

Highland Park Tower

1570 Highland Parkway

St. Paul

A vital part of St. Paul's water system and the only architecturally significant water tower in the city, the Highland Park Water Tower is an important city and neighborhood landmark. The property is additionally significant as the design of Clarence Wesley Wigington, one of St. Paul's few known black architects.

Wigington was born in Lawrence, Kansas, on April 21, 1883. He attended high school in Omaha, Nebraska. After attending architecture school for one year, he went to work for Thomas R. Kimball, a nationally recognized architect who was then president of the American Institute of Architects. While in Omaha, Wigington received a commission to design a church and two apartment buildings and won the competition to design two dormitories for the National Religious Training School in Durham, North Carolina (then an all-black school, now North Carolina State University facilities, Durham).

After relocating to St. Paul, Wigington worked on various projects ranging from creameries to churches. In 1915, after taking the city architectural examination and scoring higher than anyone previously tested, Wigington began working as an architectural draftsman and designer in the St. Paul Department of Parks, Playgrounds, and Public Buildings. His career with the city of St. Paul lasted 34 years.

The Highland Park Tower was constructed in 1928 at a cost of \$69,438. The octagonal tower has a base of smoothly dressed random-cut ashlar Kasota stone, a pressed brick shaft with several windows, and a Bedford stone lookout area. The 134-foot-tall tower is located on the second highest point in the city of St. Paul, and its observation deck affords a dramatic, panoramic view of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The tower is a dominant feature of the Highland Park's neighborhood skyline and has been preserved in good condition with few alterations (see also Harriet Island Pavilion and Holman Field Administration Building). [C 7/17/86, 86001670]