

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: South Carolina	
COUNTY: Greenville	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 23 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Reedy River Falls Historic Park and Greenway

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Vardry Park; Reedy River Park, Furman University Botanical Garden and Arboretum

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
both banks of the Reedy River from the falls downstream to Church Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Greenville

STATE South Carolina	CODE 45	COUNTY: Greenville	CODE
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Greenville

STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall, South Main at Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Greenville

STATE:
South Carolina

CODE:
45

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Greenville County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
North and Church Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Greenville

STATE:
South Carolina

CODE:
45

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
S. C. Preliminary Statewide Survey of Historical Places

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 Federal State County Local

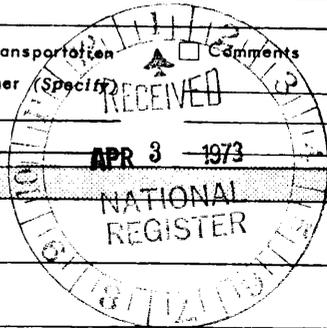
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
S. C. Department of Archives and History

STREET AND NUMBER:
1430 Senate Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Columbia,

STATE:
South Carolina

CODE:
045



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The proposed Reedy River Park in an 8.13 acre plot of land which is located at the heart of present day Greenville. The site includes the forty foot high Reedy River Falls and a secondary set of rapids in a rocky gorge downstream from these. The riverbank portion of the park includes the old Furman University botanical gardens and arboretum as well as the ruins of an early mill.

The 8.13 acre park includes six acres deeded to the City of Greenville by Furman University and some 2.13 acres of additional land. Most of this land lies below the Reedy River falls and provides an extremely desirable open space in this metropolitan area.

The Reedy River Falls lie just southeast of the South Main Street bridge and form the northernmost attraction of the park. At this point, the Reedy River plunges over a forty-foot drop into a rocky gorge which is defined on one side by the steep, rocky and heavily-wooded Camperdown Bluff. Within this area, a secondary set of falls can be found. These rapids were of key importance in the development of Greenville. Some brick ruins, presumed to be the remains of Vardry Mill built ca. 1830, are still visible on the riverbank at this point. The wide granite outcroppings below the main falls will be used for picnic facilities, walkways and footpaths. The low-lying land immediately west of this point was developed forty years ago as a botanical garden and arboretum by Furman University. The University which is no longer located in this area of Greenville has deeded these six acres of land to the city for the proposed park. Although some of the shrubs and trees of the early planting are still evident, the area has largely reverted to its natural state.

The City of Greenville has undertaken to maintain the immediate area. Overhead lighting and underground water connections are being installed. Projects are underway to clear the area of underbrush, excavate the sites of archeological importance and curtail riverbank erosion by the rapidly moving stream. Trails, walkways, footpath and picnic areas will complete the park's development.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1812, 1830**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

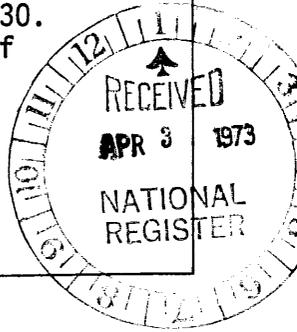
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Reedy River Falls are not only the geographical but also the historical center of Greenville. The speed and power of the falls and the rapids below them were indirectly responsible for the founding of the city in 1812 when the city's first building, a grist mill, was built at this site. Since that time, the mills that were the economic life of the town sat near the falls and used their power to grind flour or manufacture textiles.

Industrial Significance: The land immediately surrounding the Reedy River Falls was deeded to one Richard Pearis just prior to the American Revolutionary War. Reaction by his neighbors to his Tory-Loyalist sympathies forced him to leave the area hurriedly. The only trace of his having been there at all is the fact that his name (despite a change in spelling) has been attached to nearby Paris Mountain. The following owner, Lemuel Alston, remained in control of the land until 1815. He was a representative in the South Carolina legislature in 1789 and was responsible for the establishment of a corn and grist mill at the head of Reedy River Falls in 1812. Traditionally, this has become the date of the founding of Pleasantburg. In 1815, the tract which had increased by then to 11,018 acres was sold to Vardry McBee. The remains of a granite and brick mill which he built on the lower falls in the 1830s can still be discerned. The surrounding town of Pleasantburg continued to prosper with income derived from its thriving industry and in its 1831 charter the town changed its name to Greenville. The continuing growth of the town enticed further industry. The construction of the Camperdown Mills in 1870 was responsible for the decline of the falls and the eventual erosion of the banks below the mill outlets.

Rehabilitation of the area began with the opening of the Furman University botanical garden and arboretum in 1929-30. Since 1967, the Carolina Foothills Garden Club and the City of Greenville have been working to make the central part of this acreage suitable for a recreational park.



9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

_____, "Beautifying and Improving Greenville, S.C. - Report to the Municipal League" Kelsey & Guild; Boston, Jan. 1907
 _____, "The Proposal for Creating the Reedy River Falls Historic Park and Greenway" Carolina Foothills Garden Club, Apr. 1968
 _____, "A Development Plan and Programme" with map, Greenville Planning Commission, Nov. 1967
 Parker, Helen. "Greenville: Gift of the Reedy River" Sandlapper Sept. 1972. p. 16ff.
 Writer's Program of the W.P.A., South Carolina: A Guide to the Palmetto State. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 242-246.

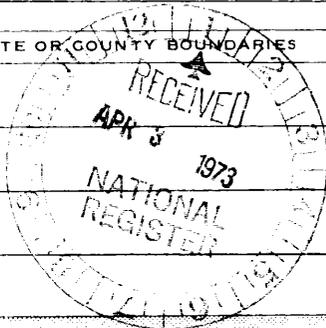
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		34°	50'	39"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		82°	23'	56"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **8 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Charles Thomas (Carol Stevens - Archives)**

ORGANIZATION: **Carolina Foothills Garden Club** DATE: **7 feb 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER: **200 Fairview Ave. / Alta Vista**

CITY OR TOWN: **Greenville** STATE: **South Carolina** CODE: **45**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Charles E. Lee
 Title: S.C. Department of Archives and History
 Date: March 28, 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Wiley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/23/73

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 4/13/73

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(Continuation Sheet)

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8. Significance: continued-

Conservation and Landscaping Significance: The rocky gorge and the bluff side below old Camperdown Mill has profuse and distinctive natural foliage. The old botanical garden also exists within the park's borders. Both of these factors help to produce an appropriate setting for the falls which are "the most distinctive feature of the topography and landscape of the city of Greenville" according to the 1907 report by a group of Boston landscape architects. Preservation of this feature will not only be of historical importance, but it will also provide a valuable recreational asset for downtown Greenville and would be a focal point of the proposed greenway which would connect Reedy River Falls Park and Cleveland Park, another of the city's recreational facilities.

