NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Tyler Municipal Rose Garden
Other name/site number: Tyler Rose Garden
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 420 Rose Park Drive
City or town: Tyler State: Texas County: Smith
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☑ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☑ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☑ statewide ☐ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☑ A ☐ B ☑ C ☐ D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 2/6/19
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

	Private
X	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

	building(s)
X	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
7	1	structures
1	0	objects
9	1	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: LANDSCAPE / Garden, Street Furniture / Object; OTHER / Wagon Wheel, Reflecting Pool, Man-Made Ponds, Stone Lookout, Picnic Patio

Current Functions: LANDSCAPE / Garden, Street Furniture / Object; OTHER / Wagon Wheel, Reflecting Pool, Man-Made Ponds, Stone Lookout, Picnic Patio

7. Description

Architectural Classification: MIXED: Formal

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick, Stone, Concrete

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-15)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

X	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.
X	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: NA

Areas of Significance: Entertainment/Recreation; Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance: 1938-1941; 1952-1969

Significant Dates: 1938, 1952

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Keith Maxwell, designer/architect; Henry L. Thompson, landscape architect

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 16-40)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 41-47)

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

Primary location of additional data:
x State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*, Austin)
_ Other state agency
_ Federal agency
_ Local government
_ University
x Other -- Specify Repository: Smith County Historical Society Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 11.7 acres

Coordinates: See page 48

Verbal Boundary Description: See page 48

Boundary Justification: See page 48

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Terri Myers, Historian and Kristen Brown, Architectural Historian
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Date: July 4, 2018

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 49-52)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 53-65)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 5-6, 66-91)

Photograph Log
Tyler Municipal Rose Garden
Tyler, Smith County, Texas
Photographed by Terri Myers
Date photographed: March 9, 2018

Photo 1: View of Wall with dedication plaques built by WPA c. 1938. Camera facing north.

Photo 2: View northeast across parterre and North Gardens to park boundary on W. Front Street. Camera facing north-northeast.

Photo 3: View across Ponds in Sunken East Garden with stairs to upper terrace. WPA built rock-lined ponds, terraces and stairs c. 1939, reinforced 1952. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 4: View to the north across Sunken East Garden/Meditation Garden toward David Austin English Rose Garden. Natural stone lookout by WPA c. 1939. Camera facing north.

Photo 5: Site 1 - Queen's Court Lawn (bowling green) in parterre c. 1938, flanked by north and south gardens. Brick Wall and fountain at east end of lawn built c. 1960s. Camera facing east.

Photo 6: Site 2 - Brick Wall and fountain at rear of Queen's Court lawn, built c. 1960. Camera facing southeast.

Photo 7: Sites 3 and 4 – North Garden in foreground (Site 4) across Sid Maxfield Garden (Site 3) in background. Rose Garden Center built 1992 outside boundaries, on right. Camera facing south.

Photo 8: Site 4 – North Gardens at north boundary of the park. One of two 1912 Smith County Courthouse fountains moved to garden in 1953. Camera facing north to W. Front St.

Photo 9: Site 6 – C. 1960 Horseshoe Garden through archway on right. Camera facing north to Front St.

Photo 10: Site 7 – Garden Wall with archway built by WPA, c. 1938. Camera facing south.

Photo 11: Site 8 – Sunken Garden terrace and parterre (rose beds, hedges and alees and wall), built by WPA c. 1938, re-established and planted, 1952. Camera facing southeast to woods.

Photo 12: Site 9 – Reflecting Pool, Fountain and Wall built by WPA c. 1938. Camera facing north.

Photo 13: Site 10 – Miniature Garden in South Gardens, built c. 1958. Camera facing south.

Photo 14: Site 11 – Maze in South Gardens, c. 1958. Camera facing south toward Camellia Garden trail.

Photo 15: Site 12 – South Gardens from Queen's Court c. 1958. Miniature Garden on right, Maze on left. Camera facing southeast.

Photo 16: Site 13 – East Sunken Garden (early 1960s) & Ponds created by WPA. Camera facing west-northwest.

Photo 17: Site 14 – One of three c. 1938 rock-lined Ponds built by WPA. Camera facing south-southwest.

Photo 18: Site 15 – C. 1938 Stone Lookout and rock work built by WPA. Camera facing south.

Photo 19: Site 16 – Camellia Garden (trail through forest) designed and installed by Bryan Thompson in 1967. South side of garden. Camera facing east.

Photo 20: Site 17 – Driveway and parking area, built 1952 to access garden floor and Smith Memorial Building (razed). Camera facing southwest.

Photo 21: Site 18 –Picnic Patio & Stone Benches, built 1952 at southwest entrance to the garden, next to Smith Memorial Building (razed). Camera facing south.

Photo 22: Site 19 – C. 1938 Stone Wall & Pier at pedestrian entrance from Houston Street, at the southeast corner of the garden. Camera facing east.

Photo 23: Site 20 – Heritage Rose Garden in southwest corner of park. Started as Sensory Garden in the 1970s, redesigned in 1986. Camera facing south-southwest.

Photo 24: Site 21 – 1997 Shade Garden in woods at south end of the park. Camera facing south.

Photo 25: Site 22 – 1999 IDEA Garden in southeast corner of garden. Camera facing north-northeast.

Photo 26: Site 23 – 1990 Meditation Garden and Pond on east side of garden. Camera facing northwest.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Narrative Description

The Tyler Municipal Rose Garden is a historic district and a designed landscape located 420 Rose Park Drive in central Tyler, Smith County, Texas. The Tyler Municipal Rose Garden is positioned at the southwest corner of W. Front Street and S. Peach Avenue and contains 11.7 acres of the original 13.729-acre tract historically reserved for the garden on the East Texas State Fairgrounds.[1] The historic rose garden features thousands of rose bushes arranged as a formal landscape with lawns, concrete walkways, and water features. The property was primarily developed in three phases. Early work including infrastructure, terracing, ponds, and an arched brick wall and pool, was completed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) from 1938 through 1941. Work resumed in 1951 and was completed in 1952 when it opened to the public. The garden developed with additional rose beds and architectural features through the 1950s and 1960s, until 1969, the end of the second period of significance. Nearly ten years passed before more informal gardens were introduced around the edges of the property to meet changing tastes and new programming needs. These more recent natural and thematic gardens lie principally in the southern and eastern portions of the garden where they are set off and obscured from view by topography and tree cover. Despite these non-historic additions, the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden remains focused on the roses themselves, with thousands of bushes precisely arranged and groomed to form geometric shapes and patterns outlined by linear pathways with intervals of architectural and water features. The Tyler Municipal Rose Garden largely retains its formal landscape design from the WPA period (1938-1941) and its historic appearance as completed and further developed in the Post-War years (1952-1969). The boundaries of the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden include all the land historically associated with the rose garden except for a narrow tract along the west side occupied by modern civic buildings. The historic district contains the garden itself (a contributing site) which includes smaller garden sections not counted separately in the resource count, one contributing object, seven contributing structures, and one non-contributing structure.

Location, Setting, and Boundary

The Tyler Rose Garden is a 11.7-acre public garden at the northeast corner of the historic East Texas Fairgrounds, located approximately one mile west of downtown Tyler. When the city of Tyler purchased the land in 1912 to establish a permanent site for the regional fair, renamed the East Texas State Fair, the tract lay in a pine forest beyond Tyler's western limits (Map 1). Since then, suburban growth has extended west, and the fairgrounds site is now surrounded by residential neighborhoods on the east, west and south. To the north is W. Front Street/SH 31, a busy state highway that serves as the main east-west thoroughfare through the city of Tyler. The address of the fairgrounds is 2000 W. Front Street, but the official city address of the Rose Garden is 420 Rose Park Drive, a loop with two entrance/exit points on W. Front Street that connects to Fair Park Drive, within the fairgrounds. Numerous city-owned resources are located along these curving fairground streets, including a modern parks and recreation office building, Harvey Hall Convention Center, a performing arts theater, and the Rose Garden Center and Museum complex. Fair Park Drive is lined on the west by several historic-age Mission Revival-style fair exhibit buildings unrelated to the rose garden or its activities (Map 3).

The main entrance to the Tyler Rose Garden is through the 30,000 square-foot Rose Garden Center and Rose Museum building, located at the garden's western boundary along Rose Park Drive. The building's entrance is at grade level on Fair Park Drive but the land drops away sharply at the rear of the building to the sunken rose garden below. Historically the entrance was through the Garden Center building that occupied the same location. The Garden Center started as a pavilion built by the WPA but was enclosed and expanded multiple times during the 1950s through 1970s before being demolished in 1991 (Figure 12). The 1992 Rose Garden Center and Museum

[1] Historically known as the East Texas Fairgrounds.

serves as a community center, museum, and "gateway" to the rose garden as did the original Garden Center. Two large, U-shaped staircases lead from the rear (east) observation deck of the Rose Center and Museum down to the rose gardens below. Since this gateway building is located just outside the rose garden and does not date to the garden's historic period, it is not included within the boundaries of the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden district.

The rose garden parcel is not flat; its highest points are along the west and north and its lowest points are within the central portion of the garden and to the east. The designers took advantage of this topography and created subtle terracing and "sunken gardens" that set off certain sections of the garden from others. When viewed from the rear porch of the Rose Center and Museum building, the rose garden appears to be situated in a bowl with sloping sides. This is especially true in the northern end of the garden, which is primarily open and exposed to the sun. The south end of the garden also slopes upward toward Houston Street, but this elevation change is partially obscured by the pine and deciduous trees that characterize the southern section. The lowest point in the garden is the east-central section; ponds were excavated at this location to take advantage of the site's natural drainage. They collect water runoff from the gardens sloped above them.

The Tyler Rose Garden boundary follows the fence line of the garden along W. Front Street/SH 31 on the north, S. Peach Avenue on the east, and W. Houston Street on the south. Along W. Front Street/SH 31, the garden fence consists of non-historic brick piers and wrought iron balusters. A curved brick wall is located at the intersection of Peach Avenue at the garden's northeast corner. The fence along Peach Avenue and Houston Streets is chain link. Outside the boundary, between the fence line and the curb of each street, is a right-of-way with mowed lawn and ornamental trees. At the garden's southeast corner is a pedestrian entrance marked by a short stone pier. Near the pier, just outside the garden's boundary, is a stone wall built by the WPA in the 1930s. It has two piers of uneven height connected by a short section of wall with a curved top and coursed square rubble masonry. Across the street is an identical wall; together these two walls functioned as a "gateway" into the fairgrounds for those traveling west on Houston Street.

The garden's western boundary is irregular since it encompasses all development associated with the garden but excludes the non-historic Rose Garden Center and Museum building and the unassociated Tyler Civic Theatre fronting on Rose Park Drive. From the garden's southwest corner at W. Houston Street, the western boundary turns north and follows the edge of the block along Rose Park Drive to encompass a driveway and parking area that has served as the garden's southwest entrance since its opening in 1952. The boundary then jogs in to the east at the south elevation of the non-historic Rose Center and Museum building, then continues north in an irregular line behind that building and the Tyler Civic Theatre, following the "cliff" behind the buildings that demarcates the edge of the rose garden. After passing the theater, the boundary continues north to connect to the northern boundary at the garden fence along W. Front Street/SH 31. In doing so, it excludes a short strip of land north of the Civic Theater that was not originally associated with the rose garden and does not currently contain roses.

The Tyler Rose Garden (one contributing site)

The Tyler Rose Garden features both open, terraced areas with rows of roses, and informal spaces where curved paths meander through shady pine trees. Most of the garden (approximately the northern three-quarters) is open and sunny, comprised of the original formal rose garden including the arched wall and reflecting pool which opened in 1952 (Photo 12), and gardens to the south developed in the 1950s. This open section is *parterre*-like, with over 38,000 rose bushes planted in parallel rows in geometrically-shaped beds defined by concrete curbs (Photo 2). Between the beds are grass strips that guests can walk on to view the roses up close. Paved pathways between the beds guide visitors from one section of the garden to the next. Within several garden areas are interest points that include reflecting pools and architectural features.

The organization of this northern section is best understood from the vantage point of the rear observation deck of the Rose Center and Museum building. When viewing the garden from this location, the long, flat lawn of the Queen's Court stretches ahead to the east and terminates at a fountain and brick wall, evoking the *allées* of French formal garden design. To the left, north of the Queen's Court, is the large formal section that was part of the garden's original design. It has planting beds arranged in geometric shapes in garden areas that are referred to in current brochure maps as the North, Horseshoe, and Sid Maxfield Gardens (Photos 7-9). This section also features an arched wall constructed by the WPA that frames the WPA-built Sunken Garden with its central reflecting pool. To the right, south of the Queen's Court, are additional *parterre* gardens referred to as the Miniature Garden, The Maze, South Garden, and the East Sunken Garden.

In the south and east-central section of the garden, the landscape is more informal in nature and the gardens represent different landscape aesthetics and themes that were popular in the era in which they were developed. Here tall pine and hardwood trees shelter water features and garden areas with curved paths, rock walls, and flowers and bushes other than roses. The east-central section of the garden includes the rock-lined ponds, stone walls and a lookout built by the WPA (Photo 18), located behind the brick wall at the end of the Queen's Court, near the rose garden's eastern boundary. Nestled among the trees in the southernmost section of the garden are the late-1960s Camilla Garden, and garden areas developed outside the period of significance including the Shade, Heritage Rose, and IDEA Gardens. Other later additions are the English Rose Garden and the Meditation Garden, which are at the garden's eastern edge near the ponds. "Antique"-style streetlights replaced circa 1952 streetlights at the edges of the Queen's Court and along several of the primary circulation paths. Garden features added after 1969 are considered non-historic.

The major garden components are inventoried below. Each number is keyed to the garden's site plan (Map 4). The descriptions first focus on the larger, open garden areas that contain roses, then move to discuss the shady, informal sections. Finally, several of the garden's non-historic features are described. Many of the integral, historic-age garden sections are simply considered features and are not counted separately from the single contiguous contributing site. However, due to their substantial size, the following components are counted as separate resources: #2 fountain and brick wall (contributing structure), #5 wagon wheel (contributing object), #7 arched wall (contributing structure), #9 reflecting pool (contributing structure), #14 ponds (contributing structure), #15 stone lookout (contributing structure), #18 picnic patio (contributing structure), #19 stone wall and pier (contributing structure), and #23 Meditation Garden and gazebo (non-contributing structure).

1. The Queen's Court (Photo 5), designed 1938, completed 1952

The Queen's Court is a broad expanse of grass lawn that stretches east-west through the middle of the garden park, directly in front of the Rose Center and Museum's rear observation deck. The lawn has manicured, closely-cropped grass and is surrounded on three sides by concrete walkways. North and south of the Queen's Court are the various sections of *parterre*-like formal rose gardens (described below). At the eastern end of the court is the fountain and brick wall. The Queen's Court is the setting for events of the Rose Festival, including the Queen's Tea, which is open to the public.

2. Fountain and Brick Wall (Photo 6), c. 1960, contributing structure

The fountain and brick wall are at the east end of the Queen's Court and serves as a backdrop for events on the court lawn. The fountain and wall are constructed of buff-colored brick laid in a running bond. The fountain consists of a low, rectangular reflecting pool with a "dancing waters" fountain inside. The brick wall rises from the rear (east side) of the fountain. It has a tall central section with brick openwork flanked by shorter wall sections and a short brick pier at each end. Behind the wall to the east are the ponds and Meditation Garden.

3. Sid Maxfield Garden (Photo 7), designed c. 1938, rose beds added c. 1956
The Sid Maxfield Garden is located north of the Queen's Court in front of the northeast corner of the Rose Center and Museum building. This original garden area, named after the rose garden's first and decades-long gardener, has two sections aligned on a north-south axis. The southern section is a rectangular garden area surrounded by a concrete walkway. Additional walkways meet in the center of the rectangle at a cloverleaf-style central path. Built around and above this cloverleaf is a non-historic, temporary, octagonal pergola used for shade in certain seasons. The four planting beds delineated by the walkways have rose bushes planted in diagonal lines reminiscent of chevrons. Initially the rectangle was to contain a flat lawn, but it was redesigned to contain the planting beds in 1956. The northern section of the Sid Maxfield Garden is a small garden area featuring an octagonal concrete path with additional central walkways. The beds within and around the octagonal walkway contain miniature roses.

4. North Garden (Photos 7-8), designed c. 1938, developed 1951-1950s
The North Garden spans the entire width of the rose garden near its northern boundary. This large garden area has regularly-spaced, parallel rows of rose bushes divided by straight concrete paths. The rows of bushes at the northernmost edge of this garden area are situated on the sloping sides of the garden's "bowl." This section was planned and developed as a test site for roses. Within it are two stone fountains that were originally located at the 1912 Smith County Courthouse but moved to the garden in 1953 when that building was demolished. At the east end of the North Garden is the wagon wheel.

5. Wagon Wheel (No photo), designed c. 1938, developed c. 1958, contributing object
The east end of the North Garden terminates in a circular concrete and brick patio with a round central pool. The pool contains a fountain that was once located in the "wagon yard," a 19th century farmer's market near downtown Tyler. Bricks inlaid into the concrete radiate out from the pool like spokes of a wagon wheel. Just south of the wagon wheel is a non-historic pergola known as the Lady Banksia Arbor.

6. Horseshoe Garden (Photo 9), c. 1960
The Horseshoe Garden is situated near the rose garden's eastern edge, south of, and slightly downhill from, the North Garden. The Horseshoe Garden takes its name from its rows of rose bushes planted in a large U-shape around a central lawn. A small sundial is located within the arch of the horseshoe at the eastern end of this garden area. Immediately south of the Horseshoe Garden is another small downhill slope that marks the transition to the English Rose Garden and the ponds. Additional rows of rose bushes are planted along this small slope.

7. Arched Wall (Photos 1 & 10), c. 1938, contributing structure
The arched wall is one of the primary architectural features of the rose garden and was part of the original 1938 design. It serves as a backdrop to the Sunken Garden, helping to further enclose the "room"-like feel of that garden and providing visual interest. It also functions as a gateway for those looking or walking south from the North Garden in the upper section. The Arched Wall is also one of the most prominently-visible garden features to motorists and pedestrians along W. Front Street/SH 31.

The Arched Wall is a freestanding wall constructed from buff-colored bricks laid in a running bond with interspersed Flemish bond rows. The wall has a shallow U-shaped footprint, with a long wall section running east-west and two short "arms" extending to the south. The wall's long side has seven bays in a symmetrical AABCBAA arrangement, with a tall round-arched opening in the central bay flanked by two bays with brick panel details in their upper sections. The outermost two bays on each end of the wall are shorter and unadorned. Between each bay, and at the south end of each short "arm," is a brick pier. The two piers flanking the paneled bays are topped with cast concrete finials. Wrought iron fencing is located atop all bays other than the central arched section. The area south of the wall, within the rectangle described by the wall's "arms," is a slightly higher elevation than the Sunken Garden to the south. A short retaining wall with concrete stairs leads from the archway down to the

Sunken Garden. At the park dedication, a bronze plaque was mounted on the south side of the wall to honor the rose garden's landscape architect, Henry L. Thompson, whose plane was lost over the English Channel in World War II.

8. Sunken Garden (Photo 11), c. 1938, completed 1952
The Sunken Garden is situated in a depression just north of the Queen's Court. The Sunken Garden's northern edge is framed by the arched wall, its eastern edge is a sloping hill, and its west edge is partially bordered by trees; because of this, this garden area feels like a distinct garden "room" separate from other sections of the rose garden. From the north, a concrete walking path leads south through the North Garden, through the arched wall, and down a set of steps to the Sunken Garden. From the west, another concrete path leads from the rectangular section of the Sid Maxfield Garden down a set of steps to the Sunken Garden below. The Sunken Garden features a reflecting pool at its center and numerous short, identical beds planted with the current All-American Rose Selections (AARS), which are chosen for their good performance in all areas of the country.

9. Reflecting Pool (Photo 12), c. 1938, contributing structure
The reflecting pool lies at the center of the Sunken Garden, south of the arched wall amidst rows of rose bushes. The low, rectangular, concrete pool is lined with cut stone tiles and trimmed with a brick cap. The rectangle shape has curved, cut corners that function as planting beds for low bushes. The pool also features a bowl-shaped stone fountain at its center. The reflecting pool is an integral element of the original rose garden, designed to reflect the roses of the Sunken Garden and to be visible when viewed through the framed opening created by the arched wall.

10. Miniature Garden (Photo 13), c. 1958
The Miniature Garden is situated just south of the Queen's Court, near the southwest entrance drive and the southwest corner of the Rose Center and Museum building. This garden area is oriented north-south around a wide concrete walkway. In the top third of the garden, the walkway widens into a square shape to encompass two tall, geometrically-shaped concrete planters that serve as central focal point for this garden area. The Miniature Garden features numerous parallel rows of miniature rose bushes on either side of the central walkway.

11. The Maze (Photo 14), c. 1958
The Maze is located just south of the Queen's Court and east of the Miniature Garden. It is a long garden area on an east-west axis, with a central rectangular grassy space. A concrete path leads south from the Queen's Court through the center of this open lawn area. At the central focal point, the path expands to encircle a round box hedge built around a decorative urn. The planting beds of The Maze are arranged in vertical and horizontal rows radiating out from the central open space. Although their arrangement is not a true maze, the pattern recalls a maze's characteristic twists and turns.

12. South Garden (Photo 15), c. 1958
South of The Maze is the South Garden, a long garden area that is also on an east-west axis. The topography trends lower to the south, and the South Garden is situated on a wide terrace several feet lower than The Maze. The concrete walkway that leads south from the Queen's Court through The Maze descends a set of concrete stairs to reach this garden area. The South Garden's planting beds are arranged as a set of large rectangular "boxes" or "rooms," each containing numerous parallel rose beds. The South Garden is the southernmost rose garden; south of it, the tree-covered, more informal garden section begins.

13. East Sunken Garden (Photo 16), early 1960s
The East Sunken Garden is a small garden area at the eastern end of the South Garden and near the rose garden's east border. It occupies a small sunny spot between the shady ponds to the north and the larger tree-covered area in

the garden's southern section. The East Sunken Garden has curved rows of rose bushes planted to follow the contour of a hill. Additional rows of bushes are located across a walking path to the east.

14. Ponds (Photo 17), c. 1938, completed 1952, contributing structure
The ponds are in the east-central section of the garden, behind and below the fountain and brick wall at the end of the Queen's Court. Because of the brick wall, the topography, and the trees around the ponds, they are not visible from the rear observation deck of the Rose Center and Museum Building. The ponds were developed by the WPA for both aesthetic and functional reasons; as the garden's lowest point, water naturally drains to this location.

The ponds consist of three small tiered pond sections separated by small dams. Together they create an oxbow shape that begins near the north end of the fountain and brick wall and curves around to the east and south. The ponds and dams are built from concrete lined with rough, irregular stones, reflecting the WPA's tendency to utilize natural, local building materials. The naturalistic shape of the ponds and their setting among numerous shade trees contrasts with the refined, regimented structure of the formal beds and manicured appearance of the various rose garden sections. At the southwest corner of the ponds is a stone-lined drainage channel that curves slightly as it passes under two walking paths and exits the garden at a culvert along Peach Avenue on the east. Minor alterations to the ponds include replacement of a wooden pedestrian bridge over one of the dams, and installation of fountain nozzles within each of the pond sections.

15. Stone Lookout (Photo 18), c. 1938, contributing structure
The historic stone lookout is located directly behind the fountain and brick wall at the east end of the Queen's Court. The lookout is essentially part of a stone retaining wall that separates that upper garden section from the lower-elevation ponds—the top of the lookout is level with the Queen's Court, while the bottom of the structure is level with the lowest pond section. The lookout has a wide, flat area that projects slightly beyond the natural slope of the terrain. This viewing deck looks east toward the ponds and has a simple pipe railing around its north, east, and south edges. Along the north edge of the lookout is a set of stone stairs that leads down to the ponds. South of the lookout, the more natural slope of the terrace is resumed, and a lower stone retaining wall extends several yards to the south. The lookout and retaining wall are constructed of coursed rubble with deeply-inset mortar joints. The concrete "floor" of the lookout's viewing deck overhangs slightly beyond the masonry wall, creating a cornice of sorts.

16. Vance Burk Memorial Camellia Garden (Photo 19), 1958, 1967
The Camellia Garden was originally installed as a small camellia test garden in 1958 but was completed to its current appearance in 1967 by Bryan Thompson, son of the rose garden's original landscape architect Henry Thompson. It was created to add color to the garden during the late fall and early winter when the roses were not in bloom. The Camellia Garden is nestled in the pine forest near the garden's southern boundary. Footpaths lead from the South Garden and picnic patio and meander through the trees, where Japonica and Sasanqua species of Camellias are planted in a less formal, more "natural" setting. The garden is accented by a low circular fountain and short span of brick wall with wrought iron fencing, both donated by Pearl Patterson from her family home in Tyler and placed in the Camellia Garden.

17. Southwest Entrance Drive and Parking Area (Photo 20), 1952
The southwest entrance drive and parking area is a short diagonal drive that provides access to the garden from Rose Park Drive near the southern end of the Rose Center and Museum Building. The drive terminates in an oval-shaped turnaround and contains 16 parking spaces along its edges. Walkways from the drive lead to the Miniature Garden, the picnic patio, and the Heritage Rose Garden. A non-historic steel fence and gate enclose the driveway after hours.

18. Picnic Patio (Photo 21), 1952, contributing structure
The irregularly-shaped picnic patio is nestled into the landscape near the southwest entrance drive just south of the Miniature Garden. Its southern edges are delineated with curved stone retaining walls with coursed ashlar masonry. A short set of concrete stairs leads from the flat picnic pad up to the top of the retaining wall and south into the Camellia Garden. In the western portion of the picnic patio is a circular planter.

19. Stone Wall and Pier (Photo 22), c. 1938, contributing structure
The stone wall and pier were built by the WPA to mark an entrance to the rose garden and larger fairgrounds property. Within the garden boundary, a short decorative stone pier marks the garden's southeast pedestrian entrance. Near the pier, just outside the boundary, is a stone wall that consists of two piers of uneven height connected by a short section of wall with a curved top. Across the street is an identical wall; together these two walls functioned as a "gateway" into the fairgrounds for those traveling west on Houston Street. Both the pier and wall have coursed square rubble masonry.

20. Heritage Rose Garden (Photo 23), 1970s/1986
The Heritage Rose Garden occupies a 0.6-acre area in the southwestern corner of the rose garden. It was begun in the 1970s and redesigned in 1986 to its current appearance. The garden features sections of lawn outlined with curved concrete walking paths and planting beds containing antique roses and perennials. From the southwest entrance drive, the entrance to the Heritage Garden is defined by a non-historic wooden pergola.

21. Shade Garden (Photo 24), 1997
The Shade Garden is located in the shady area between the picnic patio and the Camellia Garden, south of the South Garden. It contains a variety of shade plants such as hostas and ferns planted in informally-arranged beds. It also features 25 varieties of Japanese Maple.

22. IDEA Garden (Photo 25), 1999
The IDEA Garden is located at the southeast corner of the garden near the stone wall and pier. This garden area has numerous narrow, curving pathways that create irregularly-shaped planting beds that serve as demonstration and testing gardens. The entrance to the IDEA Garden is marked by a short wrought-iron fence, sign, and pergola. The garden contains a non-historic shade structure and shed, as well as benches and small decorative statues.

23. Meditation Garden and Gazebo (Photo 26), 1990, non-contributing structure
The Meditation Garden is a quiet, shady space just east of the ponds along the eastern boundary of the rose garden. This garden space features several curved pathways that lead to the ponds and around a gazebo (rebuilt in 2017). The Meditation Garden's informally-arranged planting beds contain perennials and other shade-friendly plants. This section of the garden contained a children's playground, sandpit, and picnic area when the rose garden opened in 1952; the Meditation Garden, although not from the historic period, is more compatible with the overall garden design than the playground it replaced.

24. David Austin English Rose Garden, 2003
The English Rose Garden is a small garden space just north of the ponds and south of the Horseshoe Garden. It has a curving, Y-shaped path lined with wide planting beds containing 22 varieties of English roses. It was recently installed but is compatible with the historic rose garden.

Integrity
The Tyler Rose Garden retains a high degree of integrity from both periods of significance, 1938-1941 and 1952-1969. Gardens are living, growing resources and change is inevitable; however, the major garden features of the WPA-era, including the terraces, infrastructure, rock walls and ponds, arched wall and reflecting pool are

remarkably intact to the initial construction period (1938-1941). The formal *parterre* designed in 1938, and completed in 1952, retains its original configuration and design function to the historic age to a remarkable degree.[2] The expansion of the *parterre* to the north, south and east in the 1950s and 1960s, represents the continuation of the formal garden with roses and hedges planted in geometric beds and traditional arrangements. The Camellia Garden trail created in 1967 through the woods at the south end of the garden is a departure from the garden's formal geometry but it reflects the changing trends in garden design and use at the end of the historic period. Overall, these historic-age gardens possess good integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and convey a good sense of the garden trends of their time and their intended function during their periods of significance.

Post-historic period changes in the Rose Garden include the development of the Shade, Heritage Rose, IDEA, Mediation, and English Rose Garden areas. These later gardens generally lie at the outer edges of the original formal garden, in the tree-covered fringes in the east-central and southern sections of the garden. Because of their relatively obscure locations among the trees or behind ledges, they are largely hidden from view their presence does not detract significantly from the setting and feeling of the historic Tyler Municipal Rose Garden. Other minor alterations include the introduction of non-historic pergolas at the Sid Maxfield Garden, the arbor in the wagon wheel, and the installation of new streetlights. Since it is the nature of gardens to change and evolve, these areas may yet become contributing elements if they retain their original integrity as they age.

[2] Dead and dying plants are regularly replaced, and varieties sometimes changed. In the 1950s, one of the parterre lawns was infilled with rose beds arranged in diagonal rows as it currently appears.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE TYLER ROSE GARDEN (Keyed to Site Plan – Map 4)				
Resource	**Name**	**Date**	**Resource Type**	**Contributing Status**
	Tyler Municipal Rose Garden	1938-1941; 1952-1969	Site	Contributing
1	Queen's Court	c. 1938/1952		
2	Fountain and Brick Wall	c. 1960	Structure	Contributing
3	Sid Maxfield Garden	c. 1938/1956		
4	North Garden	c. 1938/Early 1950s		
5	Wagon Wheel	c. 1938/c. 1958	Object	Contributing
6	Horseshoe Garden	c. 1960		
7	Arched Wall	c. 1938	Structure	Contributing
8	Sunken Garden	c. 1938/1952		
9	Reflecting Pool	c. 1938	Structure	Contributing
10	Miniature Garden	c. 1958		
11	The Maze	c. 1958		
12	South Garden	c. 1958		
13	East Sunken Garden	Early 1960s		
14	Ponds	c. 1938/1952	Structure	Contributing
15	Stone Lookout	c. 1938	Structure	Contributing
16	Camellia Garden	1958/1967		
17	SW Entrance Drive & Parking Area	1952		
18	Picnic Patio	1952	Structure	Contributing
19	Stone Wall & Pier	c. 1938	Structure	Contributing
20	Heritage Rose Garden	1970s/1986		
21	Shade Garden	1997		
22	IDEA Garden	1999		
23	Meditation Garden & Gazebo	1990	Structure	Non-Contributing
24	English Rose Garden	2003		

Statement of Significance

The Tyler Municipal Rose Garden is a historic district and a designed landscape located 420 Rose Park Drive in central Tyler, Smith County, Texas. It is the largest municipal rose garden in the United States, in terms of its size, and its vast number of roses - more than 38,000 on the property when last counted in the spring of 2018. Designed as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) park project in 1938, the garden was nearing completion in the fall of 1941 when United States entered World War II and nonessential domestic construction stopped for the duration of the war. Nearly ten years passed before work resumed on the garden, and it finally opened to an appreciative public in June 1952. At the heart of the terraced landscape they saw a formal *parterre* composed of geometric forms and precisely drawn pathways, hedges, lawns, and rose beds. Lower terraces featured more organic, informal landscapes of naturalistic stone-lined ponds and stone structures patterned after the National Parks Service "rustic" model of the pre-war era. The garden was expanded and further developed with respect to the original garden through the 1950s and 1960s. As its roses and fame increased, the municipal rose garden grew to be the region's largest tourist attraction, drawing thousands of rose enthusiasts and commercial buyers to Tyler and the East Texas rose district.

Initially designed by architect Keith Maxwell and later shaped by landscape architect Henry Thompson, the property is noteworthy as a largely intact example of a public rose garden that gained favor in American cities in the early and mid-20th century. It retains its historic character and architectural integrity to a high degree and conveys a strong sense of history from two periods of significance: design and initial construction (1938-1941) and completion and development (1952-1969). The second period of significance adheres to the NPS 50 year guideline. The Tyler Municipal Rose Garden is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation at the state level of significance for its role in regional and state tourism. It is also nominated under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture at the state level, as a good, increasingly rare example of a major garden type – formal rose gardens for public enjoyment - built in cities across America and Texas in the mid-20th century.

The Case for Significance at the State Level

Since the Rose Garden opened in 1952, it has grown to become the top tourist attraction, not only in Tyler, but in the entire East Texas region. Thousands of people are drawn to the garden every year to be amazed at the sheer volume of color and beauty cascading down the terraces in massive arrangements according to the many hues and varieties of roses grown in and around the city of Tyler. Tourists also flock to the garden for its elaborate rose shows and other public events of the annual Texas Rose Festival held in the third week of October.[3]

The Tyler Municipal Rose Garden grew out of a Progressive-Era movement to preserve places of exceptional beauty, both natural and designed, for the benefit and enjoyment of all people, not merely the wealthy. Cities and towns across the country embraced the idea and built thousands of pulic parks and gardens in the early 20th century, including formal rose gardens. At least eleven municipal rose gardens were established in Texas, some as WPA projects like the Tyler Rose Garden.[4] Unlike most WPA parks and gardens built during the Great Depression, the

[3] Visit Tyler, "Economic Impact Study of 2017 Rose Festival and Rose Season," prepared for the City of Tyler. The study found that there were at least 10,500 visitors to the rose garden in the month of October 2017, about 6,000 from outside Smith County. At least 33,426 visitors came to the city of Tyler alone for the festival in 2016. Figures were based on guest book sign-in, hotel occupancy and attendance at various festival-related events.

[4] *American Rose Annual*, various issues 1932-1938; Horace J. McFarland, "Other Southwestern Public Rose-Gardens*," American Rose Annual*, 1938: 89. As editor, McFarland regularly updated his readers on the status of municipal rose gardens across the country, including Texas. He identified city rose gardens in Dallas, Arlington, Beaumont, Fort Worth, Port Arthur, Waco, Brownwood, Houston, El Paso and Austin, where citizens planted several hundred roses on the state capitol grounds (Ibid).

Tyler Rose Garden was begun late in the program and wasn't completed by the time the United States went to war and stopped funding the WPA. It was left unfinished for the duration of the war. Work didn't immediately begin after the war, but in 1952, the garden finally opened to visitors who beheld a formal *parterre* with an arched wall and reflecting pool framed by lawns, hedges and 3,000 blooming roses against a green backdrop of native pines. The effect was stunning! Though undeniably beautiful, city leaders also saw the garden as "a living catalogue of Smith County roses," showcasing the many types and varieties of roses grown within a 35-mile radius of Tyler to attract commercial buyers and garden enthusiasts to the self-proclaimed "rose capital of the nation."[5]

Today, the nearly 14-acre site is widely recognized as the country's largest municipal rose garden, with more than 38,000 roses, and more than 500 varieties on display. The Tyler Rose Garden is significant as an excellent, largely intact example of the type of municipal rose gardens built in Texas, most of which were completed in the 1930s. The garden retains its formal parterre, terraces, original arched wall and reflecting pool, and its WPA "rustic" elements, to a remarkable degree, especially in comparison with other early 20th century municipal rose gardens in the state that have been abandoned, redeveloped for modern park uses or altered so severely that they no longer convey a strong sense of their history.[6]

Beyond its significance as a highly-intact rose garden and a good example of the prevailing trends in landscape architecture of the period, the Tyler Rose Garden derives much of its significance from its role in regional and state tourism the Rose Garden consistently ranks among the top attractions in Texas.[7] It is especially popular in October, when it is the setting for elaborate rose shows, the Queen's Tea, and other public events of the annual Texas Rose Festival which formed in 1933 to celebrate and promote the East Texas rose industry which had become a vital part of the regional economy. During the month-long "rose season," an estimated 200,000 people visit Tyler and other East Texas communities. In Tyler alone, tourists contribute close to $2.4 million to the city's economy during the Rose Festival.[8] In 2018, the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association named the Rose Garden as one of the state's "Great Public Spaces." Christina Sebastian, Vice-president of the Texas Chapter, was quoted as saying the Tyler Rose Garden was chosen for the honor for "its impact on the East Texas economy, history and community."[9] The significance of the Tyler Rose Garden, both as a historic landscape and as a major tourist attraction, extends beyond its symbolic value to the city to its impact on tourism and associations with the heritage of East Texas as one of the most important rose districts in the country in the 20th century.

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[5] "Rose garden crucial to Tyler's history," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 14, 2011: 8F; Helen Holmes Kayser, "South's First Rose Festival Held at Tyler," *Southern Home and Garden*, November 1933: 20). Kayser called Tyler the "rose capital of the South." By 1936, local newspapers echoed her sentiment by referring to Tyler as the "rose capital of the nation," the "rose capital of America" among other such titles. Since that time, Tyler has been called the "rose capital" of "the country," "Texas," "the Southwest," and even "the world," in hundreds of newspapers, magazines and books. Tyler reinforces its identification with roses. The city's official logo is a bright red rose displayed on its correspondence, business cards, and promotional literature. The city website opens with "Rose Capital of the United States," (http://www.cityoftyler.org).

[6] Phoebe Cutler, "The rise of the American municipal rose garden, 1927-1937," *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 1:25, 2005:202-216). Cutler said that many municipal rose gardens closed due to the high cost to maintain them. In Texas, early 20th century public rose gardens were closed or repurposed in El Paso, Beaumont, Port Arthur, Arlington, Waco and Brownwood, though they were later built on different sites in El Paso and Beaumont. Depression-era rose gardens still survive in Dallas and Fort Worth.

[7] Association of Regional Councils, "East Texas Counties: Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood," online at ht. s://txregionalcouncil.org/regional-council/east-texas-council-of-governments. Accessed July 4, 2018.

[8] Visit Tyler, "Economic Impact Study of 2017 Rose Festival and Rose Season," report prepared for the city of Tyler, n.d.

[9] Christina Sebastian, in Erin Mansfield, "Tyler Rose Garden receives statewide recognition*," Tyler Morning Telegraph online*, May 10, 2018, https://tylerpaper.com/news/local/tyler-rose-garden-receives-statewide-recognition/article_19121bf8-5469-11e8-a585-9fadb490123e.html, Accessed July 4, 2018. Sebastian, who serves on the board of the Texas Chapter, also said the Rose Garden was one of six spaces receiving the award for 2018. Others honored include the Waco Suspension Bridge, Fort Worth's Magnolia Avenue, and McAllen's Oval Park.

Historic Context

Formula for a Rose Garden

In 1938, a "formula" for creating a municipal rose garden appeared in the pages of the *American Rose Annual*, the voice of the American Rose Society, still the country's most important and influencial rose association. It read "a group of rose enthusiasts plus a sympathetic Park Board equals a civic garden anywhere."[10] In short, these were the main ingredients that went into making the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden, which coincidentally was begun that year, but there were other, more complex factors behind its planning and design in the 1930s, its initial construction under the WPA, its completion and public opening in the 1950s, and its rise to become the country's largest municipal rose garden by the late 1960s.[11]

The Tyler Municipal Rose Garden was a natural outgrowth of the city's location at the center of a thriving rose district that emerged in East Texas in the early 20th century. The region's climate and soil were ideal for growing roses and commercial nurseries sprang up in and around Tyler to meet the growing demand for roses which had become tremendously popular in the country. In a local context, roses filled the void left by the decline of cotton and the demise of fruit orchards early in the century. By the 1920s, East Texas roses were a mainstay of the region's largely agricultural economy and local growers, garden clubs, and businessmen began considering the efficacy of building a public rose garden in Tyler to showcase area roses and promote the local rose industry.

The Tyler Rose Garden was also part of a larger, national context in which Progressive Era social reforms and New Deal public works programs resulted in thousands of city, state, and national parks, including dozens of municipal rose gardens, hundreds of which were built throughout the country in the 1920s and 1930s. Largely due to its association with the local rose industry and the Texas Rose Festival, the garden grew and thrived in the postwar period when so many other municipal gardens failed. These are the principal factors behind the creation and enduring success of the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden.

Smith County Agricultural Context

The city of Tyler was founded in 1847 as the county seat of Smith County. Located near the geographic center of the county, the city grew to become the business and cultural hub of a large agricultural district by the mid-19th century. Pioneer farmers grew corn but gave way to cotton which became the county's principal crop for most of the 19th century when it accounted for nearly four-fifths of its agricultural wealth. Cotton began to decline toward the end of the century as decades of overplanting depleted the soils, producing lower yields and leaving farmers in search of other options.

As cotton faded, many local farmers shifted to truck farming - groceries, kitchen vegetables – and fruit orchards to make their living. Fruit and nut orchards appeared in East Texas as early as the 1880s and several commercial nurseries opened near the city of Tyler.[12] Its success was reflected in the enormous Texas Fruit Palace built in downtown Tyler in 1895 to showcase and promote the region's agricultural crops. Peaches were particularly

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[10] McFarland, 1938: 89.

[11] Louis H. Frohman and Jean Elliot, A Pictorial Guide to American Gardens, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1960: 93; "Columbus Park of Roses – Home; About: History," https://www.parkofroses.org. Accessed July 10, 2018. When Frohman and Elliot published with book in 1960, the Tyler Rose Garden was second only to the Columbus (Ohio) Park of Roses, a 13-acre garden with 12,000 roses and 400 varieties. The Columbus garden lost so many roses in back-to-back freezes in 1966 and 1967, that the city decided it was too costly to replant or maintain it. Rosarians revived it later but by then, the Tyler Rose Garden far surpassed it in the number of roses grown in the park. Today, the Tyler Rose Garden is widely regarded as the largest public rose garden in the country, in terms of its size – nearly 14-acres - and number of roses - more than 38,000 in 2018. The Hershey (PA) Rose Garden is larger, but it is privately-owned.

[12] Sam C. Kidd, "A History of the Rose Industry," unpublished script, 2011, In vertical files: Rose Industry, Smith County Historical Society Archives, Tyler, Texas.

important to the region's agricultural economy and by the turn of the 20th century, Smith County growers had more than a million fruit trees – mostly peaches – in production. Disaster struck in the early 1900s when peach orchards succombed to San Jose Scale, a blight that decimated the fruit industry in East Texas. Smith County nurserymen responded to the crisis by experimenting with ornamental shrubs and plants, including roses, to diversify the region's crops and revive its agriculture-based economy which had slumped when the peach orchards failed.[13] In doing so, they found the sandy, acidic soil, moderate climate and rainfall amounts within about a 35-50-mile radius of Tyler ideal for growing roses. The finding convinced several local nurserymen to begin cultivating roses on a commercial scale.

Roses had been cultivated in Smith County since the 1840s, when Matthew Shamburger moved from his native Tennessee to Texas and began experimenting with roses on his farm near Pine Springs. Several generations of Shamburgers continued his work in what had become a family tradition and they, together with G. A. McKee and Sam Ford, are credited with the early development of rose culture in the county.[14] Despite its early origins in Smith County, rose cultivation remained more of a pastime than a commercially viable agricultural crop through the mid-19th century. By the close of the century, however, the demand for roses increased dramatically as ornamental gardening became popular for a growing class of Americans with "leisure time," a concept unknown to earlier generations. Some spent their free time creating ornamental gardens of their own, while others visited public garden parks and private estates, many of which included or were devoted entirely to roses.

The beauty and romantic associations of roses captured the imagination like no other flower and gardeners clamored for new varieties, colors, and sizes. About 1900, researchers found they could increase rose colors from a limited range of white, pink, crimson and a purple hue, to include yellow, red, and magenta shades, further adding to their popularity.[15] These developments were not lost on Smith County nurserymen who began to focus more intently on rose cultivation and test their potential as a commercial crop. Tyler-area nurseymen performed the first successful rose budding on "dog rose stock" which greatly increased the varieties that could be grown.[16] They were rewarded with astoundingly beautiful and healthy roses. When the San Jose scale decimated the Smith County peach orchards in the 1910s, they had the expertise to produce roses for shipment outside the state. By 1917, they were producing field-grown roses in sufficient quantities to be sold on a much larger, commercial scale. Nurseries in distant parts of the country were eager to buy their roses because they were better able to resist disease and could withstand temperature extremes better than those grown in hothouses. As Smith County's reputation for superior roses spread, demand increased to the extent that roses became a vital part of its agriculture-based economy, much as cotton and fruit orchards had been in the past.[17]

Tyler lay at the center of the emerging East Texas rose district and benefitted more than other communities from the industry. As a railroad hub and major shipping point for the region's crops, it stood to profit from rose shipments to national markets. More importantly, its soil – and the land within a 35-50 mile radius of the city – was ideal for growing roses. New nurseries sprang up within the Tyler "rose belt" and added to the city's reputation, and its coffers. By the mid-1920s, nurseries in the Tyler were producing millions of growing rose bushes and the city became a Mecca for rose enthusiasts and commercial buyers from around the country.[18]

The Texas agricultural establishment was a little slow to acknowledge the East Texas rose industry but in 1931, the *Texas Almanac* noted that roses were an "especially prominent crop" in Smith County where farmers exported them

[13] Kidd, 2011.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Cutler, 2005: 202.
[16] Kidd, 2011.
[17] Ibid.
[18] *Rose Growers Theater*, video, Rose Museum, Tyler Rose Garden

to national markets. As roses grew in economic importance to the region and the state, the old guard began to accept them as a legitimate agricultural "crop" and in 1933, the almanac positively gushed about the rapid rise and impact of the rose industry "begun only a few years ago" with extensive farms shipping roses of "unexcelled beauty" to all parts of the nation. Almost as an afterthought, the article reported that roses brought between three-quarters to one million dollars in annual revenues to the region, most of it to Smith County and, by implication, the city of Tyler. [19]

Even in the midst of the Great Depression, when crops failed across the country with grim regularity, the rose industry helped sustain Smith County's economy. By 1935, the *Texas Almanac* enthused about the tremendous development of "outdoor rose nurseries" in East Texas, again noting that rose "farming" had only started in the region "in a small way about 20 years ago." Noting that the industry had "picked up great momentum" in the previous five or six years, the article went on to state that about 4,000,000 plants were in production with 6,000,000 worth $1,000,000 expected in 1936. The article touted the advantages of the East Texas field grown roses over "the weaknesses of hothouse grown bushes."[20] It again named Smith County as the principal location of the industry, but mentioned that there were also "some nurseries" in Van Zandt, Gregg, Anderson, Henderson and Rusk counties, as well.[21] In 1939, the Texas Almanac reported that 125 nurserymen within ten miles of the city of Tyler had grown 17,000,00 rose bushes that year, more than half the total number of bushes sold in the country.[22]

Tyler Rose Festival: 1933

As the Depression deepened in the rest of the country, East Texans were cautiously optimistic that the oil industry would safeguard them against the worst effects of the hard economy. Nevertheless, Tyler residents, especially those in the business community, looked to the rose industry to shore up the city's revenues in case the oil industry failed. The Tyler Chamber of Commerce and other boosters eagerly promoted Tyler as the center of the thriving East Texas rose district and looked at ways to capitalize on its growing identification with America's favorite flower. They distributed promotional brochures and placed advertisements in large city newspapers to attract professional landscapers and a growing middle-class with the means and free time to travel for pleasure. Among the vacationers were garden enthusiasts who visited national parks and estate gardens largely for their scenic beauty, but also for inspiration and new design ideas to try in their gardens back home. A subset of the garden type were, dubbed "rose tourists," made up largely of amateur rosarians who went to rose-growing regions to tour the blooming fields, select their favorites and place orders for their home gardens. Unlike most visitors to East Texas at that time, rose tourists made significant contributions the region's economy by patronizing local hotels and restaurants, and buying souvenirs of their trip to "the rose capital of Texas."

The impact of rose tourism was not lost on Tyler's growers and business leaders who began thinking of ways they could better market and promote the city as the center of the East Texas rose district. Among them was Tom B. Ramey, Jr., a Tyler resident who took a trip with his son to the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition in the summer of 1933. When they happened to see an exhibit filled with exceptionally beautiful roses, Ramey asked where they were grown. The vendor responded that they had come from a "little town in East Texas, called Tyler."[23] Ramey came away from the exhibition inspired to do something to display Tyler's natural assets to the world. When he returned home, he met with people in the local rose industry, garden clubs and civic groups to discuss putting on a festival to celebrate Tyler roses and attract visitors to the city.[24] In fact, the Tyler Garden Club had already come to the Chamber of Commerce with a similar proposition in 1932. Ramey's support may have lent

[19] Kidd, 2011.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] *Rose History Theater*, video, Rose Museum, Tyler Rose Garden.
[24] Ibid.

it more credence in the business community and the Chamber endorsed the project. In just six weeks, and a budget of only $1,800, the Chamber of Commerce worked with garden clubs, civic groups and local growers to organize and stage Tyler's first East Texas Rose Festival in the fall of 1933. It was complete with a parade, rose displays, speakers and the coronation of a Rose Queen.[25]

Many individuals in the community contributed to the effort. Support naturally came from Tyler area members of the American Rose Society, including L. R. Godfrey, W. B. McGinney, P.C. Moore, L. H. Strell, Rosemont Nursery and M. S. Shamburger at that time.[26] The Tyler Garden Club arranged for labor through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and a crew planted a three-acre "garden" on city property with 10,000 rose bushes and three hundred trees, all donated by Smith County nurserymen. The two-day affair opened on October 11, 1933, with Tyler laying claim "under a brilliant autumn sunshine" to the title "rose capital of the Southwest."[27] In her article for the November, 1933 edition of *Southern Home and Garden,* Helen Kayser reported that some 40,000 dozen roses were used to decorate downtown businesses along the two-mile long parade route lined with spectators who were showered with millions of rose petals from airplanes flying overhead. The coronation of Queen Margaret Copeland of Palestine and her twenty-seven Rose Princesses at the Queen's Ball was declared the "most outstanding social function in East Texas in many years" with "a company of one hundred school children representing rosebuds, wind, rain, lightning, sunshine and other allegorical figures according to the theme, "In Search of the Rose Queen."[28] Other activities packed into the two days included a luncheon with an address by Senator Tom Connally, another luncheon for all garden club members, an "illustrated lecture" on "Flower Arrangement" and tours of the rose fields. The festival closed with a lecture entitled "Adventures in Rose Growing" by Dr. J. Horace McFarland, Editor of the *American Rose Annual* and "the recognized rose authority in America."[29]

The extraordinary festival was a huge success, attracting more than a thousand visitors from outside the city and its organizers formed the Texas Rose Festival Association to make it an annual event. Since then, the festival has been held every October except for a hiatus during World War II. It grew from a two-day celebration in 1933 to entail social events throughout the year, culminating in a nearly week-long festival every October starting with a three-mile Rose Parade along a route lined with blooming rose bushes in the city right-of-way and in private yards.

Typical festival activities included a major Rose Show with roses massed in elaborate displays to convey the theme chosen for that year, bus and automobile tours of the surrounding rose fields, the Queen's Tea, and the crowning of the Texas Rose Queen and her court. The first festival surpassed all expectations, drawing over a thousand visitors who were amazed by spectacles of rose-covered parade vehicles, lavish floral arrangements, and festival royalty outfitted in remarkable sequined costumes. The festival quickly became the focus of social life in Tyler with formal dinners, costume balls and private parties in honor of the Rose Queen and her Royal Court. The only thing lacking was a municipal rose garden to showcase the flowers for which the city had become famous.

It's important to note that while the festival was a success, it did not include the entire Tyler community. Racial segregation, whether de jure or de facto was widespread historically throughout the South. Recreational spaces such as public parks and gardens were not exempt from this. As a result, support for the festival and the future Tyler Municipal Rose Garden largely came from within and was intended for Tyler's white society and tourists until desegregation in the 1960s.

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[25] *Rose History Theater*; Kayser, 1933: 20
[26] American Rose Annual, March 1932.
[27] Kayser, 1933: 20.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

The Rise of Municipal Rose Gardens

The rise of municipal rose gardens was an outgrowth of Progressive-Era movements and policies including the "City Beautiful" movement that was based on the philosophy that beauty, especially natural beauty, had the power to remedy the ills of modern life, especially in industrialized cities which were perceived as overcrowded and increasingly noisy, polluted, and ridden with crime. The philosophy held that it was incumbent upon an enlightened society to mitigate such conditions by providing public parks, including gardens, so that people might replenish their mental and physical well-being through exposure to beauty in the natural world. It was this ideal that led the country to preserve and protect places of extraordinary beauty by establishing the National Park System and, on a smaller level, that led cities to build and maintain local garden parks for the benefit and enjoyment of their citizens. Because the impulse to develop public parks and gardens for the common good coincided with the height of popularity for roses, it was only fitting that some of those public garden parks would be designed and dedicated as municipal rose gardens.

Landscape architect and author, Phoebe Cutler described the trends and historic factors behind the municipal rose garden movement of the early 20th century in her 2005 article in *Studies in the History of Garden and Designed Landscapes*. Entitled "The rise of the American municipal rose garden, 1927-1937," Cutler defined the years between 1904 and 1939 as the broad timeframe in which public rose gardens became immensely popular in America, prompting hundreds of cities to embark on the "fraught and costly business of growing roses."[30] She characterized the "classic period" from 1927 to 1937, as the time in which the majority were planned, funded, and built. The author theorized that the surge in civic rose gardens in that decade resulted from the enduring appeal of roses, the popularity of formal gardens based on historic themes, and the availabilty of government funding and support for public parks, many of which were built under New Deal programs like the CCC and the WPA. Cutler cited advocacy as one of the most important factors in the proliferation of municipal rose gardens during that time, by local and regional garden clubs and organizations, but especially by the prestigious American Rose Society (ARS) which was then, and still remains, the nation's leading source of information on roses and their cultivation.[31]

The ARS staunchly supported city-owned and operated rose gardens and spread that message through *The American Rose Annual*, edited by J. Horace McFarland, perhaps the greatest proponent of municipal rose gardens in the country at that time. McFarland was a widely-known and respected authority on roses and had a large national following as editor of several rose garden publications. His advocacy didn't stop at rose gardens, however. He had long been a champion of public parks, believing that government stewardship was the best way to preserve great natural beauty on behalf of the people in perpetuity. On the national level, he campaigned vigorously to save significant landscapes including Niagara Falls and the Florida Everglades. But his greatest passion was reserved for roses and he took every opportunity to extol their virtues and propogate municipal rose gardens throughout the land. In the 1920s, he assumed leadership roles in the ARS and served as its president from 1930 through 1933. During his three years at the helm of the society, McFarland pursued a relentless schedule of public speaking engagements that took him to cities across the country, including Tyler, at the center of the East Texas rose district. There, he addressed a crowd of rose enthusiasts and growers assembled for the first ever East Texas Rose Festival held in the city in October.[32]

[30] Cutler, 2005:202.
[31] Ibid, 203.
[32] Ibid: 205: Kayser, 1933: 20.

J. Horace McFarland Visits Tyler and the East Texas Rose District

Tyler-area rose growers and gardeners considered it quite a coup to bring J. Horace McFarland, arguably the most influential figure in the world of roses and rose gardens, to their community. In fact, it was just the first of several stops McFarland made on a journey through North and East Texas. He started the East Texas leg of his journey touring the rose fields around Tyler before delivering his lecture at the close of the Rose Festival, on October 12, 1933.[33] From Tyler, McFarland went on to Dallas and Arlington, where he congratulated the small city on its new municipal rose garden. McFarland concluded his trip in Fort Worth, where he presided over dedication ceremonies for the city's new municipal rose garden within the larger Fort Worth Botanic Garden, on October 15, 1933.[34]

When he wrote about his travels for the ARS, McFarland mentioned Tyler's progress with its "municipal rose garden."[35] In fact, Tyler didn't actually *own* a rose garden; only a three-acre tract along the parade route "on loan" from Julius Bergfeld for the duration of the festival.[36] It was merely a stop-gap measure, as Bergfeld clearly stated his intention to develop the site. McFarland's message on the importance of public ownership and oversight of "municipal" rose gardens left local garden clubs and festival organizers scrambling for a permanent solution. They urged the city to buy the property from Bergfeld, arguing that it would attract year-round tourism and would be a good venue for rose displays for the festival which was already being planned for the following year. The City Commission listened to their arguments but could not justify the expense of building a rose garden during the Depression.[37] In the meantime, Bergfeld's parcel remained the "city" rose garden, at least for festival purposes, for the next several years.

In 1936, however, Bergfeld let it be known that he wanted to reclaim his property "soon" and the city was hard-pressed to find another rose garden for the festival. In a bind, private citizens planted roses in their yards and the city installed bushes in the right-of-way along the parade route. That October, McFarland returned to Tyler as a speaker for the Rose Festival. He urged his followers to press for a city-owned rose garden to avoid losing it to another private party.[38] The Chamber of Commerce went back to the City Commission, suggesting that they could build a garden worthy of the title, "rose capital of the nation" on property the city already owned, namely the 81-acre East Texas Fairgrounds.[39] The East Texas Fair was a regional fair that started in 1874, but was held only irregularly through the 19th century. When the fair did take place, it was a highly anticipated respite from the drudgery of rural life that brought hundreds of farm families together in one place to enjoy the comraderie of friends, agricultural exhibits and entertainment in the form of music, dances and carnival rides.[40] Farmers didn't have much money to spend on entertainment or trinkets, but what little they had, was often spent at the fair – and the place where it was held.

Since East Texas was a rural region with an agriculture-based economy, city leaders wanted to capture those dollars by providing a permanent home for the fair in Tyler. In 1912, the city council voted to buy an 81-acre tract of land west of downtown from Col. H.R. Herndon, for the express purpose of keeping the East Texas Fair in Tyler, to attract visitors and increase business.[41] The gambit worked and in 1915, and every year since, except during World War II, the East Texas Fair has been held on the site. For all but the month of September, however, the grounds were vacant except for a baseball field and a few barns for the fair. When Chamber of Commerce members

[33] Kayser, 1933:20.
[34] Ibid; Cutler 2005: 209; Kayser 1933: 20; *American Rose Annual*, 1933:1
[35] *American Rose Annual*, 1934, various entries.
[36] "Municipal Rose Garden at end of South Broadway in full bloom," *Tyler Courier-Times,* June 3, 1935: 5.
[37] Tyler City Commission Minutes, June 3, 1935.
[38] "Rosarian favors public garden," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 6, 1936: 2.
[39] "Rose Garden May Be at Fair Park," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, August 13, 1936: 1..
[40] KLTV, "East Texas State Fair celebrates 100 years," original broadcast aired September 3, 2015, 3:51 p.m. CDT, transcript online at http://www.kltv.com/story/29955100/east-texas-state-fair-celebrates-100-years).
[41] Tyler City Council Minutes of the Meeting, May 3, 1912, Book 3: 393.

approached the City Commission again, they reasoned that since the city owned the fairgrounds outright, it wouldn't have the expense of buying a piece of land for the rose garden.[42] The City Commission generally favored the idea, but still lacked the money and the manpower to build the garden, and the project was shelved for another year. Even so, garden advocates began considering the fairgrounds as a likely site for the garden, if only to avoid taxing the city budget (Figures 1 & 6).

WPA Era 1938-1941

Finally, in the summer of 1938, Tyler-area resident and architect, Keith Maxwell, came to the Texas Rose Festival Association with a realistic plan for building the city rose garden under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a New Deal program to relieve unemployment by putting men to work on public projects, including city parks, during the Great Depresion. Citing direct experience with WPA parks projects in Dallas, San Antonio and Chicago, Maxwell offered to prepare the necessary documentation and guide the city through the process. Tom B. Ramey, Jr., past president of the Fair Association and one of its original directors, immediately saw the merits of the plan and urged the association to endorse it. Following the meeting, Ramey spoke on behalf of the association to reporters, declaring their collective belief that ". . . now is the opportune time to get started on a rose garden and it is the opportune time to get Federal help on it."[43]

Maxwell was variously described as an architect, a landscape architect and/or an engineer in newspaper articles and public records of his presentations to city boards and commissions where he pitched his plan. He had worked as a landscape architect on projects for the Chicago Exposition and the Texas Centennial in Dallas, and as both a landscape architect and an engineer for the San Antonio School District and Bexar County. Furthermore, he had experience securing and carrying out "numerous" WPA projects and was certain he could do the same for the City of Tyler. He estimated the cost of the rose garden at $50,000, with the Federal government paying the lion's share, approximately $45,000, leaving the city with a balance of about $5,000, a fraction of what it would otherwise cost to complete.[44] It was a managable sum, even by Depression-era standards.

But Maxwell's plan didn't end with the rose garden. As support and enthusiasm grew, so did the size and scope of the project. Maxwell encouraged the city to apply for an even larger WPA grant, either as an amendment to the rose garden application or a separate project, to fully develop the entire 81-acre fairgrounds site – by then called Fair Park – with a variety of sports facilties and recreational uses. He envisioned a 20-30-acre section on the east side of the park reserved exclusively for the municipal rose garden. For the much larger portion of the site, he proposed a network of hiking and equestrian trails, swimming and wading pools, picnic tables and playgrounds, football and baseball fields and new stadiums for each sport.[45] While his listeners expressed disbelief, Maxwell reassured them with a logical, credible program to achieve the multi-faceted public park with minimal expense to the city.

Maxwell presented himself as the best qualified person to prepare the application and carry out the project in accordance with standards and requirements set out by the WPA. WPA requirements were intended to be consistent but in practice, they varied from state to state. In virtually all cases, applicants had to complete detailed forms to show how their projects would substantially alleviate unemployment and be of public benefit. Local applicants were required to assess their level of need and provide unemployment numbers to qualify for aid. Projects had to be designed for maximum safety, convenience, and benefit to the public.[46] Local governments generally supplied the

[42] "New Municipal Rose Garden is Planned in Tyler," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, November 3, 1937: 2.
[43] "Municipal Rose Garden at East Texas Fairgrounds is Mapped by City Park Board," *Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph*, June 12, 1938, Sec. 1: 6).
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid, Sec. 1:12.
[46] Albert H. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures: Part I: Administration and Basic Service Facilities,* United States Department of the

land and construction materials, such as timber and stone, and had to show they had the resources to do so. Applications asked the numbers and types of laborers, craftsman and professionals required to accomplish the project, such as unskilled workers, experienced stone masons or architects and engineers. Applicants had to prepare a budget with line items for labor and supplies. They had to submit a property surveys that delineated the boundaries and existing features and a master plan that included an overall site plan showing the proposed roads, pathways and trails, footprints of buildings, structures and other built features, and the locations and design of entrances, fences, walls and signage, and sketches of buildings, structures and other built features. Measured elevation drawings showing construction details and methods, and exact materials would come later, if the project was approved.

The application process itself was daunting, but Maxwell had the experience as an architect, supervisor and project manager from his other WPA work to prepare the package. He would have been known the WPA preference for the "rustic" style and the mandate for native, unembellished construction materials such as natural timbers and stone.[47] He also had credentials as a landscape architect with the knowledge of formal garden design and how to juggle the goals and rustic preferences of the WPA with the expections of the public for a formal garden design. Finally, Maxwell suggested that he be hired as lead architect in charge of the entire park development project, including the rose garden, and provided a fee and work schedule to complete his presentation.[48] Maxwell's skill set and confidence, especially in his ability to navigate the murky waters of New Deal bureaucracy, won him many supporters in the community.

Advocates included civic groups, city staff, garden clubs and businessmen, all of whom considered themselves stakeholders in the project. Among the more vocal organizations were the Rose Grower's Association, Rosemont Nursery, M. S. Shamburger, the Tyler Association of Garden Clubs, the Tyler Park Board and of course, the Chamber of Commerce. In the background were the members of the local chapter of the American Rose Society, some of whom were prominent rose growers in the Tyler area. Horace McFarland led the charge with encouraging editorials in the *American Rose Annual*, especially after learning that Tyler would soon lose the rose garden "on loan" to the city.[49]

Though the Park Board shared Maxwell's enthusiasm for the project, it had no budget of its own to hire him even to prepare the application.[50] Further discussions and negotiations ensued and Maxwell ultimately prevailed. The Park Board recommended that the city "find" the money to pay Maxwell to draw a set of preliminary plans and submit the application. They reasoned that, if the government aid came through, the project would pay for itself and be a permanent amenity for the city. In making the recommendation, however, the Board cautioned Maxwell not to lose sight of the project's main objective – to build the city rose garden – noting that, "while the master plan will call for both a rose garden and a park, [the] members expressed themselves as being in favor of developing the rose garden first. and then work on the park."[51]

The city relented and offered to pay Maxwell $600 to prepare the application and master plan, with an additional $600 upon acceptance by the WPA. If the application was approved, the city further agreed to pay the landscape architect $300 a month to supervise the project through its completion[52] Maxwell must have been confident that the plan would be approved because he also arranged to design and build a small civic building on the grounds of the

Interior and National Park Service, 1938: 12, Reprint, 1999.
[47] Good, 1938: 12
[48] "Municipal Rose Garden at East Texas Fairgrounds is Mapped by City Park Board," June 12, 1938, Sec. 1: 12.
[49] *American Rose Annual*, 1938: 89.
[50] "Municipal Rose Garden at East Texas Fairgrounds." June 12, 1938, Sec.1: 12.
[51] "New Tyler Park Will Be Sought by Local Board," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, June 14, 1938: 2,
[52] "City Orders Plan Drawn for 30-Acre Rose Garden, Park," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, June 21, 1938: 10.

yet-unrealized rose garden.[53] Maxwell described it as a "Colonial type" building dedicated to the county's namesake, Gen. James Smith.[54] Having secured the city's approval, Maxwell set to work. He returned to the Commission six weeks later with a master plan for the entire 81-acre park project, with a 20-acre section in the northeast quadrant reserved for the rose garden.

Formal Gardens and Western European Revivals in Municipal Rose Gardens

Municipal rose gardens built in the 1920s and 1930s tended to follow national preferences for formal arrangement and romantic or historic themes. Especially popular were gardens based on historic Western European landscapes, real or imagined. As a result, most public rose gardens feature hallmarks of the formal garden type, particularly the French *parterre*, which literally means "on the ground." The *parterre* garden is a mosaic achieved by the geometric arrangement of lawns, box hedges, flowers, and paths best viewed from above to fully appreciate its intricate pattern of shapes and precision lines and plantings. In rose gardens, the traditional annuals were replaced by roses as the flower component of the *parterre*. The *parterre* was often combined with other formal elements associated with historic European landscapes such as terraces, water chains, statuary, reflecting pools, fountains and architectural "interest" pieces evocative of a romantic period or cultural tradition, like the loggia in an Italian Renaissance-themed garden or the linear "avenue" or *allée*, common in French designs. Contemporary accounts of Maxwell's concept for the Tyler rose garden indicate that he was well-aware of the municipal rose garden type and had incorporated those elements in his plan.

Though his original plan has not been found, several sources suggest that Maxwell took his inspiration from the rose garden designed by Kansas City landscape architects Hare & Hare in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. The Fort Worth garden was widely acclaimed for its sensational design and stunning views across a terraced landscape and water ramp and down cascading falls to an exquisite *parterre* and reflecting pool, to the forest beyond. The juxtaposition of the formal elements of *parterre* and reflecting pool against the more naturalistic woodland backdrop was a reference to Italian Renaissance landscapes used to great effect in the Fort Worth rose garden.[55] Maxwell, who worked on the Dallas Centennial park as a landscape architect may have seen the rose garden in nearby Fort Worth, but it was a common theme in garden desgin and widely promoted, in the popular home and garden publications of the time.

Maxwell adopted similar concepts for the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden. His design centered on a *parterre* composed of path-lined bowling greens set at perpendicular angles to frame a brick garden wall that stepped down to a reflecting pool at the base of a terraced "bowl" formed by a small creek and natural drainages. An open archway through the wall was perfectly aligned to view the pool and fountain sillouetted against a broad exapanse of lawn, terminating in a pine and deciduous forest across the south section of the garden. Though not as dramatic or complex as the Fort Worth rose garden, Maxwell's plan captured the essence of the municipal rose garden movement with its mosaic pattern of geometric shapes and precisely-drawn paths, Western European landscape and architectural references in the French *parterre* design and Italian round-arched "loggia," and mix of precision plantings and lawns against a "natural" backdrop.

Local newspapers attempted to describe the garden to Tyler residents with varying degrees of accuracy and success. The master plan clearly defined the 20-acre section in the northeast corner of the park reserved for the rose garden. Beyond that undisputed fact, reporters interpreted the various sections, themes and attributes of the garden as best

[53] "Projected Smith Memorial Hall Plans at Rose Garden," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, August 3, 1938: 2.
[54] The building was among hundreds of projects undertaken in observance of the 1936 Texas Centennial. A report of Centennial projects named Maxwell and Gilbert Santacruz as the architects and Fair Park as the location (in Tyler, not Dallas).

[55] Cutler, 2005: 202-216.

they could. The first newspaper account stated that the garden would be composed of three "separate and distinct rose gardens," each portraying a country and historic theme through its design, floral arrangement and architectural elements. The three gardens were supposed to represent an Italian villa, a French provencial garden and an American Colonial garden, though it was not reported how those effects would be achieved.[56] In fact, Maxwell's garden plan mixed European and American landscape themes, historical references, and an overall "rock motif" throughout the garden park, likely derived from the National Park Service's preference for a "rustic" aesthetic achieved by using local, unpolished materials like natural stone and raw timbers to build public park buildings and structures. A week after the *Tyler Courier Telegraph Times* declared that the rose park would be composed of *three* gardens, the paper contradicted itself, reporting instead that it would have *seven* distinct gardens, including a "'typical' Texas garden, an Italian, a French provincial, a cloister, a moat, a colonial and an informal garden" with a "lookout at the end of the moat overlooking the rockery effect."[57] Other articles mentioned English "cottage" and "country" gardens without further detail.

In fact, though Maxwell's design focused on the central *parterre* with its Western European landscape elements, he surrounded it with informal garden spaces using what he called "a rock motif" to define water features and build retaining walls, terrace steps and a "lookout" above the ponds on the lowest level of the garden east of the south lawn, and out of view of the formal garden. The lookout consisted of natural sandstone cut into narrow blocks and stacked in random courses to form three sides of a square "tower." The stone base continued beyond the lookout as a retaining wall and foundation of the higher terrace of the *parterre*. Water channeled from the upper terraces into the "east sunken garden" where it drained into ponds and out of the garden through culverts and tributaries built of both natural rock and cut flagstone. The "moat" in the newspaper article was an apparent reference to the semi-circluar barrier of rock-lined ponds and stone buttresses between the "natural" setting of the lower area on the east side of the park and the cultivated formal *parterre* on a higher level, above and to the west.

On the west side of the garden, Maxwell continued the rustic theme on the ridge above the terraced landscape and *parterre* below, where intended to build the garden's main entrance. According to his plan, the garden would be accessed at grade from Rose Park Drive, a loop on the south side of W. Front Street linking the different sections of the park in his master plan. Visitors would enter the garden through a 40' x 112' open pavilion consisting of two rows of regularly-spaced stone piers supporting a shade roof attached to an uncovered flagstone terrace with an unencumbered view of the formal garden in the "bowl" below the ridge. The pavilion was also intended as a stage for the rose show and displays of the annual Rose Festival. A pair of "welcoming arms,"Charleston style, staircases branched from a semi-circular landing on the east side of the terrace and curved down to the west edge of the south lawn, where a matrix of graveled pathways led into the *parterre* and other sections of the garden. As a finishing touch, Maxwell reserved a six-acre portion on the north end of the garden along W. Front Street as a trial garden to test new rose varieties intended for commerical markets.[58]

Maxwell Leaves the Project

Regardless of how the garden was described in local newspapers, the City Commission approved Maxwell's master plan for the rose garden, and the larger recreational park, and directed him to go forward with the application. Maxwell immediately contacted the WPA district engineer, Longview resident R. H. Flournoy, to survey and prepare a map for the application. Flournoy completed the task in less than a week and recommended the project to

[56] "Rose Garden Plans Ready," *Tyler Courier Telegraph Times*, August 14, 1938, Sec. 2: 4,
[57] "80-Acre Rose Garden Plan Gets Approval," *Tyler Courier Telegraph Times*, August 21, 1938: Sec. 1:2
[58] "WPA Aid Sought on 90-Acre Municipal Park-Rose Garden," *Tyler Journal*, August 26, 1938: 1. The pavilion was built, later enclosed, incrementally enlarged in the 1950s and 1960s, and demolished in 1991.

officials at the district office in Marshall.[59] Maxwell submitted the application and supporting documentation to the WPA for review on August 26, 1938.[60]

Despite Maxwell's great enthusiasm for the project, he fell out with the City over his contract before a decision came down from the WPA. When he first approached the Park Board with his proposal for the rose garden, he indicated that the city's cost for the project would be about $5,000, and his fee was based on that amount. As the project increased in size and complexity, the costs increased, as well. One of those cost increases was Maxwell's fee for drawing a much larger, more complex master plan than he originally intended. The Park Board held him to the contract and refused to pay any "additional . . . fees on his plans." Maxwell took his grievance to the City Commission, explaining that he had taken the matter to the City Manager, Mr. Fairtrace, who accepted and signed off on the larger plan and scope of work with instructions to complete the application "post haste."[61] As evidence, he offered Park Superintendent Bunnenberg who was present during the discussion and a witness to the City Manager's approval. Minutes of the meeting show that the commission took no action to resolve the issue, but indicated that the city "wouldn't object" to Maxwell continuing on as construction supervisor for the duration of the project as stipulated in his contract. The commission did, however, approve the master plan for the entire 81-acre park.[62]

Maxwell declined the invitation to stay on as construction supervisor but promised to shepherd the application through to its final approval. As he explained in a newspaper interview, "As designing architect of the proposed rose garden park, it is my duty to assist in obtaining final approval of the WPA application through the Washington office . . . [and] "Although the question of payment was not satisfactorily settled in my favor, I certainly intend to lend every effort toward the completion of my plans and toward making the Tyler rose park the show place of the South and a personal joy to all who have assisted and co-operated with me in its planning."[63]

On September 22, 1938, the city received word that the WPA district office approved the application and would forward it to the state headquarters in San Antonio. If approved there, it would go on to Washington for final consideration.[64] U.S. Senator Morris Sheppard wired Keith Maxwell that the President approved the project in mid-October but the official word came from the WPA district office on October 22, 1938 to City Manager George Fairtrace. The district administrative officer informed Fairtrace that the park had been approved in its entirety and that their engineer, Charles Flournoy would be contacting him the next week to schedule a start date for the work.[65] The project's many supporters were overjoyed. Their 81-acre park was reported to be "the largest municipal park created by the WPA" with the 20-acre rose garden declared to be "the world's largest" municipal garden, "which in itself, would be a distinct feature of the annual Texas Rose Festival." By then, the price of the project had risen to $181,255 and the construction had grown to 300 men working full time for the fifteen months expected to complete the job. Work on park infrastructure, including roads, paths, curbing, and water and sewer system for the entire site was slated to start in December 1938.[66]

When he heard the news about the application, Maxwell felt he had fulfilled his obligation and he resigned from the project altogether. Left to shepherd the project without a project director, the city scrambled to obtain approval from the WPA to allow Park Superintendent C. C. Bunnenberg to take on that responsibility. The agency approved

[59] "WPA Engineer will make Survey of Rose Garden," *Tyler Courier Times,* August 19, 1938:7.
[60] "WPA Aid Sought on 90-Acre Municipal Park-Rose Garden," *Tyler Journal*, August 26, 1938: 1.
[61] Tyler City Commission Minutes, October 24, 1938: 264.
[62] Tyler City Commission Minutes, June 20, 1938: 144.
[63] "Maxwell Will Stay on Job," *Tyler Courier Times Telegraph*, September 4, 1938: Sec.1: 2.
[64] "Rose Garden Gets District Approval," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, September 22, 1938: 6.
[65] "Rose Garden Work to Start at Early Date," *Tyler Courier-Times Telegraph*, October 23, 1938: 6.
[66] Ibid.

Bunnenberg, even though he had little training or experience for the daunting task of transforming a relatively unimproved site into a 81-acre park.[67] As project director, he was charged with overseeing every aspect of the park's development from hiring assistants and contractors to selecting materials and approving construction plans. He was particularly concerned about his ability to build the rose garden because of its high profile and public expectations to produce a garden worthy of "rose city."

Before he left the job, Maxwell told the commission that there were others qualified to supervise the construction and suggested that they secure a member of the American Association of Landscape Architects to follow his plan and supervise the rose garden's construction. He said they needed someone qualified to select the right trees, shrubs, and rose bushes for the area and install them properly for the best results. He added that hiring someone else would also save the city money, as he thought they "could be had for $200 a month," which was less than he would charge for the same work.[68] Bunnenberg may have recalled Maxwell's words as he prepared for construction.

On November 16, 1938, the *Tyler Morning Telegraph* announced that work would begin by December and on December 1, twenty-five men reported to the fairgrounds and started work on the rose garden.[69] In the following weeks, they cleared and graded the land and erected a frame and asbestos-clad building to store papers and materials for the job.[70] By mid-January, there were 120 WPA laborers "cleaning out the underbrush, pruning trees, grubbing and [starting] excavation work on the rose garden." They moved a city greenhouse from another site and rebuilt it on a ridge along the west side of the excavated garden site.[71] Later that month, the number of workers on the rose garden alone had grown to 200, with another crew working elsewhere on the "fairgounds project."[72]

After the project commenced, the newspapers devoted little space to the rose garden's progress but WPA record cards show that work continued through 1939, and into the early 1940s. Though they offer few specfic details, WPA records show that crews cleared and excavated the site, established terraces and pathways, built curbs, gutters and culverts, did "rock work," and most of the heavy construction by the end of 1939.[73] That could be the reason that, by the spring of 1940, public attention shifted to the six-acre sports center and other recreational amenities which had grown to include eight tennis courts, four volley ball courts, a softball diamond, recreation building, bridle path and wading pool. Even more impressive, the WPA was also building a stone football stadium large enough to seat 6,000 spectators. The additional work brought the cost of the park project to $332,000 – a huge increase from Maxwell's original $50,000 estimate for the rose garden. By 1940, however, the rose garden was almost a postscript to the more ambitious projects underway at Fair Park.[74]

Henry L. Thompson, Landscape Architect

Nevertheless, there was still plenty of work to be done at the rose garden. In the summer of 1940, Park Superintendent Bunnenberg solicited advice from a group of local landscapers and nurserymen, among them, Henry Thompson who had grown up working in the family business, "Rosemont Nursery."[75] In addition to his nursery experience, he had strong academic credentials. When he graduated from Tyler High School in 1936, he had gone to Cornell University where he majored in landscape architecture and floriculture. At Cornell, he met and married Lauren Wilbur of Albany, New York, another student in the landscape program. When they graduated in

[67] "Work to Start by Dec.1 on Rose Garden and Park," (*Tyler Morning Telegraph*, November 16, 1938: 3.
[68] Tyler City Commission Minutes, October 24, 1938:264.
[69] "25 Get Work on Rose Garden," *Tyler Courier-Times*, December 1, 1938: 6.
[70] "Office Building Being Constructed at Rose Garden," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, December 15, 1938: 9; December 29: 8.
[71] "181,500 More asked of WPA for Rose Park," *Tyler Courier Times-Telegraph*, January 15, 1939: 2.
[72] "200 Men Work in Rose Garden," *Tyler Courier-Times*, January 19, 1939: 2.
[73] WPA completion records, 1939-1942..
[74] "Work has Started," *Corsicana Daily Sun*, May 21, 1940: 7.
[75] Gordon Riley, "Rose Park to be Memorial," *Tyler Courier-Times*, June 12, 1952, Sec.1:3.

1940, the couple moved back to Thompson's home town of Tyler where they started a landscape and nursery business together. Shortly afterward, Thompson offered to assist Bunnenberg with the completion of the rose garden.[76]

Thompson came highly recommended from local rose gardeners, especially those involved in the annual Rose Festival. While he was still in college, Thompson stepped in to create the principal Rose Show for the 1938 Festival when the designer hired for the job was unable to fulfill his contract. Thompson rose to the occasion, creating a formal "colonial garden" with more than 1,000 *growing* and *blooming* rose bushes [*italics* mine] organized around a "center of interest" – a reflecting pool – and enhanced with an arrangement of statuary and ornaments. It was the first time that live rose bushes were used in the Rose Show and it delighted festival-goers who heaped accolades on the student designer for his amazing rose arrangement.[77] In fact, Thompson's work was so remarkable that he was asked to come back the following year as principal designer for the Rose Show even though he had no previous experience. His work was its own recommendation. Thompson agreed to do the 1939 displays and hired back again in 1940 and 1941.[78]

It was the Chairman of the Rose Show who introduced Thompson to Bunnenberg and the Park Superintendent asked the young man to join a group of landscape designers to advise him on a "color scheme" and a list of roses and other plants that would be appropriate for the rose garden. Bunnenberg reportedly came to rely on Thompson's expertise and judgment to select the rose bushes, ornamental shrubs and trees that were best suited for Tyler's climate and soil.[79] The plant list called for 18,482 "1 Grade" roses and 11,043 flowering shrubs and evergreens. Trees to be planted on the grounds included crape [sic] myrtles, redbuds, birch, bush pine and elderberry trees, with any existing native pines to remain on the site. Pampas grass, holly bushes, sweet gum trees, wild persimmons and elms were also scheduled to be planted.[80] Thompson likely played a key role in the selection and arrangement of the roses and other plants in the garden to meet the standards expected of the "rose city."

Thompson's particular contributions to the design and construction of the rose garden are not known. Later accounts indicate that he revised Maxwell's plan and credited him with the geometric design of the *parterre* and the terraced landscape. He is said to have built the terraces to provide the best light and ventilation for the roses and display them to their best advantage.[81] Thompson's background in formal garden design may have shaped or enhanced Maxwell's model but neither Maxwell's master plan, nor the working drawings for the rose garden, have been found to resolve the issues.[82] Maxwell was certainly aware of prevailing trends in municipal rose garden design, which is clear from contemporary articles describing the Italian and French gardens, water features and lookout towers. Thompson may have introduced the *parterre* to the garden and some sources attribute the arched brick wall and reflecting pool, a hallmark of his festival arrangements. It is possible that he added those features but it is more likely that he executed Maxwell's plan to the degree practical and in the best interests of the city which were to promote the local rose industry, attract rose tourism and support the annual Texas Rose Festival. In addition to Maxwell and Thompson, local horticulturalists reportedly contributed to the rose garden plan.[83]

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[76] "Plants Selected for Rose Garden," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, August 17, 1940: 3.

[77] *Dallas Morning News*, October 8, 1938: 1

[78] "Rose Festival Will Display Over 60,000 Individual Blooms," *Corsicana Daily Sun*, Sept. 11, 1940: 8; "Preparations Near Completion for Annual Tyler Rose Show," *Corsicana Semi-Weekly Light*, October 3, 1941: 14.

[79] Maxwell may have made a preliminary list as part of his master plan but Bunnenberg reportedly drew up the final plant list. after consulting with Thompson and other local nurserymen, rosarians and garden clubs.

[80] "Plants Selected for Rose Show," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, August 17, 1940: 3.

[81] *Rose Grower's Theater, transcript 2017*.

[82] Photographs taken c. 1951 show a rose garden plan and plant list but the map is not clear enough to read though it is possible to make out the general layout, ponds, terraces and other large features of the garden.

[83] "Tyler Rose Garden Largest in U.S.," newspaper clipping, Smith County Historical Society Archives, October 19, 1984, n.p.

Regardless of whether it was Maxwell or Thompson, or others, who actually designed the garden, all of those involved in the project likely aspired to meet, or perhaps exceed, the general model and public expectation for municipal rose gardens of that period. There were numerous examples in the Southwest, including Texas. When McFarland visited Tyler in 1933, he also traveled to Fort Worth, Dallas and Arlington to see their recently-opened municipal rose gardens. In 1938, he identified other places in Texas with public rose gardens, including Houston, Beaumont and El Paso.[84] Though he called them "municipal rose gardens," they were not all owned and maintained by city governments. They did, however, follow the template for formal municipal rose gardens of the period. Most were organized around a central "interest feature," a *parterre* consisting of geometric shapes formed by grass lawns, neatly-trimmed hedges, and rose beds outlined in linear paths to form a mosaic design. They often included water features such as fountains, pools or lakes, and masonry structures such as stone walls, rock and wood-beamed pergolas, stone shelters and loggias with arcades or arched openings.

A number of Texas cities built public rose gardens, many of them officially designated as municipal rose gardens, by the end of the WPA era. The municipal rose garden in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden may be the best example of the city rose garden type in Texas. It has an exceptionally intact hardscape though its focus has shifted away from roses somewhat in recent years. The original Beaumont municipal rose garden built in the 1930s, was soon abandoned, but another rose garden was eventually established elsewhere in the city. The Hermann Park rose garden in Houston originated as a private garden. It is a beautiful garden but at only just six acres, is much smaller than the Tyler Rose Garden. Arlington's municipal rose garden received an award for its design from the American Rose Society, but was swept away in a flood and never rebuilt. A garden was established at Lake Cliff in Dallas in the early 1930s and was redesigned by landscape architects, Hare & Hare in the early 1940s. It retains its central pool, fountain and tiered landscape and was restored in 2008. A municipal rose garden was built in El Paso's Washington Park in the 1930s, but it became too difficult and costly to maintain and the city eventually abandoned it. An El Paso garden group later built a new rose garden at a different location in 1959. It has 1,500 roses in 430 varieties but is modern in appearance, unlike the formal roses gardens of the WPA era.

End of the first Period of Significance

In the early 1940s, Federal monies slated for WPA projects were being diverted to national defense projects and the city rushed to complete the rose garden before they were cut off for domestic programs altogether. In October of 1941, the Park Board urged the city to buy the roses and other plants before WPA workers were pulled from the job and they had no one to do the physical work of installing them in the garden.[85] The threat was real. The city delayed and less than two months later, Japanese planes attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States went to war. WPA and other New Deal projects across the country were left unfinished as the government shifted attention from domestic matters to the war.

Though the war dominated the news, the city still intended to finish the work and in January 1942, sent out a request to nurseries for bids on the roses and other plants for the garden.[86] Thompson's parents at Rosemont Nursery had the low bid, but the contract stalled when the city learned it only had $56 left in the budget for plants.[87] When the shortfall was made public, an editorial in the local paper predicted a grim, "'roseless' garden in view for the city".[88] In desperation, the Park Board asked all the Garden Clubs and nurseries in the region for plant donations.[89] The newly formed Azalea Club accepted the challenge and pledged to donate 270 rose bushes for the

[84] "Other Southwestern Rose-Gardens," *American Rose Annual*, 1938: 89.
[85] "Park Board Urges City to Proceed with Rose Planting, *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 8, 1941: 2.
[86] "City to Take Bids Next Week on Roses, Shrubs," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, January 1, 1942: 2.
[87] *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, January 17, 1942: 10
[88]"Roseless Garden in View for City," *Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph*, February 15, 1942: Sec. 2: 9.
[89] "Board to Seek Plant Donations for Fair Park Rose Garden," *Tyler Courier-Times*, February 17, 1942: 6.

garden, but it was too late.[90] On March 21, the government announced that WPA work would end on five Tyler projects to free up 200 men for agricultural work in support of the war effort. The five projects to be halted were two sidewalk and schoolyard improvement projects and three Fair Park projects: a horse show building, the African American Fair exhibit building, and the rose garden.[91] Though the city's public works department siphoned money from its recreation budget, and citizens promised to donate labor and plants, the project ended with a "rose garden without roses" and it remained so for another ten years.[92]

Still, the garden was essentially complete by the time the project went dormant in 1942.[93] Aerial photos of Fair Park and WPA completion cards indicate that the infrastructure had been done, including water and sewer lines, road construction for Rose Park Drive, curbs, gutters and culverts, and an irrigation system that channelled water from the higher terraces down to the retaining ponds at the lowest level on the park's east side. Major site work such as the excavation of the hillside and creation of terraces for planting beds and visual appeal was finished. Parts of the garden had been shaped to form distinctive garden "rooms" such as the horseshoe garden. Also completed were the ponds, stone dam, "moat," lookout station and retaining walls in the present Meditation Garden. Sets of stone and concrete stairs for accessing the different garden levels and terraces were in place. The WPA also established the layout and form of the *parterre*, including the arrangement of lawns, rose beds and hedges, and outlining the pathways that distinguised the shapes and patterns of the formal garden. They also completed the yellow-brick garden wall with its iconic arched opening to the reflecting pool, and the pool itself, at the heart of the *parterre*.[94] All this was accomplished through the combined efforts of architect Keith Maxwell, Park Superintendent C. C. Bunnenberg, landscape architect Henry Thompson, the men of the WPA, voluneers and the City of Tyler.

Some park resources completed by the WPA were later removed from the garden. The most prominent was the original entrance to the rose garden from Rose Park Drive, the garden's western boundary. The entrance consisted of an open pavilion supported by stone piers and an attached terrace overlooking the garden with a double staircase that descended from the terrace to the garden floor. The pavilion was enclosed shortly after the garden opened in 1952 and both it and the terrace were significantly altered in the 1950s and 1960s before they were removed in 1991 to make way for the new Rose Garden Center. Another WPA-era resouce missing from the park was the James Smith Memorial Building, designed and built in 1938 by Keith Maxwell and Gilbert Santacruz as a Texas Centennial project. The small domestic-looking Colonial Revival style building stood at the edge of the pine forest in the south end of the garden and was used as meeting space by local garden clubs and civic groups, including the Girl Scouts. It was damaged beyond repair in a fire and was demolished in the 1980s.[95] Still another early site removed from the park was the children's playground built among the ponds on the east side of the park.[96] It featured a volley ball court, picnic tables, a sand pile, and swings, but the site was redeveloped and is now part of the Meditation Garden. By the spring of 1942, the rose garden was essentially complete, except for the roses.[97]

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[90] "Azalea Garden Club will give 270 Roses for Fair Park," (*Tyler Courier-Times*, February 27, 1942: 7,
[91] "WPA Halts Work on Five Projects," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, March 21, 1942: 1.
[92] One thing related to the park that did happen during the war, was the subdivision of the rose garden tract. In 1944, the city carved 0.723 acres out of the northwest corner of the parcel for a civic theater. A theater group that had discontinued its performances during the war sold its building to the city which was to hold the proceeds until after the war. The city may have agreed to donate the parcel for a new building in the bargain. The reorganized Tyler Civic Theatre built a new theater at the corner of the garden in 1951. A new theater replaced it in 2000 (About Tyler Civic Theatre "A Little History" http://tylercivictheatre.com/about).
[93] historicaerials.com, "Tyler Rose Garden,"1947.
[94] Ibid.; WPA completion cards, 1939-1942
[95] Vicki Betts, personal communication, March 12, 2018.
[96] The playground was part of Maxwell's original plan for the park. It was built on the garden's east side by the time it opened in 1952 ("Rose Garden Becomes Reality," editorial, The Tyler Courier-Times, February 21, 1953: Section 1:6)/
[97] WPA completion cards, 1939-1942; "Tyler Rose Garden," historicaerials.com, 1947.

With the construction virtually at an end, Henry Thompson enlisted for military service. In June 1942, he joined the Army Air Corps and trained to be a fighter pilot. In 1943, he deployed to England with the Eighth Air Force. In November 1944, Thompson's plane disappeared while on a mission over the English Channel, though it wasn't reported missing until February 7, 1945. He was officially declared dead the following September, when the war was over and the troops were beginning to come home. Thompson's wife Laura remained in Tyler where she raised their two little boys, Lawrence and Bryan. She continued her career as a partner in the Thompson-Hills Landscape Company. She also took up her husband's work with the Rose Festival, assisting with the design and arrangement of rose shows and floats when the festival resumed in 1947.[98] The couple's son, Bryan, made his own contribution to the rose garden in 1967 when he designed the Camellia Garden for the shaded area in the forest on the south side of the garden. Though Henry Thompson helped steer the rose garden through to its essential completion, he didn't live to see it bloom. Thousands of others would do that for him when it finally opened to the public in 1952.

Postwar Development 1951-1969

The war resolved America's unemployment crisis with thousands of young, able-bodied men enlisted or were drafted into military service, and thousands more found work in the enormous defense industry that developed to support the war effort. In fact, the country now experienced an acute labor shortage that brought large numbers of women into the work force to replace the men who had gone to war. No longer needing to create jobs, the government began dismantling its public works programs, including the largest of its New Deal programs, the WPA, which ended in June, 1943. In light of World War II, the dissolution of the WPA was of little consequence, except in places like Tyler where long-hoped for civic projects were left unfinished for lack of money and labor to complete them.

As soon as the war was over, Tyler residents turned their attention back to domestic problems, including the rose garden. In 1945, the city hired well-known city plan engineers, Koch and Fowler, to prepare a city plan to guide Tyler through the early postwar years. It included recommendations on park development, stating that it was "quite fitting that the City of Tyler should have an outstanding rose garden since it is considered the center of the rose growing industry in East Texas."[99] The planners advised the city that it should be "an unusual and outstanding garden and one which will truly represent Tyler as the rose center of the Southwest."[100] Tyler rose-lovers and businessmen alike agreed, but without the WPA, the city lacked the resources to finish the garden and it remained in "an uncompleted condition."[101]

For the early postwar years, at least, the rose garden lay abandoned, even as Tyler's citizens enjoyed the sports and recreation facilities that had been built at Fair Park. As time passed, the garden's infrastructure and resources deteriorated from neglect and lack of maintenance. Its decline was visible to every motorist driving to and from downtown Tyler on State Highway 30 (W. Front Street), one of the main thoroughfares through the city. Decried in the press as "an eroded and gullied red clay hillside – an eyesore," the neglected garden was an affront to the "rose capital of the nation.[102] As it further deteriorated with every storm and mudslide, it became apparent that the city needed to take action soon before the garden was entirely lost and they would have to start over or abandon the project altogether. It is not known if the city commissioners had that in mind when they hired Bob Shelton as the new Park Superintendent after the war, but he took on the rose garden as a personal challenge and was the principal catalyst for bringing the garden back to life.

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[98] Gordon Riley, "Rose Park to be Memorial," *Tyler Courier-Times*, June 12, 1952: 2.
[99] Koch and Fowler*, Tyler City Plan,* Koch and Fowler, City Plan Engineers, Dallas, 1945: 36.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] "Rose Garden Becomes Reality," *Tyler Courier-Times,* February 21, 1952: Sec. 1:6.

Bob Shelton at the Rose Garden, 1951-1980

Robert "Bob" Shelton was a relative newcomer to Tyler when he was hired as head of the Park Department in 1951. Shelton and his wife had moved to the city in 1946, after completing his service as a Naval officer during World War II. He lacked any specific credentials for completing the rose garden except a love of roses, and a desire to see the project through for the city. His enthusiasm for the garden was infectious and he was able to wrest $5,000 from the city coffers to rebuild the eroded terraces, reclaim the ponds and prepare the beds for planting. He was not a romantic and there is no indication that he understood the purpose or history of formal garden design. He didn't really concern himself with the arrangement and proportion of roses to lawns and hedges, the use of statuary or the interpretation of historic landscape themes. He took a pragmatic, rather than aesthetic, approach to the garden and saw its purpose as being a canvas for displaying the great variety and abundance of local roses. In his own words, he intended the garden to be a "living catalogue of Smith County roses."[103]

Shelton received plenty of support for the garden, especially from the Texas Rose Festival Association that brought back the annual celebration after its hiatus during the war. The festival resumed in 1947, the Festival to even greater crowds than before the war. Thousands of visitors who came back to Tyler contributed enormously to its economy. The Festival Association again mounted pressure on the city to complete the project, not only as a matter of civic pride but also as a permanent home for its annual event. Their frustration was voiced in an editorial headlined with the often-heard question from visitors, "Where are the Roses?"[104]

The role of the Texas Rose Festival is important to understanding the significance of the rose garden. Since it was launched in 1933, the Festival had grown from a local celebration of the Smith County rose industry to an extravaganza described as a "roseate fiesta considered by many to be the Southwest's greatest flowery pagent."[105] Millions of roses were massed for "multi-colored displays" in the many flower shows, on rose-covered floats and even at a rose vesper service on what came to be called Rose Sunday, at the close of the festival. Festival-goers claimed that the air was permeated with the fragrance of roses in October during the Rose Festival. Visitors inspired by the parades and ceremonies flocked to the rose fields in tour buses and then to local nurseries where they bought hundreds of rose bushes in an attempt to replicate the scenes in their own gardens.

The festival reinforced Tyler's claim as "rose capital of the nation," further advertising East Texas to everyone in the rose industry, from amateur gardeners to commercial rose brokers. That industry was vital to the postwar economy of the entire region. In the 1950s, more than half of the field-grown roses in the United States were produced in the East Texas rose district with the combined businesses of growing, cultivating, refrigerating, packaging and selling rose bushes bringing more than $7,000,000 annually to Tyler and the surrounding rose farms.[106] The entire region benefitted from the flourishing rose industry and many saw the Municipal Rose Garden as an integral part of their ongoing campaign to advertise Tyler as the rose capital of the nation and help support the local economy. They considered it the "crowning jewel" of Tyler's "most recognizable and enduring symbol – the rose."[107]

Creating the Perfect Environment

From the start of his campaign to finish the garden, Shelton consulted with Dr. Edton Lyle, a noted rosarian, plant pathologist and research scientist and director of the Rose Research Foundation in Tyler. Lyle expressed his skepticism about the garden's location in Fair Park because of its dense, red clay soil. He informed Shelton that, while most of the area in and around Tyler was perfect for growting roses due to its sandy, acidic soil, the clay soil

[103] "Rose garden crucial to Tyler's history," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 14, 2011: 8F.
[104] "Rose Garden Becomes Reality," *Tyler Courier-Times,* February 21, 1952: 6.
[105] Louis H. Frohman and Jean Elliot, A Pictorial Guide to American Gardens, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.: 1960: 93.
[106] Ibid.
[107] "Rose garden crucial to Tyler's history," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 14, 2011: 8F.

at the fairgrounds would strangle the roots of any rose bushes planted in the park within just a few years. He judged the city's investment in the rose garden as doomed because of the poor soil conditions at Fair Park.[108]

Although he was discouraged, Shelton was committed to the project and enlisted Lyle's assistence in creating an "ideal environment" for roses on the city site by completely changing the composition and quality of the soil in the rose beds. He organized a crew of city workers to dig out the hillside to a depth of three feet, remove the clay and spread it across a nearby baseball field on the fairgrounds. He then had city street sweepers collect tons of leaves, sewage sludge and sandy soil from elsewhere in the area. Lyle warned him that the sludge might carry soil-born diseases, so Shelton had the mixture hauled in dump trucks to a local laundry where he had it sterilized with steam heat. They then mixed it with the clay soil on the baseball field and added the result back into the beds.[109]

At the same time, Shelton directed city crews and volunteers in a massive effort to stabilize and reinforce the eroded hillside and reestablish the terraces for planting beds across the sloped landscape. It had taken at least 120 WPA laborers several years to create the terraces and build the garden's infrastructure but Shelton had only a few months and a skeleton crew to do the back-breaking work needed to get the garden in shape for its public debut. Following Thompson's formal design, city workers and volunteers reestablished the *parterre*'s precise geometry and symmetrical arrangement – circles, squares, rectangles and hexagons – centered around the arched brick wall and reflecting pool. They poured gravel for the pathways and cement for the concrete curbs to define rose beds, hedges and lawns. They cleaned out the pool, dredged the ponds, and reinforced the stone and concrete steps between terraces. Finally, they prepared the beds, orienting them to capture the best light and provide proper ventilation without crowding the roses. Each bed was arranged in two parallel rows to accommodate 20 to 60 bushes of a single rose varieety. Local gardeners and nurserymen donated and installed 3,000 rose bushes for the garden's first public viewing.[110]

Rose Garden Dedicated and Opened to the Public

Finally, after decades of false starts and interuption by the war, the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden opened to the public on June 16, 1952 (Figures 7-8). It was an immediate success, appealing not only to rose fanciers – of whom there were plenty – but to the public at large, including families with children. Tyler residents were positively enchanted with the long-awaited garden, poetically describing its "finely-terraced gardens . . . [and] graveled walkways, fountains and greenery . . . [and] great show of modern roses . . . hybrid teas, floribundas, and grandifloras." And, just in case it was unclear, the garden's modern roses were declared to be superior to all other perennials for their lasting beauty and color, "for they reign supreme until the first frost of Winter."[111] Even the playground for "kiddies and picnickers" was applauded for its "fences covered with a profusion of climbing roses that take on the vivid crimson of Paul Scarlet at the first hint of spring and continue in flower all summer long."[112]

Garden Improvements

Almost from the start, Shelton began improving the garden to attract more visitors. In 1953, just a year after the garden opened, he enclosed the open pavilion. It remained the principal entrance to the garden but offered better shelter for the many visitors who came to the park and for displaying roses, especially for the Rose Show at the annual festival. Shortly after the garden was dedicated, the Smith Memorial Building in the southwest section of the park opened as meeting space for civic groups such as garden clubs and the girl scouts. In 1953, when the 1912 Smith County Courthouse was demolished, Bob Shelton salvaged two of its original stone fountains and moved to

[108] Dorothy Pulcifer and Elton Lyle, "Tyler Rose Garden, Tyler Texas," Unpublished typescript on file at Tyler Parks and Recreation Department, n.d., c. 1960.
[109] Pulcifer and Lyle, c. 1960; "Rose garden crucial to Tyler's history," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 14, 2011: 8F.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

them to the park's north side. During his tenure, Shelton added fountains, bird baths, statues and other ornamental features as "interest points."[113]

Shelton was determined to plant as many roses as the park could contain and immediately began expanding beyond the *parterre* to accommodate more beds. The South Garden, Maze and Miniature Rose Garden were installed between the Queen's Court lawn and the forest at the south end of the park. The new rose beds were arranged in geometric patterns that continued the formal theme. North of the parterre, he added row upon row of rose beds. By the spring of 1954, the number of rose bushes had doubled from the original 3,000, to 6,000 bushes, in 175 different varieties, in under two years. Shelton continued to add roses and by 1958, the garden held 25,500 bushes, in 375 different varieties. Shelton wanted to delight, even overwhelm visitors with dazzling displays of massice color and delicate beauty cascading across the terraced landscape. In his quest, he sacrified the west lawn of the *parterre* roses, planted in diagonal rows between narrow strips of grass. The section was later named for park rosarian, Sid Maxfield, who was hired to preserve the "ideal environment" created in the garden for healthy roses.[114]

By 1960, Tyler and Columbus, Ohio vied for honors as home of the largest municipal rose garden in the country.[115] Rose lovers took notice and the garden's fame was good for business. The garden served as a permanent advertisement for the 350 Tyler area rose growers who produced an estimated 30,000,000 field-grown bushes – more than half of the nation's annual output – by the early 1960s. Local growers recriprocated the favor with yearly donations of between 1,000 to 1,500 rose bushes to replace exhausted stock and expand the garden.[116]

An important aspect of the garden that is sometimes overlooked, is its role as a laboratory for the scientific study of rose cultivation, disease prevention and control, and other research topics of interest to rose growers. When Shelton resumed work on rose garden, he kept the commitment to reserve a section for research purposes. He designated a quarter-acre section north of the formal garden as a test area to develop new rose varieties for introduction to nurseries across the country. It grew to become one of the country's premier rose test gardens and today is one of only 24 such research gardens for roses in the United States. The garden expanded its plant research to include camellias in 1958. That year, the State of Texas Camellia Test Garden was established in the shady, forested section on the south side of the garden park.[117] The test garden was repurposed in 1967 when Bryan Thompson, son of Henry and Laura Thompson, designed and installed the Camellia Garden trail in the woods.

Under Bob Shelton's leadership, the rose garden became an international tourist destination with visitors from around the world, including South America, Europe, Australia and Asia. It was especially popular with visitors from its sister cities, Yachiyo City, in Japan, and San Miguel de Allende, in Mexico.[118] By 1960, it was widely recognized in garden circles for its large size and exclusive dedication to roses. Louis H. Frohman and Jean Elliot included the "Tyler Rose Park" in their book, *A Pictorial Guide to American Gardens*, and stated that, at the time, it was the *second* largest rose garden in America with "some 400 rose varieties" and "no less than 25,000 individual bushes."[119] They commented on its exclusive dedication to roses saying "the rose rules triumphant, with all its family represented—the miniature, the hybrid tea, the climber, the bedder, the florbunda. Roses of several

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[113] "Rose Garden is in Top Shape," *Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph*, 1959, n.p., Vertical Files: Rose Garden, Smith County Historical Society Archives,
[114] Pulcifer and Lyle, c. 1960.
[115] Frohman and Elliot, 1950: 93; "Columbus Park of Roses-Home, About-History, https://www.parkofroses.org. Accessed July 10, 2018. Late freezes in 1966 and 1967 destroyed hundreds of rose bushes and the city of Columbus decided not to replace them or continue to maintain the garden. Local rosarians later worked with the city to maintain a smaller garden with far fewer than its original 12,000 roses. The Tyler Rose Garden soon surpassed it with nearly 40,000 roses, gaining the title of largest municipal rose garden in the country.
[116] Pulcifer and Lyle, c. 1960.
[117] Frohman and Elliot, 1960: 93; "Rose Garden is in Top Shape," Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph, February 8, 1959: 4.
[118] Rose Garden guest book sign-in and tour registration figures.
[119] Frohman and Elliot, 1960: 93).

centruries are included too, with special groupings of old favorities and, naturally, the very newest that have passed the tests of the American Rose Society."[120]

Later Development in the Historic Period: 1950s-1969

Bob Shelton served as Supervisor of the Tyler Parks and Recreation Department for nearly three decades, from 1951 to his retirement in 1980. During that time, he oversaw further development of the garden park to increase attendance and broaden its appeal. These early additions were largely minor or hidden from view by topography and vegetation and did not substantially alter or detract from the formal rose garden. In the early 1960s, a substantial brick wall and reflecting pool with animated fountains were added at the terminal east end of the broad Queen's Court lawn, donated by the Vaughn Foundation and M. J. Harvey.[121] In 1962, the horseshoe-shaped East Sunken Garden was developed between the South Gardens and the Meditation Garden. The term is misleading as the entire area around the ponds lies below the level of the formal garden and both have been referred to as "sunken gardens" in various reports and articles.

The garden continued to evolve and in 1967, the Camellia Garden opened on the former test site in the wooded area at the south end of the garden. It was designed and installed along a winding trail through the woods by Bryan Thompson, the son of local landscape architects Laura and Henry Thompson. The addition of camelias was to bring color to the park in the late fall and early winter, when the roses are not in bloom.[122] It is largely hidden among the trees and does not detract from the formal garden. The Camellia Garden was the first departure away from roses and paved the way for other specialty gardens starting in the late 1970s, and continuing through the 1980s and 1990s. Like the Camellia Garden, these gardens were built near the edges of the park, under tree canopy or at lower levels where they were not easily seen from the formal garden.

In 1967, *Southern Living* magazine ran a feature article on the rose garden entitled "Acres of Roses Texas Style," in its October edition. The article pronounced the garden to be "unexcelled on this continent for beauty by the square foot" with more than 30,000 rose bushes and more than 400 varieties of roses arranged according to a color scheme "so cascading as to defy written description." The article also noted the garden's landscape features, declaring the WPA-era terraces, rock work and pools, together with the "cool, green pines," as "providing a perfect background" for displaying the magnificant roses.[123] The article described the garden as it appeared at the end of the historic period, encompassing the WPA-era terraces, rock features and ponds, the formal rose garden completed in 1952 and its expansion in the late 1950s and 1960s. Because no substantial changes were made to the garden between the time it was written, in 1967, and 1969, the article's description of the rose garden is an accurate portrayal of its appearance at the end of the second period of significance (1952-1969).

Post-1969 Development: After the Period of Significance

Though the garden continued to evolve with new rose varieties and planting areas, its appearance remained much as it was described in the 1967 *Southern Living* article for the rest of Shelton's tenure as Park Superintendent. Shelton was approaching retirement when he sat for a newspaper interview at the start of the annual Rose Festival in the fall of 1977. He described changes that had taken place in the garden, focusing on the size of the rose garden from 3,000 bushes in 1952 when it opened, to about 36,000 at the time of the interview. He was quoted as saying the garden had more than 500,000 visitors annually, though that may have been an overstatement.[124] He oversaw

[120] Ibid.
[121] "Tyler Rose Garden Varieties Present 'Living Catalogue,'" 1978, Vertical Files: Garden, Tyler Public Library,
[122] *The Story of the Tyler Rose Garden,* video, City of Tyler Communications Department, 2011.
[123] "Acres of Roses Texas Style," *Southern Living*, October 1967, n.p. clipping, Vertical File: Tyler Rose Garden, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.
[124] *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 18, 1985: Sec. 6:1; Susan Travis, personal communication with Terri Myers, March 12, 2018. Methods used to estimate attendance in 1977 are not known, but current figures are based on guest book sign-in, hotel occupancy and tour registration

improvments to the garden such as the enclosure of the Garden Center and multiple additions to provide more space for meetings and exhibits. He mentioned modern elements that had come to the garden under his direction, including the Queen's Court fountains and the installation of the Camellia Garden. When asked about future plans for the garden, he remarked that the Rose Garden had been "extended to the limits of its present location" but added that they would continue making improvements "on what we have."[125]

When Shelton retired in 1980, he had spent thirty-four years as a city employee starting in 1946, as Athletic Director, followed by three decades as Parks Superintendent overseeing the Rose Garden. Shelton had been the driving force behind the garden's completion and its further development from the time it opened in 1952 through the 1960s and 1970s. Under his leadership, the Rose Garden achieved national fame, attracting thousands of tourists from every state and many foreign countries to witness the glorious profusion of more than 38,000 roses in massive displays of all the varieties and colors possible in the "ideal environment" he had created for them. It was Shelton who was most responsible for the garden's recognition as the country's largest municipal rose garden by increasing the space devoted to growing roses and increasing the number of living roses in that space.

New directors oversaw "continuing improvements" at the park, including the addition of new, thematic gardens and the replacement of the Garden Center with an enormous new Rose Center and Museum. Horticulturalist Wayne Pianta assumed Shelton's role as park director from 1978 until 1984, when he returned to college for his Masters degree. During that time, the Lion's Club began developing a Sensory Garden (now combined with the Heritage Rose Garden), so that blind and handicapped visitors could enjoy the garden.

In the 1980s, disaster struck the region's rose industry and it never fully recovered. Starting in 1983, local rose fields were stunned by a hard freeze with temperatures dropping below 17 degrees and staying there long enough to destroy the crop. A grower might sustain one hard winter and lost crop, but it was followed by two more years just as cold that ruined the second and third stages of rose cultivation necessary to bring the plants to maturity for commercial markets. Nurserymen whose families had been in the business for several generations had to leave the business because they couldn't pay the exorbitant interest rates at the time to start over. At the same time, many in the younger generation were leaving their family farms for other opportunities. The impact on the region was devastating, not only to the region's economy, but also to its identity, especially in Tyler, where the rose was the city's official symbol and the foundation of its social, cultural and, sometimes, political life. In the 1990s, the region that had been shipping half of the country's field-grown roses, was only producing between 16-20 percent of roses sold in the United States.[126] Since then, it has continued to decline. Today, there are only a handful of growers who still raise field-grown plants in the region once known almost entirely for its roses.[127]

Despite the blow to the rose industry, the Texas Rose Festival continued to go on and flourish and the city of Tyler continued to be identified as the rose capital of the nation. The rose is still it's official symbol and logo, which is on

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show that about 10,000 people visit the garden in just four days during the Rose Festival and between 75,000-100,000 visit the garden annually. They have come from every state and many foreign countries, especially in Europe, Asia, Central and South America. Current numbers fall far short of the 750,000 visitors claimed in 1985, () but are consistent with the estimated 150,000 visitors reported in 1990, when the Chamber of Commerce began collecting the type of data now used to determine attendance at festival-sponsored or related venues and events. Based on such evidence, the rose garden is considered the top tourist attraction in East Texas (Chamber of Commerce figures, *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 19, 1990: Sec. 7: 1).

[125] "One-Timer Eyesore Attracts," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, October 14, 1977, n.p., clipping, Vertical Files: Rose Garden, Tyler Public Library.

[126] Mark Chamblee interview with Terri Myers, March 9, 2018; Roger Harris, "Texas Rose Industry," https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/drr01).

[127] Chamblee, interview. Chamblee said the business of processing and shipping roses actually increased with roses from Arizona and California sent to Tyler to be groomed and prepared for commercial nurseries and large chains with garden departments, like Home Depot and Lowe's.

its letterhead, business cards and communication. The Rose Garden remained a popular park and a stage for the Rose Festival but its mission began to change as attention shifted away from formal gardens and roses, to other garden trends. One of the architects of this change was Keith Mills, who came to the Rose Garden in the midst of the disaster, following Pianta as horticultural supervisor from 1984 to 2000. One of the first things he had to contend from the first was the loss of some 8,000 rose bushes due to the hard freeze and record low temperatures in December, 1983.[128]

But Mills was well-equipped for the job. He held a degree in ornamental horticulture from the California Polytechnical Institute at Pomona and already had experience in the region, having worked as a city landscaper since moving to Tyler in 1978. Mills was largely responsible for expanding the mission of the rose garden to embrace smaller, "bouique" gardens for different thematic and specific purposes, including environmental education and then-current lifestyle trends. He articulated his beliefs that the city park "is a growing, changing garden . . . committed to a vibrant future."[129] During his tenure, Mills' beliefs were borne out in the development of several new gardens at the park. Among them were the Heritage Rose Garden (1980s), a Meditation Garden (1990), the Shade Garden featuring Japanese Maples (1997), and the IDEA Garden (1999). IDEA stands for Innovate, Demonstrate, Educate and Apply. Its purpose was to educate park visitors about their environment, composting, and the responsible use of water in a drought-prone region.[130]

Most of the new garden areas lie south or east of the main rose gardens, accessed by a system of footpaths through the pines and along the lower levels of the park. They are separated from the formal rose gardens and largely shielded from view by their topography and location in a more forested part of the park. Some of these new gardens, including the Shade Garden, were introduced in the pine forest near the Camellia Garden, south of the rose gardens. Others, including the Meditation Garden, were developed on the east side of the rose garden where they replaced the playground and picnic facilities built near the ponds and rock walls built by the WPA.

The largest, most profound change at the garden while Mills was in charge of the park, was the construction of the 30,000 square foot Rose Garden Center and Rose Museum, begun in 1991 and dedicated the following year. The massive new center replaced the previous Garden Center built as an open pavilion by the WPA and enclosed in 1952 for meeting space, rose displays and rose show of the annual Rose Festival. As the garden became more popular, more space was needed and the building was enlarged with rooms added piecemeal in several uncoordinated building campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1980s, the center had fallen into disrepair and was an embarrassment. The complex was demolished in 1991 to make room for the current Rose Garden Center and Rose Museum, opened in 1992. The new building complex occupies a well-defined sliver of land on the garden's west boundary, along Rose Park Drive. Neither the garden complex nor the adjacent Civic Theater are included in the district. The theater was never related to the rose garden and the garden center and museum building is excluded not only because of its age, but also because its size, heavy massing and New Brutalist style detract from the historic character of the rose garden.

The modern gardens are included in the district because, while nonhistoric, they are generally compatible with the historic garden, especially the WPA aesthetic in their more naturalistic settings and organic appearance, size and scale, use of stone and wood, curvilinear footpaths, romantic statuary and structures including gazebos, pergolas and arched bridges, and flowering plants selected as much for their beauty, color and scent, as for their resistance to

[128] "Tyler Rose Garden Largest in U.S.," *Tyler Courier-Times*, October 19, 1984: Sec. B, n.p. clipping, Vertical Files, Smith County Historical Society Archives, Tyler, Texas.
[129] *Rose Grower's Theater*, video transcript 2017, Rose Museum, Tyler Rose Garden.
[130] Shelly Roark, "Opening Ceremonies for New IDEA Garden Scheduled Tuesday," *Tyler Morning Telegraph,* 1999, n.p. clipping, Vertical Files: Rose Garden, Tyler Public Library.

drought or native origins. Displayed in the modern IDEA, Heritage Rose, Shade, East Sunken and Meditation gardens these attributes reflect the design principles found in the historic garden - beauty, art, tradition and romance – helping to convey a sense of shared aesthetics and cohesiveness within the park. The most recent addition is the David Austin English Rose Garden, introduced on the east side of the park in 2003. It alludes to formal rose gardens of an earlier age, with roses planted in neat parallel rows as they are in the original parterre.

Summary

Today, the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden is a good example of the municipal rose garden type built by cities across the country in the early to mid-20th century. It retains a high degree of integrity from two periods of significance, the first representing its design and initial construction by the WPA (1938-1941), and the second covering its completion and further development (1952-1969). The property retains its historic appearance and character to a remarkable degree, especially as compared with its contemporaries, many of which have been abandoned, considerably reduced in size or number of roses, redeveloped for modern park uses, or severely altered. The formal *parterre* arrangement is apparent with precisely drawn paths, lawns, hedges, and rose beds. Many of the WPA "rustic" landscape features survive as vivid reminders of the public park era in their organic design and use of natural materials. Later development in the 1950s and 1960s is indicative of the garden's more utilitarian role as a showcase for area rose growers as seen in its many rows of rose beds, but it also reflects landscape trends of the later historic period, such as its modernist brick wall and fountains of the 1960s.

As an enduring symbol of the self-proclaimed "rose capital of the nation," the rose garden is significant as a major tourist attraction in East Texas. Thousands of rose enthusiasts flock to the region to visit the rose garden, not only during the Rose Festival, but throughout the year. For this reason, the garden is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation at the state level of significance. Overall, the garden reflects both a WPA era garden park and the later evolution in the 1950s and 1960s. An increasingly rare example of what was once a major garden trend in America, the rose garden is a good and intact example of its type designed in Texas. Thus, the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden is also nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture at the state level of significance.

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University of Texas at Tyler Library, Tyler, Texas. (Vicki Betts, researcher**)**
Newspaper Collection:
Tyler Courier-Times
Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph
Tyler Morning Telegraph

Newspapers: General Research
Corsicana Daily Sun.
Corsicana Semi-Weekly Light
Dallas Morning News
Tyler Courier-Times
Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph
Tyler Journal
Tyler Morning Telegraph

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Vicki Betts, Researcher/Compiler. Index to Tyler newspaper at UT Tyler Library.
"Rose Industry," "Rose Festival," "WPA and PWA in Tyler"
Susan Allen Kline, Preservation Consultant. Source materials: Public rose gardens.
Trude Cables, Researcher. Archival collections in Tyler andSmith County Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 11.7 acres

Coordinates

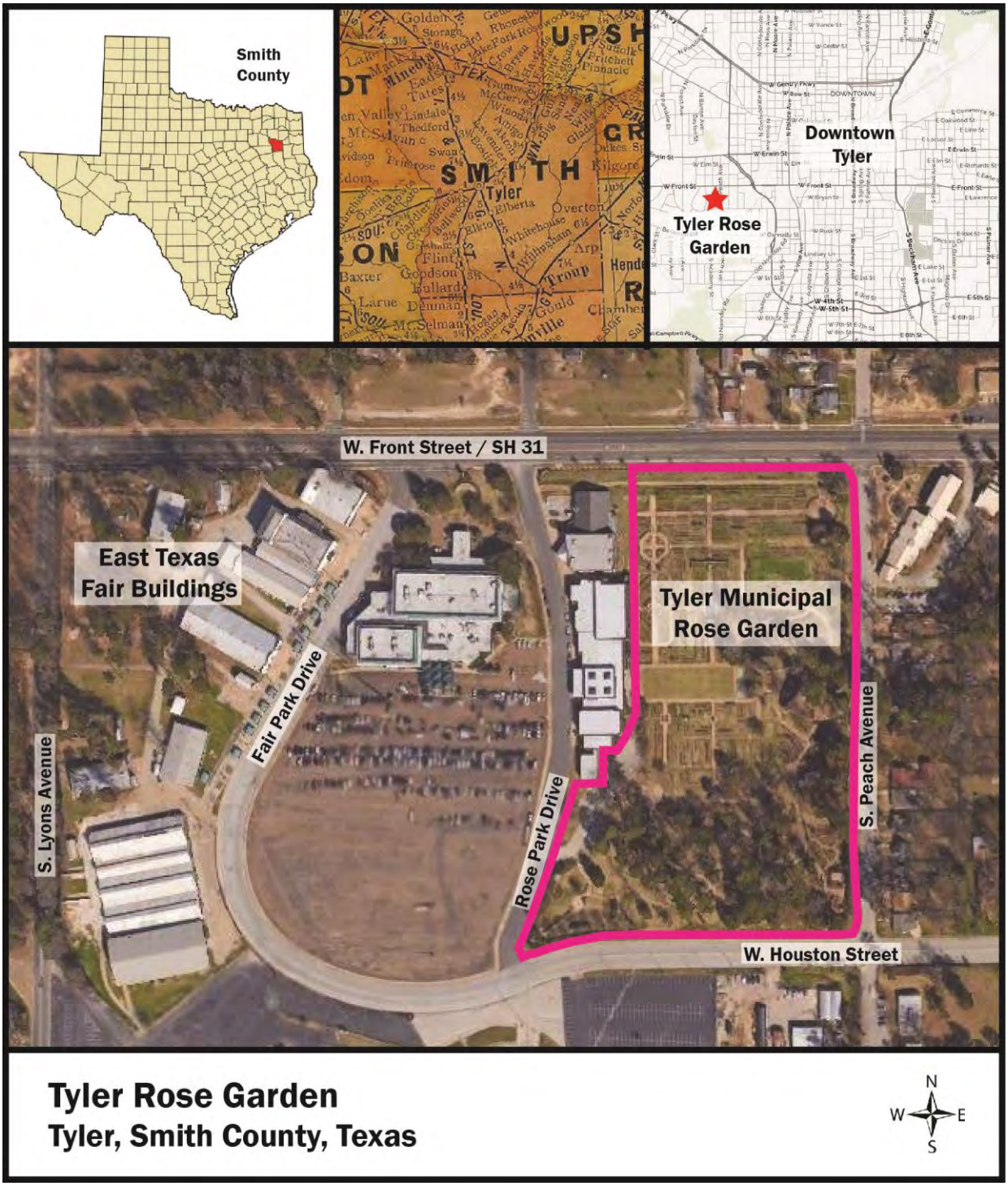
Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

	Latitude	Longitude
1.	32.346425	-95.322172
2.	32.346436	-95.320728
3.	32.343793	-95.320689
4.	32.343706	-95.322872
5.	32.345194	-95.322135

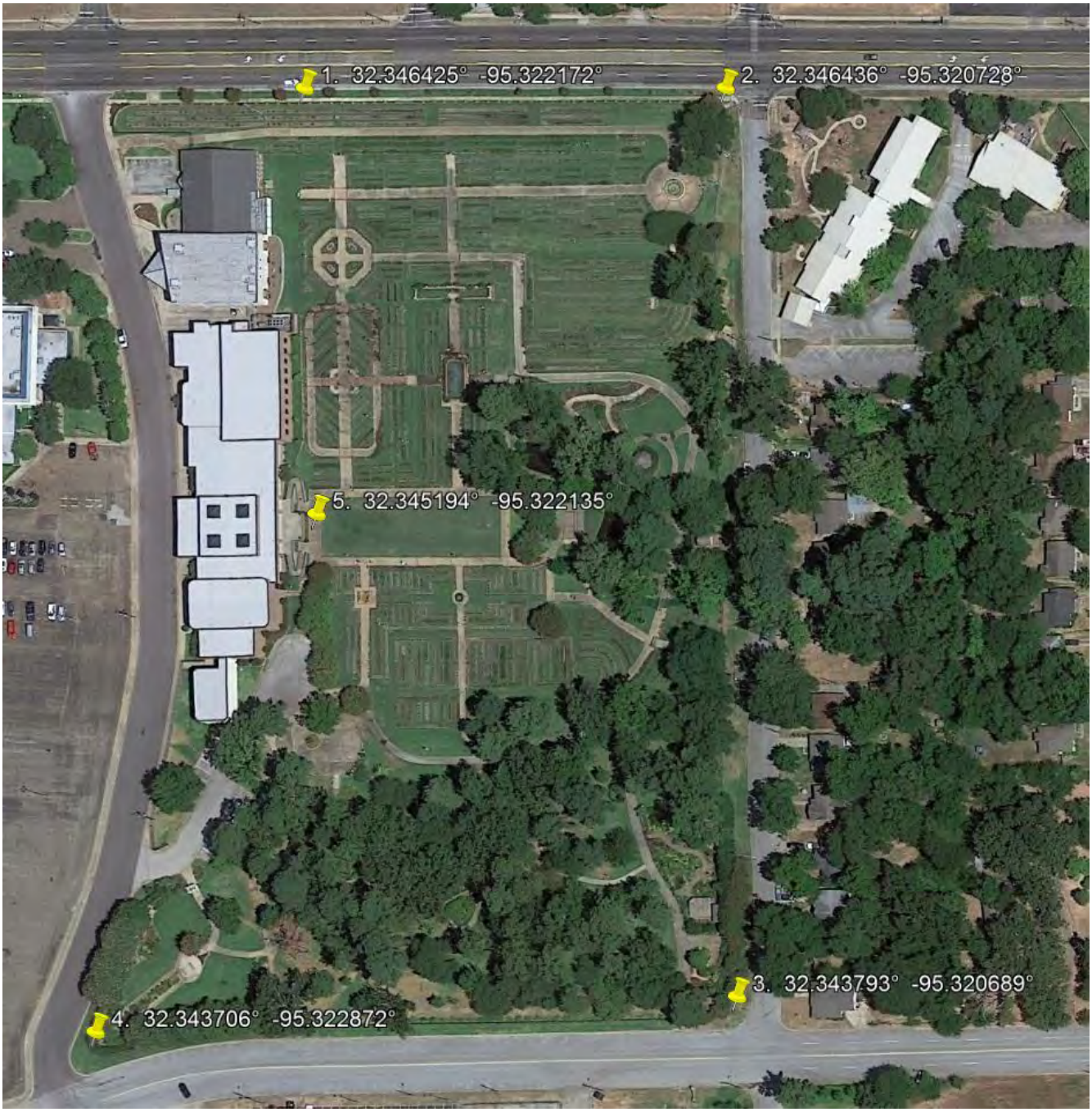
Verbal Boundary Description: All of Lot 1, Block 667, Rose Garden Addition, on the East Texas Fair Grounds, Tyler, Smith County, Texas, except Lot 1.1 (.723 acres) occupied by the Tyler Civic Theatre, and approximately 1.306 acres occupied by the Rose Garden Center and Rose Museum building complex.

Boundary Justification: The historic district boundaries include 11.7 of the original 13.729 acres of land historically identified and developed as the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden, during the periods of significance (1938-1941; 1952-1969). The boundaries contain all of the land originally reserved for a municipal rose garden in the northeast quadrant of the East Texas Fair Grounds with two exceptions: 1) a .723 acre tract (Lot 1.1) carved out of the northwest corner of the garden in 1944 for the 1951 civic theater, and 2) approximately 1.306-acres along Rose Park Drive, the western limits of the garden, containing a large Rose Garden Center and Museum complex built in 1992 to replace a much-altered WPA-era entrance pavilion and other garden structures.

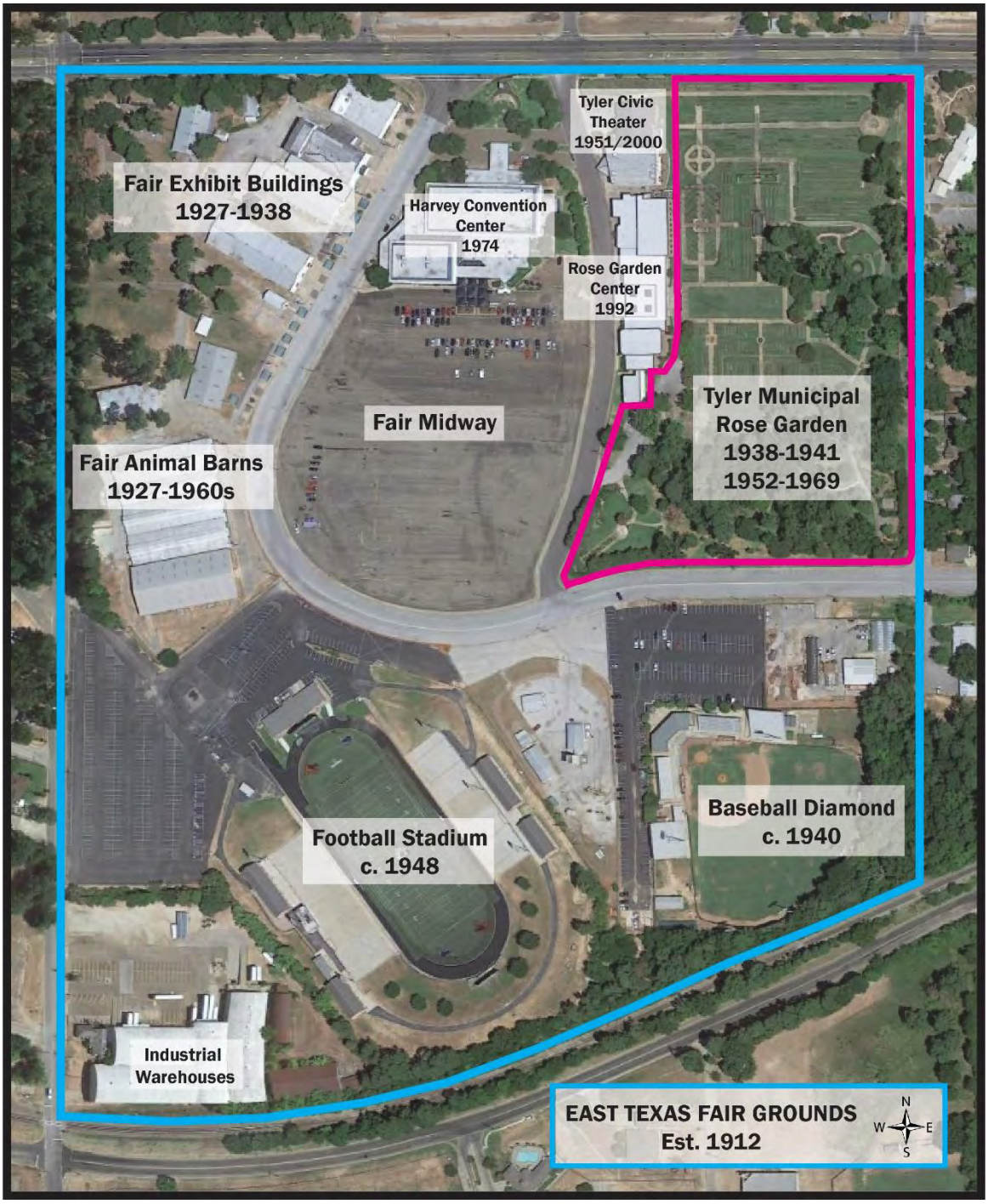
Map 1: Tyler Municipal Rose Garden Location Map



Map 2: Tyler Municipal Rose Garden, Latitude and Longitude Points



Map 3: East Texas Fairgrounds Map including the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden



Map 4: Tyler Municipal Rose Garden, Site Plan with Numbered Resources

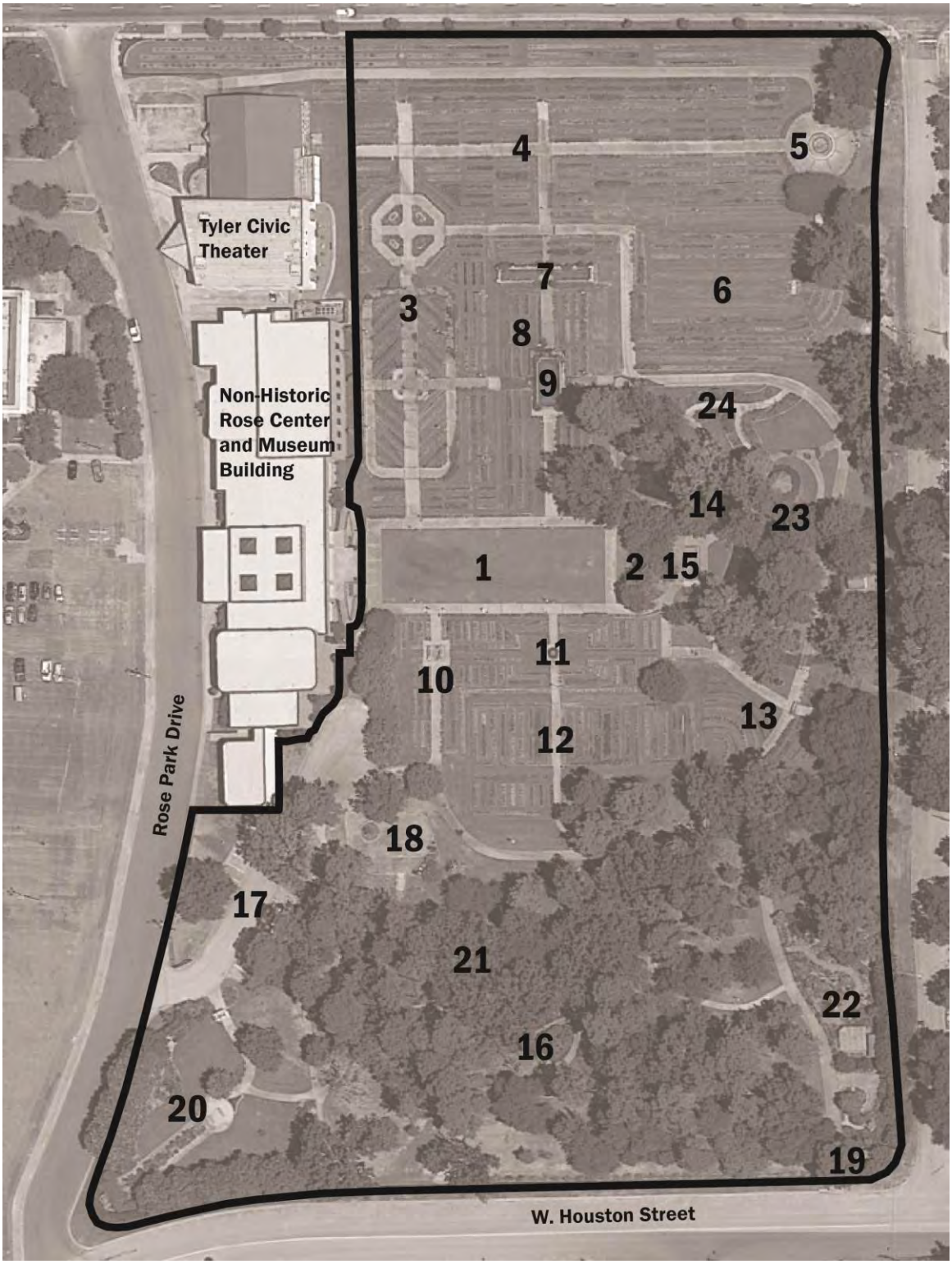


Figure 1: Fair Park. Site plan of 81-acre WPA park project showing baseball and football fields, fair exhibit halls and the rose garden (lower right quadrant), as they appeared c. 1955. City Engineer "Real Estate owned by City of Tyler," Smith County Historical Society Archives. (oriented with west at top). Smith County Historical Society Archives.

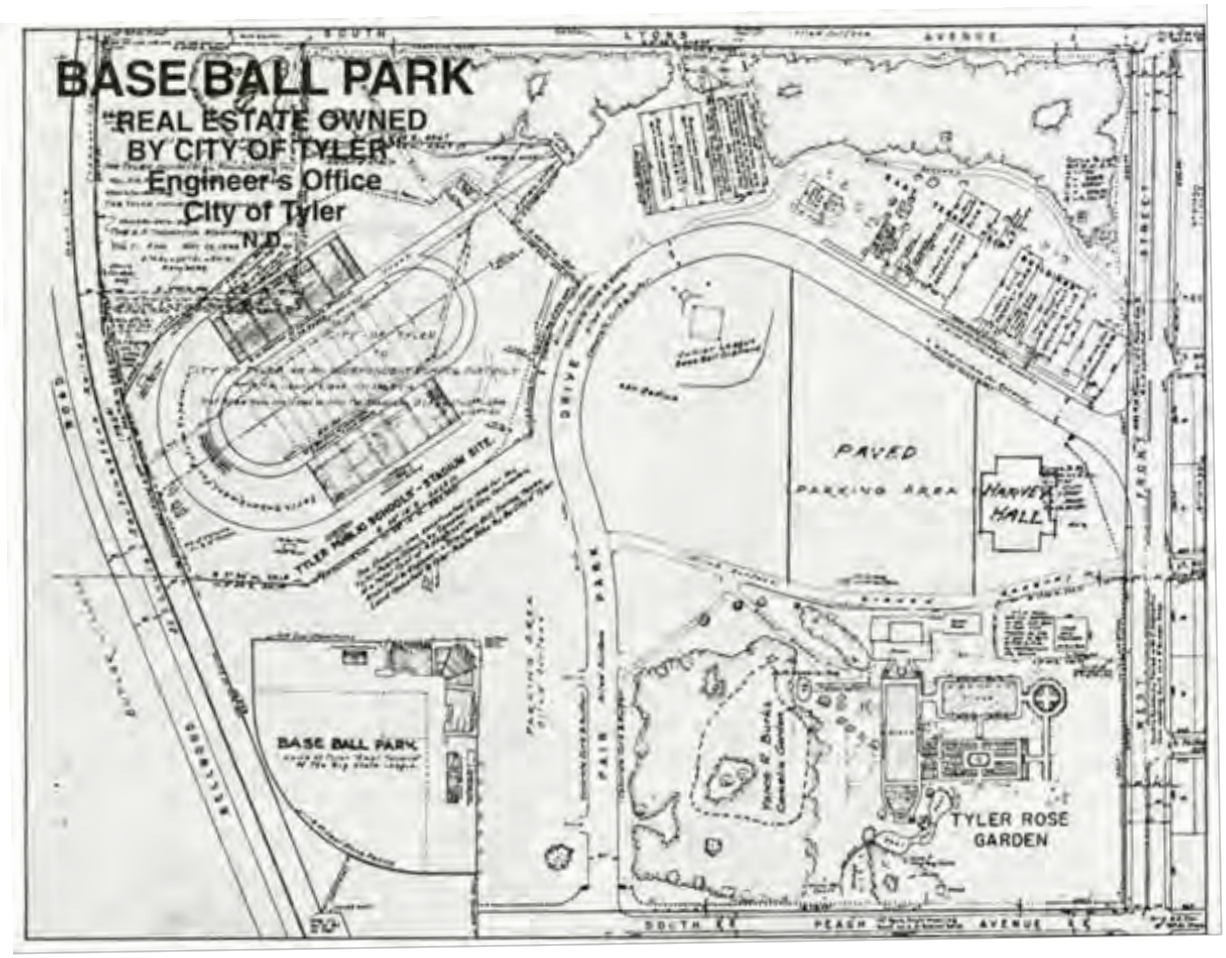


Figure 2: Tyler Rose District. "Two Billion Roses." *Saturday Evening Post*, October 4, 1947: 36, Neil M. Clark, article; Bill Shrout, photograph (Tyler Public Library vertical files: Rose Garden).

For six months each year 15 million rosebushes flower gloriously. These Tyler girls may admire them, but picking is against the rules.

Figure 3: Nurserymen Marsh and Bill Womack and Wilton Pitts in Tyler Rose Fields. "Two Billion Roses." *Saturday Evening Post*, October 4, 1947: 36, Neil M. Clark, article; Bill Shrout, photograph (Tyler Public Library vertical files: Rose Garden).

Figure 4: Rose Festival brochure, 1941. Tyler landscape architect Henry L. Thompson created a Rose Show with a Fairyland theme for the last festival before the war. The festival resumed in 1947. Smith County Historical Socity Archives.

Festival Highlights

ROSE SHOW—The featured part of the Annual Rose Festival is the hugh rose show to be held in the Holley Motor Company Building on South Spring Street. The show, displaying over 300 varieties of selected roses grown in this area, will be open to the public throughout the four-day festival. There is a small admission charge to this show.

CORONATION—The Queen's colorful coronation ceremony will be presented on Thursday and Friday nights, October 9th and 10th, at 8:00 P. M. in the new High School Auditorium. Here the Queen and her forty princesses provide two thrilling evenings in a world of pomp and ceremony. John Carter, Dorothy Sandlin and Kotchetovsky's Ballet will be guest artists this year.

PARADE—The Floral Parade will begin at 10:00 A. M., Saturday morning, October 11th. Recognized as the most beautiful and outstanding parade in the Southwest, it is made up of more than twenty-five gaily decorated floats and thirty or more bands. Some 100,000 spectators are expected to view this year's "Parade of Fairyland."

LUNCHEONS—A luncheon honoring prominent guests and rosarians will be held in the Ballroom of the Blackstone Hotel at Noon, Friday. The Tyler Council of Garden Clubs are also sponsoring a noon luncheon for Garden Club members at the Woman's Building at 12:15 Noon, on October 10th.

QUEEN'S RECEPTION AND TEA—At 4:00 P. M. on Friday afternoon, October 10th, Her Majesty, the Queen, will entertain her Court and Festival Visitors with a Reception and Tea.

QUEEN'S BALL—Given by the "Order of the Rose" in honor of Her Majesty, the Queen, and Visiting Princesses. This dance will be held at the Mayfair Club for members of the order and invited guests on Friday evening, October 10th, at 10:00 P. M.

FOOTBALL GAME—For sports enthusiastics there will be the Annual Football Classic on Saturday afternoon, October 11th, at 3:00 P. M., in the High School Stadium. Coach Alonzo Stagg's College of the Pacific from Stockton, California, will meet Coach Matty Bell's Southern Methodist University's Mustangs, from Dallas, Texas. Advance tickets are on sale at Pratt Jewelry Co. in Tyler.

COLLEGE DANCE—A well known college orchestra will play for the College Dance at the Mayfair Club honoring the visiting football teams at 9:00 P. M. Saturday Night, October 11th.

ROSE FIELD TOURS— Rose field tours and garden pilgrimages will contribute further to the pleasure of the gardners attending the Texas Rose Festival. These trips, continuous each day of the Fiesta, will bring visitors in close range of the fields that contribute to the Tyler area's annual production of between 18,000,000 and 20,000,000 rose bushes. These tours will leave from the Rose Show Building and free transportation will be provided.

VESPER SERVICE—As a fitting climax to the Festival, at 7:00 P. M. on Sunday evening, October 12th, the Vesper Service will be held in the High School Auditorium. An outstanding Texas Minister will deliver the Special Religious Talk. Special Church Services will be held at all Tyler Churches on Sunday morning.

Texas Rose Festival
TYLER, TEXAS
October 9, 10, 11, 12, 1941

The Rose Fields surrounding Tyler, Texas, comprise more than 2,000 acres and provide a perfect setting of fragrant loveliness for the Rose Capitol's annual tribute to her most famous industry.

A most cordial invitation is extended to all to visit the "Rose Garden of America" during the Ninth Annual Texas Rose Festival. A colorful four-day program will be highlighted by the world's largest Rose Show and the Coronation of the Rose Queen. The spectacular Floral Parade with 25 beautifully decorated floats and over 30 bands is a sight that both old and young will want to see. The Rose Classic Football Game between Southern Methodist University and the College of the Pacific will be a game of class and color.

Luncheons for Distinguished Guests and Garden Club Members, Queen's Reception and Tea, Queen's Ball, and a special Vesper Service Program are other highlights on this year's program.

Tours of rose fields and Garden Pilgrimages will be continuous throughout the four-day festival, and combined with the feature events and other attractions, offer a diversified program with an appeal for every Rose Festival Visitor.

PROGRAM
Ninth Annual Texas Rose Festival
TYLER, TEXAS

THURSDAY—October 9th
8:00 A. M. ..... Rose Show Opens
8:00 A. M. ..... Rose Tours Begin
8:00 P. M. ..... Queen's Coronation

FRIDAY—October 10th
8:00 A. M. ..... Rose Show Opens
12:00 Noon ..... Distinguished Guests Luncheon
12:15 P. M. ..... Garden Club Luncheon
4:00 P. M. ..... Queen's Reception and Tea
8:00 P. M. ..... Queen's Coronation
10:00 P. M. ..... Queen's Ball
Given by "Order of the Rose"

SATURDAY—October 11th
8:00 A. M. ..... Rose Show Opens
10:00 A. M. ..... Floral Parade
3:00 P. M. ..... Football Game
(S. M. U. vs. College of the Pacific)
9:00 P. M. ..... College Dance

SUNDAY—October 12th
8:00 A. M. ..... Rose Show Opens
11:00 A. M. ..... Special Church Services
7:00 P. M. ..... Vesper Service

Rose Show will open at 8:00 A. M. each day and will close at 10:00 P. M. Rose Field Tours and Garden Pilgrimages will be continuous each day.

Transport yourself to Fairyland

At the TEXAS ROSE FESTIVAL

Tyler. Oct. 9-10-11-12, 1941

Figure 5: Parks Superintendent, Bob Shelton, and Tyler Garden Club members, c. 1951. They hold the garden plan depicting the central parterre as revised by Henry Thompson. Shelton further adapted the plan to display more roses (See Figure 6). Smith County Historical Society Archives.

Figure 6: Tyler Rose Garden, undated c. 1955 plan. Plan shows the garden much as it appeared when opened to the public in 1952. The Camellia trail shown on the left was added to the plan at a later time. (Map oriented with north (W. Front St.) on the right, west entrance at the top). Smith County Historical Society Archives.

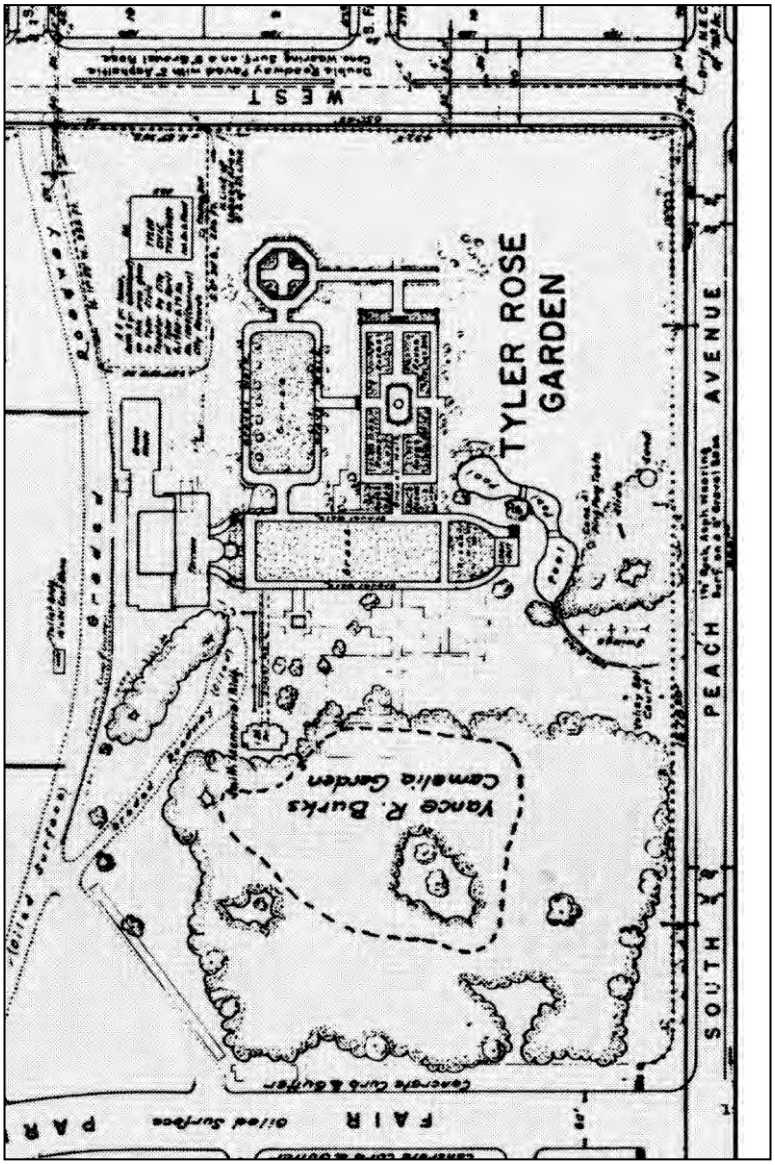


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Figure 7: "Tyler Rose Park." Dedicated in 1952 to Henry L. Thompson, a local landscape architect who helped design and build the rose garden, 1938-1942. His plane was lost over the English Channel during World War II (Uncovered plaque reads "Construction Started 1939, Roses Planted 1952").

Smith County
SCHS
Historical Society

Figure 8: Tyler Municipal Rose Garden. Postcard showing the park when it opened in 1952. View from the wall (entrance) looking south across the parterre toward the woods at the south end of the garden. City of Tyler website.

Figure 9: Reflecting Pool, c. 1953. In the "sunken garden" facing northwest toward entrance pavilion. Courtesy Smith County Historical Society Archives.

Figure 10: Rose Festival Court, c. 1955. Among the roses in the *parterre*. Camera facing north, toward W. Front Street.

Figure 11: Festival Royalty. In front of reflecting pool with Queen's Court in the background, 1954.

Figure 12: Enclosed Entrance Pavilion. WPA built open pavilion with stone piers, terrace and double stairway to "sunken garden." Pavilion enclosed for a Garden Center in 1953. Chamber of Commerce photo, c. 1955. Smith County Historical Society Archives.

Figure 13: Her Majesty, Queen Carol, of the House of Ellison, Rose Festival, 1952.

Photo 1: View of Wall with dedication plaques built by WPA c. 1938. Camera facing north.

Photo 2: View northeast across parterre and North Gardens to park boundary on W. Front Street. Camera facing north-northeast.

Photo 3: View across Ponds in Sunken East Garden with stairs to upper terrace. WPA built rock-lined ponds, terraces and stairs c. 1939, reinforced 1952. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 4: View to the north across Sunken East Garden/Meditation Garden toward David Austin English Rose Garden. Natural stone lookout by WPA c. 1939. Camera facing north.

Photo 5: Site 1 - Queen's Court Lawn (bowling green) in parterre c. 1938, flanked by north and south gardens. Brick Wall and fountain at east end of lawn built c. 1960s. Camera facing east.

Photo 6: Site 2 - Brick Wall and fountain at rear of Queen's Court lawn, built c. 1960. Camera facing southeast.

Photo 7: Sites 3 and 4 – North Garden in foreground (Site 4) across Sid Maxfield Garden (Site 3) in background. Rose Garden Center built 1992 outside boundaries, on right. Camera facing south.

Photo 8: Site 4 – North Gardens at north boundary of the park. One of two 1912 Smith County Courthouse fountains moved to garden in 1953. Camera facing north to W. Front St.

Photo 9: Site 6 – C. 1960 Horseshoe Garden through archway on right. Camera facing north to Front St.

Photo 10: Site 7 – Garden Wall with archway built by WPA, c. 1938. Camera facing south.

Photo 11: Site 8 – Sunken Garden terrace and parterre (rose beds, hedges and alees and wall), built by WPA c. 1938, re-established and planted, 1952. Camera facing southeast to woods.

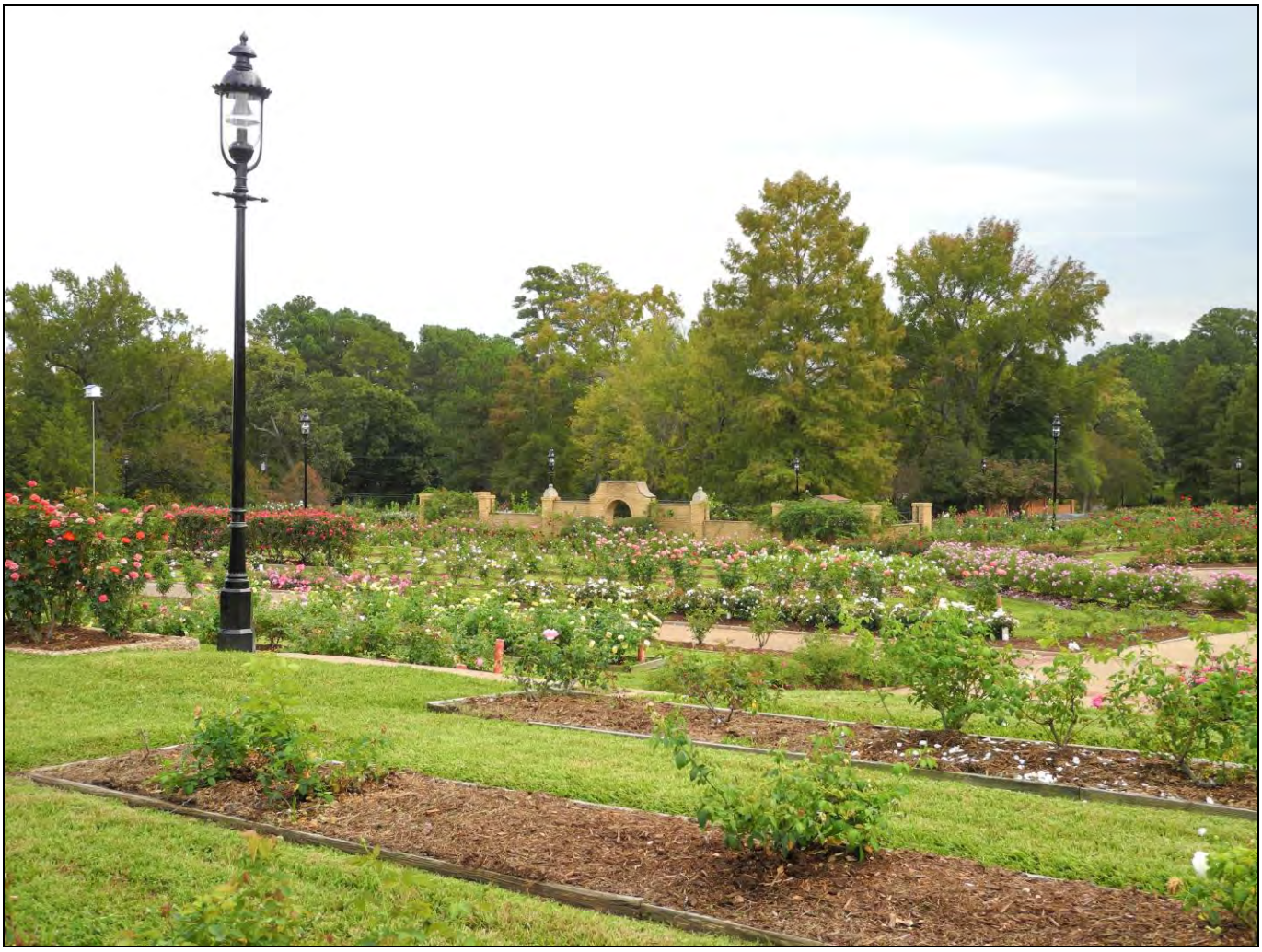

Photo 12: Site 9 – Reflecting Pool, Fountain and Wall built by WPA c. 1938. Camera facing north.

Photo 13: Site 10 – Miniature Garden in South Gardens, built c. 1958. Camera facing south.

Photo 14: Site 11 – Maze in South Gardens, c. 1958. Camera facing south toward Camellia Garden trail.

Photo 15: Site 12 – South Gardens from Queen's Court c. 1958. Miniature Garden on right, Maze on left. Camera facing southeast.

Photo 16: Site 13 – East Sunken Garden (early 1960s) & Ponds created by WPA. Camera facing west-northwest.

Photo 17: Site 14 – One of three c. 1938 rock-lined Ponds built by WPA. Camera facing south-southwest.

Photo 18: Site 15 – C. 1938 Stone Lookout and rock work built by WPA. Camera facing south.

Photo 19: Site 16 – Camellia Garden (trail through forest) designed and installed by Bryan Thompson in 1967. South side of garden. Camera facing east.

Photo 20: Site 17 – Driveway and parking area, built 1952 to access garden floor and Smith Memorial Building (razed). Camera facing southwest.

Photo 21: Site 18 –Picnic Patio & Stone Benches, built 1952 at southwest entrance to the garden, next to Smith Memorial Building (razed). Camera facing south.

Photo 22: Site 19 – C. 1938 Stone Wall & Pier at pedestrian entrance from Houston Street, at the southeast corner of the garden. Camera facing east.

Photo 23: Site 20 – Heritage Rose Garden in southwest corner of park. Started as Sensory Garden in the 1970s, redesigned in 1986. Camera facing south-southwest.

Photo 24: Site 21 – 1997 Shade Garden in woods at south end of the park. Camera facing south.

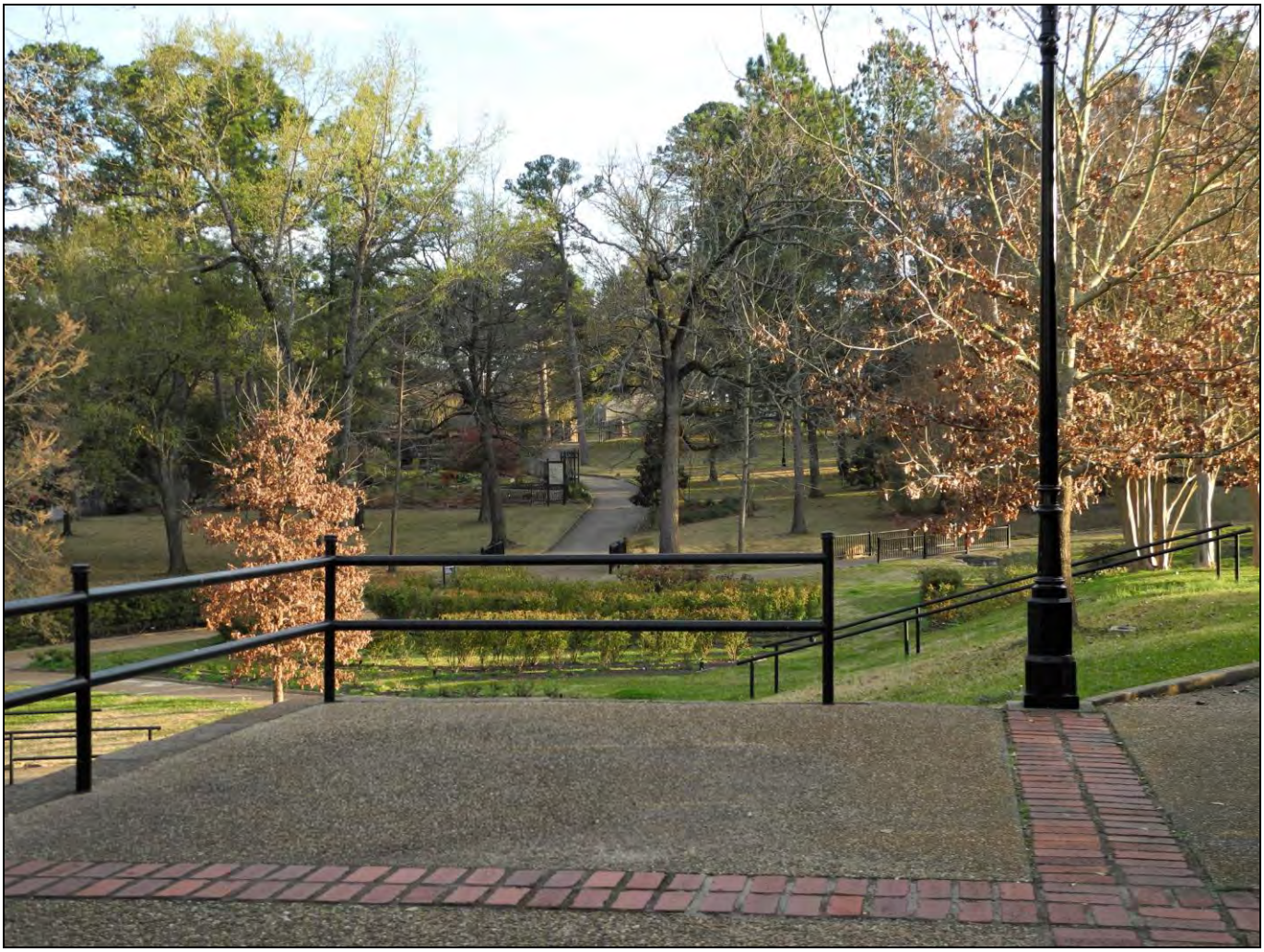

Photo 25: Site 22 – 1999 IDEA Garden in southeast corner of garden. Camera facing north-northeast.

Photo 26: Site 23 – 1990 Meditation Garden and Pond on east side of garden. Camera facing northwest.