

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Little Rock, Arkansas

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT



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Central High School

National Historic Site

Little Rock, Arkansas

Cultural Landscape Report

95% Draft

Prepared for:

Central High School National Historic Site
Little Rock, Arkansas

and

National Park Service
Midwest Regional Office
Omaha, Nebraska

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Chapter One

Administrative Data

Introduction and Project Area

The Central High School Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) was prepared by John Milner Associates, Inc. (JMA), to support National Park Service (NPS) efforts to preserve the cultural landscape of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site (NHS) and its neighborhood setting, together called the “study area.” The study area is in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, the capital city of the state and the county seat, and is embedded in a mixed residential and commercial urban area within one and one-half miles of the State Capitol complex in downtown Little Rock (*Figures 1-1 and 1-2*).

The boundaries of the NHS as set out in its 1998 National Register nomination, enclose an area of approximately 24 acres, and are, generally: Jones Street to the west, W. Sixteenth Street to the south, W. Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive (known as W. Fourteenth Street until the name was changed in 2000; hereafter referred to as Daisy Bates) to the north, and S. Park Street to the east (*Figure 1-3*). Contained within the NHS boundaries is the Central High School property, approximately 21 acres of land owned by the Little Rock School District (LRSD) and comprising several city blocks from S. Park Street to Jones Street and between Daisy Bates and W. Sixteenth Street. This same 21 acres of land also comprises the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Landmark (NHL), designated in 1982 for the nationally-significant historical events associated with school desegregation that occurred there during the school year of 1957-1958 (*Figure 1-4*).¹

The NHS also includes the corner property located diagonally across from the school at W. Sixteenth and S. Park Street, which contains the Capel Building (once Ponder’s Drug Store), and all four corner properties at Daisy Bates and S. Park Street, which contain the NHS Visitor Center, at around 1.3 acres; the Central High Commemorative Garden, at about 0.5 acres, and the rehabilitated Magnolia Mobil service station that is now used as an educational center, at about .37 acres (*Figure 1-3*). The legislative boundary for the NHS does *not* include the seven residential buildings facing the school along S. Park Street. The legislation also mandates that the NPS *cannot* affect the authority of the LRSD to administer Central High School or the authorities of the city of Little Rock in the neighborhood surrounding the school.

The documentation and design guidelines within this report concern the NHS as well as its broader neighborhood setting, which contextualizes the site and comprises its surrounding viewshed. This setting includes all properties from the edge of the NHS boundary and extending east to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, north to W. Eleventh Street, west to the tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad, and south to Wright Avenue (see *Figure 1-3*). These boundaries were

¹ James Sheire, “Little Rock High School,” *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1982).

1 established as the larger setting for the major events related to the desegregation of Central High
2 from 1957 to 1958 and include the route taken by Elizabeth Eckford from the W. Twelfth Street
3 bus stop to Ponder’s Drug Store, as well as the core of what is remaining of the neighborhood
4 fabric of homes, streets, and commercial and industrial properties from that time period. This
5 neighborhood setting comprises a portion of the larger Central High Neighborhood Historic
6 District, designated in the National Register in 1996 for its local architectural significance (see
7 *Figure 1-3* and refer to Chapter Two for more information). Also important to consider is the
8 adjacency of the study area to the Dunbar School Neighborhood, a predominantly African
9 American neighborhood directly to the east of Central High School, and home of many of the
10 members of the “Little Rock Nine” (see *Figures 1-2 and 1-3*).

11 **Goals of the Cultural Landscape Report**

12 The goal of this project is to provide information to support the NPS in partnership with the
13 LRSD, the City of Little Rock government (the City), and surrounding neighborhood property
14 owners. The NPS intends to use the treatment recommendations and design guidelines as
15 technical assistance to their partners to encourage preservation of the historic character of the
16 project area and guide design of compatible new development in the immediate vicinity of and
17 within viewsheds from the NHS. This product will help determine what effect(s) proposed
18 developments might have on the visitor experience at the NHS.

19 This CLR is part of a broader planning process being conducted by the NPS and provides
20 recommendations based on one of the central goals established by the General Management Plan
21 (GMP) for the NHS produced in 2002:

22 “The integrity and ambience of Central High School’s adjacent historic streetscape, and
23 the surrounding national historic district neighborhood, is protected to the extent possible
24 to preserve the historic scene in which the dramatic events of 1957-58 occurred. The Park
25 Service, within the limits of the site’s enabling legislation, continues to work with the
26 school board and district to achieve this goal. Resource preservation reflects the historic
27 context within which those events unfolded, providing an effective backdrop in scale for
28 interpretation of this landmark battle in the struggle for civil rights.”²

29 The CLR is also intended to supplement and augment other recently completed studies, including
30 the Little Rock Central High School National Register Nomination (1982), the Central High
31 School Neighborhood Historic District National Register Nomination (1996), the Special
32 Resource Study of Little Rock Central High School (1998), Little Rock’s Central High School
33 Neighborhood District study (1999), the Conservation Assessment for Central High School
34 (2001), the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (2003), and a Historic Resource Study completed in
35 2008 that is currently undergoing review.³

² *Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002): 8.

³ Sandra Taylor Smith, “Central High School Neighborhood Historic District,” *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (Little Rock, Arkansas: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1996).
Special Resource Study of Little Rock Central High School (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, August 1998).

1 The structure of this CLR is as follows: Chapter One—Administrative Data— introduces the
2 project, its goals, and stakeholders; provides a brief historical background; discusses the project
3 scope and methodology; presents a summary of findings; and lists recommendations for further
4 study. Chapter Two—Contributing Features—summarizes the physical site history of the study
5 area and presents an analysis of its significance and integrity, particularly as it relates to the
6 period of significance of the NHS, from 1957 to 1958. The description of features and
7 components is organized as recommended in National Register Bulletin 18: *How to Evaluate and*
8 *Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*.⁴ Chapter Three—Design Guidelines— provides a
9 framework for future planning and design related to both historic preservation and new
10 development within the NHS and its neighborhood setting. It is based on the documentation and
11 analysis developed in the earlier chapters and is guided by *The Secretary of the Interior’s*
12 *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural*
13 *Landscapes*.⁵

14 **Project Stakeholders**

15 Three primary stakeholder groups have strong interests in the future of the study area: the
16 National Park Service, which operates the NHS Visitor Center and also lists the Central High
17 School National Register Historic District and monitors the National Historic Landmark; the
18 Little Rock School District, which owns and operates Central High School; and the City of Little
19 Rock, which designated the boundaries of the Central High School Neighborhood as a planning
20 unit.⁶ Other stakeholders include students and faculty of the school, visitors to the historic site,
21 neighborhood residents, local churches, other schools and colleges, and local businesses, both
22 large and small.

23 The National Park Service administers the site from its headquarters in the NHS Visitor Center at
24 the intersection of Daisy Bates and S. Park Street. The mission of the NHS is to "preserve,
25 protect, and interpret for the benefit, education, and inspiration of present and future generations,
26 Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and to interpret its role in the integration of public

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

John Milner Associates, Inc. *Conservation Assessment for Central High School* (Little Rock, Arkansas, 2001).
Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Inventory. Washington, D.C.: U.S.
Department of the Interior, National Park Service, revised 2003.

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Inventory. Washington, D.C.: U.S.
Department of the Interior, National Park Service, revised 2003.

“Historic Resource Study for Central High School.” N.p.: n.p., n.d. Draft of report provided by NPS staff, March 2008.

“Neighborhood Action Plans as of 12/22/05.” Map available on the Planning and Development Department web site, http://www.littlerock.org/Images/UserFiles/PDF/StatisticsReports/NEIGHBORHOOD_ACTION_PLANS.pdf (accessed 4 May 2008).

⁴ J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve P. Keller, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (National Register Bulletin #18, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1987).

⁵ Charles A. Birnbaum with Christine Capella Peters, *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996).

1 schools and the development of the Civil Rights movement in the United States."⁷ In 2005, the
 2 site drew 45,438 visitors.⁸ In 2007, 56,938 people visited the site; in September of that year,
 3 ceremonies associated with the 50th anniversary of the start of the desegregation crisis-related
 4 events drew an estimated 10,000 visitors, including the “Little Rock Nine” (the nine original
 5 students that integrated Central High School), former president Bill Clinton, and Senator Hillary
 6 Rodham Clinton.⁹

7 Central High School is, unlike other historic sites and landmarks, a functioning educational
 8 facility. It operates as a four-year public high school under the administration of the Office of the
 9 Superintendent, Little Rock School District. Student enrollment is approximately 2,400 with over
 10 100 faculty.¹⁰ Today, the student body is 55 percent African American.¹¹ It is the largest of the
 11 six high schools in the Little Rock School District and the only one located in the inner city. The
 12 student body represents the most affluent areas of the city, as well as a broad spectrum of
 13 middle- and low-income areas. It is a magnet school for International Studies and has been
 14 named by admissions officers of the nation's most selective colleges and universities as one of
 15 the 16 best high schools in preparing students for college. The Little Rock Central Tigers
 16 athletics programs have a long and esteemed history of winning state championships and holding
 17 many individual and team records. The school newspaper, *The Tiger*, is one of the oldest in the
 18 country. As reported by the Little Rock School District, Central High School consistently has
 19 more National Merit Scholarship semifinalists than any other school in the state (nineteen in
 20 2006-07).¹²

21 The NPS and the LRSD engage in a mutually supportive relationship; guided tours of the school
 22 are allowed for visitors, and students of Central High School visit the interpretive exhibits at the
 23 NHS Visitor Center to learn about the historic events their school represents. The NPS is also an
 24 active member of the neighborhood community, participating or sponsoring events such as the
 25 National Night Out, Unity in the Community, clean-up projects, and other similar activities.

26 **Project Background**

27 In 1954 and 1955, the legal cases known as *Oliver L. Brown, et. al. v. Board of Education of*
 28 *Topeka, Kansas* reached the U.S. Supreme Court and resulted in historic decisions of national
 29 significance. The original decision held that racial segregation in public education was
 30 unconstitutional. In a re-hearing the next year, known as *Brown II*, the court declared that the
 31 pace of desegregation was to be determined by school authorities, but that it should begin “with
 32 all deliberate speed.” Some integration efforts did begin immediately, but defiance of the

⁷ National Park Service. “Management.” Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site web page.
<http://www.nps.gov/chsc/parkmgmt/index.htm> (accessed June 22, 2008).
⁸ National Park Service. “Park Statistics.” Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site web page.
<http://www.nps.gov/chsc/parkmgmt/statistics.htm> (accessed June 22, 2008).
⁹ Peter Whoriskey. “On 50th Anniversary, ‘Little Rock Nine’ Get a Hero’s Welcome.” Washington Post,
 Wednesday, September 26, 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/25/AR2007092502147.html> (accessed January 4, 2008).
¹⁰ “Little Rock, Arkansas,” CityData.com web site, <http://www.city-data.com/city/Little-Rock-Arkansas.html>
 (accessed October 1, 2007).
¹¹ “Little Rock Central High School.” Little Rock School District web site, <http://www.lrsd.org/display.cfm?id=132>.
 (accessed October 1, 2007).
¹² Ibid.

1 decision began to organize and grow. In March, 1956, one hundred Congressmen issued the
2 “Southern Manifesto,” encouraging states to resist integration of schools. In Arkansas, the
3 superintendent of Little Rock public schools, Virgil Blossom, strategized to incrementally
4 integrate the city’s schools, beginning with Central High School in the fall of 1957.¹³

5 In some ways, it was surprising that Central High School would become the most infamous test
6 case for how far the U.S. government would extend its reach to impose the Brown decision upon
7 a state’s jurisdiction and the extent to which local powers would resist.¹⁴ The University of
8 Arkansas had already integrated its medical school in 1947 and its law school in 1948. Several
9 public school systems in Arkansas including those in Charleston and Fayetteville were integrated
10 in 1954 and in Hoxie in 1956. Fayetteville High School graduated two African American
11 students in 1956.¹⁵ Further, the Little Rock public school system had fewer African American
12 students than other school districts that had already integrated, such as Wilmington, Louisville,
13 Washington, Baltimore, or St. Louis. Little Rock also had fewer black students than several of
14 the Southern cities addressing desegregation at the same time in the fall of 1957, such as
15 Nashville, Charlotte, Greensboro and Winston-Salem. Presumably, white residents in these cities
16 might have felt more threatened by integration than did residents in Little Rock.¹⁶

17 Demographic variables other than race may have played a role in the crisis. Along with many
18 American cities, Little Rock experienced a population boom during World War II and a
19 subsequent spike in births. The construction of an Air Force base in 1953 increased the
20 population by twenty percent, to 100,000 residents by the mid-1950s, putting new pressures on
21 the Little Rock School District’s facilities. Seventy percent of the city’s residents were white and
22 lived in the central and western portions of the city and thirty percent of Little Rock was African
23 American, living predominately in the east and southeast sections.¹⁷ Although Little Rock was
24 among the first of the school districts within the former Confederacy to begin planning for
25 compliance after the *Brown* decisions, the Little Rock School Board opened two new segregated
26 schools in 1957: Hall High School, for white students, in the affluent Pulaski Heights
27 neighborhood of then-west Little Rock, and Horace Mann High School, in the southeast area, for
28 black students.¹⁸ Central High School fell between these schools both geographically and
29 socioeconomically; its students were generally from working class backgrounds. The fact that
30 Hall High School, the wealthiest of the three schools, did not face desegregation at the same time
31 set up a class conflict as well as a racial one.

32 Before Horace Mann High School opened, black college preparatory students attended Dunbar
33 High School and Junior College, located one mile east of Central High. The Dunbar
34 neighborhood was framed by West 9th Street, a five block stretch between Broadway and Chester
35 Streets, which was the center of African American economic, political, social and cultural life in
36 Little Rock. Dunbar opened two years after Central High School in 1929, and was the first black

¹³ CLI, 20.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ “Before Little Rock: Successful Arkansas School Integration,” University of Arkansas, Daily Headlines web page.
<http://libinfo.uark.edu/11313.htm> (accessed June 22, 2008).

¹⁶ CLI, 20.

¹⁷ (DRAFT) *Historic Resource Study for Central High School*, 102-103.

¹⁸ *Special Resource Study of Little Rock Central High School*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1998): 7.

1 school in Arkansas to receive accreditation. The neighborhood was also home to the Arkansas
2 Baptist and Philander Smith colleges, both private, four-year, historically black colleges founded
3 in 1884 and 1877, respectively.

4 The Dunbar neighborhood development accommodated the dramatic increase in Little Rock's
5 black population following the Civil War and continued to grow, moving westward into what
6 was known as the Centennial Addition, between W. Ninth and W. Nineteenth Streets. As
7 development grew south of W. Nineteenth Street in the early 20th century, racial composition
8 became more mixed. The character of the historically black areas surrounding Dunbar changed
9 dramatically in the 1950s, when up to fifty acres of housing was demolished by urban renewal
10 projects authorized by Title I of the Housing Act of 1949. This put even more pressure on the
11 neighborhood's resources. When the time came to challenge segregation at Central High School
12 in September, 1957, six of the nine black students who agreed to enroll were residents of the
13 Dunbar neighborhood.¹⁹

14 During the spring and summer of 1957, groups such as the Capital Citizen's Council and the
15 Mother's League of Central High, segregationist activists, had been aggressively promoting
16 public opposition to the planned integration of Central High School. The Capital Citizen's
17 Council drew most of its support from working-class districts.²⁰ The intensive propaganda
18 campaigns of these groups included writing letters to Governor Faubus, warning him of the
19 potential for violence and disruption of school board meetings. In August, Faubus hosted
20 Governor Griffin of Georgia, a white supremacist and outspoken proponent of resistance to
21 federally mandated integration, overnight in the executive mansion. Due to such developments,
22 integration of Central High School became highly politicized and contentious even before it was
23 attempted.

24 Ultimately, Governor Faubus ordered the State Militia of the Arkansas National Guard to prevent
25 desegregation at Central High School and dispatched them, along with state police units, to the
26 school on Monday, September 2, 1957. The events that followed, briefly described here, have
27 been extensively documented and described in contemporaneous news articles, extensive
28 academic research, popular journalism that has revisited the story at its 40th and 50th
29 anniversaries, and also in memoirs such as *Warriors Don't Cry*, by Melba Pattillo Beals (one of
30 the Little Rock Nine) and *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*, by Daisy L. Gatson Bates.

31 On September 4, 1957, nine African American students, known now as the "Little Rock Nine,"
32 attempted to enter Central High School, but were turned away by the Arkansas National Guard.²¹
33 This event was heavily photo-documented and numerous photographs feature Elizabeth Eckford
34 as she approached the school that day and was turned away, as she walked the two blocks from
35 W. Fourteenth to W. Sixteenth Street, surrounded by media and an angry crowd, and as she sat at
36 the bus stop across from Ponder's Drug Store before she boarded the bus for home.

¹⁹ Cheryl Nichols, "Historically Black Properties in Little Rock's Dunbar School Neighborhood," Published by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (No Date), p. 3-7.

²⁰ *Special Resource Study of Little Rock Central High School*, 9.

²¹ The Little Rock Nine were: Ernest Green (b. 1941), Elizabeth Eckford (b. 1941), Jefferson Thomas (b. 1942), Terrence Roberts (b. 1941), Carlotta Walls LaNier (b. 1942), Minnijean Brown (b. 1941), Gloria Ray Karlmark (b. 1942), Thelma Mothershed (b. 1940), and Melba Pattillo (b. 1941).

1 The nine students did not attempt to return to school until September 23, 1957. They were
2 allowed to enter the school, but were removed from the school at lunchtime that day because of
3 threats to their safety. The students were rushed to the lower level of the school, where they were
4 loaded into police cars that had entered the lower-level garage, and were driven through the
5 school grounds and taken home.

6 The next day, President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10730, which federalized the
7 Arkansas National Guard and sent units of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division to Little
8 Rock to ensure the nine students' safety. On September 25, 1957, the 101st Airborne escorted the
9 students into the school. To protect the students and keep public order, federal troops remained
10 in Little Rock until November 27, housed in an encampment on the playing fields behind Central
11 High School. The National Guard remained in place throughout the remainder of the school year.

12 The following school year, 1958-1959, Governor Faubus used a newly passed state law and
13 closed Little Rock's four public high schools to prevent further desegregation. He scheduled a
14 public vote for two weeks later and Little Rock's citizens voted nearly 3-1 to keep the schools
15 closed, rather than fully integrate all the schools in the district. The schools re-opened in the fall
16 of 1959, and followed a course of desegregation.²²

17 These events at Central High School became the symbol of the end of racially segregated
18 education in the United States. It was the first important test for the Supreme Court's Brown I
19 and II decisions. The events of 1957 at Central High School raised significant legal questions
20 about state sovereignty versus federal authority, appropriate use of military forces including the
21 National Guard, and presidential power.

22 This test of the court's decisions also became a "media event" that captured national and even
23 international attention, and served as a catalyst for the emerging Civil Rights Movement. During
24 the height of the crisis in the fall of 1957, the media were present in large numbers outside the
25 school. The photographs and stories they shared with their audiences across the country helped
26 to bring about President Eisenhower's decision to send in Federal troops to restore order. Some
27 of the photographs, such as those of Elizabeth Eckford and the September 23 attack on African
28 American journalist Alex Wilson by a group of white men outside the school, shocked audiences
29 with the violence and hatred on display.²³ The extensive media coverage and photo-
30 documentation of the crisis are also a part of why it is seared so indelibly in public memory.

31 The people of Arkansas, Little Rock, and the Central High neighborhood have struggled with the
32 negative public image associated with these events since they occurred. Efforts to commemorate
33 the struggles of the "Little Rock Nine" have also become opportunities for dialogue and
34 reconciliation. Central High School was added to the National Register of Historic Places in
35 1977 as "the symbol of the end of racially segregated public schools in America." The
36 nomination's significance statement noted that the crisis "demonstrated the futility of directly
37 defying federal court orders." Central High School was designated a National Historic Landmark
38 in 1982.

²² *Special Resource Study of Little Rock Central High School*, 7-17.

²³ Will Counts, *A Life is More Than a Moment: The Desegregation of Little Rock's Central High* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007):77.

1 In 1997, events associated with the 40th anniversary of the crisis renewed interest in the site and
2 its significance. These events inspired a racially diverse group of individuals to come together
3 and found the non-profit group, Central High Museum, Inc. (CHMI) in 1995. This group
4 purchased the Magnolia Mobil service station across from the school, at which reporters used
5 pay phones to call in their stories during the crisis, with the intention of eventually turning
6 management over to the National Park Service or a similar entity to operate.²⁴ The CHMI
7 restored the exterior of the station to its 1957 appearance, renovated the interior, and constructed
8 a small addition for a visitor center and exhibition space that opened its doors on September 20,
9 1997. In 1996, perhaps inspired by the plans underway for the Museum, the Central High School
10 Neighborhood Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

11 In 1998, President William Jefferson Clinton signed legislation establishing the school and the
12 Magnolia Mobil Service Station as a National Historic Site to “preserve, protect, and interpret for
13 the benefit, education, and inspiration of present and future generations...its role in the
14 integration of public schools and the development of the Civil Rights movement in the United
15 States.” Today, Central High is the only operating high school in the nation to receive such
16 designation.²⁵

17 In 2001, CHMI commissioned a design for, constructed, and dedicated a commemorative garden,
18 “The Spirit of Central High,” on the northwest corner of Daisy Bates and S. Park Street. The
19 focal point of the garden, which also features nine symbolic maple trees and nine benches
20 (representing the Little Rock Nine), is a sculpture of two arches faced with photomontages,
21 designed by Michael R. Warrick and Aaron P. Hussey, called “Transcendence.”²⁶

22 In 2003, the NPS acquired the properties containing the Commemorative Garden and the newly
23 restored Magnolia Mobil service station, as well as the lot on the northeast corner of the Park and
24 Daisy Bates intersection for the NHS Visitor Center. In preparation for the acquisition the NPS
25 had produced a General Management Plan in 2002 to provide guidance for site managers of the
26 NHS for the subsequent ten to fifteen years. The plan’s objectives were to provide for public use,
27 manage the site’s resources, provide preservation assistance to the school, tell the story of the
28 events of 1957, and develop public education programs. The plan called for the construction of
29 the NHS Visitor Center on the northeast corner of Daisy Bates and S. Park Street, and the use of
30 the Magnolia Mobil service station for additional classroom space.

31 The GMP also makes recommendations for additional plans and studies, including a cultural
32 landscape report and a historic structure report to provide guidance and support for treatment of
33 cultural resources; a historic resource study to provide a historical overview and to identify and
34 evaluate cultural resources within the historic context; a site administrative history; reports and
35 plans related to assessing, building and storing the museum collections; a site-specific
36 transportation plan; and a long-range interpretive plan.²⁷

²⁴ Johanna Miller Lewis, "Build a Museum and They Will Come: The Creation of the Central High Museum and Visitor Center," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 22, No. 4. (Autumn 2000), 31.

²⁵ “Central High History,” <http://www.nps.gov/chsc/historyculture/school-history.htm> (accessed May 2, 2008).

²⁶ Judy Byrd Brittenum, “Cultural Landscape Inventory 2006 Addendum, Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site” (n.p.: n.p., 2006).

²⁷ *Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, 23.

1 In its call for the completion of a CLR for the NHS, the GMP stated that “the site is part of and
2 depends on a much larger cultural setting and historic district. This larger cultural landscape is
3 important for understanding the park’s story.”²⁸ A cultural landscape inventory (CLI) for the
4 NHS had already been conducted by the NPS in 1999 and was then revised in 2003. The CLI
5 provided baseline documentation and an inventory of cultural landscape resources. It was
6 amended in 2006 with additional information describing more recent changes to the NHS
7 landscape, including the restoration of the reflecting pool.

8 The NHS Visitor Center, sited across from the school and Mobil service station on the northeast
9 corner of the intersection of Daisy Bates and S. Park Street, was dedicated in September 2007, in
10 conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Central High School integration
11 crisis. All of the Little Rock Nine were in attendance.

12 In 2007, John Milner Associates, Inc. of Charlottesville, Virginia was hired to write the CLR for
13 the NHS. The Historic Resource Study (HRS) is also currently being produced by a separate
14 entity.

15 **Project Scope**

16 The scope of work for this CLR, as identified by the NPS at the initiation of the project, includes
17 the following elements:

- 18 • collect and review secondary historical data to document the site’s physical history and
19 evolution over time and conduct limited directed research at local repositories;
- 20 • document existing landscape features, including land use, buildings and structures, spatial
21 organization, views and vistas, circulation, vegetation, constructed water features, and
22 small-scale features;
- 23 • analyze and evaluate changes that have occurred within the study area from the period of
24 significance;
- 25 • provide treatment recommendations and design guidelines to assist the NPS in making
26 decisions regarding future management of the site; and
- 27 • provide a framework to support the NPS in interactions with representatives of the City
28 of Little Rock and private property owners to help encourage preservation of the general
29 character of the NHS and its neighborhood setting.

30 **Project Methodology**

31 The methodology used for this CLR has been based on a multidisciplinary approach that
32 combines historic research with field investigation, leading to a comparison of existing
33 conditions with those present during the period of significance. When there was little information
34 available concerning the particular landscape characteristics of the period of significance,
35 informed evaluations were developed regarding the probable physical character or use of the area

²⁸ Ibid., 7.

1 during that time. Such evaluations were made using both extant visual clues and professional
2 understanding of design, construction, and land use practices believed to have been represented
3 during the period of significance.

4 *Project Meetings*

5 In November 2007, CLR project team members met at the NHS Visitor's Center for an initial
6 project meeting and site visit. Meeting attendees included:

- 7 • National Park Service—Michael Madell, Laura Miller, Marla McEnaney
- 8 • Bahr Vermeer Haecker—Dan Worth
- 9 • John Milner Associates, Inc.—Laura Knott, Jenny Mikulski, Sarah Traum

10 NPS staff briefed the CLR team on the history and background of the NHS, clarified ownership
11 and jurisdictional issues, and discussed current planning issues affecting the immediate
12 neighborhood surrounding the site. Staff emphasized the importance of understanding and
13 protecting the historic character of the neighborhood setting of the NHS, in particular viewsheds
14 into and out of the site. The scope of work was discussed and the project schedule clarified.

15 In October 2008 CLR project team members returned to the NHS and met with NPS employees
16 to discuss the final phase of the project, and for a Stakeholders meeting and a Public Open
17 House. Meeting attendees included:

- 18 • National Park Service—Laura Miller, Marla McEnaney
- 19 • Bahr Vermeer Haecker—Dan Worth
- 20 • John Milner Associates, Inc.—Laura Knott, Jenny Mikulski

21 At this meeting NPS staff advised the CLR team that they wished the treatment recommend-
22 ations to present a range of options rather than prescriptive criteria and to avoid using regulatory
23 language. NHS staff mentioned that they are currently planning new wayside interpretive
24 exhibits.

25 Stakeholder meeting attendees the following day included the above personnel as well as Nancy
26 Rousseau, the principal of Central High School; Steven St. John, Little Rock School District
27 Maintenance and Operations; and Tony Bozynski, Director, City of Little Rock Planning and
28 Development. Issues discussed at this meeting included the school's needs for expanded
29 facilities and parking and concerns about leaking around the parapets of the school building.

30 Neighborhood residents attended an Open House in the evening and were apprised of the CLR
31 work and assured that treatment recommendations would be intended to guide and assist
32 homeowners but would not be regulated or mandated.

33 In June 2009, the CLR project team met with NPS staff at the NHS to discuss issues related to
34 the final report and upcoming public meeting *[to be added in June]*

1 *Historic Research Methodology*

2 Documentary research was based on the extensive existing documentation for the Central High
3 School National Historic Site, including the GMP, CLI, Special Resource Study, Long Range
4 Interpretive Plan, and draft HRS as well as the National Register nominations for both the school
5 and neighborhood. Limited, directed research was conducted in the National Historic Site
6 offices, at the Archives and Special Collections of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (for
7 historic photographs), and the Arkansas History Commission (for historic maps). The JMA team
8 also contacted the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, the Little Rock School District, the
9 City of Little Rock Historic Preservation Commission, and the Department of Public Works for
10 additional information.

11 *Base Mapping Methodology*

12 The base map was created in AutoCAD by combining information from a number of sources,
13 including an aerial photograph obtained from the City of Little Rock Public Works Department
14 (2005), AutoCAD drawings prepared by AJC Architects for the NHS Visitor Center (2006),
15 AutoCAD drawings prepared by Crafton Tull and Associates, Inc. (2007), and building
16 footprints digitized from Sanborn maps (1897, 1913 and 1939-1950). The draft prepared from
17 the aerial photograph was used to document conditions in the field and subsequently revised with
18 the addition of data from other drawings as they were gathered.

19 *Existing Conditions Methodology*

20 Initial fieldwork to document existing conditions within the study area was conducted October
21 10-12, 2007, by Laura Knott, Jenny Mikulski, and Sarah Traum. Information was gathered on-
22 site through photography and field revisions to the base survey drawing.

23 Documentation of existing conditions was subsequently prepared through clarifications of the
24 base map obtained from design documents for both the high school and the NHS Visitor Center,
25 aerial photography, United States Geological Service (USGS) quad mapping, review of
26 photographs taken in the field, and examination of NPS planning documents to provide a cross-
27 referenced narrative, graphic, and photographic depiction of landscape features associated with
28 the property. An introductory section describing the regional environmental context and setting
29 was developed for the narrative, followed by detailed narrative and graphic documentation of the
30 property in accordance with the guidelines provided in National Register Bulletin 18: *How to*
31 *Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* and *The Secretary of the Interior's*
32 *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural*
33 *Landscapes*.²⁹ Based on the guidance offered in the bulletin, documentation of existing landscape
34 features was organized into a series of landscape characteristics as follows:

- 35 • Land Use
- 36 • Buildings and Structures

²⁹ Keller, 1997 and Birnbaum, 1996.

- 1 • Spatial Organization
- 2 • Views and Vistas
- 3 • Circulation
- 4 • Vegetation
- 5 • Small-scale Features

6 Photographs of representative landscape features were included in Chapter Two. These were
7 referenced in the text, and their photographic station points indicated on base maps included
8 within the chapter.

9 *Comparative Analysis of Historic and Existing Conditions*

10 To better understand the relationship between the existing cultural landscape and the character of
11 area during the 1957-58 period of significance, the project team compared historic and
12 contemporary maps and photographs. The three primary goals of the comparative analysis were
13 to:

- 14 ▪ understand which features survive from the period of significance;
- 15 ▪ establish the basis for an integrity assessment; and
- 16 ▪ provide an understanding of the similarities and differences between historic and existing
17 conditions that would contribute to the development of a well-grounded treatment plan for
18 the cultural landscape.

19 The comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions identified contributing,
20 non-contributing, and missing features. Contributing features are those surviving from the period
21 of significance; non-contributing features are those that originated after the period of
22 significance; and missing features are those that are known or thought to have existed on the site
23 during previous periods but that are no longer evident except possibly in the archeological
24 record. If the date of the feature is not known, it is listed as “undetermined.”

25 *Integrity Assessment*

26 Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not.
27 Within the concept of integrity, the National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities that,
28 in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always
29 possess several, and usually most, of the following seven aspects: location, design, setting,
30 materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In Chapter Two, this report summarizes the
31 site’s overall integrity and then assesses integrity in accordance with these aspects, a

1 methodology described in National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register*
2 *Criteria for Evaluation*.³⁰

3 *Treatment Approach and Design Guidelines Methodology*

4 Management issues, the findings of the historic and existing conditions documentation, and the
5 analysis of historic and existing conditions served as the basis and framework for developing the
6 CLR treatment approach and the design guidelines. The treatment approach was developed based
7 on guidance offered by *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic*
8 *Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, as well as other relevant
9 NPS guides and management policies associated with specific project recommendations. Design
10 guidelines based on this treatment approach were developed using selected recommendations
11 determined to be feasible projects leading to preservation-related actions. These recommend-
12 ations were illustrated for better understanding.

13 **Summary of Findings**

14 Based on the comparative analysis and evaluation of the study area, it was determined that the
15 property possesses integrity for the period of significance, from 1957 to 1958, as described in the
16 National Historic Landmark nomination of 1982. However, its integrity has been diminished
17 since 1982 by the loss of some buildings and outbuildings, original street patterns, vegetation,
18 and the establishment of parking lots for the high school and the NHS Visitor Center. The
19 surviving features, including S. Park Street, Daisy Bates, W. Sixteenth Street, and Jones Street,
20 the Central High School building, the Magnolia Mobil service station, the seven residences along
21 S. Park Street across from the school, the Chapel Building, the railroad tracks, and most of the
22 residential buildings and structures that existed during the period of significance in the
23 immediate neighborhood, support the property's integrity of location and some integrity of
24 association, feeling, and setting. The surviving buildings and structures, although many have
25 been altered, also possess integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The loss of other
26 features, such as key residential and commercial buildings and structures present during the
27 period of significance, one residential street, and small-scale features such as street sign bollards
28 and the W. Sixteenth Street bus stop, threatens the site's integrity of design and materials.

29 Based on the significance and integrity of the study area, NPS goals and objectives for the area,
30 and the fact that historic landscapes are rarely static environments, the CLR recommends
31 *rehabilitation* as the overarching treatment approach to management of the site and setting.
32 *Rehabilitation* will protect the resource by advocating stabilization and preservation of
33 contributing resources, while also allowing for new uses such as expanded visitor access and
34 interpretation based on the Secretary of the Interior's definition of rehabilitation as "the process
35 of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an
36 efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which

³⁰ National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1987), 44. Also available online <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb15.pdf> (accessed 3 March 2009).

1 are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."³¹ Specific design guidelines for
2 the study area that also illustrate the rehabilitation concept are presented in Chapter Three.

3 **Recommendations for Further Study**

4 Recommendations for further study regarding the Central High School study area include:

- 5 • completion of a Historic Structure Report for Central High School to provide guidance as
6 Little Rock School District considers opportunities for expansion and development;
- 7 • collaboration with City of Little Rock planning staff, the Little Rock School District, and
8 neighborhood residents, regarding establishment of a local historic preservation district
9 that would provide a zoning overlay for special protection;
- 10 • support of the completion of historic structure reports for the seven residential buildings
11 that face Central High School on the east side of S. Park Street, to better advise those
12 private property owners who wish to restore or rehabilitate their properties to the period
13 of significance associated with the NHS; and
- 14 • continuation of an active search for the original 1922 planting plan for Central High
15 School.

³¹ National Park Service, "Technical Preservation Series: The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation," <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/rhb/stand.htm> (accessed 20 February 2008).

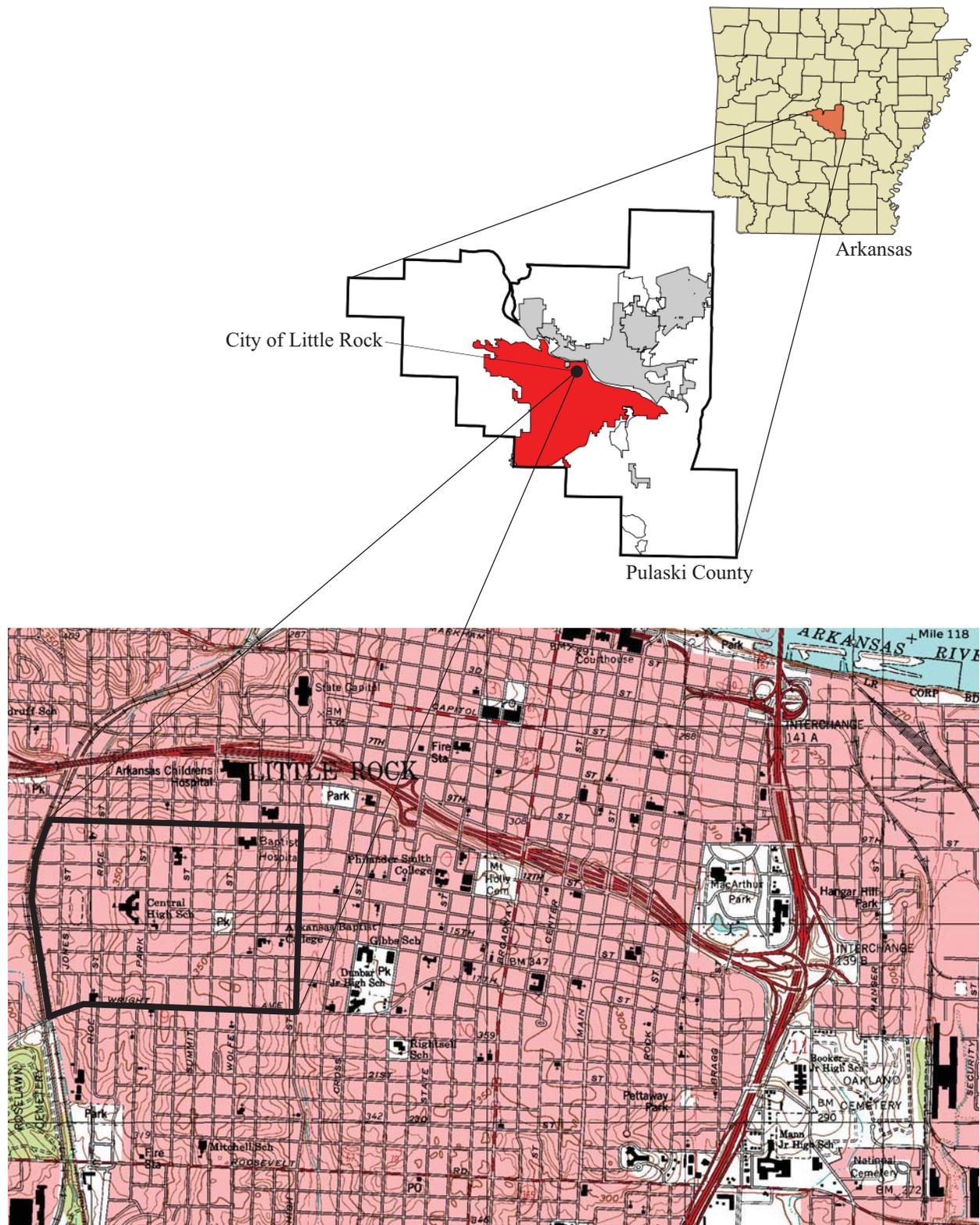


Figure 1-1. Location Map with project study area outlined in black. Source: USGS Little Rock Quadrangle, Arkansas, 1994, <http://www.topozone.com> (accessed January 8, 2008).

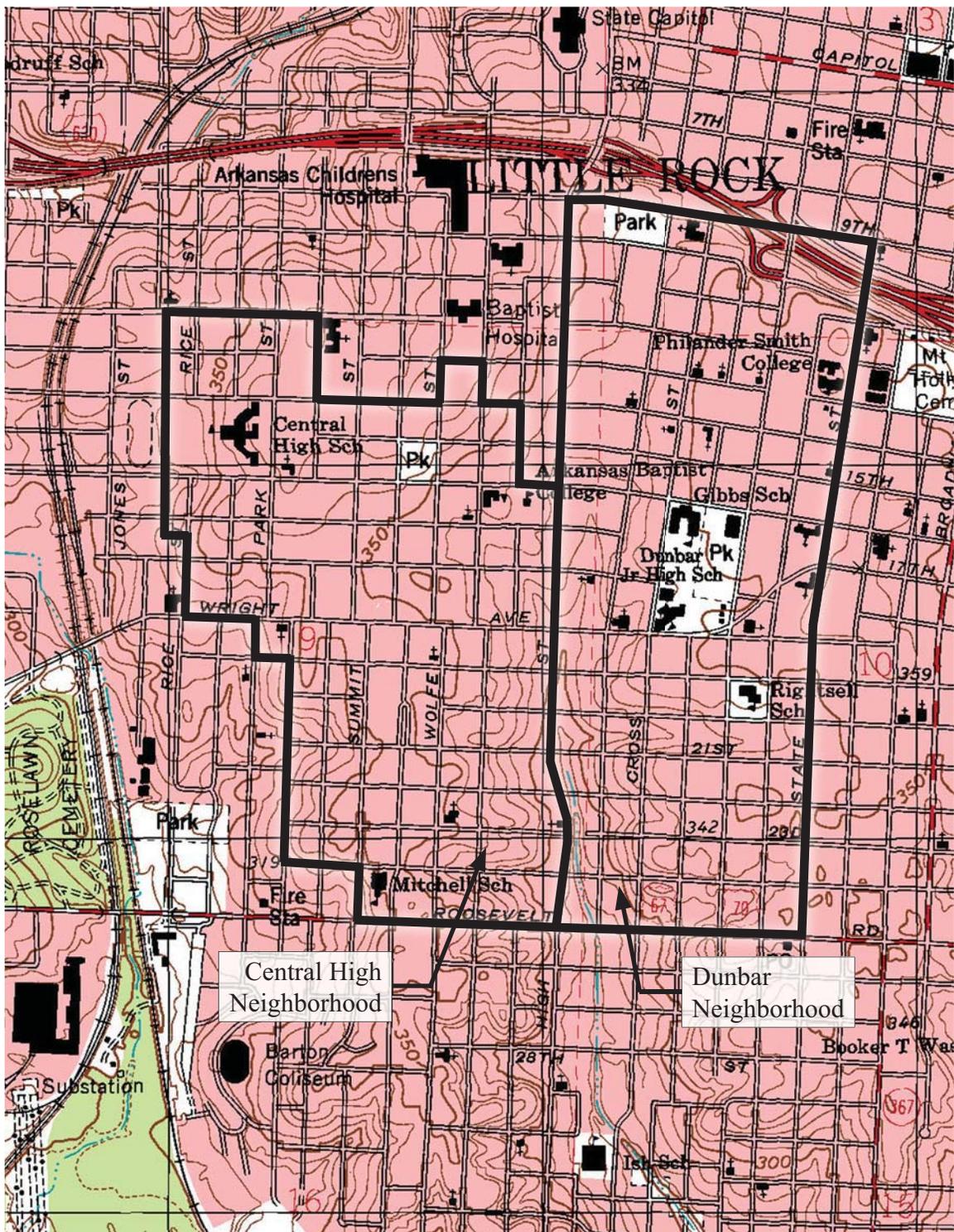


Figure 1-2. Closer view of USGS quad showing Central High School and also Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School (today known as the Dunbar Magnet Middle School). *Source: USGS Little Rock Quadrangle, Arkansas, 1994, <http://www.topozone.com> (accessed January 8, 2008), adapted by JMA.*

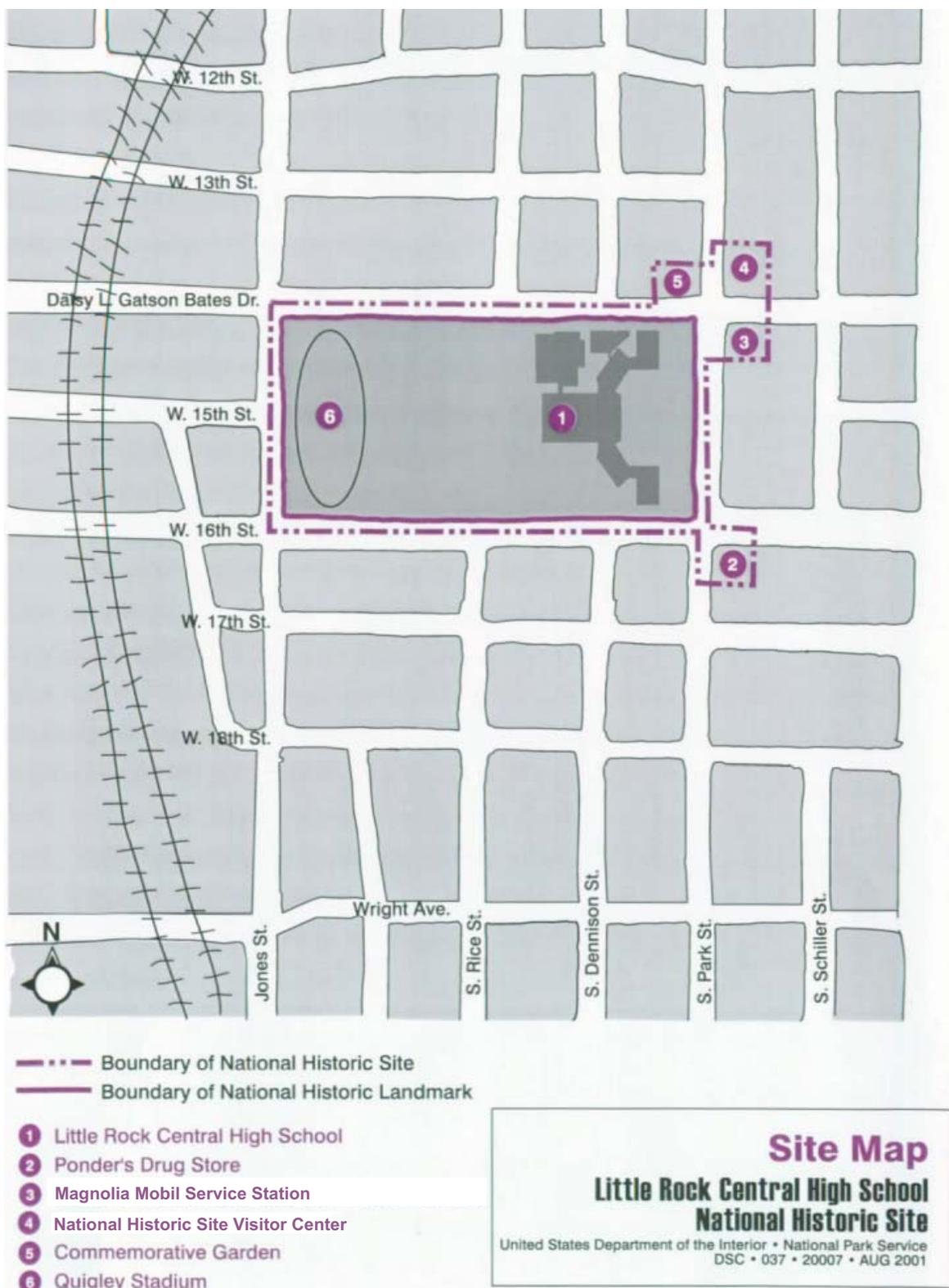


Figure 1-4. Map of the Central High School National Historic Site showing the locations of its major components. *Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, 2002, 19. (Updated)*