



HISTORIC NAME Market Square Park
OTHER NAMES Centennial Park
ADDRESS Bounded by 10th Street, Central Avenue,
 12th Street, and River Avenue

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS Commerce/Trade
CURRENT FUNCTIONS Landscape/Park
OWNERSHIP Municipal
ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION Site

	Main Building	Other buildings/features
FOUNDATION		Rock fountain, Gazebo Granite War Memorial Wrought iron fences
WALLS		
ROOF		
OTHER		

DESCRIPTION Centennial Park was the old Market Square laid out by Holland's founder, the Reverend Albertus C. Van Raalte, in 1847. The park established in 1876 as the city's first park encompasses one city block. Lights were added in 1894 and oak benches in 1896. A newly constructed octagon-shaped gazebo (1989 - noncontributing) of cream brick with red brick rectangular inserts, metal roof, iron posts and decorative fencing is situated at the north end of the park. Restrooms are located beneath the new structure. The older underground restrooms (1904) are still intact and used only for storage. New red-brick walkways (1989-1992), following the original gravel paths, provide diagonal and circular paths through the park.

An historic twenty-foot high porous rock grotto-like fountain donated and built in 1902 by Dutch immigrant Tenius Ten Houten serves as the focal point of the park. The rustic coral fountain which is ringed by a Victorian-inspired iron fence (1993) is planted in the summer with about 800 tiny plants that are carefully set into holes cut in the porous tufa. Lush green moss provided a background for delicate ferns, blue lobelia, pansies, trailing vinca, ivy, coleus, begonias and jewel-like fuschia.

To the south of the rock fountain lies a lily pool (1902) that is also ringed by an iron fence (1993.) The tufa rockwork is

planted with ivy and colorful annuals. The pool is stocked with goldfish during the summer months. Both the goldfish and the tropical plants spend their winters at the city's greenhouse a few blocks from the park.

On the west side of the park, facing River Street, a granite memorial to War Veterans is flanked by flags of the United States and Michigan as well as by porous rock flower holders (1902) that display colorful annuals.

HISTORY Centennial Park was given to the City of Holland in 1876 by the Van Raalte family to be used as a public park and to commemorate the United States Centennial. The planting of trees and shrubs was undertaken as a community enterprise, and each family's memorial tree was identified with an engraved metal token. Each spring, the park, an important part of Holland's Tulip Time festival, is filled with tulips. Located near the center of downtown Holland, it provides a peaceful oasis with many shade trees, benches, and colorful gardens, an inviting respite from traffic and crowds. It is a living monument to the efforts of nineteenth-century Hollanders who responded to Michigan Governor James J. Bagley's plea for citizens to plant commemorative centennial trees. One of a dwindling number of Victorian-inspired public parks, Centennial Park is also an enduring and well-preserved visual resource that commemorated the history of landscape design.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1876
ORIGINAL OWNER

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Landscape Architecture

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Centennial Park, an increasingly rare example of nineteenth-century public square planning in Michigan, is significant because of its historic associations with the City of Holland and with Victorian landscape design. The park today is a legacy to nineteenth-century Hollanders' collective efforts to plant trees and to establish a public park.

Although some of the park's original features have changed over the years, the park maintains many of its original Victorian landscape elements. The assortment of plants which fill the tufa fountain today are similar to the original plantings. "Lush green moss provides a background for delicate ferns, blue lobelia, pansies, trailing vinca, ivy, coleus, begonias and jewel-like fuchsia." The tufa rock in the lily pool is planted with ivy and colorful annuals and the pool itself blooms with white and red water lilies. In carrying on the Victorian popularity of exotic, lush plants, Centennial Park continues planting "palms, dwarf banana, and tree-like standards of lantana and fuchsia, along with orange-flowered clivias, orange-leaved crotons, double hibiscus, flowering maples, fragrant citrus trees, pink and white oleanders, camelias, giant Philodendron

selloum, and several birds-of-paradise." Of all of these Victorian plants, the most impressive are the palms which are set in old-fashioned wooden planters and rolled out each summer to take their place among the maple trees. Other summer plantings which grace the carpet beds are brightly-colored annuals such as "petunias, verbena, salvia, coleus, dwarf phlox, portulaca and lovelia" which replace the spring tulips that are planted each fall for the annual Tulip Time festival. Some of the features have changed over the years but the park's Victorian splendor is intact. Original gravel paths have been replaced by brick walkways (1992), delicate woven-wire fencing around the rockwork fountain has been replaced by cast-iron fencing (1993). An original 1907 bandstand was removed during the depression and a new gazebo, located to the east of the original bandstand, was added to the park in 1989.

BIBLIOGRAPHY National Register of Historic Places nomination.

Kunst, Scott G. "Holland's Centennial Park, A Victorian Survivor," Michigan History. July/August, 1986.

Interview. Bernie Hibma, Centennial Park caretaker. May, 1993.