraced main  
28 entry, and just hours later leaving the school with police escort from the lower level garage  
29 area at the rear of the building (*Figure 2-13*). Many national and local news reporters  
30 documented events within the school setting that day, including newsman Alex Wilson, who  
31 was attacked by the crowd and seriously wounded across W. Sixteenth from and just east of  
32 Ponder's (*Figures 2-14 and 2-15*).

33 On September 25, 1957, the U.S. Army's 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne escorted the students into the  
34 school, again passing through the local streetscape and formal front garden of the school  
35 (*Figures 2-16 and 2-17*). Those same troops remained in Little Rock until November 27,

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<sup>45</sup> "Works Progress Administration," Encyclopedia of Arkansas,  
<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2284> (accessed January 8,  
2008).

<sup>46</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 34.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>48</sup> *Special Resource Study*, 5.

1 1957, encamped on the playing fields behind Central High School and adjacent to Quigley  
2 Stadium (*Figures 2-18 through 2-24*). Historic photographs document the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne on  
3 and around the school campus as they continued to serve as escorts to the students through  
4 the fall of 1957 and the Arkansas National Guard as they patrolled the school property  
5 throughout the remainder of the school year to help maintain order (*Figure 2-25 through 2-*  
6 *28*). Historic photographs also document this historic setting, when Governor Faubus closed  
7 Central High School in 1958, along with Little Rock's other three public high schools  
8 (*Figure 2-29*). It remained closed for the entire school year of 1958-59. Finally, it was within  
9 the neighborhood setting for these historic events, that the citizens of Little Rock continued  
10 to attempt to live their lives with as much normalcy as possible (*Figure 2-30*).

### 11 *Contributing Features, 1957-1958*

12 The period of significance for the study area is considered to be 1957-1958, as indicated in  
13 the 1982 nomination for the Little Rock Central High School National Landmark.<sup>49</sup> This was  
14 the school year in which the major events of the historic desegregation crisis took place,  
15 beginning on September 2, 1957, when Governor Faubus dispatched the Arkansas National  
16 Guard and state police to the school to prevent desegregation at Central High, and ending  
17 approximately a year later when Faubus ordered the closing of the four public high schools in  
18 Little Rock (see Chapter One). It is these events that comprise the central interpretive theme  
19 of the NHS.

20 The landmark nomination differs from the 1977 Little Rock Central High School National  
21 Register nomination in the period of significance. The 1977 nomination indicates two dates  
22 of significance: September, 1927, the completion date of the Central High School building  
23 and September 25, 1957, the date of official enrollment of the Little Rock Nine in Central  
24 High. While the construction date of the building is important, the specified date of  
25 enrollment downplays the importance of subsequent events, such as the continued occupation  
26 of the site through the year by the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and ongoing media coverage.

27 In marked contrast to both of the nominations mentioned above, the Central High  
28 Neighborhood Historic District was nominated at a local level of significance for its  
29 architecture. Its period of significance is from 1890 to 1947, the era of the physical  
30 development of the neighborhood surrounding the school.<sup>50</sup> This period does not include the  
31 year of the desegregation crisis and therefore the district nomination serves as supportive  
32 information only.

33 Cultural landscape features present during the period of significance were determined from  
34 careful study and evaluation of the 1950 Sanborn maps, historic photographs from the period,  
35 and written documentation. These features have been organized according to characteristics  
36 adapted from the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* as determined as

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<sup>49</sup> Sheire, *National Register Nomination Form*.

<sup>50</sup> Sandra Taylor Smith, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form Central High School Neighborhood Historic District* (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1996), 16.

1 those most applicable in defining and analyzing the character of the Central High School  
2 study area from 1957 to 1958.

### 3 *Land Use*

4 The immediate neighborhood around Central High School from 1957 to 1958 was composed  
5 of private residences, churches, schools, businesses, and light industry. The northeast corner  
6 of the study area contained the most non-residential lots. The Arkansas Baptist Hospital  
7 occupied an entire city block and the Seventh Day Adventist Church and School, the Central  
8 Church of Christ, and West Side Junior High were also in the northeast corner of the study  
9 area. Centennial Public School was located three blocks south of the hospital and Asbury  
10 Methodist Church three blocks to the west. A small number of stores were located along  
11 Twelfth Street and on Battery Street between Twelfth and Eleventh Streets. There were also  
12 several apartment buildings within the neighborhood, primarily on corner lots.

13 Across S. Park Street from the school were the Tipton and Hurst greenhouses, located at the  
14 northeast corner of W. Fourteenth and S. Park Streets (where the NHS Visitor Center is  
15 located today; the Magnolia Mobil service station, on the southeast corner of W. Fourteenth  
16 Street and S. Park Streets; and Ponders Drug Store, on the southeast corner of W. Sixteenth  
17 and S. Park Streets.<sup>51</sup> A mix of residential and light industrial properties lined the west side  
18 of Jones Street, across from Quigley Stadium. Arkansas Power and Light buildings and a few  
19 residences lined Jones Street, facing east. Behind them and adjacent to the railroad tracks  
20 were Robinson Lumber, the Garrett Brothers greenhouse, a planing mill, and the Cross and  
21 Rogers lumber yard.

### 22 *Buildings and Structures*

23 The buildings on the Central High School campus during this period were largely  
24 concentrated on its eastern end. These buildings include the high school, the Tiger  
25 fieldhouse, and the Campus Inn. Quigley Stadium was located at the western end of the  
26 parcel and open playing fields lay between the school and the stadium.

27 The five-story tall Central High School was the focal point of the neighborhood during the  
28 1957-58 period, dominating the landscape along S. Park Street between W. Fourteenth Street  
29 and W. Sixteenth Streets (see *Figure 2-8*). It was constructed with a steel frame, load-bearing  
30 brick walls, and brick facing. The elevations were composed of systems of brick pilasters and  
31 spandrels of varying vertical scales, separated by horizontal bands of paired window  
32 openings. Pilasters capped with cut stone rose above the parapet level. Parapets in the main  
33 section were lined with medieval shields and crests of cut stone. Pointed Gothic arches of cut  
34 stone spanned the broad pilasters at the façade's pinnacle and round colonnades of cut stone  
35 decorated the lower level.

36 The main entrance into the school was designed as a terraced sequence leading from the  
37 ground level in front of the building, with paired, two-flight stairs on each side, and a terrace  
38 at the second floor, where the main entry was centered. The main entry consisted of three  
39 pairs of doors set between four broad pilasters with tall round-arched glazed openings above.

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<sup>51</sup> Tipton and Hurst, Incorporated in still a plant nursery and floral business in Little Rock.

1 Each of the pilasters was decorated with statuary depicting educational themes. Large iron  
2 Gothic lanterns on the pilasters illuminated the entry.<sup>52</sup> The entrance terrace was supported  
3 by a round, arched colonnade, with masonry arches springing from stone Corinthian  
4 columns.

5 The colonnade formed the background for the courtyard garden plaza at the front of the  
6 school (see *Figure 2-8*). Double steps led from this plaza to the main entry terrace. A  
7 retaining wall, around six feet tall in some locations, surrounded the plaza, and was lined on  
8 both sides by a mixed border of trees and shrubs. The center of the sunken garden was an  
9 oval reflecting pool flanked by two flagpoles, one on either side. The eastern retaining wall  
10 originally had a wall-mounted fountain, reputedly fed by a spring on the site. From the  
11 western edge of the sunken garden, steps led to the colonnade on the ground floor of the  
12 school that supported the entrance terrace, above.

13 Quigley Stadium consisted of two opposing grandstands made of concrete with buff brick  
14 veneer, a central playing field, a 10-foot tall poured concrete perimeter wall, and six sets of  
15 field lights (three sets on each side) mounted on 100-foot-tall steel lattice towers.<sup>53</sup> The  
16 stadium and its surrounding concrete wall dominated the neighborhood on the east end of the  
17 school property.

18 Tiger Field House, during this period was a fairly new structure that was connected to the  
19 school and constructed with brick to match the school. Although not documented as an  
20 important setting for the historic events, it is almost as imposing as the high school building.  
21 Its scale and location certainly contributed to the quality of the streetscape during the period  
22 of significance.

23 On the other hand, the original Campus Inn was documented as part of the setting for events  
24 in 1957-58, as films and photographs show police cars as they escorted the Little Rock Nine  
25 off the school grounds, passing the Campus Inn as they crossed W. Fourteen Street and drove  
26 south on Dennison Street. It was a wood frame building assembled from two Army barracks  
27 and featured a screened-in front porch that faced W. Sixteenth Street. Decorative signs  
28 mounted on the ends of the porch featured the outline of a tiger's head and the lettering read  
29 "Pfeifer's LRHS Campus Inn." The Campus Inn was not imposing structure like the other  
30 buildings and with its small scale, front porch, and orientation towards the street, appeared  
31 much like the residential buildings in the area.

32 Like the Campus Inn, most of the residences in the study area during this period were simple,  
33 one-story tall wood-frame buildings with horizontal wooden siding, although some houses  
34 had asbestos shingles or brick veneer exteriors (see *Figure 2-20 for example*). Most of the  
35 houses were oriented with their gable end to the street, with front porches. Front lawns and  
36 similar setbacks were almost universal features of the houses in the study area. Many houses  
37 had one-car garages located at the rear of the house, accessed either from an alley through the

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<sup>52</sup> Sheire, *National Register Nomination Form*.

<sup>53</sup> *Special Resource Study*, 5.

1 block or from a drive extending from the street. The Sanborn map also shows other small  
2 structures such as storage sheds or backyard greenhouses.

3 Larger, two-story wood frame houses could also be found in the neighborhood, particularly  
4 along S. Park Street, Schiller Street, south of W. Fourteenth Street, and Battery Street. The  
5 one- and two-story homes along S. Park Street, opposite the high school, appeared in  
6 numerous photographs taken during the 1957-58 school year (*see Figures 2-11, 2-18, 2-19,*  
7 *2-20, and 2-25*). While some of these were two-story, a few were also smaller, one-story  
8 bungalows.

### 9 *Spatial Organization*

10 Space within the study area during the 1957-58 year was organized by a combination of  
11 street layouts, building walls, street trees, and utility features. The gridded quality of the  
12 street layout, dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, organized the area primarily into linear spaces, a  
13 quality enhanced by the uniform setbacks of the one- and two-story houses, the rows of shade  
14 trees planted along the right-of way and in front lawns, low retaining walls, vertical utility  
15 poles, and horizontal utility lines (*see Figures 2-2 through 2-5, 2-11, and 2-17*). In section,  
16 these features formed a hierarchical street space, organized into public, semi-public, semi-  
17 private, and private spaces (*Figure 2-31*). The street surface, curbs, and public sidewalks  
18 formed the public space; the front yards, often defined by low retaining walls, formed the  
19 semi-public spaces because they were open to view; the front porches, present on almost  
20 every house, formed the semi-private spaces because they were often partially screened; and  
21 the interiors of the houses were the private spaces. With the exception of institutional  
22 buildings, such as Central High School, Centennial School, the Arkansas Baptist College,  
23 and larger industrial structures, the buildings within the study area were of a similar size and  
24 scale.<sup>54</sup> Only where small commercial buildings appeared—usually at street intersections—  
25 was the linear quality of the space interrupted.

26 Central High School with its tall façade, deep setback, and large lot was set apart as a focal  
27 point for the surrounding neighborhood. The front of the school, set in the “Y” configuration  
28 provided a stage-like setting for events during the historic period (*Figure 2-32 and see*  
29 *Figure 2-7*). Highberger designed the central composition in the formal and symmetrical  
30 Renaissance Revival style. The surrounding landscape he designed in a Romantic,  
31 naturalistic layout, with curvilinear paths and planting beds interspersed with areas of open  
32 lawn. He retained existing trees in front of the school to provide shade and retain the park-  
33 like quality of the site.<sup>55</sup> The spatial character of the former park’s topography was also  
34 retained in the treed slope behind the school that leads to the playing fields. This combination  
35 of formal and naturalistic layouts was commonly used by designers of the period from the  
36 late 19<sup>th</sup> century well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Formal and symmetrical terraces and plazas were  
37 often designed as outdoor rooms and reflected the layout of the building, while the  
38 naturalistic plantings provided Romantic backdrops for events within the landscape.

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<sup>54</sup> Centennial School was demolished in 1971, but the bell tower reconstructed as a feature for Centennial Park, which was built on the school lands. Source: “Centennial Elementary,” Little Rock School District web site, <http://www.lrsd.org/display.cfm?id=265> (accessed May 6, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> Brown, 3.

1 Because Quigley Stadium was surrounded by a ten-foot tall perimeter wall, the open space  
2 within was hardly perceptible from the street. The adjacent playing fields, bounded only by  
3 the school to the east and stadium wall to the west, were open to the street on both the north  
4 and south ends.

5 The Tiger Fieldhouse and the Campus Inn were built in the two open, triangular areas to the  
6 northwest and southwest of the school buildings that had been originally designed as open  
7 spaces. Both affected the quality of the streetscape, the fieldhouse dominating the streetscape  
8 of W. Fourteenth close to Dennison Street and the Campus Inn complementing the  
9 streetscape of W. Sixteenth on the opposite side.

## 10 *Views and Vistas*

11 During the period of significance, the linear spaces organized by the streets, walls, trees, and  
12 utilities within the study area offered long views of the streetscape in all directions. Views to  
13 the front of the high school were available from many locations along S. Park Street, as  
14 evident in the numerous photographs taken from the street by the media of various events  
15 during the year. Most of these photographs were taken from the Magnolia Mobil service  
16 station, Ponder's Drug Store, or along the east side of S. Park Street (*see Figures 2-10, 2-11,*  
17 *2-14, 2-16, 2-17, and 2-26*). Views looking out from inside the school to the surrounding  
18 landscape in the front of the school were also significant (*see Figures 2-19 through 2-21, 2-*  
19 *25, and 2-28*). While other parts of the study area played roles in the crisis, it is the views to  
20 and from the school along S. Park Street that are the most well known because they were so  
21 intensively documented by photojournalists.

22 No ground-level photographs of the rest of the neighborhood are available from this time  
23 period, but it can be assumed that the linear views created by streetscape features were  
24 similar along most of the streets of the study area. Views were also likely framed, pinched,  
25 punctuated, or screened by the occasional appearance of small corner stores, vegetation, and  
26 small streetscape features, such as signage.

## 27 *Circulation*

28 With the exception of restrictions placed on movement by barricades and troop patrols in the  
29 fall of 1958, the circulation pattern for the period 1957-58 followed the patterns established  
30 earlier in the twentieth century. Street-side parking was available on most neighborhood  
31 streets, except the west side of S. Park Street. Some streets were paved in asphalt and some  
32 retained brick gutters, possibly suggesting an earlier street surface. Traffic was likely heavier  
33 along major streets, such as W. Twelfth Street and Wright Avenue. Truck traffic headed  
34 toward industrial sites along the railroad may have been a source of noise and conflict with  
35 residence and pedestrians.

36 Concrete sidewalks bordered most of the streets and were usually separated from the curb by  
37 a narrow planting strip; however, those around the perimeter of Central High School  
38 extended directly to the curb.

1 Most of the residences in the area had narrow driveways extending from the street to a  
2 parking area or garage behind the house. Narrow, gravel alleys subdivided many of the larger  
3 blocks and provided vehicular access to the rear of properties.

4 At the high school, semi-circular driveways provided vehicular access to both the north and  
5 south wings of the main building. Three other driveways on the north and south sides of the  
6 block provided access to parking areas on the north, west, and south sides of the school. The  
7 1957 aerial shows what were likely two large parking lots on the north side of the playing  
8 fields and a driveway on the northwest corner of the school block that served the stadium.  
9 This aerial also indicates the locations of sidewalks and footpaths throughout the school  
10 block and the oval track within Quigley Stadium.

11 Not visible in the photograph, but most likely a presence in the neighborhood during 1957-  
12 58, was the railroad track on the west side of the study area. The railroad was active during  
13 that period and the sounds of the train horns and the passing of loaded cars likely added to  
14 the soundscape.

### 15 *Vegetation*

16 Vegetation on the Central High School property during the period of significance included  
17 the front lawn with its array of large trees, the treed slope separating the school from the  
18 playing fields, the wide expanse of grass forming the playing fields, and evergreen plantings  
19 within the front courtyard. The landscaped plaza in front of Central High School remained  
20 largely unchanged since its construction in 1927, and photographs show a large number of  
21 evergreen shrubs around the foundation of the building and the retaining wall of the central  
22 plaza (*see Figure 2-30*). Species of trees and shrubs are difficult to determine from historic  
23 photographs, but a number of the trees shown in those photographs are extant today and  
24 include pine, red oak, pin oak, white oak, American elm, maple, Eastern red cedar, and  
25 American holly (*see “Historic Scene,”* below).

26 Much of the larger neighborhood setting surrounding the high school was shaded with  
27 deciduous trees, planted between the sidewalks and curb and within front and rear yards of  
28 residences. Other plant materials identified in historic photographs include vines, small  
29 ornamental trees, and shrubs (*see Figure 2-20*). Specific species and their arrangement are  
30 not known, but, reference to a neighborhood of a similar vintage and scale in the southeast  
31 may be helpful. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Landmark District Residential Design  
32 Guidelines offer the following insight:

1 The design of the landscape for the front and rear yard of a residence was different  
2 based on the utilization of the spaces. The front yard reflected the image of the home  
3 and the status of the owners. Plants and landscape elements defined the boundaries of  
4 the private yard from the public sidewalk and streets, while still providing a visual  
5 connection with neighbors and people passing by the house. While the design of the  
6 front yard concentrated on enhancing the beauty of the home and reputation of its  
7 owners, the design of the backyard was primarily based on utilitarian needs and the  
8 landscape reflected the functional uses of the rear yard.

9 ...Most of the houses in the neighborhood are built on foundation piers which raise  
10 the home above the ground. Because the homes were placed on piers, masses of  
11 shrubs and foundation plantings were often grown to soften and conceal the supports.  
12 Today there are plantings and shrubs which remain along the foundation, although  
13 many houses have enclosed the space between the piers.

14 Hedges and flowering shrubs and vines, which are still planted along the sides and  
15 front of homes in the district, define the boundaries of the yard. Grass was planted in  
16 the front yards of some residences and flowers were grown along the foundation,  
17 sidewalk, front yard fence, and in clay pots and wooden boxes placed along the  
18 porch.<sup>56</sup>

19 Additional information about what may have been grown in the area during the period of  
20 significance may come from perusal of local nursery catalogs. In addition, because there  
21 were several greenhouses in the area, more information about plants they cultivated may give  
22 clues regarding common plants used in local yards.

### 23 *Small-Scale Features*

24 On the school campus, small-scale landscape features included several “no parking” signs  
25 along the school side of S. Park Street, the flagpoles from 1927, white-painted wooden  
26 bollards lining the semi-circular driveways at the side entrances of the school, benches in the  
27 plaza around the reflection pool, and the chain link fence that bounded the playing fields (*see*  
28 *Figures 2-8, 2-23, 2-27, and 2-30*). It is likely that other furnishings such as benches, picnic  
29 tables, trash containers, and lights also existed on the campus during the period of  
30 significance, but they have not been documented. The South Cafeteria Courtyard that today  
31 contains ten concrete picnic tables is believed to have been constructed in the late 1950s but  
32 it is not known if it existed in 1957-58. The North Cafeteria Courtyard is thought to date to  
33 the 1930s, but this has not been verified, so it is not known if any furnishings there date to  
34 the historic period.

35 Within the public streetscape of the neighborhood setting of the high school, small-scale  
36 features likely included parking signs, above-ground utility lines and supporting wooden  
37 poles, street lights, bollard-style street markers, and bus stops benches and signs (*see Figures*  
38 *2-10 and 2-12*). Parking signs similar to those along S. Park Street may have existed along

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<sup>56</sup> Angela Mclean, *Martin Luther King, Jr. Landmark District Residential Design Guidelines* (Atlanta Urban Design Commission, 1993), 76.

1 other streets, as well. Above-ground utility lines supported on wooden poles lined both sides  
2 of S. Park Street and likely were used in the same arrangement on adjacent streets within the  
3 neighborhood setting of the school. The utility poles also probably supported street lighting,  
4 as the one documented on S. Park Street, the “radial wave” type of incandescent lighting  
5 typically used from the 1940s into the 1960s (*see Figure 2-24*).<sup>57</sup>

6 Within residential properties small-scale features included retaining walls of concrete and  
7 stone on sloping sites (*see Figures 2-20 and 2-30*). Furnishings such as trellises were  
8 documented in some front and side yards (*see Figures 2-10 and 2-11*).

## 9 **Existing Study Area Character**

### 10 *Introduction*

11 This section describes, through narrative text, contemporary photographs, labeled base  
12 mapping, and analytical diagrams, the current conditions and extant landscape features  
13 associated with the Central High School National Historic Site (NHS) and the surrounding  
14 neighborhood context of the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District, that is, its  
15 “neighborhood setting.” Together, these comprise the study area for this CLR.

16 For the purpose of organizing the descriptions and inventory of features in this chapter, four  
17 “character areas” have been identified within the study area as having similar land uses and  
18 visual character within their conceptual boundaries (*See Map 2-1 Character Areas*). These  
19 will each be described and assessed, in the following order: the Historic Scene, the Public  
20 Services Area, the Central High School Area and the Neighborhood Setting.

21 In order to depict the current condition and extant landscape features and resources that  
22 together comprise the Central High School Historic Site and its neighborhood setting, these  
23 character areas are described in terms of their landscape characteristics as follows:

- 24 • Land use,
- 25 • Buildings and Structures,
- 26 • Spatial Organization,
- 27 • Views and Vistas,
- 28 • Circulation,
- 29 • Vegetation,
- 30 • Constructed Water Features, and
- 31 • Small-scale Features.

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<sup>57</sup> “Aluminum Head Radial Wave Incandescents.” Allen Jayne’s Historic Street Lighting Page,  
<http://members.aol.com/ajaynejr/stlight.htm> (accessed May 6, 2008).

1 Cultural landscape feature names are shown in bold-face type when they first appear in the  
2 text. This indicates that they appear in *Appendix B: Resource Inventory Table*.

### 3 *The Historic Scene*

#### 4 *Introduction*

5 The Historic Scene encompasses the façade of **Central High School**, its **front grounds**, the  
6 **S. Park** and **Daisy Bates** intersection, the recently renovated **Magnolia Mobil service**  
7 **station**, the **Capel Building** (Ponder's Drug Store), the **seven private residences** which face  
8 the school across S. Park Street, **1600 S. Park Street**, and the **S. Park Street streetscape**  
9 contained and created by these structures and other landscape features (*Map 2-2 Historic*  
10 *Scene*). It is within this streetscape that most of the documented events of the integration of  
11 Central High School in 1957 occurred.<sup>58</sup>

12 The *General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* for the Little Rock  
13 Central High School National Historic Site, published in 2002, describes the relationship of  
14 the streetscape to the historic site:

15 This historic streetscape is a small part of the larger, equally important cultural  
16 landscape that surrounds the national historic site. It is the location most recognizable  
17 as the backdrop of the events of 1957. Many of the historic photographs were taken  
18 along this block, which has remained largely architecturally intact and unaltered since  
19 1957 (one home was damaged by fire several years ago). There is a need to preserve  
20 this setting in order to interpret the events of 1957. The current boundary of the  
21 national historic site is down the center of S. Park Street. The seven residences are  
22 part of the historic streetscape; although they are not within the boundary...the  
23 National Park Service has no authority concerning these homes.<sup>59</sup>

24 The following sections describe in more detail the particular features that contribute to this  
25 cultural landscape.

#### 26 *Land Use*

27 This area is associated with the following land uses: **civic** (education), **interpretation** (NPS)  
28 **transportation** (streets), single-family **residential** (homes), **religious** (church), and  
29 **commercial** (Ponder's Drug Store).

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<sup>58</sup> The Bullock Temple C.M.E Church on the corner of W. Sixteenth Street and South Park is also located within this character area, but was not built until after the period of significance.

<sup>59</sup> *Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, April 2002. (*General Management Plan*).

## 1 *Buildings and Structures*

2 The Central High School building and its front entrance plaza, both described in detail,  
3 above, are the most significant features of the Historic Scene (*Figures 2-33 and 2-34*).<sup>60</sup> The  
4 only apparent change that has occurred within the plaza since the period of significance was  
5 the restoration of the central reflecting pool in 2005 to its historic condition.

6 There is also no apparent change to the façade of Central High School since the period of  
7 significance except for ongoing maintenance and repair. The Central High School National  
8 Historic Site received two "Save America's Treasures" grants: one for \$500,000 in 2000 and  
9 the second for \$2 million in 2001. Some of these funds were used to address roof repairs and  
10 other renovations to the Central High School building. Due to the investment in repairs and  
11 renovations, the school building is in good condition with the exception of concerns about  
12 roof leaks that will be addressed in the upcoming Historic Structure Report.

13 Across S. Park Street from the high school are seven residences that were part of the  
14 streetscape during the period of significance (*Figures 2-35 through 2-37*). Four of these  
15 houses are one-story wood-frame structures, including two in the "Folk Victorian" style—a  
16 common house type found in the South—featuring an "L" floor plan, front and side-facing  
17 gables, and a front porch tucked in the corner of the "L".<sup>61</sup> Another of these houses was built  
18 as a Craftsman bungalow, with front-facing gables, a partial-width porch, and heavy squared  
19 masonry columns. The front of the other one-story house has been heavily remodeled, but  
20 may have originated as another "Folk Victorian".

21 Three two-story wood-frame houses are located in the center third of the block. One was  
22 built in what appears to be the Neo-Classical style, with its side-gabled roof, full-width  
23 porch, and Doric columns. The other two have been heavily remodeled since their original  
24 construction but one of those may also have been constructed as a larger Craftsman style  
25 bungalow. This house currently needs repairs due to a fire.

26 Two one-story wood-frame residences were located on the corner of S. Park Street and W.  
27 Sixteenth Street during the period of significance (*see Figure 2-20*). Both houses have since  
28 been demolished. The site of one of the houses, as well as the lot that was vacant during the  
29 historic period, are occupied today by the **Bullock Temple C.M.E. Church**, built in 1971  
30 (*Figure 2-38*). The church may also own the site of the other house that was demolished. A  
31 small commemorative garden is located on that site (*Figure 2-39*).

32 The building that once housed Ponder's Drug Store, the Capel Building, is located on the  
33 corner of S. Park and W. Sixteenth Streets. This is a brick structure with ceramic tile  
34 decoration and an ornamental mixture of soldier and sailor brick courses laid to create  
35 borders at the front corner. The building is in poor condition (*Figure 2-40*).

36 1600 S. Park Street, located across the street from the Capel Building, appears in historic  
37 photographs from the period of significance (*Figure 2-41 and see Figure 2-30*). This house,

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<sup>60</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 42.

<sup>61</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

1 which has the same footprint as the one documented in the 1939-1950 Sanborn map appears  
2 to have been remodeled in the 1950s with new exterior materials. It rests on a terrace  
3 supported by a stone retaining wall.

4 At the other end of S. Park Street within this character area is the Magnolia Mobil service  
5 station that served as one of the bases of operations for the media during the crisis. The  
6 station was built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, a popular design for gas stations in  
7 the 1920s and 1930s (*Figure 2-42*). Magnolia Oil (later Mobil), a pioneer in regional  
8 architectural styles for gas stations, frequently made use of the Spanish Colonial-Revival  
9 style.<sup>62</sup> The station walls are masonry with a stucco exterior and the building has a red barrel-  
10 tile roof. The main body of the building is one story with a one story canopy supported by  
11 two large square columns and extending out over the service area. Three restored gas pumps  
12 are located on a raised base on either side of the columns. Most of the area around the  
13 building is paved in concrete. A small **office addition** on its southern side, also constructed  
14 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, is used as administrative space by the National Park  
15 Service. The Magnolia Mobil service station and its addition were rehabilitated to their ca.  
16 1950s appearance in 1997.<sup>63</sup> Work will soon begin to convert this building to an education  
17 center, with no changes to the exterior appearance of the building.

18 Other structures located within the Historic Scene include a small number of low **stone**  
19 **retaining walls**, around two to three feet tall, used in front of residences along S. Park Street,  
20 W. Fourteenth, and W. Sixteenth Streets to create a transition from porch to street level (see  
21 *Figure 41*). These walls, built with what appears to be local native stone and remaining from  
22 the historic period, contribute greatly to the character of the Historic Scene.

### 23 *Spatial Organization*

24 The Historic Scene is spatially organized by the geometric grid of streets that was established  
25 in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when that part of Little Rock was planned and developed (see *Figure*  
26 *2-5*). Comparison of the 1897 and 1913 Sanborn maps indicates that W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street once  
27 extended all the way to S. Park Street, but that the street was vacated and the two lots sold to  
28 private owners who constructed houses on those lots prior to 1913. This created an unusually  
29 long block, about one-eighth of a mile long, and oriented north to south (*Figure 2-43*).  
30 Central High School faces S. Park Street and the long block of residences opposite, and is  
31 sited such that its front doors are aligned precisely with the middle of the block.

32 The **front grounds** of Central High School are organized symmetrically along a **central axis**  
33 leading from the front door: the two wings of the school, staircases, reflecting pool,  
34 sidewalks and open green spaces mirror each other along this axis and serve to frame the  
35 view of the front door of the school from the street (*Figure 2-44*). The front door is set back  
36 approximately 240 feet from the centerline of S. Park Street, and there is a mown lawn  
37 between the street and school approximately one-quarter of an acre in size. Smaller lawn

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<sup>62</sup> W. Dwayne Jones, "A Field Guide to Gas Stations in Texas." Texas Department of Transportation web site, [http://www.dot.state.tx.us/publications/environmental\\_affairs/fieldguide\\_gas\\_stations\\_.pdf](http://www.dot.state.tx.us/publications/environmental_affairs/fieldguide_gas_stations_.pdf). (accessed January 14, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 2.

1 areas front the north and south wings of the school. The buildings on the opposite side of S.  
2 Park Street are set back approximately 20 feet from the road right-of-way and are sited close  
3 together, with only 10-20 feet between them. The expansiveness of the open, green spaces in  
4 front of the school contrasts with the density of the facing streetscape and surrounding  
5 neighborhood.

### 6 *Views and Vistas*

7 Views of the **façade of Central High School** dominate the streetscape within the Historic  
8 Scene character area and important views within the streetscape related to the events of the  
9 school crisis in 1957 usually include the high school in the background (*Figure 2-45* and see  
10 *Figures 2-16, 2-17, 2-22, 2-26, 2-27, 2-30*). These include what was likely Elizabeth  
11 Eckford's **sequence of views** of the streetscape towards the south available as visitors follow  
12 the footsteps of her historic journey from the W. Twelfth Street bus stop to the front of the  
13 school (see *Figures 2-10 through 2-12*). This sequence also includes views towards Ponder's  
14 Drug Store and the setting for Eckford's wait on the bus. **Views from inside the school** to  
15 activities along S. Park Street and in the school yard are also significant (see *Figures 2-19, 2-*  
16 *20, 2-21, 2-21, and 2-28*). Sequential views the Little Rock Nine and their escorts may have  
17 experienced as they attempted to enter the front of Central High School for the first time on  
18 September 23, and were escorted instead to a side entrance, are also important to preserve.  
19 Because little has changed in this area and because historic features have been restored, these  
20 views are still available to the visitor today. Views from the school's entrance landing are  
21 more accessible to the visiting public than views from the interior of the school and they also  
22 benefit from the strong integrity of the Historic Scene, including the reflecting pool, front  
23 lawn, and the residences on S. Park Street (*Figure 2-46* and see *Figure 2-25*).

### 24 *Circulation*

25 Circulation within the Historic Scene occurs via public streets, several curvilinear concrete  
26 paths within the front part of the school property, and the walkways and stairs associated  
27 with the entrance sequence at the central front entrance to the high school (*Figure 2-47*).

28 S. Park Street is the primary circulation feature of the Historic Scene and it is within its  
29 streetscape that many of the photodocumented events of the crisis occurred. It is within and  
30 along this street that the "Little Rock Nine" made their first attempt to enter the school,  
31 where crowds gathered to witness the integration of the school, where the National Guard  
32 paced and waited, and where the "Little Rock Nine" were transported and finally escorted  
33 into the school. The street appears to be much the same as it was during the historic period  
34 that is, approximately 35' wide, lined with concrete curbs, and paved in asphalt (*Figure 2-*  
35 *48*). Today, however, traffic is one-way, moving north to south. The west side of S. Park  
36 Street in the Historic Scene area serves as the drop-off and pick-up area for school buses. The  
37 most recent change within S. Park Street is the **scored and tinted concrete** paving pattern  
38 that was recently installed at the center of the **intersection of S. Park and Daisy Bates**  
39 (*Figure 2-49*).

40 The **concrete sidewalks** along S. Park Street on both sides are as they were during the period  
41 of significance (see *Figure 2-38, 2-41, and 2-43*). On the east side of S. Park Street, a narrow

1 strip of grass lies between the back of curb and the sidewalk but the sidewalk extends all the  
2 way to the curb on the west side.

3 Most of the **curvilinear sidewalks** on the front grounds of Central High School date either to  
4 the historic period or follow approximately the same path as those existing during that time  
5 (*Figure 2-50*). The original walks were made of exposed aggregate and some were recently  
6 replaced with the same material in 2007.

7 The designed sequence of movement from the street to the front door can be experienced  
8 today almost exactly as it was originally planned. Two walkways lead from the sidewalk  
9 along S. Park Street and branch to provide access to either the sunken plaza or the main front  
10 door. The layout of the curving sidewalks is almost symmetrical. Two paths lead into the  
11 plaza, from where the building appears even more imposing than from the street. While both  
12 paths originally included staircases down into the plaza, the southern staircase was removed  
13 and replaced with a universally accessible ramp when the reflecting pool was reconstructed  
14 in 2005.

15 From the plaza, a short flight of broad steps leads to the colonnade level. From there, a set of  
16 **paired stairways** up to meet ground level and then up another stairway to the entrance level.  
17 Paving within the plaza is concrete, the colonnade level is square terra-cotta tile, the steps are  
18 cast stone or concrete, and the floors of the landings within the composition are also paved in  
19 square terra-cotta tile.

20 Another circulation detail is the ornamental **ceramic tile landing** set within the exterior front  
21 entrance vestibule of the Capel Building, upon which Elizabeth Eckford would have walked  
22 upon when she attempted to enter Ponder's Drug Store (*Figure 2-51*).

### 23 *Vegetation*

24 **Twenty-eight large trees** dating to the period of significance exist within the Historic Scene.  
25 Species include pine (*Pinus* sp.), red oak (likely *Quercus falcata*), pin oak (*Quercus*  
26 *palustris*), white oak (likely *Quercus alba*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), maple (*Acer*  
27 sp.), Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), American holly (*Ilex americana*). These trees  
28 were recognized by the Arkansas Famous and Historic Tree Program in 2007 to be old  
29 enough to have been present during the 1957-58 period of significance. Nine of these have  
30 been identified and registered with the program as the "**Little Rock Nine Witness Trees.**" In  
31 2008, labels were attached to these trees, identifying them as such (*Figure 2-52*).

32 Not only do these large trees provide shade on each end of the east side of the high school  
33 building, they, along with the **large shade trees on the west side of S. Park Street**, help  
34 define the space of the streetscape in which many important activities of the desegregation  
35 crisis occurred. The trees helped define the space of the street from the school yard and the  
36 private yards of the residences along S. Park Street (*see Figures 2-48 and 2-53*).  
37 Unfortunately, some of these trees have grown up into utility lines and subsequent pruning  
38 has negatively affected the appearance of their canopies (*see Figure 2-43*).

39 Other vegetation within the Historic Scene includes **small trees, shrubs, and groundcovers**  
40 **planted in the 1990s and 2007** (*Figure 2-53 and 2-54*). While many of the larger shade and

1 evergreen trees were present during the period of significance on both sides of S. Park Street,  
2 most trees and shrubs were installed after this time. On the other hand, the lawn in front of  
3 the school and front lawns of the residences across S. Park Street existed during the historic  
4 period.

5 Shrubs and trees planted in the 1990s were added in anticipation of the 40th anniversary of  
6 the desegregation crisis.<sup>64</sup> Landscape plantings installed in 2007 were intended to enhance  
7 the school grounds in anticipation of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the desegregation crisis, this time  
8 by Frank R. Riggins of Crafton, Tull, and Associates, Inc., Little Rock (*Figure 2-55*).<sup>65</sup> It  
9 appears that the intention of this latest design was to restore the landscape as close as  
10 possible to the original.

11 The new design includes trees such as bald cypress, crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*),  
12 foster holly (*Ilex attenuata* “Fosteri”), southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), and  
13 American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*); shrubs including compact holly (*Ilex crenata*  
14 “Compacta”), glossy abelia (*Abelia grandifolia*), Heller Japanese holly (*Ilex crenata*  
15 “Helleri”), Southern Indian azalea (*Azalea indica*), Nelly Stevens holly (*Ilex cornuta* “Nellie  
16 R. Stevens”), Vanhoutte spirea (*Spirea x vanhouttei*); evergreen groundcovers such as  
17 Liriope (*Liriope muscari*); and Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon* “TIF-419”).

18 Most of these plants were used around the foundation of the school and on both sides of the  
19 retaining wall of the sunken plaza. A small number of plants still exist that may have been in  
20 place since 1997 or even before, including dogwoods on the south side of the plaza (three  
21 dogwoods had been growing on the north side, but were recently removed), liriope outlining  
22 the arc of the pool, nandinas planted in a bed around each of the two flagpoles, and other  
23 evergreen shrubs within the plaza area (*Figure 2-56*). Notably, many of these new plantings  
24 are bedded in redwood mulch, the color of which is obtrusively high-contrast (*Figure 2-57*).

25 **Residential plantings along S. Park Street** have lawns and a variety of large and small  
26 trees, both shade and flowering, and a variety of groundcovers and shrubs (*see Figures 2-35*  
27 *and 2-36*). A **small commemorative garden** was planted in one of the lots on S. Park Street  
28 adjacent to Bullock Temple that was once occupied by a residence (*see Figure 2-39*).

### 29 *Constructed Water Features*

30 Two constructed water features exist within the Historic Scene Area: the **reflecting pool** that  
31 is the centerpiece for the sunken garden in front of the school and the **wall fountain** installed  
32 in the retaining wall to the east of the pool. The reflecting pool is elliptical, with a rounded  
33 concrete edge. It was part of the original construction of the central plaza, but had been filled  
34 and topped with concrete sometime after the period of significance. It has recently been  
35 restored and is in good condition today (*see Figures 2-30 and 2-34*). The wall fountain was  
36 not restored and is being used as a planter.

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<sup>64</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 36.

<sup>65</sup> Frank R. Riggins, “Central High School Landscape,” Phases 1-2. Crafton, Tull, and Associates, Inc. (now Crafton, Tull, Sparks and Associates, Inc.), Little Rock, Arkansas, 2007 (AutoCAD drawing).

## 1 *Small-scale Features*

2 Small-scale features existing within the Historic Scene include site furnishings, signage,  
3 lighting, and utility-related features.

4 Most site furnishings within the Historic Scene are located on the Central High School  
5 property. These include **ten concrete benches** installed in 2006 in the front plaza and  
6 arranged around the restored reflecting pool (*Figure 2-58*). These benches are composed of  
7 simple horizontal slabs set on slab-like supports. Nine were inscribed on the front in sans-  
8 serif lettering with the names of the “Little Rock Nine” and the tenth represents all past,  
9 present, and future students of the school. All are set on the outside edge of the concrete  
10 sidewalk surrounding the pool.

11 Two **flagpoles** flank the reflecting pool and are extant from 1927. The poles are heavy metal  
12 with cast metal Neo-Classical bases ornamented with stylized acanthus leaves, set on large  
13 octagonal cast concrete pedestals (*Figure 2-59*).

14 Contemporary site furnishings include black or dark-brown painted **steel trash cans** located  
15 in the front plaza and at several school entrance doors (*Figure 2-60*); **concrete bollards**  
16 installed in 2007 at the east end entrance door (*Figure 2-61*); **metal landscape edging**  
17 installed around the foundation plantings in the front of the school; and **steel chain link**  
18 **fencing** sited around the HVAC equipment to the east of the front entrance (*Figure 2-62*).

19 A **ceramic tile mosaic** depicting a tiger ornaments the back wall of the nymphaeum adjacent  
20 to the reflecting pool (*Figure 2-63*). It was a gift from the graduating class of 1962 of Central  
21 High School. A variety of **commemorative plaques** throughout the front lawn demarcate  
22 gifts from other alumnus groups, such as specimen trees or a daffodil bed (*Figure 2-64*).

23 At the northeast corner of the school property is a low **monument sign** constructed of buff  
24 brick to match the school building and set with a cast stone or concrete sign engraved with  
25 “Little Rock Central High Tigers, Class of 1972” (*Figure 2-65*). The sign is oriented at a  
26 diagonal and faces the northeast corner of the site.

27 Above-ground utilities located within the school property include **HVAC equipment** that is  
28 partly screened by the cheek wall of the front steps of the school and which is surrounded by  
29 chain link fence (see *Figure 2-62*). A **water spigot** is also located in the vicinity of the  
30 reflecting pool (*Figure 2-66*).

31 Signage within the streetscape of S. Park Street include **traffic control signs** and **street**  
32 **identifications signs** (*Figure 2-67*), the white-painted **Bullock Temple C.M.E. Church sign**  
33 that is mounted on a metal pole (see *Figure 2-38*), and the **Magnolia Mobil service station**  
34 **sign**.

35 Also located within this are **utility poles and lines** on the east side of S. Park Street, **fire**  
36 **hydrants** (see *Figure 2-38*), **storm drains** along the curb edge, and the **restored gas pumps**  
37 at the Magnolia Mobil service station. Mercury vapor **street lights** are mounted via steel  
38 attachments on each utility pole—there appear to be four to five per block (see *Figure 2-43*).

1 Features missing from the Historic Scene today, but existing during the period of significance  
2 include the **bollard-style street signs** at the corner of S. Park and W. Fourteenth Streets  
3 (now Daisy Bates) and at S. Park and W. Sixteenth Streets (*see Figure 2-10*). Also missing is  
4 the **bus stop bench** and **stop sign** at the corner of S. Park and W. Sixteenth Streets that are  
5 featured in numerous photographs of Elizabeth Eckford on September 4, 1957 (*see Figure 2-*  
6 *12*). In addition, the **utility poles** and **parking signs** that once lined the west side of S. Park  
7 Street are also missing (*Figure 2-68* and *see Figure 2-17*).

## 8 *Management Issues*

9 Today, the cultural landscape of the Historic Scene is under management by several entities.  
10 Although it is designated a National Historic Site, Little Rock Central High School and its  
11 grounds represent a fully functional, operating academic institution, owned and operated by  
12 the Little Rock School District. A General Management Plan completed in 2002 determined  
13 the preferred course of treatment for the NHS to be to "preserve and maintain" resources. The  
14 National Park Service holds cooperative agreements with both the City of Little Rock and the  
15 Little Rock School District concerning issues having to do with preservation, interpretation,  
16 and maintenance. For example, site tours and interpretive programs are provided by the NPS,  
17 however, management of the school property is the responsibility of LRSD. The NPS only  
18 serves in an advisory capacity when historic resources are impacted.

19 The National Park Service owns and manages the Magnolia Mobil service station, along with  
20 the NHS Visitor Center and Commemorative Garden; the Bullock Temple C.M.E. Church  
21 owns and manages the three lots on the northeastern corner of S. Park Street and Sixteenth  
22 Streets; and a number of private property owners own and manage the seven residences along  
23 S. Park Street. Utilities along the street are owned and maintained by three separate private  
24 companies: Entergy, AT&T, and Centerpoint. Because so many entities own and manage  
25 these properties and their features, cooperation between them is necessary when considering  
26 historic streetscape preservation.

## 27 *The Public Services Area*

### 28 *Introduction*

29 The Public Services Area encompasses the northeast and northwest corners of S. Park Street  
30 and Daisy Bates, where the NHS Visitor Center and a Commemorative Garden are located  
31 (*Map 2-3 Public Services Area*). Administrative and operational functions are performed here  
32 and the site also has formal, designed interpretive and contemplative opportunities.

### 33 *Land Use*

34 The Public Services Area, as its name connotes, is in use today for programs which support  
35 and augment the visitor's experience of the historic site. The NHS Visitor Center and its  
36 plaza area are used for **interpretive, civic** (education), and **administrative** functions.  
37 **Commemoration**, in the forms of strolling and contemplation, is a land use associated with  
38 the garden area. **Parking** is also a land use associated with this area; lots for visitors are  
39 positioned behind (to the northeast) of the NHS Visitor Center and across the street, east of  
40 the Magnolia Mobil service station.

1 ***Buildings and Structures***

2 The NHS Visitor Center was sited and designed to capture views of Central High School  
 3 from its vantage point across the street. The interpretive exhibits inside the NHS Visitor  
 4 Center are arranged in front of expansive, plate-glass windows that also look out onto the  
 5 school (*Figures 2-69 and 2-70*).

6 The **NHS Visitor Center** opened in the fall of 2007, in time for the ceremonies associated  
 7 with the 50th anniversary. This 10,078 square foot, single-story, International-style building  
 8 occupies a large lot on the northeast corner of the intersection of S. Park Street and Daisy  
 9 Bates.<sup>66</sup> The building design is composed of contiguous, rectangular volumes, is approx-  
 10 imately 190 feet in length with an irregular width ranging from 50 to 67 feet. These volumes  
 11 vary in height from fifteen to thirty feet, and in their setbacks from the street, which range  
 12 from 55 to 74 feet from the center line of S. Park Street. The steel frame building is clad with  
 13 a buff brick veneer and wall-to-wall storefront glass dominates the exterior walls of the north  
 14 and south ends of the building. Steel sunshade elements, mounted on concrete frame  
 15 structures, and an overlapping roof overhang create the entranceway on the NHS Visitor  
 16 Center's west façade. A roof overhang shades and filters the sunlight over the predominately  
 17 glass southern façade. In general, the rooflines are flat, except over the center volume where  
 18 they are pitched, under which clerestory windows allow light to filter into the central lobby.

19 The **Commemorative Garden sculpture** is centered on the garden's winding path and is  
 20 composed of two arched monuments facing each other within a circular brick plaza (*Figure*  
 21 *2-71*). This sculpture and the garden were completed in 2001. The design was commissioned  
 22 by the Little Rock Central High School Museum Commission and contains features that  
 23 enhance contemplation of the historic event. The artists Michael Warrick and Aaron P.  
 24 Hussey designed the sculpture and its contextual landscape. Text is engraved in granite in the  
 25 middle of the plaza and reads:

26 ***The Spirit of Central High***

27 *This commemorative garden is to celebrate*  
 28 *The ability of people to overcome adversity*  
 29 *And to recognize and honor triumph of the*  
 30 *Collective good over the betterment of only a few.*

31  
 32 *The sculpture will give voice to the values of human*  
 33 *Equity over narrow favoritism, of social justice*  
 34 *Over oligarchy, of decency and civility over bigotry.*

35  
 36 *Through the years Central High School has been seared*  
 37 *By the heat of controversy, scarred by episodes of hatred*  
 38 *And strife yet in spite of those evils it has survived, indeed*  
 39 *Not just survived but succeeded beyond anyone's belief*  
 40 *Becoming once again Arkansas' premier high school.*

---

<sup>66</sup> This lot housed the Tipton and Hurst complex of greenhouses in 1957.

1  
2                   *It has achieved this not by returning to its*  
3                   *Old form, merely showing its pretty face,*  
4                   *But by modeling the diversity and pluralism*  
5                   *That caused the original storm of protest.*

6 The arches in the garden symbolize Central High School's past and its present through photo  
7 montages printed and adhered to the back of Lexan panels that face the inside of the circle.  
8 The outside of the arches are designed to reference the decorative stone work on the façade  
9 of the school and include replicas of the statuary at the school's entrance. The arches are  
10 approximately 15 feet tall, eight feet wide, and three feet thick and are faced with a buff-  
11 colored brick matching Central High School.

12 Buildings present during the 1957-58 historic period that are missing today include the  
13 **greenhouses and other buildings** that formerly occupied the NHS Visitor Center site and  
14 **three residences** that formerly occupied the Commemorative Garden site: 1314, 1320, and  
15 1322 S. Park Street.

### 16 *Spatial Organization*

17 The NHS Visitor Center occupies the 1.31 acre lot on the northeast corner of Daisy Bates and  
18 S. Park Street. Entrances are from both S. Park Street and Daisy Bates with parking lots sited  
19 to the north and east of the building. The **front seating plaza** associated with the NHS  
20 Visitor Center, with its benches, lights and interpretive displays, is on the southwest corner of  
21 the lot, from where it is possible to view Central High School as well as the garden across S.  
22 Park Street (*Figure 2-72*). The setback of the NHS Visitor Center is approximately 75 feet  
23 from the centerline of S. Park Street, more than 15 feet beyond the average setback of the  
24 residential buildings on the same side of the street, between Daisy Bates and W. Sixteenth  
25 Street. The expanse of open space between the building and the street contrasts with the more  
26 intimate spatial qualities of the neighborhood.

27 The Commemorative Garden is located on a 0.56 acre lot on the northwest corner, across  
28 from the NHS Visitor Center and at the same intersection. The **open knoll** in the southeast  
29 corner is kept in mown turf and the entire north half of this significant intersection is exposed  
30 to the sky in a manner uncharacteristic of the general neighborhood's streetscape (*Figure 2-*  
31 *73*). This knoll is framed by a stepped, brick retaining wall that rises from approximately six  
32 inches height at the garden's entrance 100 feet north of the intersection, to two and a half feet  
33 above grade at the intersection. The other side of the garden is more enclosed due to its  
34 statuary and vegetation.

### 35 *Views and Vistas*

36 Both the NHS Visitor Center and the Commemorative Garden sites command long views of  
37 the Historic Scene. The NHS Visitor Center is oriented such that **views of Central High**  
38 **School**, looking out its windows from inside the center's interpretive exhibits, provide the  
39 backdrop for its interpretive exhibits.

1 There are also prominent **views of the Magnolia Mobil service station** from the Public  
2 Services Area. The service station is a valuable component of the Historic Scene. From the  
3 intersection there are also long **streetscape views down Daisy Bates and S. Park Street**  
4 (see *Figure 2-73*).

5 The **view of the school parking lot** from the Commemorative Garden detracts from the  
6 commemorative character of the garden and the interpretive purpose of the Visitor Center.  
7 The school's senior and faculty parking lot, across from Daisy Bates, is only partially  
8 screened with a fenceline and vegetation (*Figure 2-74*). The NHS Visitor Center, however, is  
9 well-sited for concealing its associated utilities and parking areas from the street.

## 10 *Circulation*

11 Pedestrian circulation in the Public Service Area is provided by **concrete sidewalks** along  
12 both sides of S. Park Street and Daisy Bates (*Figure 2-75*). The intersection of these streets  
13 features the brick and concrete circular composition centered on the middle of the  
14 intersection discussed in the previous section (see *Figure 2-73*). The **concrete paving in the**  
15 **front plaza** of the NHS Visitor Center reflects bright sunlight in contrast to the shade-  
16 dappled sidewalks in the rest of the neighborhood. The **brick-edged concrete sidewalk** in  
17 the Commemorative Garden is approximately eight feet wide (*Figure 2-76*). The bricks are  
18 buff-colored (matching those of Central High School). This walkway bisects the garden, with  
19 entrances and exits on both Daisy Bates and S. Park Street (*Figure 2-77*).

20 Vehicular circulation within the Public Service Area consists of S. Park Street and Daisy  
21 Bates, as well as the **NHS Visitor Center parking lot** and the **Magnolia Mobil service**  
22 **station parking lot**.

23 S. Park Street in this area is asphalt-paved, approximately 32 feet wide and unstriped. Street-  
24 side parking is prohibited within the Public Service Area, but permitted on both sides of the  
25 street as it transitions into the residential areas. South of Daisy Bates, S. Park Street is one-  
26 way headed south for the two blocks adjacent to the Central High School property but north  
27 of Daisy Bates is two-way. Daisy Bates is two-way, asphalt-paved, approximately 36 feet  
28 wide, and striped with a double yellow line (see *Figure 2-70*). Parking is not permitted street-  
29 side on this road in front of the Commemorative Garden.

30 Traffic through the NHS Visitor Center parking lot can enter or exit via either street. The lot  
31 accommodates 34 vehicles, including two handicap accessible spaces and space for bus and  
32 RV parking (*Figure 2-78*). The Magnolia Mobil service station parking lot on the south side  
33 of Daisy Bates has 14 spaces. Both of these lots are asphalt-paved and striped.

34 The **path through the Commemorative Garden** winds through the center of the garden and  
35 passes through the focal sculptural plaza. Commemorative benches and tree plantings are  
36 sited on both sides of it. Southeast of this path is open turf and the northwest side included  
37 mulched perennial beds and additional shrubs and trees, including those that form a buffer  
38 between the garden and the school parking area to the west and the residences to the north.

## 1 *Vegetation*

2 Vegetation in the Public Services Area consists of turf, ornamental perennials, shrubs, and  
3 both young trees. **New perennials, shrubs, groundcovers, and trees** were installed as part  
4 of the renovations to both the NHS Visitor Center and Commemorative Garden. While not  
5 on the property, the canopies of **mature trees** edging the perimeter of the Commemorative  
6 Garden on its west and north sides provide an important visual buffer (see *Figure 2- 77*).

7 The NHS Visitor Center’s plantings were established in 2007. Shrubs around the parking  
8 area include Japanese Beautyberry (*Callicarpa japonica*). In the walkways between the NHS  
9 Visitor Center and the parking lot there are tree pits, protected with painted black metal  
10 grates, containing new, small-caliper street trees such as honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*).  
11 In the front of the NHS Visitor Center, a 25-foot wide area between the building and  
12 sidewalk is mulched and planted with native, drought-resistant perennials, ornamental  
13 grasses and a single row of young small-caliper trees, including redbuds (*Cercis canadensis*)  
14 (*Figure 2-79*). The planting beds within its seating areas are mulched and contain drought-  
15 tolerant, native perennials such as blue fescue (*Festuca glauca*) and brown-eyed Susan  
16 (*Rudbeckia triloba*).

17 Across the street from the NHS Visitor Center there are more **mature groundcovers and**  
18 **shrubs** associated with the Magnolia Mobil service station parking lot along its perimeter  
19 (*Figure 2-80*).

20 A **mown turf** knoll covers the southeast expanse of the Commemorative Garden. **Nine**  
21 **commemorative maple trees** follow the path through the garden and memorialize the  
22 struggles of the Little Rock Nine. Ornamental shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses are  
23 planted in mulch beds along the north and western edges of the garden (see *Figure 2-74*).

## 24 *Small-Scale Features*

25 The outdoor plaza of the NHS Visitor Center, outside its main entrance, contains many  
26 small-scale features including lights, benches, trash receptacles, and interpretive signs (see  
27 *Figure 2-79*). More than a dozen **bollard lights** are spread out throughout the plaza in  
28 random order, a pair of **black metal benches** faces the school, another pair faces the garden,  
29 and a single bench faces the entrance with its back to S. Park Street. The southwestern-most  
30 corner of the plaza features a central interpretive exhibit, set in an open space surfaced with  
31 large concrete pavers. A cylindrical tan concrete **trash receptacle** is located in the center of  
32 the seating area of the plaza.

33 In between the columns of the shade structure over the Visitor Center entrance are three  
34 canted **fiberglass interpretive signs** mounted on rectangular concrete supports with steel  
35 post mounts (see *Figure 2-73*). The supports are finished in white and the signs exhibit  
36 photographic images and text. Their positioning under the shade structure aids in their  
37 visibility.

38 There is another, **central outdoor interpretive exhibit** in the center of the plaza in full sun,  
39 which utilizes two similar concrete supports and steel post mounts and matches the above  
40 exhibits. It originally featured an approximately two and half-foot square, level sign featuring

1 a map of the Central High School property and perimeter streets, and two more, canted  
2 interpretive signs of text and photographs. In 2008 this exhibit was adapted to be more  
3 physically and visually accessible (*Figure 2-81*).

4 An **NPS identity sign** made of fiberglass and metal is located on the north side of Daisy  
5 Bates (see *Figure 2-78*). Another NPS identity sign is located on the south side of Daisy  
6 Bates, next to the Magnolia Mobil service station parking lot and is suspended from an arm  
7 extending from a post faced with buff-colored brick. It is mounted to a planter with buff-  
8 colored brick retaining walls (*Figure 2-82*).

9 A red sandstone **retaining wall** behind the NHS Visitor Center forms the rear boundary of  
10 the parking lot. Rising above this wall, a **slatted privacy fence** separates the parking lot from  
11 a private residence to the east. Also behind the NHS Visitor Center, in the parking lot area, a  
12 three-sided **concrete bay** is set into the retaining wall and has a slatted wood gate partially  
13 concealing a dumpster. Other white painted concrete **retaining walls** frame an employee  
14 seating area, at a service entrance on the north side of the building, which is reached by way  
15 of four poured concrete stairs. A painted black metal tubular **bike rack** is set in the concrete  
16 paved walkway along the rear of the building (*Figure 2-83*).

17 Furnishings in the Commemorative Garden include path lights mounted within **brick**  
18 **bollards** that are approximately three feet high and two feet square (*Figure 2-84*), cylindrical  
19 cast concrete trash receptacles centered in the paths of both entrances to the garden and **nine**  
20 **symbolic benches** along the garden's path with nine curved, cast concrete seats mounted on  
21 three buff-colored brick footings (see *Figure 2-76*).

22 The south and east perimeter edges of the Commemorative Garden are framed with a  
23 **stepped, buff-colored brick retaining wall** ranging from six inches to three feet in height  
24 and approximately 16 inches wide. On the Daisy Bates side, two small **square brick**  
25 **columns** with inset embossed metal dedication plaques frame the entrance (*Figure 2-85 and*  
26 *see Figure 2-77*).

27 A **chain link perimeter fence** skirts the perimeter of the parking lot on the north side of  
28 Daisy Bates that, when it forms the western boundary of the Commemorative Garden, is  
29 threaded with white plastic slats.

30 **Utility and street light poles** are set in the tree lawn on the east side of S. Park Street. **Stop**  
31 **signs, parking signs and fire hydrants** are also features of the streetscape in this area (see  
32 *Figure 2-73 and 2-80*).

## 33 *The Central High School*

### 34 *Introduction*

35 The Central High School Area includes all buildings and structures within its 21-acre  
36 property, its athletic fields and parking lots, as well as the perimeter streets around the high  
37 school (W. Sixteenth Street, Jones Street, and Daisy Bates) and the residential facades facing  
38 them, which are a component of the surrounding streetscape (*Map 2-4 Central High School*

1 *Area*). The streetscape plays an important role in contributing to the historic setting of the  
2 school.

3 The Little Rock School District school board is responsible for maintaining the school and its  
4 grounds, while the National Park Service is responsible for interpreting its history. The  
5 school is not open to historic site visitors except during guided tours, although visitors may  
6 independently explore the front landscape of the campus.

### 7 *Land Use*

8 The land uses associated with this area are **education** (the school and its associated  
9 buildings), **recreation** (athletic fields), **residential** (the surrounding residences),  
10 **transportation** (perimeter streets and parking lots), and **interpretation** (although the  
11 Historic Scene is the most significant area, other areas in the school grounds are associated  
12 with historic events and the Central High School Area in general contributes to the context  
13 and setting). The **industrial** area west of the school has retained its historic character of open  
14 work yards, storage structures, and only one to two buildings with large footprints. Railroad  
15 tracks form the western boundary of the study area and the railroad is still in use.

### 16 *Buildings and Structures*

17 **Central High School** (see description in Historic Scene, above) is the dominant structure on  
18 the east end of the high school site. The front façade is described in detail, above. A notable  
19 feature of the rear of the building is its complicated façade and variety of use areas, including  
20 the two spiral slides enclosed in metal sheeting and attached at the back of the building  
21 (*Figure 2-86*). The building steps down the slope of the site from the east to the west; the  
22 lower level is accessible through a group of garage doors. This was an essential feature  
23 during the crisis of 1957-58 because it was through these doors that the Little Rock Nine  
24 were transported away, via police cars, due to threats to their safety (*Figure 2-87*).

25 **Quigley Stadium** is the dominant structure on the west end of the high school site (*Figure 2-*  
26 *88*). It is bounded by a 10-foot high poured concrete wall, and includes two grandstands on  
27 either side of the broad playing fields and six 100-foot-tall athletic field lights (*Figure 2-89*).  
28 The two grandstands seat 15-20,000 fans and are made of concrete and faced with buff-  
29 colored brick. A **small stucco building** attached to the southern side of the west grandstand  
30 houses the Little Rock School District Child Nutrition Office. The east grandstand is larger  
31 than the west grandstand and has a central seating area and additional seating in two wings.  
32 The perimeter wall is free-standing, constructed of poured concrete, and is set with a plaque  
33 commemorating the WPA and its 1936 construction date mounted on the southwest corner  
34 (*Figure 2-90*). On the east side, a concrete retaining wall also frames the service drive  
35 entering the stadium area. The east grandstand sits on a topographic rise, and the driveway  
36 retaining wall makes up for this change in elevation while the surrounding concrete wall  
37 remains consistent in height.

38 Quigley Stadium is lit by six 100-foot-tall sets of Athletic Field Lights mounted on vertical  
39 steel trusses (*Figure 2-98*). They may date to the original construction of Quigley Stadium

1 and can be considered historic because they appear in photographs from 1957 (*see Figures 2-*  
2 *22 and 2-23*).

3 The **Tiger Fieldhouse** is located west and north of the central volume of the main school  
4 building and is used for physical education classes and basketball team practice. It is also  
5 faced with buff-colored brick to match the school building (*Figure 2-91*). This modern,  
6 square single-story building with a flat roof and clerestory windows is connected to the main  
7 school building by means of a **black metal overhead structure** made of painted posts and a  
8 translucent plastic roofing material that also serves as a covered eating area (*Figure 2-92*). Its  
9 front entrance, on the Daisy Bates side, is accessed by means of an ADA ramp as well as  
10 stairs (*Figure 2-93*).

11 The **Jess W. Matthews Library and Media Center** was constructed and opened in 1969.  
12 The library is a single-story, windowless, flat-roofed building faced with buff brick. It is also  
13 physically connected to the main school building, by means of a **covered walkway** also  
14 faced with buff brick (*Figures 2-94 and 2-95*). Its front entrance faces Daisy Bates, and is six  
15 feet above road grade, while its rear entrance meets the school's first floor elevation, which is  
16 indicative of the knoll upon which Central High School was built. The difference in grade  
17 and the front entrance is accommodated through two flights of stairs.

18 An **overhead wood-frame structure** covers an outdoor eating area located to the west of the  
19 school (*Figure 2-96*).

20 The **Campus Inn** is a new two-story, brick building constructed on the site where the  
21 **original Campus Inn** was razed in 2000 (*Figure 2-97*).

22 **Ten modular prefabricated buildings** of varying sizes are located west of the main school  
23 building, on its southern side (*Figure 2-98*). These were originally installed for classroom  
24 space when classes needed to be relocated during recent renovations; however, they are still  
25 being utilized. They are generally arranged along an asphalt-paved service drive off of W.  
26 Sixteenth Street one block west of its intersection with S. Park Street. One smaller unit sits in  
27 the middle of the drive, blocking views of the rear of the school and of an outdoor seating  
28 area that dates to the historic period (*Figure 2-99*). Most of these buildings are sided with  
29 corrugated metal or wood, painted in various colors and have slightly pitched metal roofs  
30 (*Figure 2-100*). Units of wood stairs, landings and handrails are attached to their entrances  
31 (*Figure 2-101*).

32 A **baseball diamond and an associated dugout** were redeveloped on the south side of the  
33 mid-"third" of the school property in 2003 (*Figure 2-102*).

34 The residential streetscape surrounding Central High School along W. Sixteenth Street and  
35 Daisy Bates is characterized generally by Craftsman-Bungalow-style houses, featuring low-  
36 pitched gabled roofs with wide unenclosed eave overhangs and asymmetrical facades and  
37 larger Folk Victorian-style buildings with steeper, pyramidal roofs (*Figures 2-103 through 2-*  
38 *110*). Both typically feature front porches.

1 The houses are mostly one or one and half stories and are typically spaced very close  
2 together (15-20 feet apart) with setbacks approximately 20 feet from the public sidewalk.  
3 Many of the houses have off-street parking on narrow driveways between the structures.  
4 These houses usually have wood siding, or sometimes brick, or are a combination of a brick  
5 foundation and wood siding. They have gabled or hipped roofs, or a combination thereof, and  
6 often have dormers of various sizes and configurations. Where lot elevations rise above street  
7 level the difference in grade is often accommodated with mortared **mortared stone or**  
8 **poured concrete retaining walls**, approximately three feet high. These walls appear to be  
9 made of a local native stone and are contributing feature that date to the historic period. Two  
10 of these walls in particular are depicted in historical documentation of the events of 1957-58.  
11 A wall on the southwest corner of W. Sixteenth Street and S. Park Street can be seen in a  
12 striking photograph by Will Counts depicting onlookers observing the crowds; it still  
13 occupies the same corner although it was raised and re-mortared sometime during 2008  
14 (*Figure 2-111* and see *Figure 2-30*). Another wall down the street, at 1600 Dennison, can be  
15 seen in archival film footage and also features onlookers sitting along the wall during the  
16 events. This wall is presently in good condition and appears much the same as it does in the  
17 footage (see *Figure 2-103*).

18 Despite the preservation of some residential buildings in this area, one of the major issues  
19 here still remains deferred maintenance and the demolition of small houses along the  
20 streetscape since the period of significance. Sanborn Company fire insurance property maps  
21 from 1950 indicate that there were a total of 52 residential properties surrounding Central  
22 High School on S. Park Street, W. Sixteenth Street, Jones Street, and what was then W.  
23 Fourteenth Street (Daisy Bates). Since that time, 17, or 33%, of those buildings have been  
24 demolished. Of the 39 that remain, six, or 15% of the original buildings, are vacant and  
25 boarded up. Hence, it appears that almost half of the houses surrounding Central High School  
26 in 1950 are either gone or uninhabitable. Missing structures include **three residences on**  
27 **Daisy Bates and W. Thirteenth Street** that were demolished for the construction of the  
28 school parking lot on Daisy Bates and **five residences on W. Sixteenth and Jones Streets**  
29 that have been removed since the period of significance.

30 At the west end of the site, on the other side of Jones Street, several lots that are in  
31 commercial or industrial use face the school. Much of this space is taken up by open lots  
32 used to store vehicles and materials. However, between W. Sixteenth and W. Fifteenth  
33 Streets there are several **commercial or industrial one-story buildings** on the west side of  
34 Jones Street. Two are set back off the road and another fronts directly on Jones Street,  
35 opposite the stadium's west grandstand. It is faced with buff brick and its windows are  
36 boarded up and painted blue (*Figure 2-112*). Two residential buildings facing Jones Street  
37 and another on the corner, facing Daisy Bates, are being used commercially.

### 38 *Spatial Organization*

39 The Central High School property has a variety of spatial qualities. The angled north and  
40 south wings of the high school and the fence along the top of the slope form **two triangular**  
41 **spaces** on the west side of the school, north and south of its central volume. On the north  
42 side, this space is occupied by the Tiger Fieldhouse and the Mathews Library. The space on

1 the southern side contains the ten modular classrooms and the Campus Inn. This area is  
2 chaotic and cluttered with small buildings and other structures with only narrow passageways  
3 between them (see *Figure 2-98*). Some parking is also accommodated in this area, adding to  
4 the visual clutter. Also on the west side of the school there are two outdoor eating areas, the  
5 **South Cafeteria Courtyard** and the **North Cafeteria Courtyard**. The North Cafeteria  
6 Courtyard was open during the period of significance but is now covered with an awning.

7 In contrast, the **athletic fields** that dominate more than half of the western side of the school's  
8 property present wide expanses of open space. The playing fields just west of the school,  
9 including the baseball field, are open to the street on both sides. The fields inside Quigley  
10 Stadium are also expansive, but bounded by perimeter support and viewing structures (see  
11 *Figure 2-88*). The perimeter of the school property in other places is controlled and secured  
12 by means of chain link fencing (*Figure 2-114*).

13 A drop in elevation of about fifteen feet occurs approximately one-third of the length of the  
14 school property, just west of the school buildings. The athletic fields and parking areas are  
15 located on the lower level; the descent is accommodated with stairs. This **slope between the**  
16 **school buildings and athletic fields** also contains most of the trees within this character  
17 area. These provide a screen between the fields and the school buildings.

18 The residential streetscape that frames the school on its east (S. Park Street, described in the  
19 Historic Scene character area, above), south (W. Sixteenth Street), north (Daisy Bates) and,  
20 to a limited degree, west (Jones Street) sides is characterized by a consistent scale of building  
21 and relationship to the street. In general, most residences were constructed about 20' from the  
22 street right-of-way. Houses are similar in scale and sited with respect to each other and to the  
23 streets they face in a consistent manner.

#### 24 *Views and Vistas*

25 **Views of and from within Central High School** are inhibited by perimeter walls and  
26 fencing as well as cluttered additions to the west side of the school (see *Figures 2-98 and 2-*  
27 *99*). **Views of the stadium wall** are imposing; the 10-foot high poured concrete walls  
28 surrounding the stadium, though historic, present a bare composition at the west end of the  
29 school site for surrounding neighbors (*Figure 2-115*). On the other hand, they create a sense  
30 of enclosure from within the stadium (*Figure 2-116*). Elsewhere on the school property, high,  
31 chain link fencing secures the school perimeter but also obscures views into and out of the  
32 schoolyard (*Figure 2-117*).

33 **Views into the schoolyards** behind the school are blocked by building additions and their  
34 connecting structures and the prefabricated modular buildings on the south side (*Figure 2-*  
35 *118*). All of the prefabricated units positioned behind the school are obtrusive, non-  
36 contributing features negatively impacting views into and out of that area. One in particular  
37 blocks views of the rear of the school and an outdoor seating area that dates to the period of  
38 significance. It also blocks views from the other direction; without it, views would be  
39 available from the picnic tables into the residential neighborhood, looking across W.  
40 Sixteenth Street and down Dennison Street (*Figure 2-119*).

1 **Views of the streetscape** are threatened by deferred maintenance and demolition of  
2 residences surrounding the high school. The gaps left by demolished homes also contributes  
3 to the uneven quality of the streetscape and a gradual loss of historic character (*Figure 2-*  
4 *120*)

### 5 *Circulation*

6 Vehicular circulation within the Central High School area occurs primarily along **W.**  
7 **Sixteenth Street, Jones Street, and Daisy Bates; alleyways** between major streets; several  
8 **service drives, loading docks, and parking lots** on the school property; and two large  
9 parking lots on the north side of the school, on either side of Daisy Bates.

10 W. Sixteenth Street is about 25 feet wide, paved with chip seal, unstriped, and curbed  
11 (*Figure 2-121*). An asphalt-paved, narrow alley between S. Park Street and Dennison Street  
12 can be accessed by vehicles (*Figure 2-122*). Both **Dennison Street and Rice Street**  
13 approach W. Sixteenth Street from neighborhoods to the south. Parking is allowed along  
14 most of the street, on both sides.

15 There is a **staff parking lot and loading area** on the south and west (rear) side of the school;  
16 this was a historical condition. This area is accessed off of W. Sixteenth Street, opposite of  
17 Dennison Street. West of Quigley Stadium there is also a warehouse that takes deliveries,  
18 accessed from Jones Street (*Figure 2-123*).

19 Jones Street is 30 feet wide, asphalt-paved and unstriped. The eastern extension of W.  
20 Fifteenth Street ends at Jones Street. Parking does not appear to be prohibited on this street,  
21 but this end of the school site does not appear to support much activity.

22 Daisy Bates (formerly W. Fourteenth Street) is the widest of the perimeter streets around  
23 Central High School, at 36 feet (*see Public Service Area, above*). It has a double yellow  
24 stripe and six inch concrete curbing to either side. Rice Street continues to the north off of  
25 this street. Notably, Dennison Street north of Daisy Bates, another secondary road, was  
26 removed with the addition of the school's north parking lot. This lot is accessed off of W.  
27 Thirteenth Street only (*Figure 2-124*).

28 A **universally accessible drop-off area** is located just off Daisy Bates, on the north side of  
29 the school. As one of the original circular driveways, it is now concrete and allows only one-  
30 way traffic (*Figure 2-125*). School buses pick up and drop off at the front entrance of the  
31 school on S. Park Street, discussed above in the Historic Scene section.

32 Cars park in designated areas on the south and west sides of the main school building but  
33 parking also occurs around dumpsters and in unassigned areas behind the school (*Figure 2-*  
34 *126*). Parking also occurs behind the chain link security fencing on areas of mown turf at the  
35 school's south entrance (*Figure 2-127*).

36 The school's two main parking lots lie to the south and north of Daisy Bates. The older of the  
37 two, the parking lot north of the baseball field, is accessed via Daisy Bates. It is paved with  
38 poured-in-place, red-tinted concrete and was constructed originally as the school tennis

1 courts prior to 1950. It is not striped, but can accommodate approximately 160 cars.  
2 Downslope from the school, the lot itself was constructed in two tiers; the drop-off between  
3 the tiers and its easternmost side is achieved by three-foot high concrete retaining walls  
4 (*Figure 2-128*).

5 The **parking lot north of Daisy Bates** is accessed via W. Thirteenth Street. The construction  
6 of this lot necessitated demolition of two residences and the closing of Dennison Street from  
7 Daisy Bates to W. Thirteenth Street. It is paved in asphalt, white striped, and accommodates  
8 more than 200 faculty and student vehicles. Both this and the north parking lots are fully  
9 enclosed by chain link perimeter fencing approximately eight feet high. The east side of this  
10 parking lot abuts the Commemorative Garden. The five foot drop in elevation from the  
11 garden to the parking lot is accommodated by a concrete retaining wall along the eastern side  
12 of the lot, topped by fencing visible from the garden side.

13 Pedestrian circulation in the Central High School Area is limited to **sidewalks along the**  
14 **perimeter of the school** and **walkways between buildings** added west of the main school  
15 building. Some of these walkways are surfaced with the exposed aggregate concrete used  
16 elsewhere around the front of the school and discussed in the Historic Scene section. Other  
17 walkways are paved with chip seal asphalt and concrete, or a combination of these. In many  
18 places at the rear of the school, these surfaces are cracking, patched and in need of repaving  
19 (*Figure 2-129*). A **stairway leading to a rear entrance of the school** is concrete with metal  
20 hand rails; the cheek walls are cracked and showing wear (*Figure 2-130*).

21 Athletic field areas are accessed by asphalt and **concrete service drives and concrete stairs**.  
22 These are cracking and showing wear (*Figure 2-131*).

### 23 *Vegetation*

24 Roughly two thirds of this character area are utilized as athletic fields and are mostly **mown**  
25 **turf**. Older trees survive as foundation plantings around the rear of the school, and along a  
26 narrow strip of slope descending towards the athletic fields. The surrounding perimeter  
27 streetscape tree plantings are very sparse, although recently young trees have been added to  
28 the tree lawn. Some older trees grow in the front lawns of residences and some houses have  
29 dense remnant or more recently added ornamental shrubs and perennials, while other  
30 properties have simple mown turf lawns.

31 West of the north wing of the school, there are a number of mature trees in the lawn between  
32 the Mathews Library and the Tiger Fieldhouse (*Figure 2-132*). There is a pair of pines  
33 between the library and field house (*Figure 2-133*), and a large pine between these buildings  
34 and the school. In that courtyard area, there are also crape myrtles and privet.

35 A planter sheltered by one of the building canopies contains a struggling row of liriopie  
36 (*Figure 2-134*). There is also a pair of holly trees in an interstitial space behind the school  
37 (*Figure 2-135*). There are more crape myrtles and a few larger trees in the outdoor seating  
38 area behind the school (*Figure 2-136*).

1 A strip of land, about 75 feet wide, running the entire north-south width of the school  
2 property that separates the rear of the school from the baseball field, drops 14 feet in  
3 elevation. There are **extant mature canopy trees on the slope**, primarily willow oak (*Figure*  
4 *2-137*).

5 There are no street trees within the streetscape on the north side of W. Sixteenth Street. On  
6 the south side, new plantings in the tree lawn consist of **small caliper street trees** spaced  
7 approximately 25 feet apart (*Figure 2-138*). **Residential landscape plantings** vary greatly in  
8 terms of their vegetative cover, from homes with elaborate foundation plantings, pruned  
9 hedges and mature canopy trees in their front, side and/or back yards (*Figure 2-139*), to  
10 relatively bare lots with mown lawns and paved parking pads (*Figure 2-140*). There is a row  
11 of **mature, large-caliper trees on the east side of the alley** headed south of W. Sixteenth  
12 Street between S. Park and Dennison streets.

13 At the west end of W. Sixteenth Street the large bare concrete stadium wall emphasizes the  
14 lack of street trees on that side of the street. Jones Street, as well, lacks vegetation. There are  
15 a few trees and shrubs dotted throughout the commercial lots to the west, some older trees in  
16 the backyards of the few residences in this section, and older shrubs around their foundations.

17 Daisy Bates is very similar to W. Sixteenth Street in that there are no street trees planted in  
18 the lawn between the school and the road. On the residential side, there are young, small-  
19 caliper trees planted in the tree lawn and the residential front lawns vary. Some lawns feature  
20 very large caliper trees as well as more mature foundation plantings and shrubs while other  
21 lots are quite bare.

## 22 *Small-Scale Features*

23 The small scale features in the Central High School area are mostly located in groupings  
24 behind the school. These features include elements such as seating walls, picnic tables, trash  
25 receptacles, dumpsters, shade structures, bike racks, lights, utilities, and fencing.

26 The South Cafeteria Courtyard contains several **concrete and metal picnic tables**, a number  
27 of **benches**, and **seating walls** that may date to the late 1950s.<sup>67</sup> Some newer, painted black  
28 metal picnic tables are interspersed with these, as well as a couple of painted brown metal  
29 benches mounted in the concrete along the seating wall perimeter (*Figures 2-141 and 2-142*).  
30 This area is bounded by an approximately two-foot-high concrete seating wall. There are  
31 bright yellow plastic **trash receptacles** throughout this area. The covered eating area north of  
32 this courtyard also has an outdoor eating area. The picnic tables here are painted black metal  
33 and appear relatively new.

34 The North Cafeteria Courtyard has a **buff-colored brick retaining wall**. This area also has  
35 painted black metal picnic tables in an uncovered area. Near this area there are also **raised**  
36 **buff-colored brick planting beds**, currently planted with liriopse (*see Figure 2-134*).

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<sup>67</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 44.

1 **Utility poles and lines** are mounted and strung between the prefabricated modular buildings  
2 on the south side of the rear of the school (*Figure 2-143*). North of this area, there is a  
3 grouping of **generators** between the school and the baseball diamond that is enclosed by  
4 **chain link fencing**. The athletic fields west of these areas are also secured with chain link  
5 fencing (*Figure 2-144*). Historic photographs show that there was chain link fencing on the  
6 eastern edge of the baseball field during the period of significance, but there is no  
7 information regarding the presence of this fencing on other edges of the character area (*see*  
8 *Figure 2-23*).

9 The residential streetscape small-scale features include **fire hydrants, street signs,**  
10 **mailboxes, fencing and utility poles and lines** similar to those depicted in the two sections  
11 discussed, above.

12 A **drainage canal** on the east side of Jones Street daylights at W. Sixteenth Street and  
13 extends southward halfway to W. Seventeenth Street. It is approximately four feet wide and  
14 three feet deep and has guard rails at either end but no barrier between it and Jones Street's  
15 narrow shoulder (*Figure 2-145*).

## 16 *The Neighborhood Setting*

### 17 *Introduction*

18 The Neighborhood Setting is significant as it represents the areas within which Central High  
19 School and the Historic Scene are located (*Map 2-5 Neighborhood Setting*). The  
20 Neighborhood Setting is bounded by W. Eleventh Street to the north (to include areas  
21 relative to the intersection of W. Twelfth Street and S. Park Street, where Elizabeth Eckford  
22 disboarded her bus), by the railroad tracks to the west of Jones Street, the commercial  
23 corridor of Wright Avenue to the south, and the present-day Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,  
24 Drive to the east.

### 25 *Land Use*

26 During the period of significance, the area was primarily **residential** in character, but  
27 residential land use is diminishing around the edges of the area, particularly in the northeast  
28 corner around the Arkansas Children's Hospital complex. Here, what were historically  
29 residential lots are being re-zoned to accommodate other uses, such as offices and parking  
30 lots (*see Figure 2-1*). Buildings within this complex are large and **institutional** in scale, its  
31 parking lots vast and utilitarian, and its internal circulation is not open to through-traffic.

32 Despite these changes, land use within the Neighborhood Setting of Central High School is  
33 still primarily single family residential. Other land uses associated with the neighborhood,  
34 including: **civic** (education, and Centennial Park), **transportation** (streets), **religious**  
35 (churches), medical, and educational uses. As it was during the historic period, Wright  
36 Avenue corridor on the south edge of the neighborhood contains the highest number of  
37 **commercial** uses of the neighborhood, which include a wide range of retail, office, and  
38 service establishments.

1 Other than the high school grounds and the more recently established CHS Commemorative  
2 Garden, the only open green space in the study area is Centennial Park, three blocks to the  
3 east of Central High School. During the period of significance, this block contained  
4 Centennial School, which was demolished in 1971 and a park developed in its place.

### 5 *Buildings and Structures*

6 Most of the buildings within the Neighborhood Setting of the NHS are one and two-story  
7 wood frame historic **residential buildings**. If one assumes that the Neighborhood Setting  
8 possesses the same general characteristics of the larger Central High Neighborhood Historic  
9 District, more than 50% of the buildings in the area are contributing historic structures, 35%  
10 are noncontributing historic structures (altered beyond recognition or covered in vinyl  
11 siding), and 14% are noncontributing buildings constructed since 1947. However, for the  
12 purposes of this report, any building constructed between 1947 and 1957 is considered as  
13 contributing to the historic character of this area.

14 The historic residential buildings recorded in the historic district nomination reflect local  
15 preferences in popular architectural trends between 1890 and 1946. In this neighborhood is  
16 found an eclectic mix of Queen Anne (ca 1900s), Colonial Revival (1890s to 1940s),  
17 American Foursquare (ca 1910s), Plain Traditional (1940 to 1990), Craftsman (1915-1925),  
18 English Revival (1890s to 1940s—most 1920 to 1940), Spanish Revival (1920s), and  
19 Minimal Traditional (1930-1940--revival styles with minimal detailing) (*Figures 2-147*  
20 *through 2-151*). Of all of these, about 40% of the residences in the Historic District were  
21 constructed as Craftsman bungalows, described above.<sup>68</sup>

22 **Front porches** are a ubiquitous feature of residences in the neighborhood, extending across  
23 half or the entire façade of buildings. Porch columns are sometimes brick (*Figure 2-152*) or  
24 mortared stone, or a combination of wood columns on a brick base, but in many instances are  
25 ornamental metal (*Figure 2-153*).

26 In the northeast corner of the study area many residential buildings have been demolished  
27 and have been replaced with the large institutional **buildings associated with the Arkansas**  
28 **Children's Hospital**.

29 **Commercial buildings** in this character area are concentrated along the former streetcar-line  
30 roadway of W. Twelfth Street and also along Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive and Wright  
31 Avenue. The Capel Building (Ponder's Drug Store) (see Historic Scene), built in 1916, is  
32 typical of these commercial buildings, which are typically one-story, constructed of brick,  
33 and placed up to the street right-of-way line (*Figure 2-154*).<sup>69</sup>

34 A number of churches were integral to the early development of the neighborhood. **St.**  
35 **Bartholomew's Catholic Church** on Marshall and W. Sixteenth Street was built first in  
36 1911 and replaced by the current structure in 1931 (*Figure 2-155*). The building is small in  
37 scale but has a two-story steeple tower entrance. It is considered contributing to the historic

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<sup>68</sup> Smith, 18-28.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 28.

1 district.<sup>70</sup> Other churches within the neighborhood include Bullock Temple C.M.E. Church  
2 (1971) on S. Park Street (see Historic Scene), **Liberty Hill Baptist Church** at W. Twelfth  
3 and Schiller, and **Pilgrim Valley Baptist Church** on Wolfe at W. Eighteenth streets.  
4 Construction dates for churches other than the Bullock Temple are not known.

5 The **Arkansas Baptist College**, a historically African American college located within the  
6 neighborhood, has been in continuous operation since the late 19th century (*Figure 2-156*).  
7 The original Main Building of the college is still extant on campus and efforts are underway  
8 to preserve it (*Figure 2-157*).

9 In addition to buildings, structures within the neighborhood setting include small **garages,**  
10 **storerooms, and other small accessory structures.** These are usually located at the rear of  
11 residences (*Figure 2-158*).

12 Frequently, residential yards also feature **low concrete, fieldstone, and brick retaining**  
13 **walls** that contain yards that are sited above street grade (*see Figure 2-156 and 2-157*). In  
14 these cases there are typically **concrete sidewalk, stairway and cheek wall configurations**  
15 for accessing the house from the street (*Figure 2-159*). Less frequently, **free-standing**  
16 **masonry walls** enclose front yards.

17 An unusual structure within the neighborhood which contributes to an understanding of its  
18 history is **remnant stone entrance to Centennial Elementary school**, an architectural  
19 element retained and preserved as a site feature of the present-day Centennial park (*Figure 2-*  
20 *160*).

### 21 *Spatial Organization*

22 The Neighborhood Setting for the NHS is organized by the **street grid**, and its spatial  
23 qualities are defined by these streets, the facades of residences and other buildings in the  
24 area, as well as by large, primarily deciduous street trees (*Figure 2-161*). In general, most  
25 residences were constructed with an approximately **uniform twenty-foot setback from the**  
26 **street right-of-way.** Houses are similar in scale and sited with respect to each other and to  
27 the streets they face in a consistent manner. Many residences sited above street grade feature  
28 low, mortared stone retaining walls at their property lines along the sidewalks frontage that  
29 range from a height of one to three feet (*see Figure 2-159*). A **street tree canopy**  
30 intermittently encloses the streetscape from above.

31 Residential lots on most streets within this character area are narrow, deep, and flat with  
32 driveways placed alongside houses. Houses were constructed closely together so that the  
33 building facades enclose the street. Accessory buildings, such as garages, were sited to the  
34 rear of lots. Despite the wide variety of architectural styles and mixture of one- and two-story  
35 buildings, there is a general uniformity in the overall scale, setback, and spacing of the  
36 houses in this area. Zoning laws today require deeper setbacks than were typical in the  
37 historic streetscape, so buildings constructed after these laws were forced to disrupt the more  
38 pedestrian-oriented spaces of the historic streetscape.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 28.

1 The uniform setbacks of these houses, the trees that line the street space, and the overhead  
2 utility lines and the wooden poles that support them, all contribute to the intimate, yet linear  
3 quality of the streetscape. However, due to demolitions that have occurred since the period of  
4 significance, there are occasionally **vacant lots**. These gaps left from demolition interrupt the  
5 linear quality of the space (*Figure 2-162*).

6 Along most of the residential streets, a **hierarchy of private to public space** ranges from the  
7 public space of the street and sidewalks; the semi-public spaces of front yards, often set apart  
8 from the street by low retaining walls, vegetation, or yard fences; the semi-private spaces of  
9 the front porches that are found on almost every house; and the private spaces of the interior  
10 of the houses (*see Figure 2-31 and Figure 2-161 and Figure 3-11*). The low stone retaining  
11 walls that contain the front yards of some of the historic houses in the neighborhood  
12 contribute to the clarity of that hierarchy. Historical documentation that depicts onlookers  
13 seated on these walls during the crisis provide are exemplary depictions of this stratification  
14 of public to private space. This is an important spatial relationship that contributes heavily to  
15 the historic quality of the neighborhood and could be easily compromised if new homes are  
16 constructed with deeper setbacks than the historic homes and built without the traditional  
17 front porch, or if the site grading is altered dramatically.

18 Traditionally, within this neighborhood most commercial buildings are set on the right-of-  
19 way, placing them directly on the sidewalk (*see Figure 2-154*). This placement increases the  
20 possibility of pedestrian activity and enlivens street life. This historic characteristic could be  
21 easily lost if new commercial buildings were constructed with deep setbacks and parking in  
22 the front.

23 The neighborhood setting for the NHS is also characterized by form of the institutional  
24 campus (*see Figure 2-156*). This usually consists of a loose arrangement of buildings within  
25 a large block, constructed to serve the program of the organization and less frequently in  
26 response to the overall neighborhood. In the case of the Arkansas Baptist College campus  
27 this is a condition that dates to the historic period of significance. The Arkansas Children's  
28 Hospital campus, however, is a new development that occupies blocks that were residential  
29 during 1957-57; the character of this northwestern part of the neighborhood has been  
30 significantly altered by changes in street circulation patterns, buildings that are very large in  
31 scale and by an increase in overall paved surfacing.

32 Centennial Park provides an open space that was not present during the period of  
33 significance, but which is certainly appreciated in the present. It is fortunate that a portion of  
34 the Centennial school was preserved, referencing the history of the neighborhood.

### 35 *Views and Vistas*

36 Central High School is massive enough that it can be seen rising above the houses and trees  
37 that line streets beyond the perimeter of the school property. **Views of Central High School**  
38 dominate the western part of the neighborhood.

39 Where Centennial School once stood there is now a park. These blocks of Fifteenth Streets,  
40 Sixteenth Street, South Battery and Wolfe Streets, consequently, have **open views across**

1 **Centennial Park** where they would have been enclosed during the period of significance.  
2 The front steps and entrance of the school remain as an artifact and park feature.  
3 Streetscape views in the northeast quadrant of the neighborhood are dominated by the new  
4 buildings and ground-level parking lots constructed by the Arkansas Children’s Hospital.  
5 These **views of Arkansas Children’s Hospital** are also not a historic condition.  
6 On other streets, front facades of houses, street trees, and utility poles that line the streets  
7 within the Neighborhood Setting frame **linear views up and down streets** in both directions.

### 8 *Circulation*

9 It appears that most streets within this area are in the same configuration and maintain the  
10 same materials that have been traditionally used throughout most of their history. Streets are  
11 generally approximately 35’ wide, lined with 6” concrete curbs, paved in asphalt, and  
12 bordered on both sides with concrete sidewalks (*see Figure 2-48*). A broad exposed  
13 aggregate gutter or parking strip lines many of the streets (*Figure 2-163*). Most of the blocks  
14 in this area are bisected by gravel-paved alleys that provide access to the rear of lots.

15 Three major streets frame the edges of the Neighborhood Setting for the NHS: **W. Twelfth**  
16 **Street, Wright Avenue, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive**. The fourth side is  
17 bounded by the tracks of the **Union Pacific Railroad** on the west.

18 As mentioned above, Wright Avenue is a minor arterial. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive  
19 and Daisy Bates are both considered collector streets and the other streets within the  
20 Neighborhood Setting are considered local. The Little Rock Bicycle Plan classifies Dr.  
21 Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, Daisy Bates, and Jones Street from W. Thirteenth to Daisy  
22 Bates as “Class II”, indicating that the existing street surface is to be used for a bicycle route,  
23 but that striping to create lanes on both sides of the street are to be added for safety at a  
24 minimum of six feet from the curb.

25 With the exception of the broad sidewalk along the front of Central High School, most  
26 **poured concrete sidewalks** in the neighborhood are generally between five and six feet in  
27 width (*see Figure 2-161*). They generally follow the line of the street. Most houses are  
28 accessed by **concrete sidewalks leading from public sidewalks to front porches**.

29 In addition to the **local and collector streets**, houses within the neighborhood are almost all  
30 accessible by **narrow, unpaved alleys** that bisect each block and are usually oriented north  
31 to south (*see Figure 2-122*). Alleys are frequently used to access parking at the rear of  
32 buildings. Otherwise, parking for residences is accessible via narrow driveways off of the  
33 local streets. **Residential driveways** vary in material, but are generally of concrete or asphalt  
34 and often of simple two-track concrete with a turf center (*Figure 2-164*).

35 Most commercial traffic uses collector or arterial streets to pass through the neighborhood.  
36 The exceptions are the school buses that load and unload students along S. Park Street, and  
37 city buses that pass through the neighborhood. Circulation around the Children’s Hospital

1 area is organized by a maze of one-way roads and enclosed parking areas. Through-traffic is  
2 no longer possible in this area.

3 The Union Pacific Railroad is still active in this area and trails pass along the rails on the  
4 west side of the neighborhood.

### 5 *Vegetation*

6 Most of the streets within the Neighborhood Setting of the NHS are lined with **mature shade**  
7 **trees**, or with **trees recently planted by the Central High Neighborhood Urban Forestry**  
8 **Program**. The Urban Forestry Program was created in 1990 by members of Central High  
9 Neighborhood, Inc. The program was initiated in response to the loss of many of the  
10 neighborhood's trees in a storm in 1990. The goals of the organization have been to  
11 reestablish the tree canopy that was lost and to establish an urban forest in the  
12 neighborhood's public rights-of-way with large deciduous shade trees and small flowering  
13 trees. Related goals include providing shade and habitat, controlling air pollution, reducing  
14 water runoff, and improving the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood. Members hope that  
15 this project can help improve the quality of life in the neighborhood and encourage neighbors  
16 to take a greater interest in the local trees.

17 The first step taken by the group was to ask the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department  
18 to assist by planting twenty-seven willow oaks to replace some of what was lost. The group  
19 then contracted with an arborist to develop an inventory of neighborhood trees to become the  
20 basis for future plantings. In 1991, the group developed a long-range plan and began  
21 implementation in a six-block pilot area. This effort was supported by a matching grant  
22 received in 1993 from the Arkansas Forestry Commission which funded hazardous tree  
23 removal and treatment of existing trees. In 1994 and 1995, the group received additional  
24 grants with which they were able to install 59 large deciduous trees and several small  
25 flowering trees. Other projects have included the production of an educational brochure  
26 about the project and funding for continual maintenance on existing and new trees.<sup>71</sup>

27 Other vegetation found within the neighborhood includes **mown turf** and **residential**  
28 **landscape plantings**, including groundcovers, perennials, annuals and bulbs, deciduous and  
29 evergreen shrubs, pruned hedges, small ornamental trees, evergreens, and large canopy trees.  
30 Rarely are ornamental plants located close to the street or in the grass strip between sidewalk  
31 and curb; this area is primarily planted in lawn grasses and kept mowed (*see Figures 2-159*  
32 *and 2-161*).

### 33 *Small-Scale Features*

34 Small-scale features within the Neighborhood Setting include **street identification signs**,  
35 **traffic and other regulational signage**, **fire hydrants**, and **utility poles** that line the streets  
36 within the right-of-way (*Figure 2-165*). Some of the utility poles also support street lighting  
37 (*Figure 2-166*).

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<sup>71</sup> Ann McCoy Allen, "Quiet Revolutions: Neighborhood Urban Forestry Programs" (master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 2005), 36-38.

1 Other small-scale features include **path light standards in front yards**, occasional **street-**  
2 **side mailboxes**, other miscellaneous small objects or **lawn ornaments** located in front yards.  
3 A common vernacular feature in the neighborhood is the quantity of **outdoor smokers** in  
4 front and back yards, many of which are fabricated from oil drums (*Figure 2-167*).  
5 An eclectic variety of **perimeter fencing** styles of varying transparencies can be found  
6 throughout the neighborhood including: ornamental metal (*Figure 2-168*), metal pickets  
7 featuring stone or brick columns (*Figure 2-169 and Figure 2-170*), chain link (*Figure 2-171*),  
8 wood pickets (*Figure 2-172*) and fully enclosed wood board privacy fences (*Figure 2-173*).  
9 Some fences enclosing back yards are visible from the street while other fences surround  
10 front yards.

## 11 **Summary of Changes, 1958-2007**

12 While the study area retains many features from the 1957-58 period, there have also been  
13 several important changes since then. Of most concern regarding the integrity of the  
14 streetscape is the deterioration and subsequent demolition of residences along the  
15 neighborhood streets and the potential expansion of the high school.

16 Central High School has continued to be a vital part of the Little Rock School District since  
17 the period of significance. The school has added facilities, including the 1969 Jess Matthews  
18 Library was built on the north side of the school.<sup>72</sup> During the 1980s, the reflecting pool in  
19 the sunken plaza in front of the school was filled in but then restored in the early 2000s.<sup>73</sup>  
20 The original Campus Inn, located along W. Sixteenth Street west of the school, was  
21 demolished in 2000, but a new Campus Inn, designed in reference to the old building, was  
22 constructed in the same location.<sup>74</sup> The school continues to expand its program offerings,  
23 including an International Studies Magnet program, and has erected temporary trailers  
24 behind the school to meet increasing needs for space.<sup>75</sup> There is also an increasing demand  
25 for parking by students and faculty. The school purchased several lots on the north side of  
26 Daisy Bates, demolished the residences there, closed Dennison Street, and built a large  
27 parking lot to meet these needs.

28 Seven residences heavily documented in historic photographs from the period of significance  
29 remain along S. Park Street across from the high school. Two residences that existed on the  
30 block during the period of significance have been demolished and the Bullock Temple  
31 C.M.E. Church built in place of one of them in 1971.<sup>76</sup>

32 Post World War II suburbanization contributed to the “white flight” from the study area and  
33 surrounding neighborhoods during the 1960s and 1970s. During this period there was also a  
34 steep decline in owner-occupied housing, which led to an increase in transient residency,  
35 declining and deferred maintenance, and overall deterioration that has led to the demolition

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<sup>72</sup> This library was named for Jess W. Matthews who served as principal of Central High School from 1945-1965.

<sup>73</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 36.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>75</sup> *General Management Plan*, 3.

<sup>76</sup> *Special Resource Study*, 28.

1 of houses within the study area.<sup>77</sup> By the early 1990s, the area had transitioned from a mixed  
2 middle- and working-class neighborhood with a mixed race population to a majority African  
3 American population where over half lived below the poverty level.<sup>78</sup> Through the efforts of  
4 community groups, such as the Central High School Neighborhood Organization, home  
5 ownership is on the rise and several projects are being undertaken to add infill housing and  
6 renovate existing housing stock.

7 As part of the establishment of the NHS, several new features have been added to the study  
8 area. These include the Commemorative Garden at the northwest corner of Daisy Bates and  
9 S. Park Street. This garden, opened in the fall of 2001, was developed in a vacant lot that  
10 once held two large houses visible in historic photographs. The garden's construction was  
11 commissioned and funded by the Central High Museum, Inc. "as a place to contemplate the  
12 lessons of 1957."<sup>79</sup> The garden was donated to the NPS by this group.

13 The NHS Visitor Center was dedicated on September 24, 2007.<sup>80</sup> This complex includes  
14 parking areas to the north and east. The 1920s Magnolia Mobil service station, at the  
15 southeast corner of Daisy Bates and S. Park Street, was restored in 1997 by Central High  
16 Museum, Inc. to serve as a visitor center for Central High School and subsequently also  
17 donated to the NPS.<sup>81</sup> Since the construction of the NHS Visitor Center, this building is to be  
18 used for educational programming.

### 19 *The Historic Scene*

20 Existing character of the Historic Scene is the result of several changes that occurred  
21 following the period of significance:

#### 22 *Land Use*

- 23 • Changes from residential and commercial to civic, interpretive, and religious use
- 24 • Closing of Ponder's and cessation of associated retail services and street life

#### 25 *Buildings and Structures*

- 26 • Demolition of residential structures
- 27 • Filling and restoration of reflecting pool

#### 28 *Spatial Organization*

- 29 • Weakening of spatial qualities of the historic streetscape through removal of utility  
30 poles, demolition of houses, non-compatible new construction

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<sup>77</sup> Smith and Speed, 17.

<sup>78</sup> *Cultural Landscape Inventory*, 11.

<sup>79</sup> National Park Service, *Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Little Rock Central High School, National Historic Site* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2004), 28.

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/chsc/parknews/visitor-center-dedication.htm> (accessed December 14, 2007).

<sup>81</sup> *Special Resource Study*, 28.

1 Views and Vistas

- 2 • Removal of residences and non-compatible new construction has altered views of  
3 historic scene

4 *Circulation*

- 5 • Change of S. Park Street to one-way  
6 • New paving design at intersection of Daisy Bates and S. Park Street

7 *Vegetation*

- 8 • Loss of large shade trees  
9 • Replacement of original plant species with non-historic species

10 *Small-Scale Features*

- 11 • Removal of bus stop and bench  
12 • Removal of bollard-style street signs

13 *Management*

- 14 • Cooperative agreement between Little Rock School District and NPS

15 *The Public Services Area*

16 The existing character of the public services area is the result of many changes that have  
17 occurred following the period of significance:

18 *Land Use*

- 19 • Changes from residential to civic, commercial, and religious use

20 *Buildings and Structures*

- 21 • Demolition of residential structures on S. Park Street

22 *Spatial Organization*

- 23 • Weakening of spatial qualities of the historic streetscape through demolition of  
24 greenhouses and residences, non-compatible new construction

25 *Views and Vistas*

- 26 • Removal of residences and non-compatible new construction has altered views of  
27 historic scene

28 *Circulation*

- 29 • Change of S. Park Street to one-way

- 1       • New paving design at intersection of Daisy Bates and S. Park

2       *Vegetation*

- 3       • Loss of large shade trees and residential vegetation

4       *Small-Scale Features*

- 5       • Removal of bollard-style street signs

6       *Management*

- 7       • Management change from private to public

8       *The Central High School Area*

9       Existing character of the Central High School area is the result of several changes that  
10      occurred following the period of significance:

11      *Land Use*

- 12      • Closure of light industrial businesses between Jones Street and the railroad  
13      • Change from residential use to parking

14      *Buildings and Structures*

- 15      • Demolition of residential structures on Daisy Bates  
16      • Addition of temporary classrooms west of the school building  
17      • Infill of fenestration in the Quigley Stadium

18      *Spatial Organization*

- 19      • Weakening of spatial qualities of the historic streetscape through demolition of  
20      houses, non-compatible new construction  
21      • Addition of security fencing around parking lots

22      *Views and Vistas*

- 23      • Portable classroom arrangements present confusing and cluttered views

24      *Circulation*

- 25      • Street closure and construction of north parking lot

26      *Vegetation*

- 27      • Loss of residential plantings

28      *Small-Scale Features*

- 29      • Addition of furnishings and canopies for north outdoor gathering area

- 1 • Addition of furnishings for south outdoor gathering area

#### 2 *Management*

- 3 • Cooperative agreement between Little Rock School District and NPS

#### 4 *The Neighborhood Setting*

5 Existing character of the Central High School Historic Neighborhood Setting is the result of  
6 several changes that occurred following the period of significance:

#### 7 *Land Use*

- 8 • Changes from residential land use to office, commercial, and institutional
- 9 • Change of Centennial block from educational to civic

#### 10 *Buildings and Structures*

- 11 • Demolition of residences for new construction associated with hospital and other  
12 institutions
- 13 • Construction of historically non-compatible buildings

#### 14 *Spatial Organization*

- 15 • Weakening of spatial qualities of the historic streetscape through demolition of  
16 houses, non-compatible new construction

#### 17 *Views and Vistas*

- 18 • Linear views of streetscape eroded by loss of residential housing

#### 19 *Circulation*

- 20 • Increased traffic volume

#### 21 *Vegetation*

- 22 • Loss of street tree canopy

#### 23 *Small-Scale Features*

- 24 • Removal of bollard-style street signs

#### 25 *Management*

- 26 • Economic changes led to absentee ownership, deferred maintenance, abandonment,  
27 and demolition

## 1 **Integrity Analysis**

### 2 *Introduction*

3 A comparison was made between the historic landscape as understood from maps, written  
4 documents, and photographs from the period of significance, 1957-58, and the existing  
5 landscape. This section, arranged by character area, will feature comparative photo pairs and  
6 analytical descriptions of the changes noted.

### 7 *The Historic Scene*

8 The Historic Scene comprises the core setting for the desegregation crisis of 1957-58. The  
9 façade of Central High School; its entrance, lawns, and sidewalks; S. Park Street; the  
10 Magnolia Mobil service station; and the houses along the block of S. Park Street from Daisy  
11 Bates to W. Sixteenth Street are the "backdrop" of the extensively photodocumented events  
12 of that time, which in many cases captured images of large crowds which formed in front of  
13 the school and at these two intersections.

14 The façade of Little Rock Central High School is formidable (*Figures 2-174 through 2-178*).  
15 Grand in scale and with many classical details, it is a prominent landmark that is highly  
16 recognizable from historic photographs of the desegregation crisis. Views of this façade from  
17 many different points around the area (the front grounds of the school, as well as views from  
18 S. Park Street) are a valuable feature of the Historic Scene. Views of the school grounds and  
19 S. Park Street from within the school are also significant because students and faculty would  
20 have observed activities outside of the school from there. These views retain much of their  
21 historic integrity.

22 The school and its attendant landscape and their features retain a high degree of integrity of  
23 location, setting and association. Although the feeling, design and materials in the front plaza  
24 area were threatened over the years by alterations, some of these features have been recently  
25 restored. The addition of the tiger mosaic to the wall of the grotto slightly detracts from the  
26 historic character of the sunken plaza. Removal of some utility poles on the west side of S.  
27 Park Street also detracts slightly from the integrity of the Historic Scene for the period of  
28 significance. Fortunately, much of the vegetation, in particular, the shade trees that grew  
29 along the street and in front of the school, are extant, although at least one of the large shade  
30 trees has been removed since the period of significance.

31 Elizabeth Eckford's famed walk on September 4, 1957 began on W. Twelfth Street and S.  
32 Park Street, but the jeering mob she faced was gathered at the intersection of W. Fourteenth  
33 Street (now Daisy Bates) and S. Park Street. The Magnolia Mobil service station there, with  
34 its pay phones, was an important outpost for reporters calling in their stories. The station has  
35 undergone a detailed and thoughtful rehabilitation that contributes greatly to the interpretive  
36 potential of the Historic Scene.

37 Along S. Park Street, between the Magnolia Mobil station and Ponder's, are seven  
38 residences, which also existed during the crisis. They are extant today and in varying  
39 condition. At the end of the block, two lots are occupied today by the Bullock Temple

1 C.M.E. Church. The scale of the building and the character of its associated landscape  
2 interrupt the residential character and the rhythm of this block of S. Park Street. The  
3 residential character of the streetscape dates to the late 19th century, and was intact at the  
4 time of the crisis. The church was not deemed obtrusive in the 2003 CLI, but it does not  
5 contribute to the historic character of the streetscape.

6 When Ms. Eckford was turned away at Ponder's Drug Store when she sought shelter from the  
7 crowd, she was photographed on W. Sixteenth Street waiting for a city bus on a bench across  
8 from the store. Photographs also depict when she was joined by the New York Times  
9 education reporter, Benjamin Fine, who famously told her to not let the jeering crowds see  
10 her cry. The bench and bollard street sign in the photographs are no longer extant, although  
11 the NPS has shown interest in restoring the bench. The building that housed Ponder's Drug  
12 Store is now vacant and neglected (*Figure 2-179*). However, it has not been torn down,  
13 remodeled, or put to a contemporary use, so it still has the potential to be rehabilitated as part  
14 of the Historic Scene. There are remnant original decorative tiles at the vestibule of what was  
15 the store's corner front entrance.

16 W. Sixteenth Street was also the location of the brick house on the corner of S. Park and W.  
17 Sixteenth Street where onlookers lounged during the crisis across the street from Ponder's.  
18 Both the house and the stone masonry wall that was there in 1957 appear to be in good  
19 condition (*Figure 2-180*).

20 The Magnolia Mobil station, the drug store, the front of the high school, and the block of  
21 residences along S. Park Street in-between carry significant historical associations with that  
22 day and have become contemplative destinations for visitors. The NPS has recognized the  
23 important of these sites and their context. The *General Management Plan and Environmental*  
24 *Impact Statement* published in 2002 states that:

25         This historic streetscape is a small part of the larger, equally important cultural  
26         landscape that surrounds the national historic site. It is the location most recognizable  
27         as the backdrop of the events of 1957. Many of the historic photographs were taken  
28         along this block, which has remained largely architecturally intact and unaltered since  
29         1957 (one home was damaged by fire several years ago). There is a need to preserve  
30         this setting in order to interpret the events of 1957. The current boundary of the  
31         national historic site is down the center of S. Park Street. The seven residences are  
32         part of the historic streetscape; although they are not within the boundary...the  
33         National Park Service has no authority concerning these homes.

34 Recommendations concerning preservation of the integrity of the Historic Scene are provided  
35 in Chapter Three of this report.

### 36 *The Public Services Area*

37 There is very little historic integrity to the Public Services area, as the entire area has been  
38 redesigned to accommodate its administrative and new interpretive uses. The two residences  
39 and the greenhouses which occupied this area during the period of significance burned in the  
40 1980s and the remains removed. The residences that were at the northwest corner of then W.

1 Fourteenth Street and S. Park Street in 1957 had already been demolished when the Central  
2 High School Museum Commission acquired the property (*Figure 2-181*).

3 The NHS Visitor Center now stands on the site of the Tipton and Hurst greenhouses, which  
4 were located at the intersection of W. Fourteenth Street and S. Park Street (*see Figure 2-5*).  
5 The simple street intersection paving that existed in 1957 was replaced in the early 2000s  
6 with a pattern of white and red stamped concrete (*see Figure 2-73*).

### 7 *The Central High School Area*

8 The Central High School Area possesses moderate integrity for the period of significance  
9 (*Figure 2-183*). Significant historic associations include the:

- 10 • National Guard and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne encampment on athletic fields during period of  
11 significance;
- 12 • Drive-in side entrance of building where students were escorted off-campus in police  
13 cars and residence across the street on Dennison that witnessed the event (*Figure 2-*  
14 *184*);
- 15 • Playing fields and Quigley Stadium, which have changed little since the 1950s; and
- 16 • Location of Campus Inn, although the original building was replaced.

17 Other historic features that remain include the:

- 18 • Heavily wooded and sloping hill to the west of the school—its character may be the  
19 reason why this area was formerly set aside as a park rather than divided up into  
20 residential lots like the surrounding neighborhood;
- 21 • Surrounding streetscape, although its integrity has been compromised by the  
22 incremental demolition of residences along all three streets; and
- 23 • House across the street from the side entrance, at 1600 Dennison Street is extant and  
24 in good condition, except that its garage, evident in historic photographs, has since  
25 been removed (*Figure 2-185a and 2-185b*).

26 Changes to this area include the addition of Matthews Library, which now occupies what was  
27 a student parking lot during the period of significance; it is the only building presently on the  
28 Central High School property other than the new Campus Inn, which did not exist during the  
29 period of significance. Other changes include the addition of a number of temporary  
30 classroom buildings and other free-standing objects and structures on the west side of the  
31 school building. Additional parking areas and surrounding security fences also negatively  
32 impact the integrity of this area.

### 33 *The Neighborhood Setting*

34 Although this report has had to rely almost exclusively on a comparison of aerial  
35 photographs from 1957 and 2005, it appears that the Neighborhood Setting for the NHS

1 possesses moderate integrity to the period of significance. Historic features remaining  
2 include the overall fabric of residential and small commercial buildings throughout. Other  
3 historic features that remain from the period of significance are the number of small stores  
4 and churches throughout the area, and buildings within the Arkansas Baptist College campus.

5 Comparison of the 1957 and 2005 aerial photographs show some change in tree cover during  
6 the intervening fifty years. Most change has occurred within the public streetscape,  
7 particularly associated with new construction in the area. Recent neighborhood campaigns  
8 have resulted in some street tree replacement in the right-of-way, but on-going monitoring of  
9 the tree canopy and replacement of damaged or removed trees is encouraged.

10 Threats to this integrity include the increasing pressure of the growth of businesses and  
11 institutions on the edges, and particularly on the northeast corner of the neighborhood. Other  
12 threats include new development that is not compatible with the historic character of this  
13 area. Design guidelines presented in Chapter Three of this report address this in more detail.

## 14 **Summary**

15 The historic landscape of the Central High School study area, as defined for this report, has  
16 generally moderate integrity. Some areas, such as the Historic Scene, have high integrity,  
17 while others, such as the Public Services Area have low integrity. In general, the  
18 neighborhood setting for the dramatic events of 1957-58 has overall moderate integrity; there  
19 is great potential for preservation of the historic character of this neighborhood.

20 It is quite fortunate that this site has been receiving increasing neighborhood, city, state, and  
21 national attention and that there is a growing appreciation of its historic character. The recent  
22 designation of the site as a NHS, the construction of the NHS Visitor Center, the 50<sup>th</sup>  
23 anniversary commemoration in 2007, local neighborhood preservation activities, and the  
24 consideration by the City of Little Rock to establish the area as a local historic district are all  
25 significant events and bode well for the future of the site. Chapter Three will detail  
26 recommendations and guidelines for management and design within this area.