

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION  
FORM

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: Rotary Park Bridge

other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number: Rotary Park, 31st Street And Rotary Drive

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Huntington

vicinity: \_\_\_\_\_

state: West Virginia

county: Cabell

code: 011

zip code: 25728

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

Susan M Perce  
Signature of Certifying Official

10/29/02  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Rotary Park Bridge \_\_\_\_\_ Cabell \_\_\_\_\_ West Virginia \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Property** \_\_\_\_\_ **County and State** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of Keeper	Date of Action
_____ entered in the National Register	_____	_____
_____ See continuation sheet		
_____ determined eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
_____ See continuation sheet		
_____ determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
_____ removed from the National Register	_____	_____
_____ other (explain):	_____	_____
_____		
_____		
_____		

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of property**

(Check only one box)

- \_\_\_\_\_ private
- public-local
- \_\_\_\_\_ public-State
- \_\_\_\_\_ public-Federal

- \_\_\_\_\_ building(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ district
- \_\_\_\_\_ site
- structure
- \_\_\_\_\_ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0 _____	0 _____	buildings
0 _____	0 _____	sites
1 _____	0 _____	structures
0 _____	0 _____	objects
1 _____	0 _____	TOTAL

**Name of related multiple property listing** N/A \_\_\_\_\_

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously in the listed National Register** 0 \_\_\_\_\_

Rotary Park Bridge \_\_\_\_\_ Cabell \_\_\_\_\_ West Virginia \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property County and State

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

Transportation: Road Related (vehicular) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

Transportation: Road Related (vehicular) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

Other: Rustic Style \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

Foundation Stone \_\_\_\_\_

Walls Stone \_\_\_\_\_

Roof N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(See continuation on sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Rotary Park Bridge

Cabell West Virginia

Name of Property

County and State

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

\_\_\_ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

\_\_\_ B removed from its original location.

\_\_\_ C a birthplace or grave.

\_\_\_ D a cemetery.

\_\_\_ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

\_\_\_ F a commemorative property.

\_\_\_ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

Entertainment/Recreation

**Period of Significance**

1929-1930

**Significant Dates**

1929-1930

**Significant Person**

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(See continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet

Rotary Park Bridge  
Name of Property

Cabell West Virginia  
County and State

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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#### Bibliographical

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### 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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation District

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreege of Property Less than 1

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Quad Map Name: Huntington-WV

A 17 378280 4252984  
Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**  
(See continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**  
(See continuation sheet.)

Rotary Park Bridge \_\_\_\_\_ Cabell \_\_\_\_\_ West Virginia \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_ County and State \_\_\_\_\_

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Jared N. Tuk and Geoffrey B. Henry, Architectural Historians \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: GAI Consultants, Inc. \_\_\_\_\_ Date: May 2002 \_\_\_\_\_

Street & Number: 570 Beatty Road \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: 412-856-6400 \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town: Monroeville \_\_\_\_\_ State: PA \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: 15146 \_\_\_\_\_

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation District \_\_\_\_\_

Street & Number: 210 11th Street #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: 304-696-5954 \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town: Huntington \_\_\_\_\_ State: WV \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: 25728 \_\_\_\_\_

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## Summary Description

The Rotary Park Bridge is located on Rotary Drive in Rotary Park, a 108-acre public park located in the City of Huntington, in western Cabell County, West Virginia. The park was laid out in 1921 on a hilly bluff with commanding views of Huntington to the north and the Guyandotte River to the east. Rotary Park Bridge was built ca. 1929-1930 and is a stone single-arch bridge approximately 175 feet long and 30 feet wide that carries vehicular traffic on Rotary Drive over a narrow ravine. The bridge is constructed of native rock-faced, square-cut ashlar, laid in irregular courses, and is topped by square-cut ashlar coping. Rounded stone abutments mark the southeast, northwest, and southwest ends of the bridge walls. The round arch bridge opening is trimmed with rock-faced ashlar with keystones. Rotary Park Bridge is in good condition and maintains its essential aspects of integrity. The boundary of Rotary Park Bridge is its footprint.

## Location and Setting

Rotary Park is a 108-acre public park located in the City of Huntington, in western Cabell County, West Virginia. The park is one of 11 recreational facilities owned and operated by the Greater Huntington Park and Recreation District. Rotary Park is situated on a hilly bluff overlooking the east end of the City of Huntington, between US Route 60 and the Guyandotte River to the east, and East 28<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. The surrounding terrain is hilly to the south and west, while to the north and east, Rotary Park is surrounded by the floodplain of the Ohio River valley. The Rotary Park property is bounded on the north by 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue East; on the east by US Route 60; on the south by Roby Road and residential development; and on the west by residential development along 28<sup>th</sup> Street East. Currently, the only public access to the park property is via a paved driveway that leads from US Route 60, on the east end of the park.

Rotary Park, named for its historic association with the Rotary Club of Huntington, was established in 1921. The park's road system, dating from 1929-1930, consists of numerous winding paved and gravel roads, most of which are located on the east side of the park and are currently used as walking trails. Included in this system are approximately 6.2 miles of paved road designated for public driving, from US Route 60 to a parking area along Rotary Road, near the peak of the hill.

## Rotary Park Bridge (1929-1930)—Contributing Structure

Rotary Park Bridge is located approximately one-half mile into Rotary Park from US Route 60, at the intersection of the current entrance road with Rotary Road. The immediate setting consists of thick stands of deciduous trees, some covered with vines or ivy. A portion of the bridge itself is covered with ivy as well. Rotary Park Bridge carries

east-west vehicular traffic along two-lane Rotary Road over a ravine that is currently a dry creek bed.

Built ca. 1929-1930 as part of the development of the Rotary Park road system, Rotary Park Bridge is a stone single-arch bridge measuring approximately 175 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 50 feet high, and has a shallow S-shaped footprint. The central arch is rounded and is approximately 25 feet high. Rotary Park Bridge is constructed of native rock-faced, square-cut ashlar, laid in both regular and irregular courses. The top course or coping is made up of identical square-cut ashlar blocks. This coping serves as a 1-foot-high wall on either side of the bridge, as there is no guardrail. The stones vary in size from 8"x 11" to 18"x 28". The stones, although partially covered with ivy, are in good condition, and show no visible signs of repointing, repair, or replacement.

Rounded stone abutments mark the southeast, northwest, and southwest ends of the bridge walls. The northeast abutment has been removed, although the rest of the wall is intact. Each abutment is 4 feet high and 3 ½ feet wide at its base and is faced with stones that vary widely in size and surface texture. The top stones are particularly rough.

The round arch bridge opening is trimmed with nearly square rock-faced ashlar (slightly darker in color) with a keystone at the apex of the arch. Centered above the arch at the road grade are two original open water drains, one on each side of the roadway, which carry rainwater through the bridge walls and onto molded stone spouts. These drain into the ravine below.

The Rotary Park Bridge retains a high level of integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, setting, association, and feeling. The bridge has been well maintained over the years. Alterations include repaving of Rotary Road at regular intervals since 1929, and the removal of the northeast abutment at an unknown date.



## Statement of Significance

The Rotary Park Bridge is significant under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation on the local level with the period of significance being 1929-1930. The bridge is significant for its association with the founding and development of the Huntington parks system in the early twentieth century, and specifically with the history of Rotary Park. Rotary Park was founded in 1921 by the Rotary Club of Huntington, whose leaders had a strong commitment to providing parks and recreational facilities for Huntington's residents. The park was envisioned as a rustic retreat within the Huntington City limits for residents to enjoy nature and to take advantage of impressive views of the city and its environs from several elevated sites. In 1925, Rotary Park was acquired by the Huntington Board of Park Commissioners (now the Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation District), who still own and operate the park. A system of winding roads was laid out in Rotary Park in 1929-1930, and the Rotary Park Bridge was probably built as part of this roadway system. Rotary Park Bridge, with its use of native materials and natural finishes is typical of the nationally popular Rustic Style, popular in the design of park buildings and structures during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the 1960s and 1970s, Rotary Park was altered by the construction of numerous athletic fields and other recreational facilities, leaving Rotary Park Bridge as the only intact element of its 1920s appearance.

### Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation

Huntington's park system had its beginning in 1908 when Rufus Switzer, then a member of the City Council, proposed the purchase from the Huntington Land Company of 55 acres of land along Four Pole Creek (Wallace 1947: 50). In 1909, Switzer, by then Mayor, hired New Jersey landscape architect J.T. Withers to prepare plans for Ritter Park, a formal park laid out in Huntington's center, and to suggest sites for future public parks. The project languished until 1921 when a City-Civic Committee, led by the Huntington Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, initiated a drive for public parks and playgrounds in Huntington (Wallace 1947: 50).

Huntington's Rotary Club was led during the 1910s and 1920s by civic-minded leaders who strongly believed in the contribution of public parks to the physical and social health of Huntington's citizens. Among these leaders were Rotary President Thomas Bailey, J. R. Marcum, president of the Union Trust Bank, and Colonel George Selden Wallace, the so-called "Father of Huntington's park system."

In 1921, the Rotary Club joined forces with the Kiwanis Club to purchase undeveloped land in Huntington for use as public park and recreation areas. Rotary member George S. Wallace and Kiwanis member Harry Harvey led the public subscription effort, which eventually raised more than \$70,000 (Ogren 1929). Among the largest contributors to the effort were C.W. Campbell, who gave \$12,500; Colonel J.H. Long, who donated land, Ed

Love, and the Big Four Realty Company, who also donated land. The money raised went towards purchase of approximately 60 acres in southeast Huntington from owner John L. Hite (Ogren 1929). The property fronted on a bluff with commanding views of the Ohio and Guyandotte Rivers and was undoubtedly selected for its great scenic beauty. In that same year, the Rotary Club purchased 24 acres of land near Twelve Pole Creek in Wayne County, near the Cabell County line, approximately two miles south and west of the City of Huntington. This property formed the nucleus of Camp (Mad) Anthony Wayne, a rustic campground operated for many years by the Huntington Boys Scouts, although owned by the Rotary Club.

During its first few years of existence, Rotary Park received few if any improvements, and was considered generally inaccessible (Ogren 1929). This was in line with its designation as a natural scenic area, visited mostly by hikers who were willing to scale its summit, there to find "a natural charm and a vantage point which more than compensates for the slight difficulties involved" (Ogren 1929). According to a newspaper article, "The landscaping arrangements worked out for (Rotary Park) plan no artificial features, whatever, nor will there be any automobile roads running through the park proper. There will be gravel walks and bridle paths aplenty, but nature will be left strictly alone in the matter of highways" (Ogren 1929). Colonel Wallace and others had a larger vision for Rotary Park, however, and wished to see limited development at the park to encourage day-visits, picnicking, and camping by Huntington's residents.

In 1925, the Rotary-Kiwanis group, joined by other prominent Huntington citizens, brought about the passage by the State Legislature of an act creating the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Huntington. Colonel Wallace became the Board's first chairman, a position he held into the late 1940s. The Board assumed control of Huntington's publicly owned parks, as well as Rotary Park, and another park property known as Kiwanis Park. The Board undertook the purchase of additional lands adjoining Rotary Park, including 100 building lots facing Eighth Avenue, touching the south of the Rotary Park property (Ogren 1929). A 1929 newspaper article stated that a topographical plan of the park had been made, and that "elaborate plans have been worked out for turning it into one of the most charming parks in West Virginia" (Ogren 1929).

In 1929, the Board hired landscape engineer Gus Wofford to "direct the beautification of the city parks, playgrounds, and cemeteries" (Ogren 1930). Wofford was most likely responsible for the design of the roadway system in Rotary Park, completed in late 1930. An August 10, 1930 article in the *Huntington Herald Advertiser* shows the route of Rotary Road, the park's principal thoroughfare. The paved Rotary Road provided automobile access from Roby Road and Smith Streets and followed a winding path through the park, including vantage points over the Guyandotte and Ohio Rivers. Several unnamed side roads branched off of Rotary Road, providing access to the southern end of the park. Although an exact construction date for the stone bridge carrying Rotary Road

over a small creek bed in Rotary Park is not known, it is likely it was completed as part of the laying out and paving of the entire Rotary Road.

Rotary Park's layout and development during the 1920s and 1930s showed the direct influence of the nineteenth-century Romantic movement in American landscape architectural history. As practiced by Frederick Law Olmstead and others, American landscape architecture eschewed the formalism of Renaissance and Baroque design in favor of landscapes more in tune with their natural surroundings. The premiere example was New York's Central Park, which through many artful contrivances managed to convey a rustic appearance in the middle of America's largest city. Architects and landscape architects took to designing park buildings and structures (bridges, viaducts, culverts, and park furniture) in what was to be called the Rustic Style. This style emphasized the use of native building materials and more natural finishes. The Rotary Park Bridge is clearly in the Rustic Style, with its shallow S curve, its use of native building stone laid in irregular courses, and its rough-cut finish. The bridge was designed to complement, rather than intrude on the landscape, one of the central tenets of the Rustic Style.

The Rustic Style was readily adapted by landscape architects and architects building during the formative years of the United States national park system of the early twentieth century. By the 1910s, the style became the preferred style for the construction of lodges, cabins, and roadway and landscape design in national and state parks. The style was given an additional boost by the 1935 publication by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of *Park Structures and Facilities* that illustrated Rustic-Style cabins, bathhouses and lodges, as well as such mundane objects as signs, drinking fountains, and bridges constructed by the CCC in various state and national parks (Newton 1975: 580).

Since its inception, Rotary Park has been an integral part of the expansive system of parks and recreational facilities owned and maintained by the GHPRD. By 1946, the GHPRD park system consisted of more than 800 acres. The park system by then included Rotary Park, Ritter Park, a formal park in the center of Huntington; Kiwanis Park on the south side of Four Pole Creek; Memorial Park; 25-acre St. Cloud Commons, and Camp Mad Anthony Wayne (Wallace 1947: 51).

By the 1960s, the focus and direction of Rotary Park had shifted away from providing a purely rustic and rural retreat. Instead, plans were developed in the 1970s for the construction of numerous athletic facilities in the park, including baseball fields, a swimming pool, and running tracks. Thus, the Rotary Park Bridge remains as one of the few intact features of Rotary Park's appearance from the 1920s.

**REFERENCES**

- Board of Park Commissioners of City of Huntington  
1925-1945 Meeting Minutes. In possession of Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation District.
- Cabell County Land Records
- Jadrnak, Jackie J.  
1977 "Rotary Park . . . Troubled Dreams." *Huntington Advertiser*. 4 April 1977.
- Jourdan, Katherine M.  
1997 *Little Beaver Dam* National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Charleston, WV.
- Marshall, Paul D.  
1993 *Kanawha State Forest Historic District* National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Charleston, WV.
- Marshall University Center for Regional Progress  
1992 "Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Action Plan." Unpublished manuscript in possession of Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation District.
- Massey Tim R.  
1978 "Ballfield Promised for Rotary Park." *Huntington Herald Dispatch*. 16 September 1978.
- Ogren, Ruth  
1929 "Rugged Beauty of Rotary Park Will Lure Many." *Huntington Herald Advertiser*. 28 July 1929.  
1930 "City's Greatest Park Area Open Now to Drivers—Rotary Road Extension Makes Rotary Park Accessible to Public." *Huntington Herald Advertiser*. 10 August 1930.
- Newton, Norman  
1975 *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Cambridge, MA.
- Rosenlieb, Duane  
1978 "Park Plans to Include Baseball." *Herald Dispatch*. 23 September 1978.

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the Rotary Park Bridge is consistent with the bridge's footprint, and encompasses an area of less than one acre.

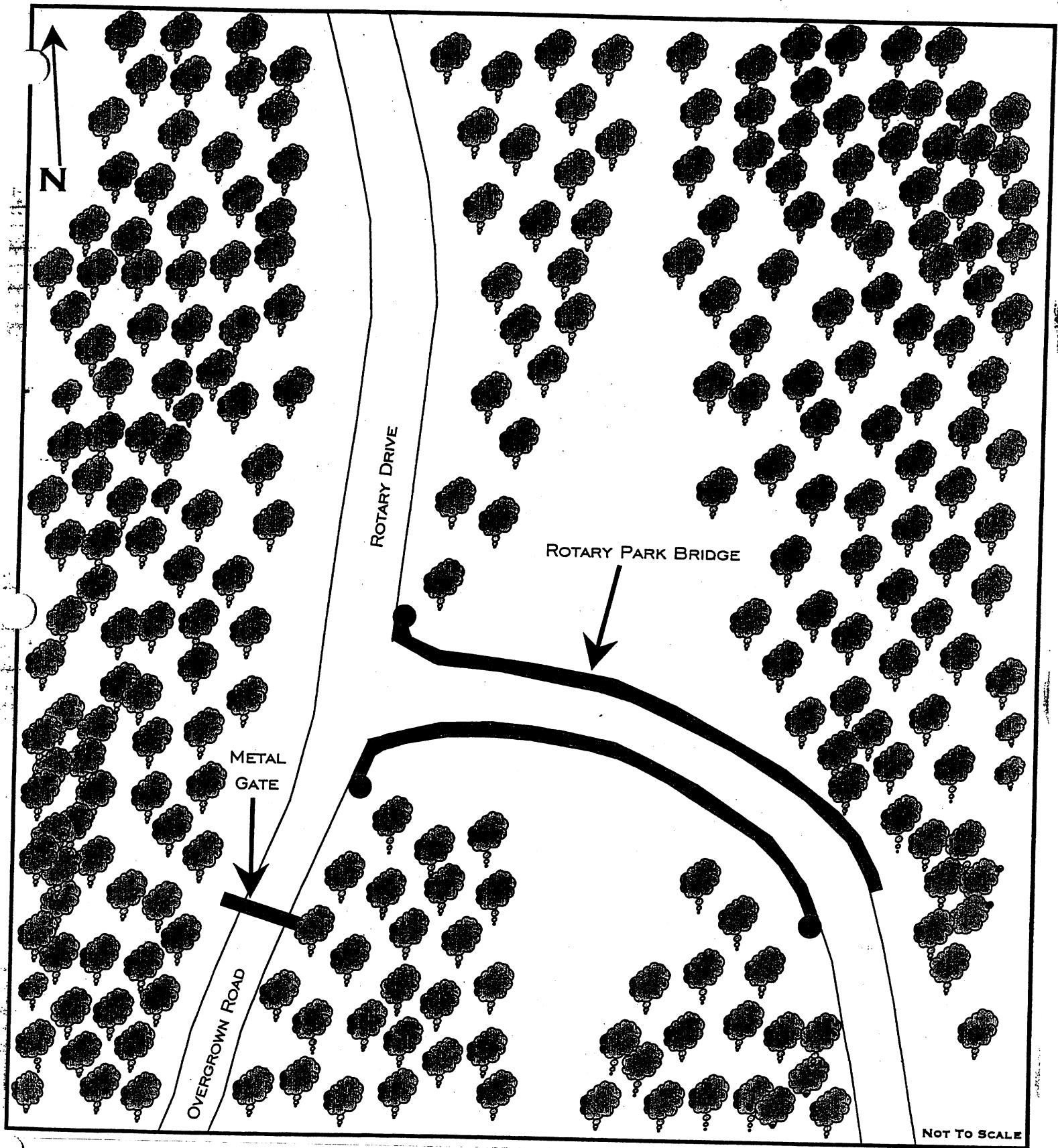
### **Boundary Justification**

The nominated boundary for the Rotary Park Bridge is drawn to include the complete structure of the resource, including its walls, abutments, approaches, and decking. These elements are the extant historic features of the bridge. The boundary is drawn to exclude the surrounding non-contributing park features, which date from after the period of significance.

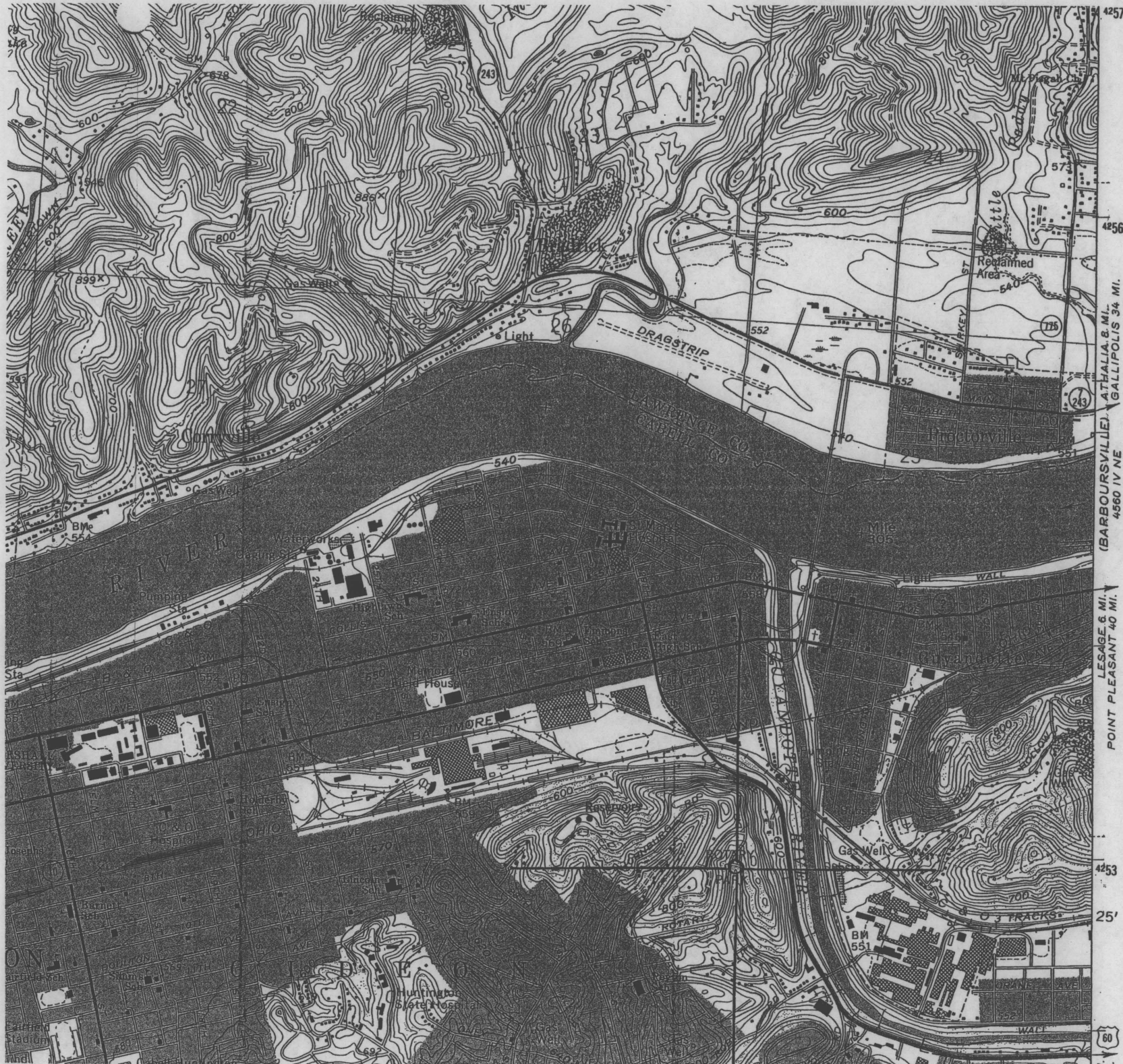
**Rotary Park Bridge  
Huntington  
Cabell County, West Virginia  
Jared N. Tuk, Photographer  
19 February 2002**

**Negatives at West Virginia Division of Culture and History  
(State Historic Preservation Office)  
Charleston, West Virginia**

- Photo 1/3      Overview of Bridge. Camera Facing Northeast.
- Photo 2/3      Overview of Bridge, Showing Setting and Southeast Abutment. Camera Facing Northwest.
- Photo 3/3      View of Opening With Creek Bed Under Bridge, Showing Features of Stonework. Camera Facing North.



**FIGURE**  
**SKETCH PLAN, ROTARY PARK BRIDGE,**  
**HUNTINGTON , CABELL COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA**



4257  
4256  
ATHALIA 8 MI.  
GALLIPOLIS 3 1/4 MI.  
(BARBOURSVILLE)  
4560 IV NE  
LESAGE 6 MI.  
POINT PLEASANT 40 MI.  
4253  
25'  
60

ROTARY PARK BRIDGE  
ROTARY PARK, 31<sup>ST</sup> ST.  
AND ROTARY DR.,  
HUNTINGTON,  
CABELL COUNTY, WV

UTM ZONE 17  
378280 E  
4252984 N