

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

253

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Heritage Park Plaza

OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Heritage Park; Heritage Park Overlook; Upper Heritage Park

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: West Bluff Street at Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: Fort Worth

VICINITY: N/A

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A

STATE: Texas

CODE: TX

COUNTY: Tarrant

CODE: 439

ZIP CODE: 76102

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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

Mark Wolfe
Signature of certifying official / Title

State Historic Preservation Officer 3/15/10
Date

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- other, explain
 - See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper
Laura McElwain

Date of Action

5-10-10

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: PUBLIC-Local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: SITE

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING	
	0	0	BUILDINGS
	1	0	SITES
	0	0	STRUCTURES
	0	0	OBJECTS
	1	0	TOTAL

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

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: LANDSCAPE: Park, Plaza

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: LANDSCAPE: Park, Plaza

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER: Modernist Park and Water Garden

MATERIALS:	FOUNDATION	CONCRETE
	WALLS	CONCRETE
	ROOF	CONCRETE
	OTHER	

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-11)



8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: G

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Landscape Architecture

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1976-1980

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1977, 1980

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Halprin, Lawrence (Landscape Architect)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-12 through 8-21)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 9-22 through 9-25)

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- State historic preservation office: Texas Historical Commission
- Other state agency:
- Federal agency:
- Local government: City of Fort Worth
- University: University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives
- Other -- Specify Repository: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: Approximately one-half acre

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
	14	656032	3625711

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: See page 10-26

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: See page 10-26

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Rachel Leibowitz, Historian, Texas Historical Commission)

NAME/TITLE: W. Dwayne Jones, AICP; and Michal G. Tincup, RLA, ASLA (consultants)

ORGANIZATION: Historic Fort Worth, Inc. (Jerre Tracy, Executive Director)

STREET & NUMBER: 1110 Penn Street **TELEPHONE:** (817) 336-2344 **DATE:** 16 December 2009

CITY OR TOWN: Fort Worth **STATE:** Texas **ZIP CODE:** 76102

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet Map-27 through Map-30)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-46 through Photo-49)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS (see continuation sheets Figure-31 through Figure-45)

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: City of Fort Worth
Mayor's Office (The Hon. Mike Moncrief, Mayor)

STREET & NUMBER: 1000 Throckmorton Street **TELEPHONE:** (817) 392-6118

CITY OR TOWN: Fort Worth **STATE:** Texas **ZIP CODE:** 76102

NAME: City of Fort Worth
Parks and Community Services Department (Richard Zavala, Director)

STREET & NUMBER: 4200 South Freeway, Suite 2200 **TELEPHONE:** (817) 392-5711

CITY OR TOWN: Fort Worth **STATE:** Texas **ZIP CODE:** 76115

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Heritage Park Plaza, designed by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, is an urban public park and water garden defined by reinforced concrete walls and hardscape, live oak trees and ornamental plantings, concrete stepping stones over pools of water, and active water features of channels and walls. Located on approximately one-half acre on the southern bluff of the Trinity River, at the northern edge of downtown Fort Worth and immediately northwest of the Tarrant County Courthouse, the plaza contains abstract references to local history in both its form and inscriptions on its concrete walls. Concrete stairs with low risers allow access to various levels within the plaza, leading to an elevated bridge or catwalk that extends over the bluff and provides an overlook to the north, visually connecting the park to the greater city of Fort Worth. Heritage Park Plaza is one of Halprin's most significant urban projects, and it retains a high level of integrity including location, association, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and design. It is therefore nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture at the national level of significance.

Summary

Heritage Park Plaza (1976-1980) is located on approximately one-half acre on the southern bluff of the Trinity River, at the northern edge of downtown Fort Worth and immediately northwest of the Tarrant County Courthouse (1893-1895; listed NRHP 1970). The hierarchy of sidewalks along Bluff and Main streets and public facilities surrounding the plaza limit pedestrian accessibility. Several local architectural and historic landmarks lie within the viewshed of Heritage Park Plaza. The Paddock Viaduct (1914; listed NRHP 1976, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark 1980), a structure to the east of the plaza, crosses the west fork of the Trinity River and serves as an architectural landmark that connects the downtown to North Fort Worth. The historic Fort Worth Power & Light Company Power Plant (1912) is located across the Trinity River bluffs and anchors the north view from Heritage Plaza. A six-story concrete parking garage built for the Tarrant County Criminal Court (c. 1985) lies to the west of the plaza.

Heritage Park consists of approximately 112 acres divided into two parts: Heritage Park Plaza (or Upper Heritage Park), designed by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, and Lower Heritage Park. Heritage Park Plaza encompasses approximately one-half acre on the southern bluff of Trinity River, several hundred feet to the east of the confluence of the Clear and West Forks of the river; Lower Heritage Park occupies the remaining acreage down the bluff and along the Trinity River channel. Upper Heritage Park is an urban public park and water garden defined by reinforced concrete walls and hardscape, live oak trees and ornamental plantings, concrete stepping stones over pools of water, and active water features of channels and walls; abstract references to local history are found in both the form of the plaza and inscriptions on its concrete walls. Concrete stairs with low risers allow access to various levels within the plaza and lead to an elevated bridge or catwalk with metal railings that extends over the bluff and provides an overlook to the north. In contrast to the concrete surfaces and water features of Halprin's Heritage Park Plaza, Lower Heritage Park contains switchback trails, native shrubs, trees, and bramble, and a natural site that steps down incrementally to the Trinity River, which provides a larger landscape context. This nomination includes only Heritage Park Plaza (Upper Heritage Park), with boundaries established to encompass the one-half acre footprint of the designed site, and excludes the approaches from Bluff and Main streets.

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In concept, Heritage Park Plaza provides a sequential experience guided throughout the site by a progressive series of concrete walkways, stepping stones, stairs, and an elevated catwalk. The experience is active as visitors move freely throughout the plaza, repeating sequential movements or lingering as they choose. The overall composition of volumetric spaces, made into "rooms" by the oversized concrete walls, creates a series of terraces or lawns on the side of the bluff, intermingled with flowing water and recessed grottoes under gridded live oaks, yaupons, and shrubs. Flowing water is a key design element that subtly cascades down the bluff through the interconnected channels, runnels, weirs, and water walls, all originating at the source fountain near the principal entry. At the main entrance and on the western elevation, kiosks and ornamentation on the concrete walls refer to the history of Fort Worth as well as the plaza's association with the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976.

Heritage Park Plaza—with its spectacular views and vistas to the north, west and east—retains a high level of integrity of location, setting, association, workmanship, materials, feeling, and design. Its setting is a key aspect to the plaza's design, as it lies on the original location of the fort that established the city in 1849; the military site was selected for its views and, thus, its defensive values. In the course of the 19th and 20th centuries the city developed around the site, with Bluff Street running diagonally east-to-west as it connected to Main Street, running north-to-south, from the county courthouse, which was the center of civic life.

Setting

The Tarrant County Courthouse, completed in 1895, lies immediately to the southeast of Heritage Park Plaza. This 4-story, rusticated pink granite building is the most recognized architectural landmark in the city of Fort Worth, serving as the seat of county government and a reminder of the community's beginnings along the Trinity River. Access between the plaza and the courthouse is limited and disconnected.

The Paddock Viaduct is immediately to the northeast of Heritage Park Plaza. The viaduct is recognized as the first reinforced concrete arch bridge in the United States to utilize self-supporting reinforcing steel. Built in 1914 and named for four-term mayor Buckley Burton Paddock, the viaduct provided access to and from the growing North Fort Worth neighborhoods in the early 20th century as well as the active stockyards and North Main Street commercial district. Paddock Viaduct offers lookout stations along the street and pedestrian rights-of-way allowing views of Upper and Lower Heritage parks. Unlike the courthouse, the viaduct establishes a dialogue with Heritage Park Plaza created by the references in the plaza's northern elevated walkway to the belvederes built into the viaduct. The viaduct and Heritage Park Plaza take full advantage of the monumental views as well as references to the origins of the city.

The Fort Worth Power & Light Company complex, now owned by the Tarrant County College District, is visible to the north of Heritage Park Plaza across the west fork of the Trinity River and sits along the northern bluff. Constructed in 1912, the power plant occupies the site of an earlier plant built ca. 1890; today the building stands vacant, and the Tarrant County College District has no immediate plans for its use. The power plant provides a strong image of historic Fort Worth along the river's edge and is associated with the city's 20th-century development. Lawrence Halprin identified the power plant and its majestic smokestacks, now demolished, as a "powerful architectural form" in his 1970 plan.¹

¹ Lawrence Halprin & Associates, "Fort Worth Trinity River Report" (November 1970), 17.

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A six-story concrete parking garage, built for the Tarrant County Criminal Court in 1985, lies to the west of Heritage Park Plaza. This structure offers a slight deference to the plaza in its materials and in its design, which does not allow automobile parking on the ground floor. The structure's architects intended to encourage pedestrian traffic to the area by establishing an alternative, active use of the ground floor space, but the daycare facility that was envisioned for this location never materialized. The parking structure obstructs the west-northwest viewshed but does not compromise Halprin's designed landscape.

Heritage Park Plaza

Heritage Park Plaza is accessed at two points. The principal access is along the southern elevation, and the secondary access is on the western elevation, where there are primary and secondary entrances. These two entries are the beginnings of the sequential experience that leads to the main exit at the southeast point, also considered the eastern elevation of the complex, near Main Street. In plan, the plaza is a complex of interconnected rooms or volumetric spaces, defined by monumental walls of reinforced concrete that are softened by organic materials including grass, trees, shrubs; activated by moving water features; and complemented by sculptural metal railings, and bronze letters and graphic figures. Concrete is utilized to create stepping stones—some like square tabletops—as well as a variety of water features that include a diamond-shaped fountain, grottoes, and narrow channels, both elevated and at-grade.

The principal entry on the south elevation is approached by an uncovered concrete landing with contained shrubs and an interpretive kiosk that describes the significance of the site to Fort Worth. The entry, a few steps farther south, is marked by large bronze capital letters that read "HERITAGE PARK." The street-facing wall is designed for water to cascade over it, creating textures of visual and aural interest for the visitor. The entrance experience is subtle as one passes between concrete walls—staggered, to provide an opening approximately ten feet wide—into the first and largest room of the complex. This room is defined by four concrete walls broken by large and small water walls, and includes a recessed pavilion, concrete walkways, and a lawn with mature trees. Water flows down the southernmost wall and over raised letters of bronze that read: *"Embrace the Spirit and Preserve the Freedom Which Inspired Those of Vision and Courage to Shape Our Heritage."* To the east of this water wall is a small pavilion constructed entirely of concrete, with four pillars supporting a roof that covers a diamond-shaped basin called the "source fountain." With another water wall serving as a background behind it, the source fountain—similar to a *chozubachi*, a stone water basin found in Japanese gardens and shrines—provides flowing water to concrete channels that connect at right angles down through the larger room.

To the west of the principal entry is a bronze plaque that lists the members of both the Streams and Valleys Committee and the Fort Worth City Council in 1980, as well as the designers, engineers, and contractors who worked together to create Heritage Park Plaza. The plaque includes the date of completion and dedication as April 18, 1980, as well as the following inscription:

Heritage Park
Fort Worth "Where the Pioneer Spirit is Alive and Well"

The 112 acre Heritage Park at the confluence of the clear
and west forks of the Trinity River will span the dimensions

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of time for this and future generations to know and enjoy by preserving the bluffs and river where Fort Worth was founded in 1849.

Dedicated during the occasion of Fort Worth's celebration of the 200th year of the United States of America.

Several important elements comprise this large room. A concrete walkway forms the western edge along the concrete wall and wraps along the room's perimeter on the south, west, and north before descending and connecting to a central walkway to the north. Another water wall defines the edge of the walkway, dropping down to a lower lawn that covers the majority of this large room. A grid of four rows (west to east) defines the lower lawn, with live oak trees placed as the first, third and fourth rows, and a concrete walk accessed by concrete steps establishing the second row. This lower room is separated from an upper room by a water channel fed from the source fountain. The upper room features a fifth row of live oak trees with a grass lawn covering the ground plane and abutting the concrete walls on the south, east, and north elevations. The concrete walk in the lower lawn of the largest room connects all walkways at its northernmost point and continues in a direct line to the north. This central walkway crosses a channel of water from the source fountain by stepping-stones and then descends along concrete steps to continue to a second, smaller room and the elevated walkway or catwalk.

The elevated walkway, flanked by metal railings, continues to the north, where it turns 180 degrees and culminates in a semi-circular overlook or belvedere similar to those of the Paddock Viaduct. This marks the far northwest point of Heritage Park Plaza. The catwalk then drops down to a walkway with a metal railing and open balusters that run east to west and lies below an elevated water channel. This concrete walk runs approximately 20 to 30 feet before descending a series of stairs to culminate in another semi-circular overlook marking the far northeast point of Heritage Park Plaza. After a second 180-degree turn the catwalk takes an abrupt right angle and extends to the south, reconnecting to the plaza. This section extends approximately 15 to 20 feet and is flanked again by a metal railing with open balusters. Water flows from a runnel within the handrail to a runnel below, which is then channeled to a grotto where water cascades. The exposed bluff, visible below the elevated walkway, is densely vegetated and serves as a "wild" or "natural" landscape in sharp contrast to Halprin's plaza of artfully placed plant materials. At the end of the catwalk are a recessed water wall or grotto and a walkway that turns to the east to cross a small pool with large square stepping stones. This path follows a monumental concrete wall forming the eastern elevation of the plaza and ends facing another water wall that marks the terminus of the water sequence. The walkway then takes a right-angle turn to exit toward Main Street, or out of the plaza and downstairs to the brick switchbacks of Lower Heritage Park. A mounted sign marks the way to the Trinity Trails and the Trinity River's edge along a brick path.

The second point of entry to Heritage Park Plaza is along its western elevation. A large entrance or doorway is cut into the concrete wall near its center, with a similar, but smaller, opening near the northern edge of the plaza. Large window openings flank the central doorway. This entrance leads into a large water wall that forms the westernmost edge of the large room. On the west face of this wall is a graphic design of rectangles and curving lines in bronze, which represents the site plan of the original military fort that once stood on the site of Heritage Park Plaza at the confluence of tributaries to the Trinity River. Historic photographs suggest that this design, when first built, was not merely graphic or two-dimensional, but that three-dimensional volumes of bronze were affixed to

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this wall, making the site plan a tactile map; it is likely that these bronze pieces were stolen or otherwise removed. A water channel along its length softens the hard edge of this concrete wall. On the ground is a small plaque that interprets the significance of the fort plan:

In the Spring of 1849, Major Ripley Arnold of the US Army had orders to establish a military post "somewhere near the confluence of the clear and west forks of the Trinity River." Major Arnold first established a camp below these bluffs at the "Cold Springs" which provided a convenient fresh water supply.

After the summer floods of 1849, the camp was relocated to higher ground in the general area of present day Heritage Park and the Tarrant County Courthouse. "Camp Worth" was officially designated as "Fort Worth" on November 14, 1849. The arrangement on the water wall is a scale depiction of the Fort Worth layout as submitted to Washington, DC Army Headquarters on September 7, 1853.

The fort was abandoned on September 17, 1853 because the frontier had moved westward. Fort Worth's early settlers quietly converted the abandoned Fort Worth buildings into businesses including a hotel and shops.

The smaller entrance on the west elevation leads to the second room of the complex, near the center of the plaza. This walk is lined with yaupon holly trees that shield small concrete benches. On its western edge this second room includes a set of long concrete stairs that descend to a bi-level lawn. The upper lawn is enclosed by large concrete walls, with the northernmost wall perpendicular to a narrow set of concrete stairs that descend to the termination point of the elevated catwalk and square stepping stones that lead to the exit on Main Street.

Landscape Design Concept

Heritage Park Plaza is a series of interconnected rooms surrounded by monumental water walls and pools that cascade down the bluff toward the Trinity River. In plan, the plaza is a large rectangle with smaller contained volumetric spaces on its east and west. The hard edges of these concrete rooms contrast with, and are softened by plant materials and flowing water that activate the spaces with sound and movement.

Throughout the park groves of gridded trees, grottoes, and water features evoke archetypal forms that may be inspirational or emotional for visitors, bringing the purifying aspects of flowing water to the urban street. The water features further reference the Trinity River far below the plaza.

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The division of Heritage Park Plaza into upper and lower segments symbolically contrasts the plaza's small, rigidly defined "civilized" or "controlled" space of concrete walls, pavers, and walkways to a vast "wilderness" or "uncontrolled" space below, suggesting the city's founding on the Texas frontier.

Critical to the plaza's design are patterns of circulation throughout the site. The stairways and catwalk allow visitors to experience a sequence of movements that culminate in dramatic vistas. Halprin's design drawings show visitors walking through the site and engaging with it, as opposed to sitting passively on non-existent benches.

Noteworthy, too, is the incorporation of historical content, as Heritage Park Plaza acknowledges the site's history both literally and figuratively. Interpretive signage and inspirational text, as well as the abstracted site plan of the original fort in bronze, are easily recognized as historical references. In contrast, the substantial concrete walls, creating rooms that are open to the sky, evoke the early military fort buildings that once stood there and the early-20th century stone ruins of La Corte Barrio located in the park below. The flow of water throughout the plaza is also evocative of the great importance of the river confluence in the selection of the fort's site.

Site Integrity

Overall, plantings remain in place throughout Heritage Park Plaza. Trees and shrubs that define its volumetric spaces remain as originally designed and executed, with the exception of one red oak (*Quercus rubra*) that originally occupied the northeast corner of the lower lawn in the second, smaller room. A single weeping willow (*Salix babylonica*) was never planted to the northeast of the gridded live oaks as designed, where it was intended to soften the lawn and further define the space of the large, central room. The St. John's wort (*Hypericum calycinum*) and pink lady (*Raphiolepis indica* "Ballerina") planted in the garden are not maintained, thus minimizing the "garden" concept. Saucer magnolias (*Magnolia soulangiana*) were planted to the front of the terminal grotto near the end of the processional site, serving to enclose the intimate grotto. Cedar elms and various shrubs (Japanese star jasmine and crape myrtle) along the site's edge once separated Heritage Park Plaza from the automobiles that approach Paddock Viaduct on the east side; now these plantings are in poor condition. Generally the original plantings remain intact, though in need of care.

The lighting system in the plaza currently is inoperable. The absence of night lighting compromises the plaza's evening use, though this is merely a maintenance issue that is reversible. The water pump for the grottoes and channel system currently is inactive; again, this is a maintenance issue and not an irreversible change, although it greatly compromises the overall design. Earlier repairs to the water pump system, however, appear to have caused staining of the concrete and lifting of pavers at several locations. In other locations, exposed rebar is evident and some walkway pavers are buckling. Together the result is a general appearance of neglect and uneven maintenance.

Nevertheless, Heritage Park Plaza retains its integrity of location, setting, workmanship, design, materials, association, and feeling, and it is therefore nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture; realized between 1976 and 1980, it meets Criterion Consideration G. It is the only public space within Fort Worth designed by Lawrence Halprin, a master of design in landscape architecture, and it is the only site officially developed by the city in commemoration of the U.S. Bicentennial Celebration. Built

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on the site of Fort Worth's founding, Heritage Park Plaza evokes the architectural ruins of the city's earliest days and provides an abstracted historical interpretation, with the vista of the rivers' confluence and subsequent urban growth as a magnificent backdrop. More than any other public park in Fort Worth, Halprin's Heritage Park Plaza is evocative and respectful of the city's past and simultaneously optimistic about its future, as expressed in its combination of modern building materials and methods with symbolic forms, native plant species, and water.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Park Plaza (1976–1980) is a public park in downtown Fort Worth designed by the internationally-acclaimed landscape architect Lawrence Halprin (1916–2009). The plaza design incorporates a set of interconnecting rooms constructed of concrete and activated throughout by flowing water walls, channels, and pools; rooms contain plant materials in a structured grid pattern that includes upper and lower lawns. An elevated walkway over the bluff grants access to vistas across the Trinity River valley, much like the 19th-century military fort that once occupied this site. As the work of a master, Heritage Park Plaza is of exceptional national significance because it is the only one of Halprin's many public works to present a historical narrative of urban development, as its concrete walls directly refer to the fort complex and to the stone ruins of an early barrio located in the park below the plaza. Of even greater significance, it is here in Heritage Park Plaza that Halprin first experimented with a sequence of outdoor rooms to construct a narrative—a design concept that he later employed in Washington, DC, for the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial near the National Mall. Heritage Park Plaza is nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture, at the national level of significance, as an exceptional example of a modernist urban water garden designed by a master landscape architect, Lawrence Halprin. It represents one of Halprin's most significant projects and embodies his mature theories and philosophy of landscape design.

Summary

In 1969 the City of Fort Worth, through the Streams and Valleys Committee, commissioned San Francisco-based landscape architect Lawrence Halprin to study the Trinity River corridor in order to create an urban plan that would enhance this historic, scenic, and ecological feature. Halprin's resulting plan included a two-part, 112-acre urban park, now known as Heritage Park. Heritage Park Plaza, also called upper Heritage Park, is the half-acre portion of Halprin's original plan that is sited upon the edge of the downtown overlooking the river, and is the subject of this nomination.

The designed plaza consists of a set of interconnecting rooms constructed of concrete activated throughout by flowing water walls, channels, and pools. Each room contains plant materials in a structured grid pattern that includes upper and lower lawns. An elevated walkway over the bluff grants access to vistas across the Trinity River valley much like the 19th century military fort that once occupied this site, before the city's founding. Both literally and figuratively, Heritage Park acknowledges its relationship to the city's U.S. Bicentennial celebration programs and its location on the founding site of the city.

Heritage Park Plaza is the conceptual work of Lawrence Halprin, the principal designer of the landscape architecture firm Lawrence Halprin & Associates. Satoru Nishita, partner and longtime employee of the firm, finalized the working drawings and managed construction of the plaza. The firm of Halprin & Associates dissolved in 1976, and the project moved with Nishita to the newly formed firm of Carter Hull Nishita McCulley Baxter (CHNMB) until completed in 1980.

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Today the half-acre Heritage Park Plaza remains as one part of the larger Heritage Park conceived by Halprin, and it is the most intact and noteworthy of his work in and the state of Texas.² Heritage Park Plaza is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture at the national level of significance. It meets Criterion Consideration G as a property achieving significance in less than fifty years because it is recognized as a pivotal work of the internationally acclaimed landscape architect Lawrence Halprin—his first use of interconnected rooms to establish a sequential experience through a landscape. Halprin would later rework the basic elements of this plaza into his design of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C., which interprets the president's life and accomplishments through a progression of four outdoor rooms using monumentally scaled concrete walls with text, flowing water, but with the addition of figurative statuary. Heritage Park Plaza retains a high level of integrity despite a lack of maintenance and the discontinuation of its lighting and water systems.

Lawrence Halprin and the City of Fort Worth

On May 12, 1969, the Fort Worth City Council formed the Streams and Valleys Committee to reclaim the Trinity River as a historic, scenic, and ecological resource for the city. This act followed an earlier announcement by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop flood control projects along the Trinity River throughout Fort Worth.

The Amon G. Carter Foundation, the Sid Richardson Foundation, executive Charles David Tandy, and philanthropist Ruth Carter Johnson were among those who provided funding to commission Lawrence Halprin & Associates to prepare a report for the enhancement of the long-neglected riverfront. Halprin & Associates conducted a number of community workshops and scored activities to set priorities for the plan. These exercises are noted as being the first use of this process by the firm.³ Halprin's study of the Trinity River coincided with his partnership with Stewart Udall, former Secretary of the Interior under President Lyndon Baines Johnson, in a planning firm that the city council commissioned to propose a freeway route on the north edge of downtown. Udall's and Halprin's firm, called Overview, studied a segment of the North Side-Southwest Freeway that curved around downtown and across the West Side. The city council stated Overview would assess the impact of the proposed freeway on the Trinity Valley, its associated parks, and downtown traffic.⁴

The "Fort Worth Trinity River Report" soon emerged as a comprehensive plan of the river and its potential for the city. Released in November 1970, the report is commonly referred to as "the Halprin Plan of 1970." One month later, the Fort Worth City Council adopted this plan and appointed a new 10-member committee for its implementation. The Halprin Plan addressed an eight-mile section of the Trinity River from University Drive, past the historic county courthouse, to Riverside Drive, and it recommended creating tree-lined boulevards along Forest Park Boulevard and University Drive. The plan also added a series of parks and man-made lakes for

² Lawrence Halprin designed the landscape of the NorthPark Shopping Center (1963-65) in neighboring Dallas, Texas. The shopping mall was developed by Raymond Nasher and designed by the architecture firm of Harrell & Hamilton (now Omniplan), and the American Institute of Architects recognized the design with several awards. Halprin's NorthPark landscape has seen significant alteration.

³ Jim Burns, "The How of Creativity: Scores & Scoring," in *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 56.

⁴ Carl Freund, *Dallas Morning News*, September 20, 1969.

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swimming and boating near the downtown, and included needed dams. The Halprin Plan called for the expanded recreational use of the riverfront and, most importantly, the creation of a large "heritage park" that incorporated the natural bluff along the south side of the river.⁵

In January 1976 Halprin told a local news reporter, "Next to the Trinity itself, the bluffs are Fort Worth's greatest natural asset. Their physical form is an amphitheater 50-80 feet high and almost a mile long. They are well-wooded and command fine views in several directions."⁶ Halprin's appreciation of the natural bluffs echoed the thoughts of earlier landscape architects and community leaders. In 1908, the Fort Worth newspaper had reported interest in making the historic military fort site along the natural bluff into a park. George Edward Kessler, the Kansas City-based landscape architect who created master plans for twenty-six cities throughout the United States, had noted the bluffs as an asset in his 1909 Plan for Fort Worth.⁷

A second publication, "The Fort Worth Central Business District Sector Report," emerged in October 1971, also recommending that downtown businesses embrace the river rather than ignore it—thus making the riverfront, and the theme of water, a critical part of the downtown experience. This second report and the Halprin Plan of 1970 became the vision for Fort Worth's development of the Trinity River and its environs throughout the last decades of the 20th century and into the present. The city continues to revisit several aspects of these plans today as it implements its current "Trinity River Vision" project.⁸

Halprin's newly released vision for the Trinity River in 1970 coincided with local plans to recognize and commemorate the U.S. Bicentennial Celebration. By the early 1970s, the Fort Worth City Council established the Bicentennial Association of Fort Worth, which became the leading organization to identify and organize local celebrations and observances of the nation's 200th year. During this period, local partners joined together to acquire the needed land for the riverfront public space, and the local engineering firm of Carter & Burgess, Inc., proposed a "heritage plaza" design.

On April 1, 1976, Lawrence Halprin met with local representatives—including Ruth Carter Johnson (now Ruth Carter Stevenson), Phyllis Tilley, Polly Phillips, James Toal, Jack Tuomey, and Uria Lester—concerning Heritage Park Plaza and a fountain design. During this meeting Halprin sketched out a plaza concept for the bluff overlook, which included a sequence of water cascades running along and down the plaza's multiple levels. Halprin's drawing made that day replaced the Carter & Burgess design proposal, although that firm later served as the project's engineers.⁹

Fort Worth city officials dedicated the site of Heritage Plaza on July 4, 1976, casting it as the primary local contribution to the national celebration. Although the official groundbreaking ceremony occurred in November

⁵ Carl Freund, *Dallas Morning News*, December 13, 1970.

⁶ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 12, 1976.

⁷ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, June 7, 1909.

⁸ The official website for the Trinity River Vision Authority is <http://www.trinityrivervision.org/TRVWEB/Default.aspx> (accessed on 16 December 2009); also see

⁹ Alison Hirsch, "The Fate of Lawrence Halprin's Public Spaces: Three Case Studies." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2005.

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1977 and construction was not completed until 1980, Heritage Park is recognized in Fort Worth as the primary site associated with the U.S. Bicentennial celebrations.

The construction of Heritage Park Plaza cost approximately \$1.3 million, of which \$965,890 came from private sources, including the Carter Foundation and Richardson Foundation; other contributors included the Texas Electric Service Company, the Tarrant County Water Control District No. 1, the City of Fort Worth, and the Tarrant County Commissioners Court. Haws & Garrett General Contractors managed construction of the plaza; Carter & Burgess, Inc., completed engineering drawings. These local firms worked closely with Halprin's former associate Satoru Nishita, who established the firm of Carter Hull Nishita McCulley Baxter (CHNMB) during the project's completion.¹⁰

On April 18, 1980, the City of Fort Worth dedicated Heritage Park Plaza and issued a final statement in the ceremony's program: "It is hoped that Heritage Park Plaza will provide a place of solitude and serenity for visitors who seek a moment of peace and a chance to reflect upon the past and envision the future."¹¹

Urban Parks in Fort Worth

Fort Worth established its first municipal park in 1892 on a 30-acre site surrounding the Holly Street water plant. Citizens later formed the Park League to campaign for the expansion of public parks, and in 1907 the Fort Worth City Council established the first Park Board. In 1909 the Park Board, at a cost of \$1500, hired landscape architect George Kessler to complete a master plan for Fort Worth city parks. Kessler's report became the 1909 city plan that guided park development for much of the 20th century.¹² Kessler's master plan initiated local interest in recognizing both the dramatic Trinity River bluffs and the original military fort site that would later become Heritage Plaza.

In the years following World War II, Victor Gruen—the Los Angeles-based urban planner, architect, and developer—brought a new vision to Fort Worth. The president of Texas Electric commissioned Gruen to study techniques that would revitalize the central business district. Gruen's 1956 report, "A Great Fort Worth Tomorrow," brought international attention to an ambitious plan to restructure downtown Fort Worth much like a suburban shopping mall. Gruen's proposal was of immense interest among developers, architects, and urban planners, but he failed to convince local leaders of its viability. This scale of unrealized achievement would shadow the Halprin Plan of 1970 and create some anxiety regarding its practicality in Fort Worth.

The Halprin Plan, however, met with significant financial support in the community, largely from the Carter Foundation, and fostered an appreciation of the ideal of a modern urban downtown that had to include parks and water displays in order to be successful in the late 20th century. During the 1970s, Fort Worth leaders began to plan new parks to enhance the downtown. Today, Heritage Park Plaza is one of three modernist parks in downtown, which form a triangle that embraces the central business district with public open spaces. Halprin's

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Streams and Valleys Committee, 1980.

¹² Oliver Knight and Cissy Stewart Lale, *Fort Worth: Outpost on the Trinity* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1990), 177.

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Heritage Park Plaza is the northernmost site on Bluff and Main streets, while Burnett Plaza, designed by landscape architect Peter Walker, anchors the west on West 7th Street; the Fort Worth Water Gardens, designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee, mark the south end at Commerce Street.

Walker's Burnett Plaza, completed in the mid-1980s, redesigned an earlier Burnett Park established during the early 20th-century City Beautiful movement. Walker removed picturesque paths that curved among large expanses of lawn dotted with older trees, and created a flattened ground plane overlaid with a series of diagonally-crossing sidewalks interspersed with triangular patches of lawn, small pools, and spraying fountains. Walker's design is best experienced from the adjacent corporate office towers, where one can look down upon the 3.3-acre plaza and read the flat patterns as a 20th-century reinterpretation of the French *parterre* gardens of the Enlightenment period. On the ground, the flat plaza affords little privacy or shelter from the oppressive summer sun and heat, and it has been heavily criticized since its completion. Recently the city has hired Peter Walker to redesign Burnett Plaza yet again, at a cost of over \$1 million, incorporating a raised grass lawn to relieve the monotony of the ground plane, and a children's playscape. The "new" Burnett Plaza is expected to open to the public sometime in 2010.¹³

Lawrence Halprin was first intended to design the Fort Worth Water Gardens (1970-1974), but Ruth Carter Stevenson eventually awarded the commission to Philip Johnson and John Burgee; Stevenson had already worked with Philip Johnson, whom she commissioned to design the Amon Carter Museum (1961) and its first addition (1964). Stevenson expressed her interest in seeing this water garden completed much like Halprin's celebrated Lovejoy Fountain in Portland, Oregon (1966).¹⁴ The Johnson and Burgee design for the 4.3-acre Fort Worth Water Gardens includes three pools of water—a meditation pool, an aerating pool, and an active pool—and a terraced knoll. As at Halprin's Lovejoy Fountain and later at Heritage Park Plaza, the dominant material of the Water Gardens is concrete, which is used to create terraced steps, sunken walkways, and boulders that channel water to the lower center of the garden. Water enlivens the monolithic concrete spaces throughout the site, and different species of trees and a wide array of other plants are interspersed within the different rooms. The Water Gardens were closed to the public after four visitors drowned there in 2004; after reducing the depth of the main pool and other alterations, the park was reopened in 2007. The Texas Society of Architects, the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects, awarded the Fort Worth Water Gardens its 25-year achievement award in 2008.

Lawrence Halprin, Landscape Architect (1916-2009)

Lawrence Halprin was born in Brooklyn, New York on July 1, 1916. After graduating from high school, he traveled to Palestine (now Israel), where he lived on a kibbutz for three years before returning to the United States to attend college. In 1939 Halprin earned a Bachelor of Science degree in plant sciences from Cornell University; the University of Wisconsin-Madison awarded him a degree in horticulture in 1941. The years in Wisconsin proved to be critical ones: while at the university, he met his future wife, dance student Anna Schuman; at Anna's suggestion, they visited Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's home and studio near Spring Green, where Wright encouraged Halprin to study architecture as it related to landscapes.

¹³ Sandra Baker, "Children's Play Areas to Be Added in Redesign of Fort Worth's Burnett Park," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, June 27, 2009.

¹⁴ Interview with Randle Harwood, City of Fort Worth Parks Department, January 7, 2005. See Hirsch, "The Fate of Lawrence Halprin's Public Spaces: Three Case Studies," 11.

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With this inspiration, in 1942 Halprin began the undergraduate program in landscape architecture at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. There he studied under landscape architect and theorist Christopher Tunnard, whose recent monograph *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* (1938) expanded Halprin's interest in this field. These years at Harvard fostered his appreciation of modernism in all areas of design, as the Graduate School of Design faculty included the former Bauhaus leaders Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy.

Following his graduation from Harvard in 1944, Halprin was commissioned to the U.S. Navy, serving on a destroyer ship that was attacked in the Pacific. Halprin was put on leave in San Francisco, where he stayed upon his official discharge from service in 1945. He joined the office of landscape architect Thomas Dolliver Church in San Francisco and worked there for four years, an experience which was critical to Halprin's later practice. In 1948 Halprin collaborated with Church on the seminal modernist garden *El Novillero* (more commonly known as the [Dewey] Donnell Garden) in Sonoma, California, with its iconic, biomorphically-shaped pool. In 1949 Halprin started his own firm in San Francisco, Lawrence Halprin & Associates, beginning what would become almost three decades of collaboration with designers Jean Walton, Donald Carter, Satoru Nishita, and Richard Vignolo.

Halprin's practice of the 1950s paralleled the development of modernist landscape design. Most of the firm's projects were private residential gardens or small residential developments in the area. Later Halprin accepted commissions for campus master plans, bringing projects of greater scale into the office. This period transitioned into new projects that responded to the urban renewal movement across the United States. The destruction of many urban areas and removal of inner city blight, often for the construction of new highways, created opportunities for design on what were then considered to be inferior sites and spaces. Halprin's projects in Portland and Seattle are some of his most notable as related to urban renewal. His largest and most significant project of the period, however, is the landscape design for the Sea Ranch Condominiums designed by architect Charles Moore (1962-1967). This 5,000-acre site for vacation homes responded to the ecology of the coastal environment and established new standards for residential developments. This project signaled Halprin's interest in ecology and a departure from the small-scale gardens that had consumed much of his early work.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, Halprin continued to expand his portfolio of urban spaces that considered ecology, transportation systems, and the new building types of the suburban corporate complex and the shopping mall. In San Francisco Halprin created dynamic urban centers at former industrial sites Ghirardelli Square (1962-1968) and Embarcadero Plaza (1962-1972). Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis (1962-1967) and Park Central Square in Springfield, Missouri (1969-1970) also became important designs for shopping centers. Two other projects firmly established Halprin as one of the leading landscape architects and planners of urban sites in the United States: the four sequential public spaces in Portland—Lovejoy Plaza, Pettygrove Park, Auditorium Forecourt, and the Transit Mall (1965-1978)—and Seattle's Freeway Plaza (1970-1974) confirmed Halprin's great skill in reclaiming abandoned and neglected urban spaces.

The volume and breadth of projects in Halprin's office during this period resulted in the expansion of his staff to sixty. These projects also allowed Halprin to further develop his skills at choreographing water to create sequential human experiences, or "motation," a theory of site-specific movement developed by Halprin and his choreographer wife Anna. Most of these large-scale urban projects utilized reinforced concrete to evoke massive geological forms altered by natural processes. At Lovejoy Plaza, Halprin took inspiration from monumental boulders along Oregon

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mountain streams to create a force of water crashing and cascading down toward more subtle and contemplative ponds of water. During this period Halprin's national reputation solidified, as did his design vocabulary, which he repeatedly used to choreograph water and sequential or progressional "human-made" experiences.

By 1975 Lawrence Halprin & Associates reduced its staff and its projects. The smaller office did not deter his interest in landscape design nor his active practice. Several major projects date from this period including Charlottesville Mall in Virginia, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C. (commissioned in 1974), Levi Straus Plaza in San Francisco, Bunker Hill Steps and Library Garden in Los Angeles, the 52-acre Approach to Yosemite falls in Yosemite National Park, the Haas Promenade in Jerusalem, and Lucas Studio campus at The Presidio and Stern Grove in San Francisco. Also during this period, Halprin designed Fort Worth's Heritage Park Plaza following his earlier concepts for the larger Heritage Park.

Although Halprin dissolved the firm in 1976, when he turned 60 years old, he continued to practice landscape architecture well into the 1980s. In the subsequent years he received new recognition by his peers and garnered many awards. He received a presidential appointment to the first National Council on the Arts, and later to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Halprin also wrote more about his theories and design work, eventually becoming a driving force in the preservation of modernist landscape architecture. In 1995 Halprin reflected upon his mature design theory: "The essential dilemma in the art of making landscapes is how to transmute experiences with the natural landscape into human-made environments that are fit for living...My own way has been to design the *outward forms* of nature but emphasize the *results of the processes* of nature...This act of transmuting the experience of the natural landscape into human-made experience is, for me, the essence of the art of landscape design."¹⁵

Halprin's cumulative awards include:

- 1964 Medal for Allied Professionals, American Institute of Architects
- 1969 Fellow, American Society of Landscape Architects
- 1970 Honorary Fellow, American Institute of Interior Design
- 1978 Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences
- 1978 Gold Medal, American Society of Landscape Architects
- 1979 Thomas Jefferson Medal in Architecture, University of Virginia
- 1979 Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement, American Institute of Architects
- 2002 National Medal of Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, awarded by President George W. Bush
- 2002 Friedrich Ludwig von Sckell Golden Ring, Germany (Halprin is the first American to receive this honor)
- 2003 Design Medal, American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2005 Michelangelo Award, Construction Specifications Institute

Lawrence Halprin died at his home in Kentfield, California, on Sunday, October 25, 2009, at age 93.

¹⁵ Lawrence Halprin, "Nature into Landscape into Art," in George Thompson, ed., *Landscape in America* (Austin: University of Texas at Austin, 1995), 247.

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Current Status of Heritage Plaza

The City of Fort Worth closed Heritage Park Plaza in September 2007. It is now fenced with restricted access and all entries are blocked. The water pump is no longer operational, nor is the lighting system. Several trees are overgrown and some plantings have been removed or are in poor condition. The City of Fort Worth Parks Department has considered demolition or significant alteration to Heritage Park Plaza, ironically, due of the city's desire to finally implement a modified version of the Halprin Plan of 1970. As Park Department staff has noted, "[Heritage Park] was the first time that Fort Worth really faced the river. [His plan] was really about thirty years before its time. I mean, we're ready to do that now through the "Trinity River Vision."¹⁶

In recent years Streams and Valleys, Inc., commissioned local engineering firm Carter & Burgess, Inc., to reassess Heritage Park Plaza. Their report noted the need for new plumbing and electrical systems as well as compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Further, the report stated that some walls would need to be removed and safety railings added. These repairs were estimated to cost \$7.3 million.¹⁷

In December 2008, the Southwestern Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation requested a determination of eligibility from the Texas Historical Commission (SHPO), which did find Heritage Park Plaza to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In February 2009, Preservation Texas, the statewide non-profit historic preservation organization, listed the site on its annual list of the 11 Most Endangered Sites in Texas. Historic Fort Worth, Inc., the local non-profit historic preservation organization, is advocating for the preservation of Heritage Park Plaza and is supported by the national non-profit organizations The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF), and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In February 2009 the Amon G. Carter Foundation, an original benefactor of this park, agreed to fund a redesign effort for Heritage Park Plaza in recognition of its inherent civic and design value.

Downtown Fort Worth, Inc., has commissioned the firm of landscape architect Laurie Olin to complete a feasibility study that would result in schematic design recommendations for a sensitive restoration of Heritage Park Plaza that address concerns for safety and accessibility. In April 2009 Olin conducted public workshops with city staff, local preservationists, and other interested citizens, with more public discussion likely in future.

On July 28, 2009, the Fort Worth City Council passed Resolution 3768-07-2009, "Supporting the Restoration and Improvement of Heritage Plaza." The resolution states that in 1970, the city "commissioned renowned landscape architect Lawrence Halprin to create the Trinity River Planning Program, which laid the foundation for various improvements to the Trinity River corridor, including the eventual construction of Heritage Plaza as Fort Worth's official contribution to the American bicentennial celebration." The council also recorded its support for "restoring and improving Heritage Park through a community visioning process" led by Olin Studio.¹⁸

¹⁶ Interview with Randle Harwood, Parks Department, City of Fort Worth, January 7, 2005. See Hirsch Master's thesis, 12.

¹⁷ Dan McGraw, "Neglected Heritage," *Fort Worth Weekly*, February 18, 2009.

¹⁸ Fort Worth City Council, "A Resolution, No. 3768-07-2009, Supporting the Restoration and Improvement of Heritage Plaza," adopted July 28, 2009, signed by Marty Hendrix, City Secretary, Fort Worth, Texas. Accessed on December 16, 2009 at: <http://www.fortworthgov.org/uploadedFiles/City_Secretary/City_Council/Official_Documents/2009_Resolutions/3768-07-2009.pdf>.

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Statement of National Significance

By the 1970s Lawrence Halprin assumed an important position internationally in the field of landscape architecture, and his works of the 1960s and early 1970s were recognized as exemplary contributions to the reclamation of neglected or marginal urban spaces. These two decades of projects, together with his theoretical writings on urban space and placemaking, locates Heritage Park Plaza—first imagined in Halprin's 1970 Fort Worth plan, further developed after 1975, and completed in 1980—at a pivotal point in his mature design vocabulary.

Halprin's many contributions to the art and practice of landscape design are evident in Heritage Park Plaza. He recognized this site on the southern bluff of the Trinity River at the northern edge of downtown Fort Worth as underutilized. As in his Portland fountain sequence, at Heritage Park he employed the concept of a source fountain from which water flows throughout the site, connecting disparate spaces through a series of channels, water walls, runnels, ponds, and grottoes. This movement of water is paralleled in the design of descending walkways and stepping-stones through upper Heritage Park to access lower Heritage Park, where visitors can experience the scenic bluffs and the riverfront.

At Heritage Park Plaza—a public park that commemorates one historic event (the founding of Fort Worth on the U.S. frontier) in honor of another event (the U.S. Bicentennial)—one can witness Halprin employing his theories of movement, sequence, and experience with a confident hand, relying on a limited palette of materials to create spaces that are never overly didactic, but which allow visitors to feel a great range of emotions. His masterly arrangement of interactive water features, stepping stones, trees, grass lawns, and paved surfaces grants visitors to Heritage Park Plaza the opportunity to explore at their own pace; to enjoy quiet, contemplative spaces; to take in commanding views of the river confluence; and to understand the historical significance of that site. While it may be that Halprin ultimately receives greater recognition for his design of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, DC, it must be understood that the president's memorial transitioned through several iterations over more than twenty years, and its success as a commemorative space reflects lessons learned in the design of Heritage Park Plaza.

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR, Founder and President of the Cultural Landscape Foundation, places Heritage Park in the following context: "Halprin was part of the movement in the last century where we were reclaiming our rivers and waterfronts from neglect and industrial use. He used modern ideology and abstract waterfalls in a natural setting, and Heritage Park is significant when judging this architect's work. But it is also important that Halprin came up with a design for Fort Worth that embraced the waterfront. Fort Worth is now rediscovering its waterfront and this park was the beginning of that process."¹⁹

In his essay "Preserving the Designed Landscape," Halprin questioned "not whether we should protect and preserve the best of these designs," but "what is worth preserving and why?" In answer to these questions, he wrote:

¹⁹ McGraw, "Neglected Heritage."

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As with all art forms, there are a variety of opinions about what constitutes the essence of the art of landscape design. What differentiates our art is that it is multidimensional—based as it is on the physical experience of moving through the landscape. As we move, all of our senses are engaged: we become aware of colors, smells, sounds, and the feel of the earth and stone underfoot. The emotional impact of water in pools, streams, and waterfalls tugs at us consciously and subconsciously. No other art form designs with so many elements of nature, with experiences that are often extremely ephemeral. The enjoyment of landscapes is primarily experiential. That is another reason why special critical judgment is needed to evaluate the worth of these designs and decide what should be preserved.²⁰

As the work of Lawrence Halprin, a master of the art of landscape architecture, Heritage Park Plaza is an exceptionally significant example of modern landscape design in the United States, and it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, in the area of Landscape Architecture, at the national level of significance. The property also meets Criteria Consideration G as a landscape of exceptional importance which has gained significance within the past 50 years.

²⁰ Lawrence Halprin, "Preserving the Designed Landscape," in *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture II: Making Postwar Landscapes Visible*, edited by Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, with Jane Brown Gillette and Nancy Slade (Washington, DC: Spacemaker Press, 2004), 40.

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Heritage Plaza is bounded on the south by West Bluff Street and on the east by North Main Street including the surveyed property noted as Lot 1A and Lot 2A, Land 600 Addition to the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas, and adding all approaches to Heritage Plaza beginning at the curb line of said streets.

The western boundary begins on the southwest at the outermost point of the intersection of the sidewalk and curb at West Bluff Street and extends in a northerly direction to the point of intersection of the descending path noted as "Franklin Street walk," approximately 20 feet from the outermost edge of the concrete plaza, then north/northeast to the northernmost point of the plaza and elevated lookout bridge, including all land under the bridge, then east to the point of intersection of the northeast boundary, roughly 20 feet from the northeastern point of the lookout bridge, and noted as "foot path to river (water)," then to the curb line of North Main Street, then south/southwest along the curb line of North Main Street to the curb line of West Bluff back to the beginning point of intersection.

The boundary is noted on an accompanying map with a dashed line that is drawn from an original site plan denoting "limit of contract" in the Halprin Archives at the University of Pennsylvania of March 1, 1977. (See page 10-27.)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Nomination includes all property part of the original and completed design for Heritage Plaza, also referred to as Upper Heritage Park, and presented on the project drawings by Lawrence Halprin & Associates dated March 1, 1977, and contained in the Halprin Archives at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with the exception of the descending paths at the northwest and northeast that are noted on the boundary site plan. This nomination excludes Lower Heritage Park part of the original Halprin design but part of Heritage Plaza.

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Section MAP Page 27

Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

SITE MAP WITH BOUNDARY

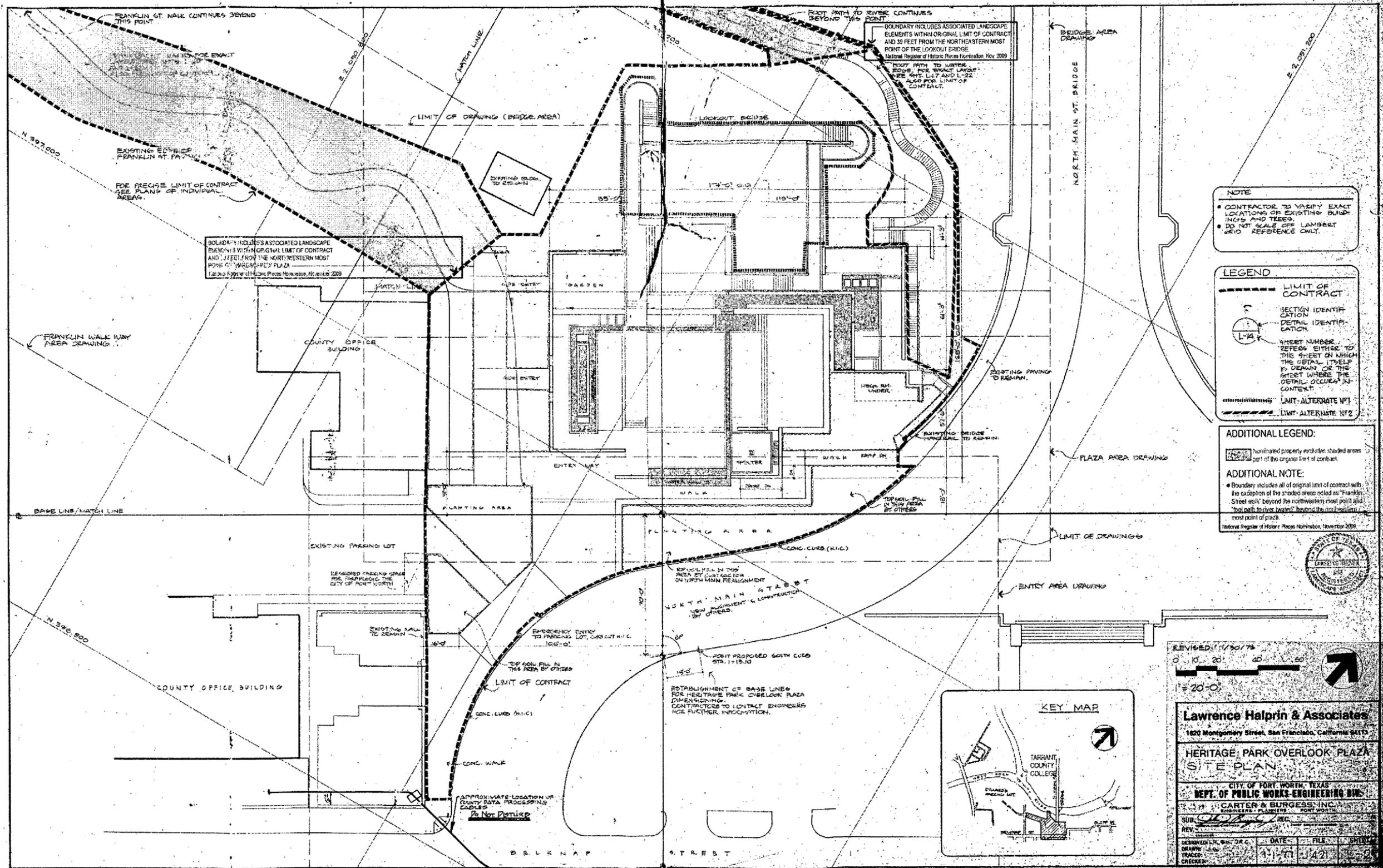
SEE REVERSE SIDE

Heritage Park Plaza, nominated property outlined in heavy line; gray shaded areas are excluded.

Lawrence Halprin Associates

City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Files

Notation of National Register nomination boundary by Michal G. Tincup, RLA, ASLA, 2009



NOTE

- CONTRACTOR TO VERIFY EXACT LOCATIONS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND TREES.
- DO NOT SCALE OFF LARGE-SCALE REFERENCE ONLY.

LEGEND

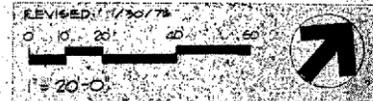
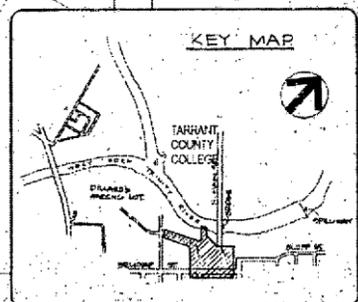
- LIMIT OF CONTRACT
- SECTION IDENTIFICATION
- DETAIL IDENTIFICATION
- SHEET NUMBER, REFERENCE EITHER TO THE SHEET ON WHICH THE DETAIL ITSELF IS DRAWN OR THE SHEET WHERE THE DETAIL OCCURS IN CONTEXT.
- LIMIT-ALTERNATE #1
- LIMIT-ALTERNATE #2

ADDITIONAL LEGEND:

- Nonfinal property or other shaded areas not part of the original limit of contract.

ADDITIONAL NOTE:

- Boundary includes all of original limit of contract with the exception of the shaded areas noted as "Franklin Street walk" beyond the northwestern most point and "foot path to river/water" beyond the northeastern most point of plaza.



Lawrence Halprin & Associates
 1820 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, California 94115

HERITAGE PARK OVERLOOK PLAZA
SITE PLAN

CITY OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS
DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS-ENGINEERING DIV.

CARTER & BURGESS, INC.
 ENGINEERS - PLANNERS - ARCHITECTS
 FORT WORTH, TEXAS

SUB	REV	DATE	FILE	SHEET
		11-17-71	1142	1

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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Map 1. Heritage Park Plaza, located within Heritage Park, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Map 2. Aerial photo showing relationship of Heritage Park Plaza, tucked between Paddock Viaduct (labeled as N. Main Street) and parking garage structure. The grid of oaks, the concrete walls, and multiple levels of the park are legible.

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Map 3. Bird's eye view, showing relationship of Heritage Park Plaza to the Tarrant County Courthouse (to the southeast, lower right corner of photo) and to the parking garage structure (to its west, lower left corner of photo).

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

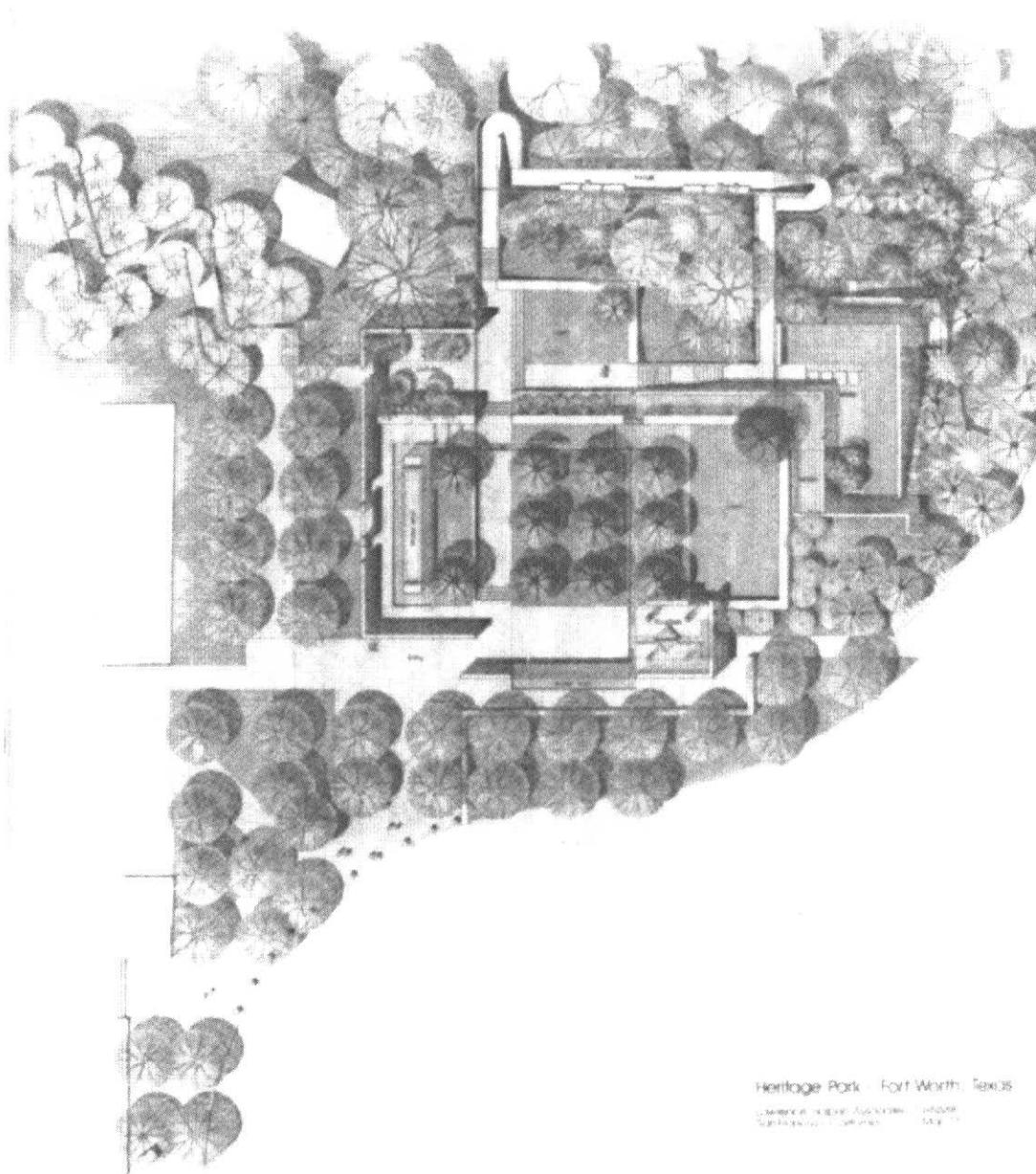


Figure 1. Heritage Park Plaza Plan, March 1977 (watercolor)

Lawrence Halprin Associates
City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Files

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

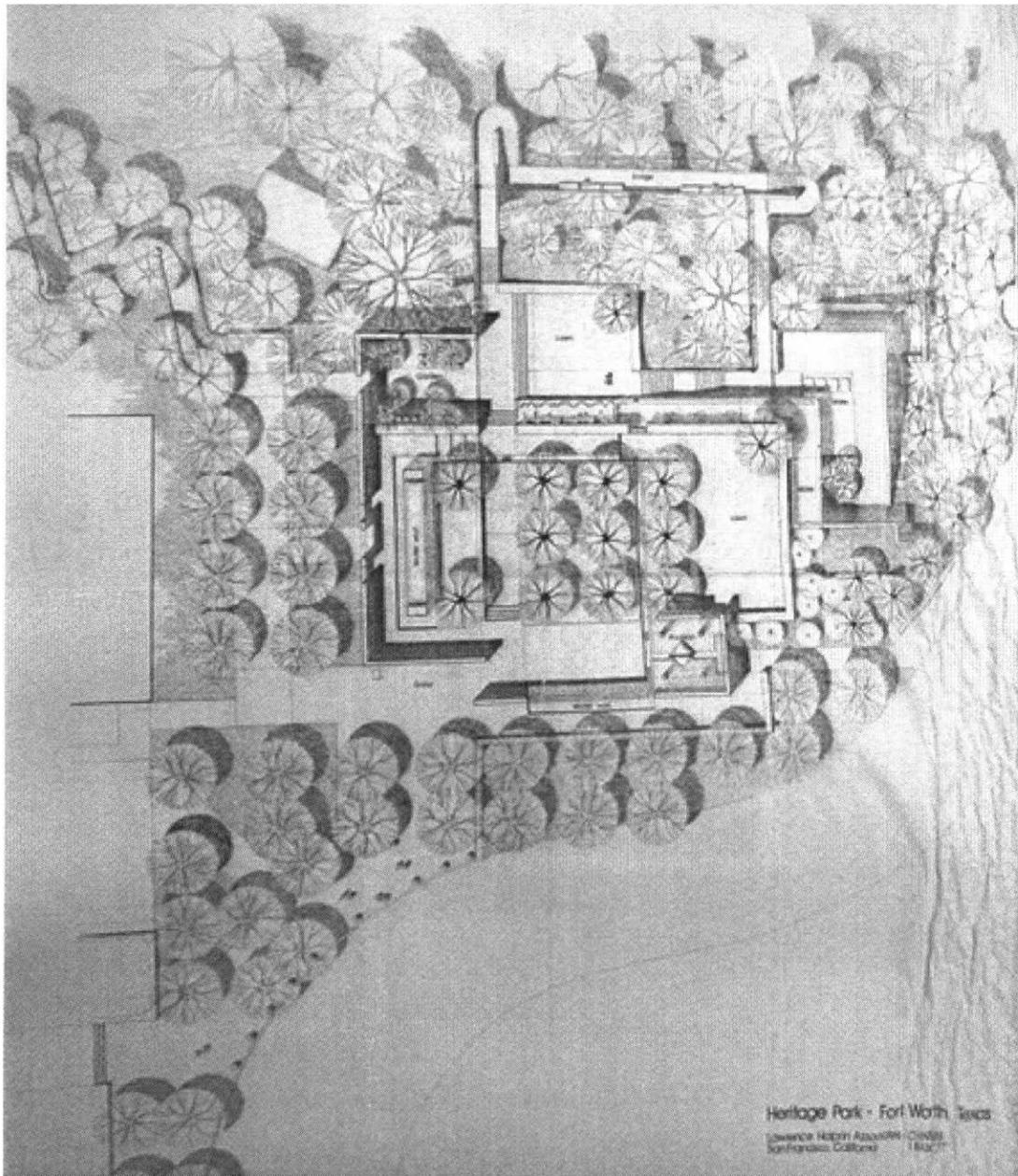


Figure 2. Heritage Park Plaza plan, March 1977 (line drawing)

Lawrence Halprin Associates
City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Files

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

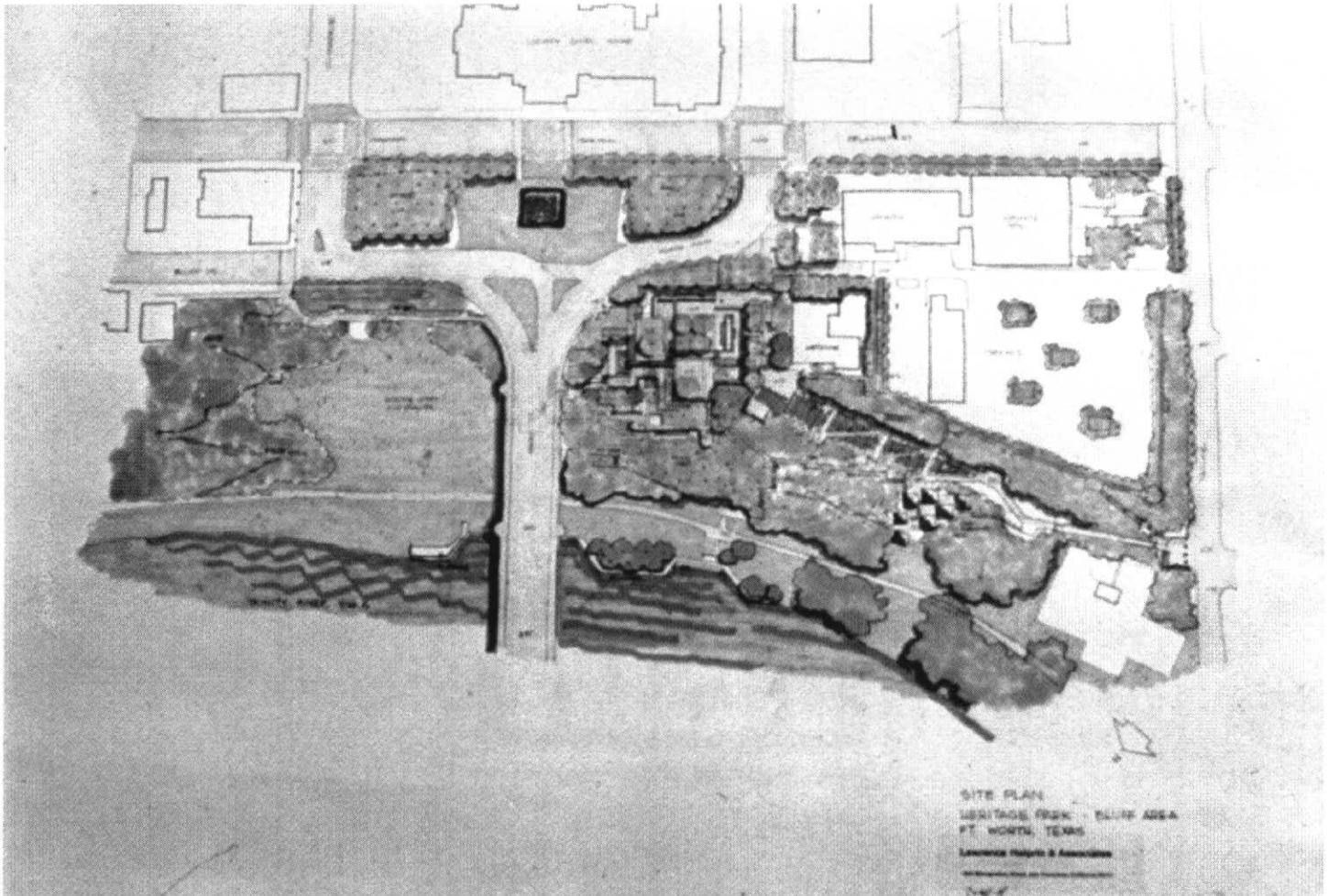


Figure 3. Heritage Park Plaza Site Plan, Bluff Area

Lawrence Halprin & Associates

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

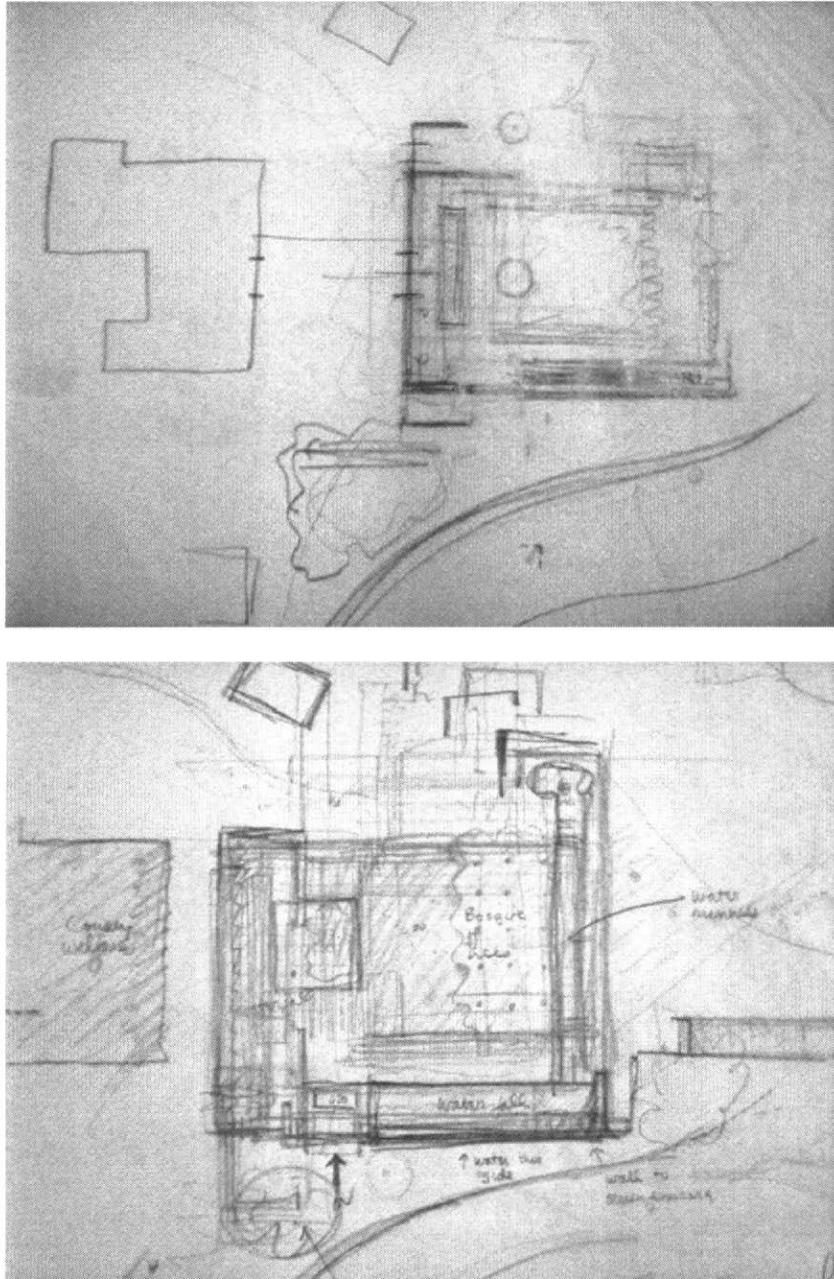


Figure 4. Halprin's early sketches of Heritage Park Plaza, before he developed the overlook concept, with a more compact plan.

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City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Files

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

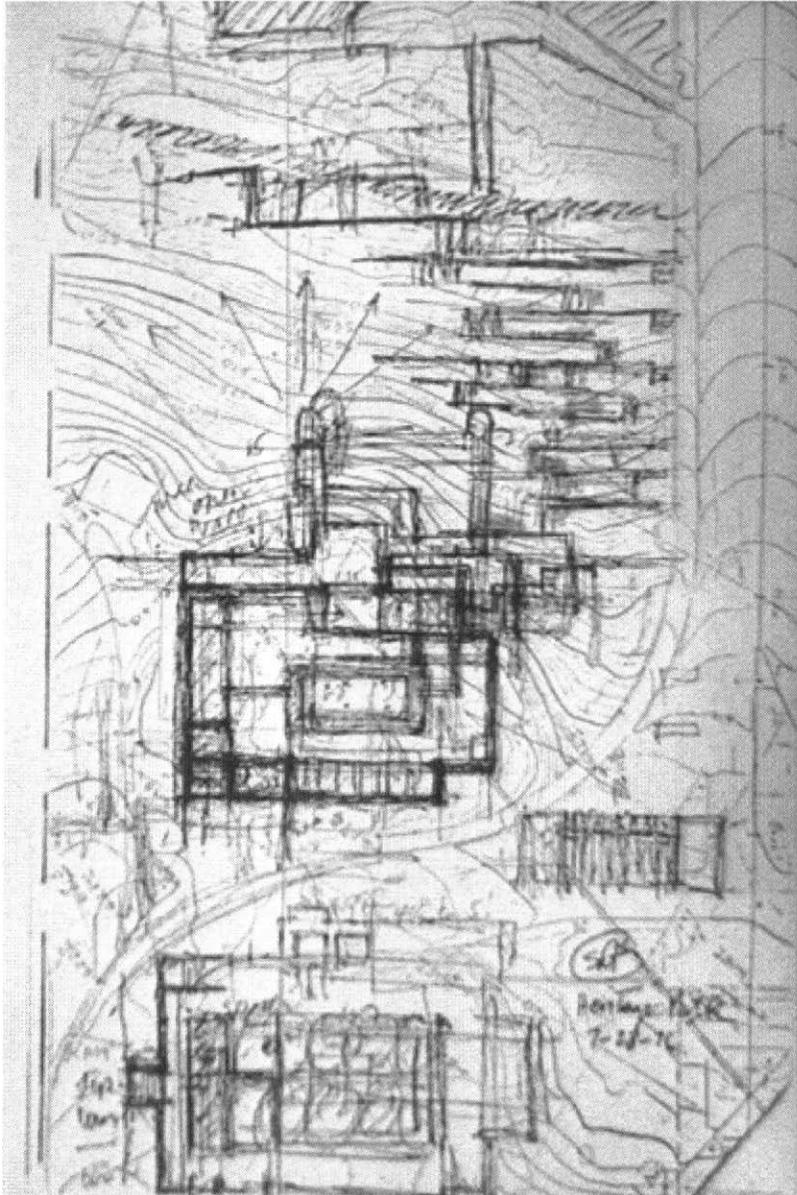


Figure 5. Halprin's emerging thoughts of the Heritage Park Plaza overlook, its vistas of the confluence, and an elevation of the water wall at the park entrance on Bluff.

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City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Files

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

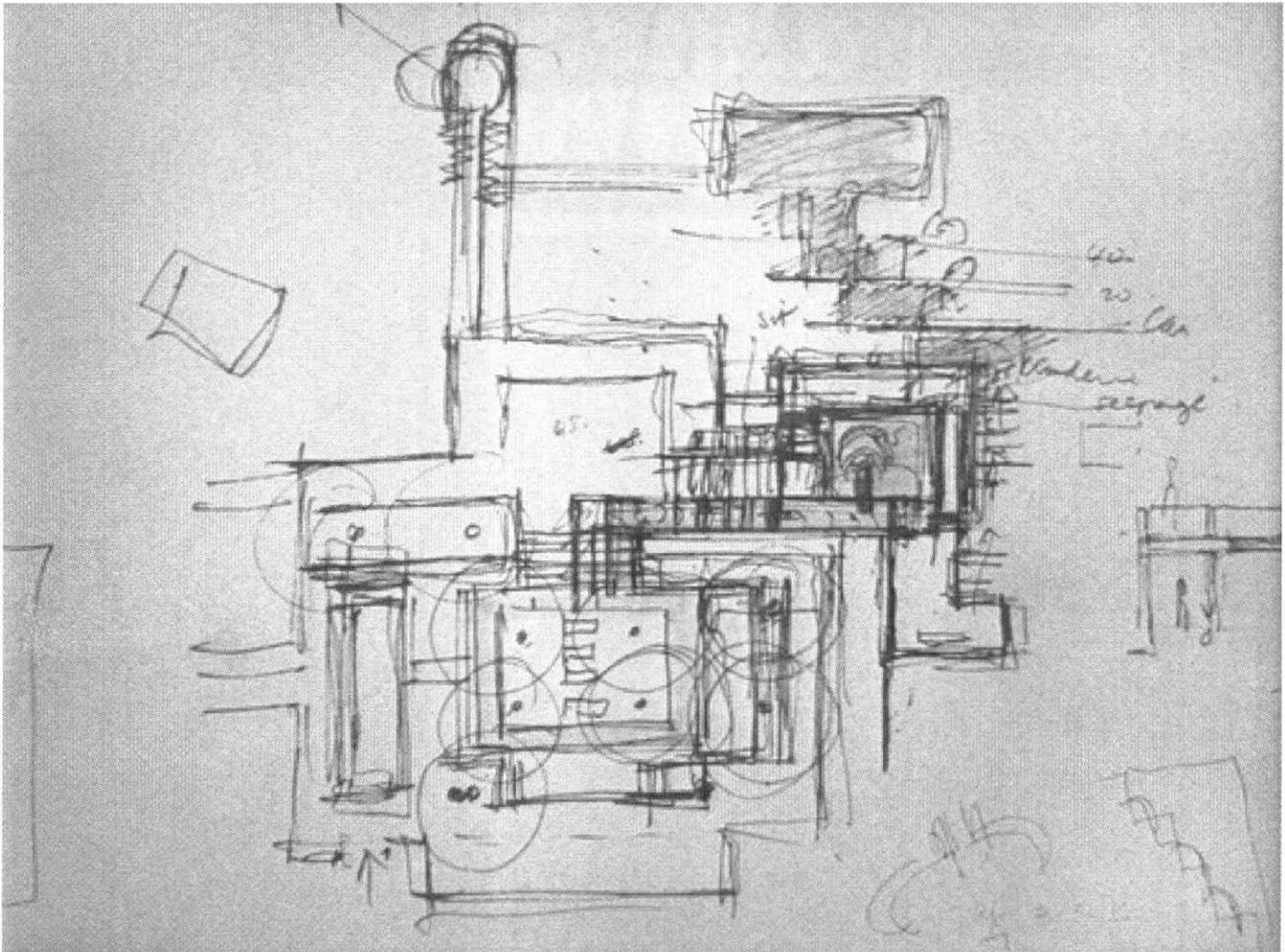


Figure 6. Halprin's later thoughts of Heritage Park Plaza show the overlook in its current location, but other interior details are still rough and schematic.

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Heritage Park Plaza
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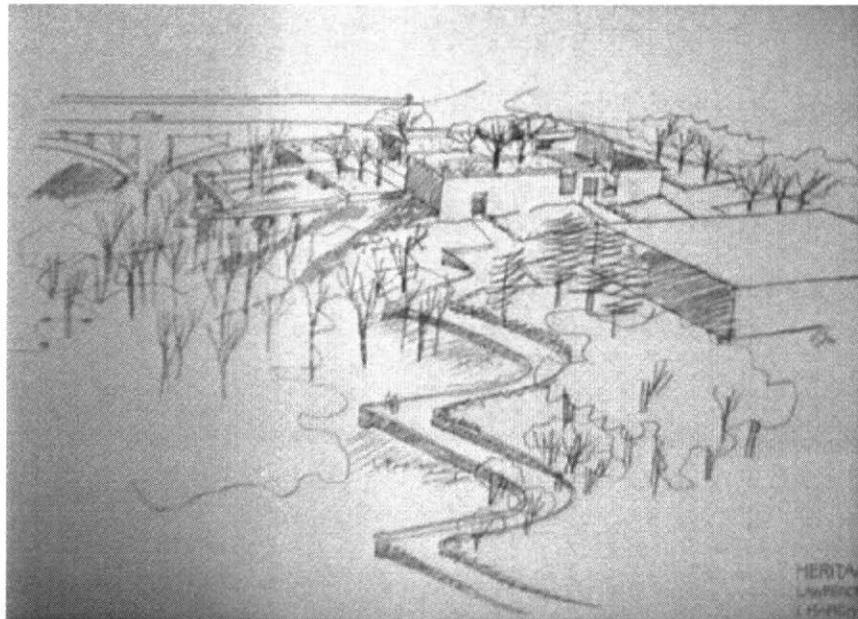
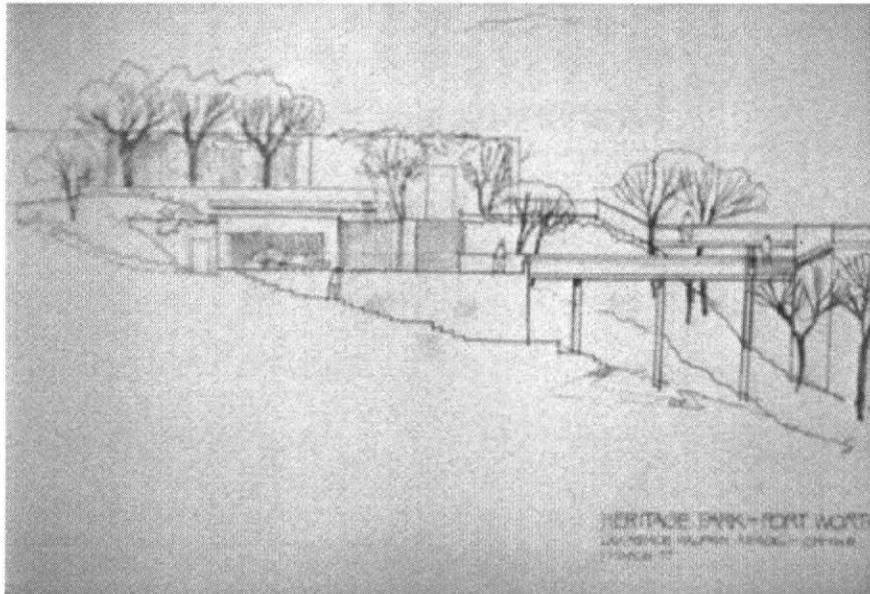


Figure 7. Halprin’s March 1977 drawings. Section and east elevation (top). View from west, showing a walled Heritage Park Plaza, with zig-zagging brick trails leading from river up to the plaza; Paddock Viaduct in background (bottom).

Lawrence Halprin & Associates
City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Files

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

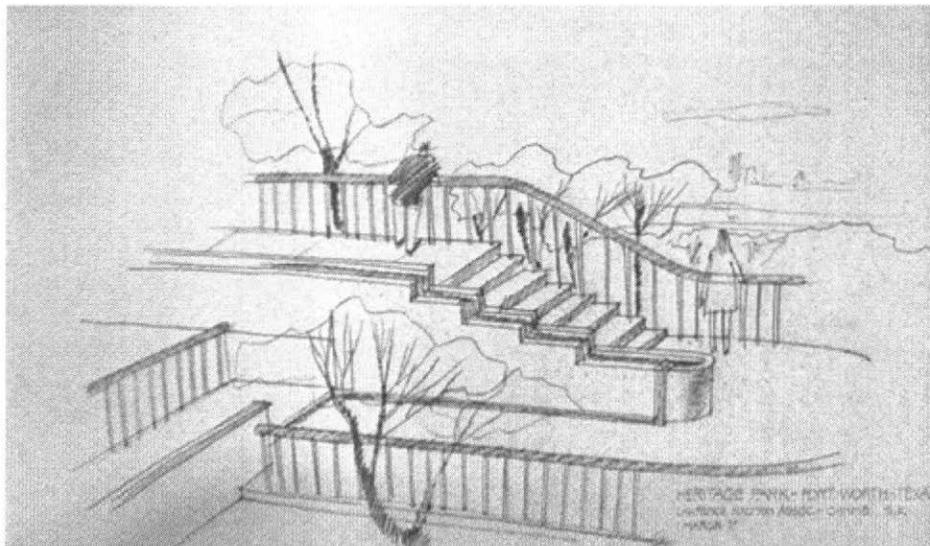
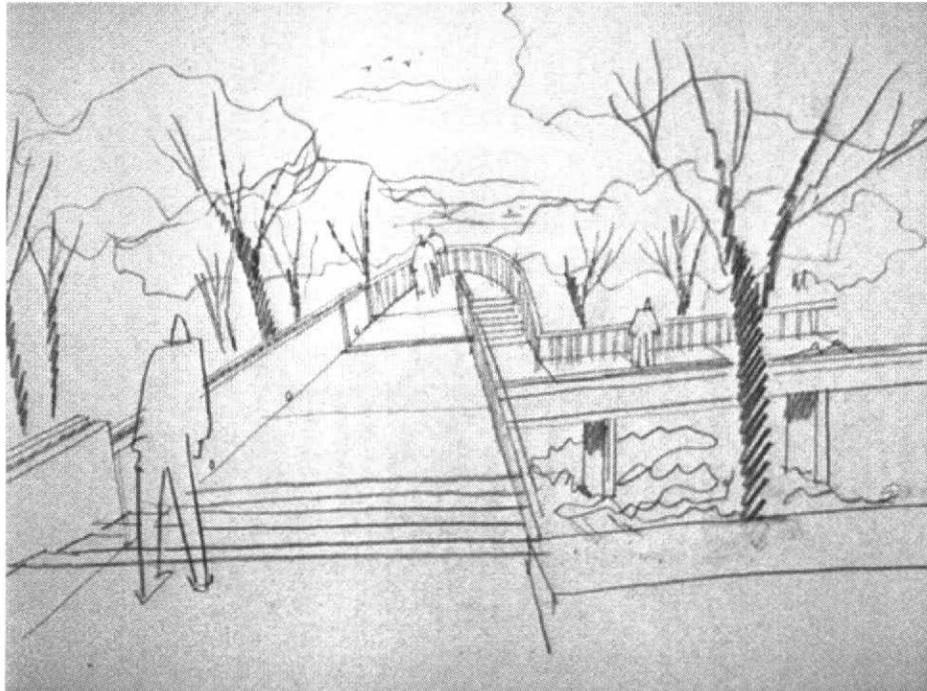


Figure 8. Halprin's March 1977 drawings of Heritage Park Plaza overlook and walkways views. The bottom drawing illustrates the cascading water feature that follows the descent of the stairs.

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Figure 9. Halprin's March 1977 view of the overlook extending from the bluffs toward the river on the north.

Lawrence Halprin & Associates

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

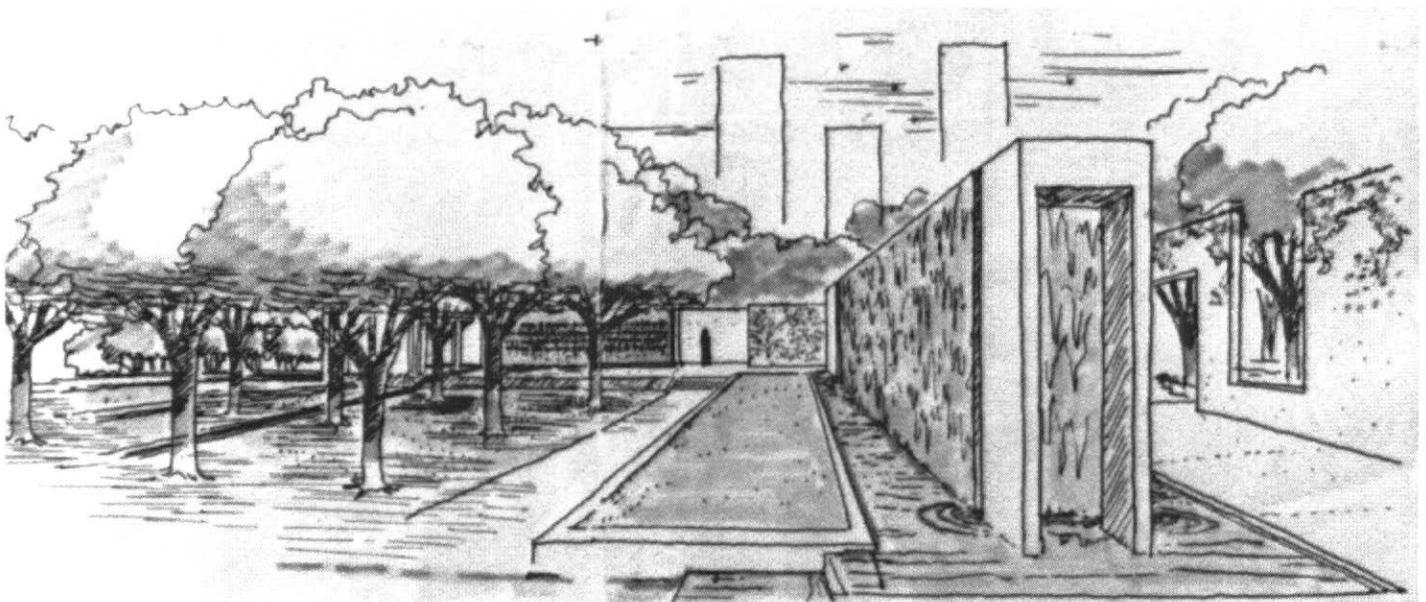


Figure 10. Heritage Park Plaza perspective

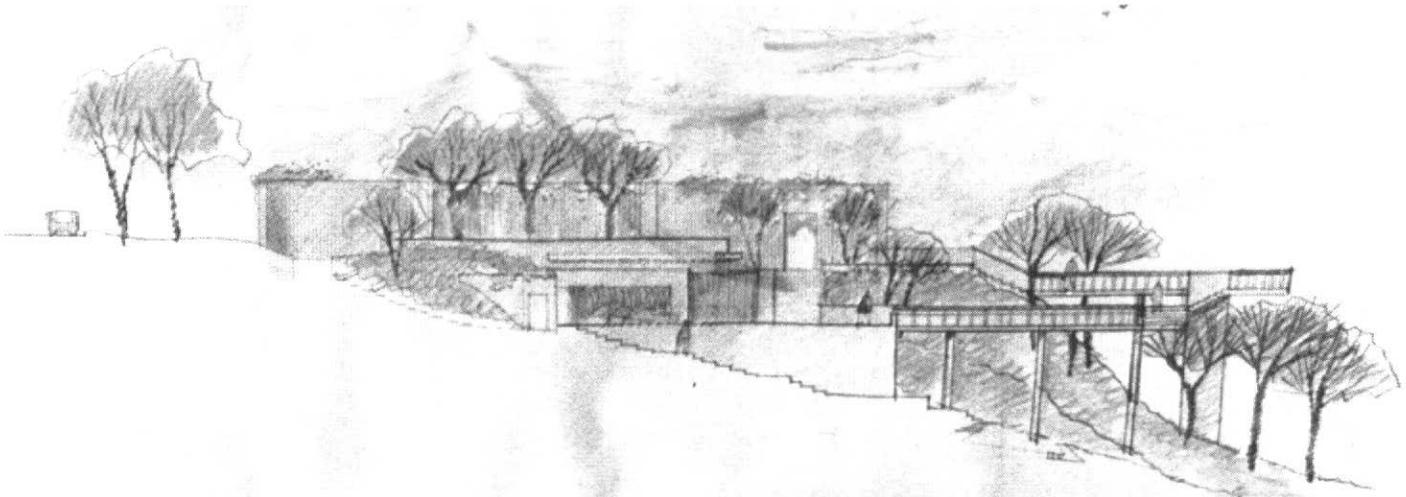


Figure 11. Heritage Park Plaza section / elevation sketch

both figures, Lawrence Halprin & Associates

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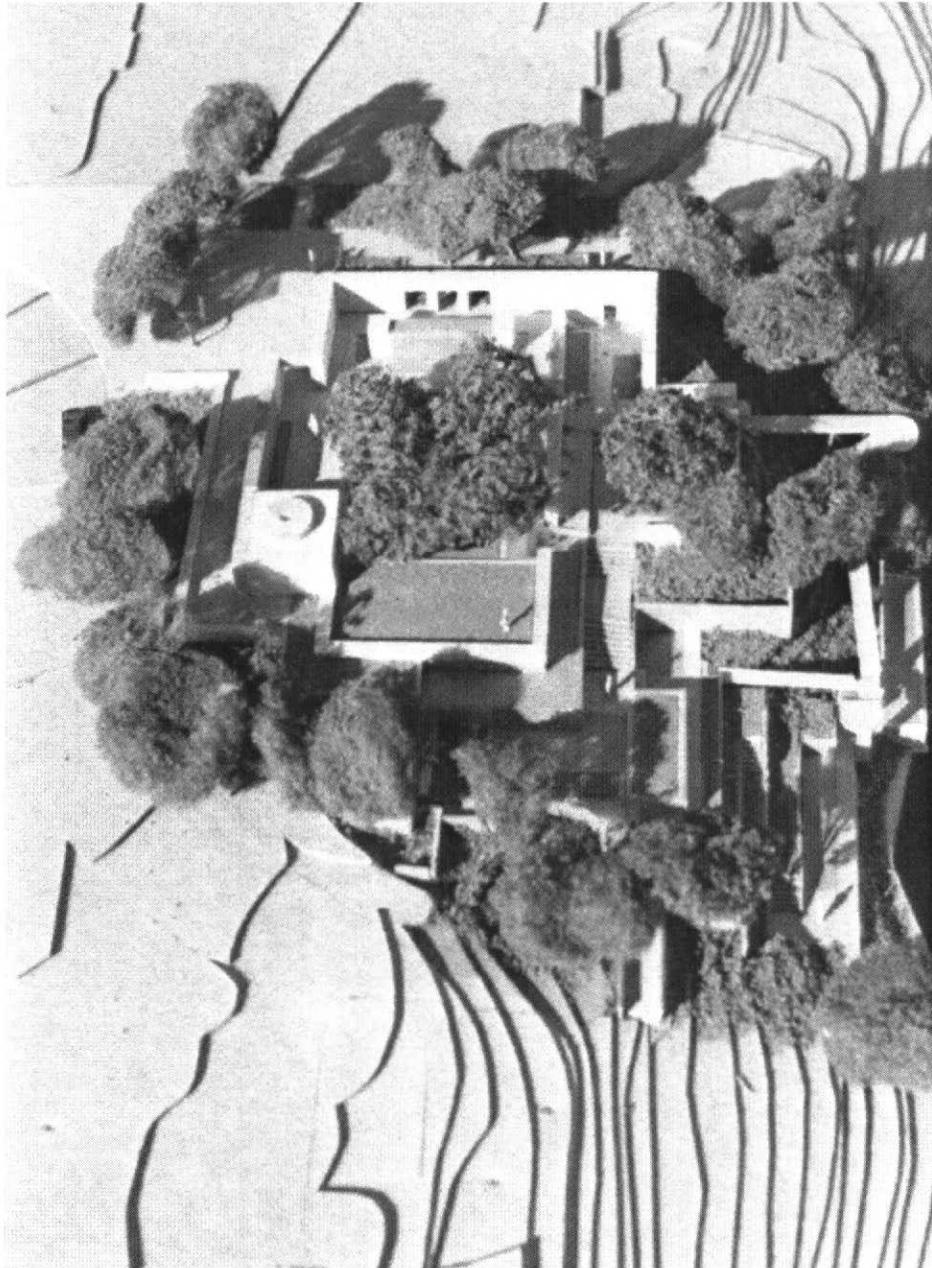


Figure 12. Heritage Park Plaza model

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City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Figure 13. Heritage Plaza model

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Figure 14. Heritage Plaza site before construction, ca. 1975.
The Tarrant County Courthouse is behind the wooded site, to the southeast.

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas


western union

Telegram

FWA070(1357)(4-035166S108)PD 04/17/80 1357
ICS IPMRNCZ CSP
4157881952 TDRN SAN FRANCISCO CA 72 04-17 0157P EST
PMS MR JOHN M. STEVENSON, CHAIRMAN OF STREAMS AND VALLEYS
CARE CONTINENTAL NATIONAL BANK, FONE 8173349377 & DLR ASAP, DLR
PO BOX 910
FORT WORTH TX 76101

DEAR JOHN, I AM DEEPLY SAD NOT TO BE ABLE TO BE WITH YOU ALL ON THIS
JOYOUS OCCASION. IT FEELS LIKE A BIRTHDAY TO ME. FINALLY THE RIVER
WHICH HAS RECEIVED SO MUCH NURTURING FROM YOUR DEDICATED GROUP, AND
ITS HERITAGE OVERLOOK PARK, HAVE GROWN FROM A TINY IDEA TO A
FULL-GROWN LIFE-GIVING GREENWAY THROUGH THE CITY, CARRYING BEAUTY ON
ITS WAY. ALL MY WARMEST GREETINGS AND THOUGHTS ARE WITH YOU.

LARRY HALPRIN

NNNN

Figure 15. Telegram from Lawrence Halprin to John Stevenson, Chair of the Streams and Valleys Committee, on the occasion of Heritage Park Plaza's dedication, April 17, 1980. Note that Halprin refers to it as "Heritage Overlook Park."

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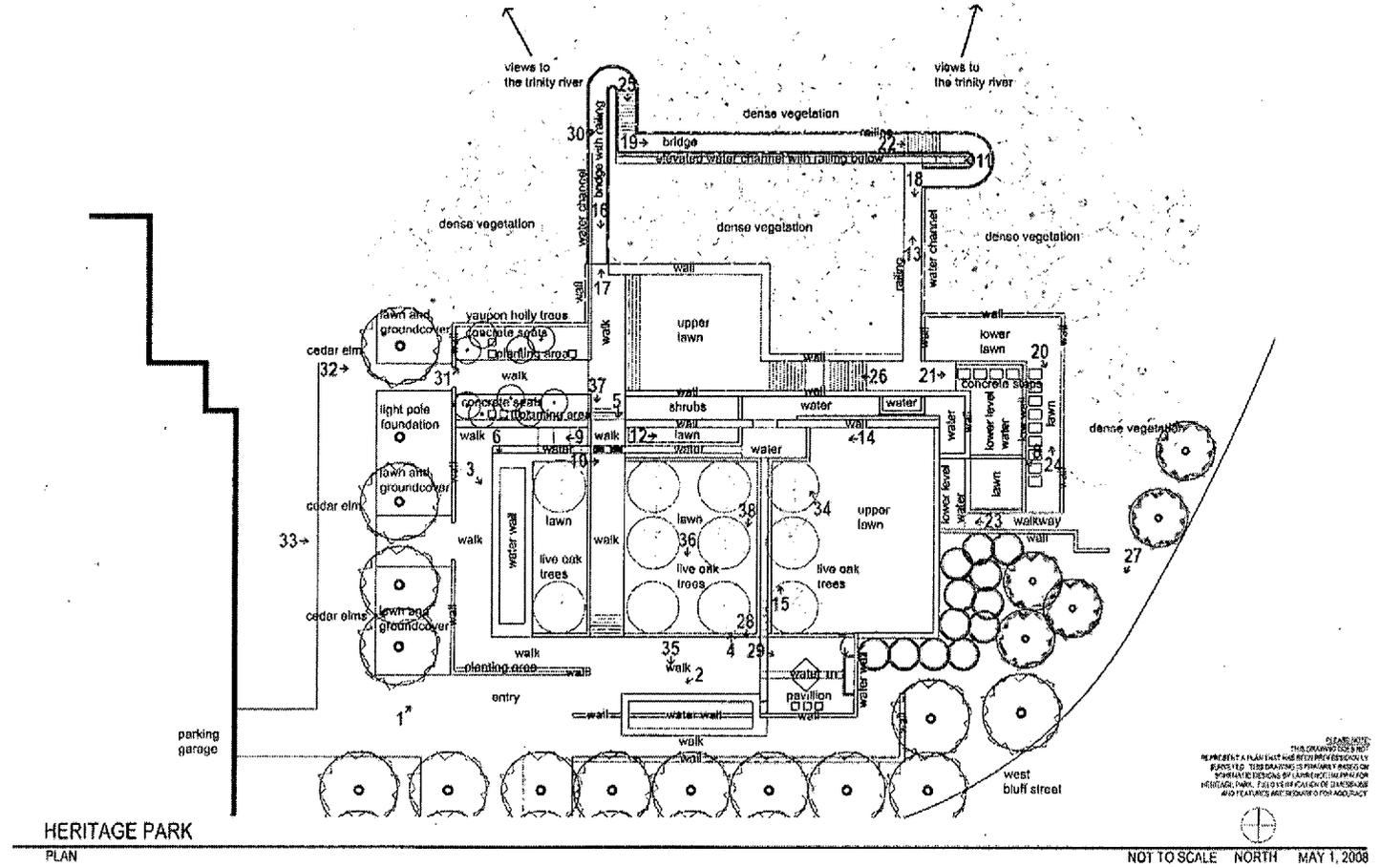


Figure 16. Site plan with photo key

Drawn by Michal G. Tincup, RLA, ASLA, May 2008; photo key added November 2009.

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

PHOTO LOG

All photographs have identical credits as follows:

Name of Property:	Heritage Park Plaza
City:	Fort Worth
County:	Tarrant County
State:	Texas
Photographer	Bob Lukeman
Date:	February 1, 2010
Location of digital files:	Texas Historical Commission, Austin; and Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

Printed on Epson Ultra Premium Presentation Paper with Epson Ultrachrome ink

Photo 1 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0001.tif)
Heritage Plaza entry
Camera facing: Northeast

Photo 2 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0002.tif)
Heritage Plaza entry
Camera facing: Southwest

Photo 3 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0003.tif)
HP west elevation water wall with map
Camera facing: Southeast

Photo 4 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0004.tif)
Hp with live oaks
Camera facing: North

Photo 5 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0005.tif)
Hp lawn area with live oaks
Camera facing: South

Photo 6 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0006.tif)
Water wall
Camera facing: South

Photo 7 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0007.tif)
Water wall within pavilion
Camera facing: South

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 8 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0008.tif)
Hp lower lawn near water wall
Camera facing: Southwest

Photo 9 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0009.tif)
Water channel near stairs
Camera facing: West

Photo 10 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0010.tif)
Water channel near live oaks
Camera facing: East

Photo 11 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0011.tif)
Water channel near overlook stairs
Camera facing: West

Photo 12 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0012.tif)
Water channel near live oaks
Camera facing: East

Photo 13 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0013.tif)
Overlook area
Camera facing: North

Photo 14 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0014.tif)
Walls and lawn area
Camera facing: West

Photo 15 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0015.tif)
Water Channel near pavilion
Camera facing: North

Photo 16 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0016.tif)
View into site from elevated walk
Camera facing: South

Photo 17 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0017.tif)
View out of site from elevated walk
Camera facing: North

Photo 18 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0018.tif)
Elevated walkway with view towards lower water wall
Camera facing: South

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 19 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0019.tif)
Elevated walkway showing water channel above railing
Camera facing: East

Photo 20 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0020.tif)
Stepping slabs near lower water wall
Camera facing: Southeast

Photo 21 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0021.tif)
Stepping slabs near lower water wall
Camera facing: East

Photo 22 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0022.tif)
Elevated walkway stairs
Camera facing: East

Photo 23 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0023.tif)
Lower level lawn and water wall
Camera facing: West

Photo 24 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0024.tif)
Water wall and stepping slabs
Camera facing: North

Photo 25 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0025.tif)
Stairs at elevated walkway
Camera facing: South

Photo 26 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0026.tif)
Stairs at lower water wall
Camera facing: West

Photo 27 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0027.tif)
East Entry, Bluff Street
Camera facing: Southwest

Photo 28 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0028.tif)
Water channel between pavilion area and water wall
Camera facing: South

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Heritage Park Plaza
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photo 29 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0029.tif)
Pavilion area
Camera facing: Southeast

Photo 30 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0030.tif)
Overlook walkway
Camera facing: East

Photo 31 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0031.tif)
Garden area with concrete block seating
Camera facing: Northeast

Photo 32 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0032.tif)
West entrance into garden area with steel fence
Camera facing: East

Photo 33 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0033.tif)
West entry into water wall with map
Camera facing: East

Photo 34 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0034.tif)
Water channels and walls
Camera facing: Northwest

Photo 35 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0035.tif)
Water wall near entry
Camera facing: South

Photo 36 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0036.tif)
Water wall near entry
Camera facing: South

Photo 37 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0037.tif)
Steps near garden area
Camera facing: South

Photo 38 (TX_Tarrant County_Heritage Park Plaza_0038.tif)
Water channel near pavilion
Camera facing: South

HERITAGE PARK



*Freedom
and courage*









spirit and preserve the fre
inspired those of vision and
our heritage



Embrace the spirit and preserve the
which inspired those of vision and
to shape our heritage



Embrace
who
to Share









































A photograph of a modern architectural structure. On the left, a concrete structure with a series of horizontal beams and a wall with small circular perforations is visible. In the foreground, there are concrete steps and a paved area made of rectangular bricks. On the right, a large, rusted metal wall features an inscription in a cursive font. The background shows bare trees and a clear sky.

*Embrace the spirit and preserve
which inspired those of vision
to shape our heritage*







PARK
CLOSED
CITY CODE 24-8

PARK
CLOSED
CITY CODE 24-8





*Embrace the spirit and preserve the freedom
which inspired those of vision and courage
to shape our heritage*

A large, reddish-brown wall with an engraved quote, flanked by trees and a concrete building. The ground is covered in dry leaves. A chain-link fence is visible on the right side of the wall.

*Embrace the spirit and preserve the freedom
which inspired those of vision and courage
to shape our heritage*



*Embrace the spirit and freedom
which inspired those of us who have the courage
to shape our heritage*

*Embrace the spirit and preserve the freedom
which inspired those of us who fought for
to shape our heritage and courage*