

United States Department of the Interior**National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Caponi Art Park

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 1215 Diffley RdCity or town: Eagan State: MN County: DakotaNot For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A**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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:**Date**_____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:**Date**_____
Title :_____
**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:¹ ☒
- Public – Local ☒
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☐
- District ☒
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

¹ The sculptures created by Anthony Caponi are privately owned by Cheryl Caponi.

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

2

Noncontributing

0

buildings

1

0

sites

3

1

structures

31

9

objects

37

10

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single-dwelling

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Work of Art

LANDSCAPE: park

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single-dwelling

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Work of Art

LANDSCAPE: park

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete Block, Wood, Concrete, Metal,
Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Caponi Art Park is located near the center of the Twin Cities suburb of Eagan, to the west of the intersection of Lexington Avenue South and Diffley Road. The modern-day park is composed of approximately 60 acres: 20 acres to the north of Diffley Road and 40 acres to the south of Diffley Road. The southern 40 acres primarily functioned as cattle pasture until the construction of the Diffley Road underpass in 1993, and most of the features on this section were constructed after the end of the proposed period of significance for the property in 1994. Therefore, the boundaries of the National Register property are limited to the northern 20 acres, which are bordered by Diffley Road to the south, Patrick Eagan Park to the north, a single-family housing development to the west and single-family housing and commercial development to the east (see Figure A, Property Boundaries). The 20-acre historic district is a wooded site with pedestrian trails built into the natural contours of the landscape. It holds a private residence and art studio building, both composed of concrete block and partially clad with wood paneling; hand-crafted site elements such as stone walls and outdoor fireplace; and over two dozen metal, stone, and concrete sculptures set into the landscape. The property continues in its historic capacity as an art park and retains excellent integrity.

The Caponi Art Park is locally significant under Criterion B in the area of art for association with artist and art educator Anthony (Tony) Caponi and under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture as a notable and unique local example of a late twentieth century outdoor sculpture park.

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Beginning in 1949, Caponi constructed his house and a studio on the site and shaped the surrounding landscape into an art park. More than just an outdoor gallery to display his works, the rolling acreage was also the canvas and substance of his art. The site was Caponi's home, his studio, and, as a professor and the head of Saint Paul's Macalester College's art department, often his classroom. The park is the best representation of Caponi's significance as an artist, as it is the work most strongly associated with Caponi and clearly demonstrates his artistic philosophy about the interrelationship between art and nature. Additionally, Caponi's intent to develop the site into a public art park demonstrates his desire to expand art education and enjoyment beyond the walls of the museum and classroom and reflects his significance as an educator. While the development of Caponi Art Park aligns with the outdoor sculpture garden trend of the late twentieth century, Caponi's focus on the landscape itself as his primary canvas, and his desire to work within the existing natural setting, was a unique design decision that distinguishes this designed landscape from other late twentieth century sculpture gardens in the Twin Cities.

The period of significance begins in 1949 when Caponi purchased the property and began construction on his home, and ends in 1994, when Caponi opened his land for public enjoyment, shifting the primary purpose of the site from personal canvas, studio, and classroom space to public gallery. As a site of exceptional significance within the context of Anthony Caponi's work, the park meets Criteria Consideration G.

Narrative Description

Per National Register Bulletin 18, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Landscapes*, the following description is organized by the various features of a designed landscape: spatial organization, topography, vegetation, circulation, structures and site furnishings, sculptures, and buildings. The main contributing and non-contributing resources listed in the resource count in Section 5 above include:

Contributing Sites: 1	Non-Contributing Sites: 0
- Art park/landscape	
Contributing Buildings: 2	Non-Contributing Buildings: 0
- Anthony Caponi Home	
- Anthony Caponi Studio	
Contributing Structures: 3	Non-Contributing Structures: 1
- Stone walls	- Activity shelter
- Shed	
- Metal picket fence	
Contributing Objects: 31	Non-Contributing Objects: 9
- Fireplace	- 9 sculptures
- 30 sculptures	
Total Contributing Resources: 37	Total Non-Contributing Resources: 10

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Spatial Organization:

The 20 acres of land north of Diffley Road can be divided into three areas (“zones”) based on vegetation, patterns of circulation, and use (see sketch map and Figure LL):

- 1) The west trail zone with wooded trails on the far west side of the park (Photo 0001)
- 2) The core zone, the nucleus of the park that includes a gravel drive and accessible parking area, Anthony Caponi’s studio, the Caponi Home, outdoor fireplace, and most of the park’s sculptures and hand-crafted stone walls (Photos 0002 – 0019)
- 3) The east trail zone on the east half of the park that contains wooded trails as well as the labyrinth and “The Grove,” a clearing with a concentration of sculptures (Photos 0020 – 0026)

The east and west zones are heavily forested with both a tree canopy and undergrowth, with trails that follow the topographical variations created by hills, gullies, and other natural landscape features. The west zone contains no sculptures. In the east zone, sculptures are located along some trails as well as within The Grove, a concentration of the park’s major sculptures at a clearing at a trail intersection. A labyrinth is located at the north side of the east zone.

The core zone separates the east and west zones. In contrast to the rest of the site, the core is a savanna-like area with large mature trees spaced far apart across a grassy lawn. As one moves north, the grade slopes downward, with an almost continuous decline in elevation from Diffley Road to the north end of the park. The only two buildings on the property – the Caponi Home and Anthony Caponi’s studio – are located in the core, and sculptures are scattered throughout the area. Most visitors enter the core zone through an underpass beneath Diffley Road (constructed in 1993 and outside of the historic park boundaries) that provides access from the parking lot on the south side of Diffley Road. A gravel drive off of Diffley Road leads to the accessible parking area and studio building. At the parking area, another wide trail turns north, leading to the Caponi Home and the activity shelter to the north of the house. A knoll is located at the far north end of the core. Stone walls near Diffley Road, the studio building, and the Caponi Home provide man-made terracing that complements the natural topography.

Integrity: As indicated in the following sections, most of the park’s existing patterns of vegetation, circulation, and use were present by 1994, and the park’s spatial relationships largely reflect the historic configuration.

Topography:

The park has a significant amount of topographical variation. The buildings, structures, trails, and landscaping that Caponi created were designed to work within the natural contours of the site. In general, the elevation is highest near Diffley Road and decreases as one moves north across the park. Runoff traveling downward towards the ponds in Patrick Eagan Park to the north has created three major ravines on the site (see Figure B). One of these runs south-north in the west zone (Photo 0001). The other two run southeast-northwest and north-south in the east zone. The labyrinth in the east zone sits in a natural depression.

At the core zone, the tree and vegetation cover is thinner, making the site’s grade change highly visible (Photos 0007 and 0015). From Diffley Road, the grade slopes downward, continuing until the north end

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of the zone, which is essentially the north property line of the park. Here, a grassy knoll marks the point where the elevation begins to rise again as one moves east (Photo 0019). Around the studio building and Caponi Home, hand-crafted stone walls provide terracing that accents the natural elevation change.

Integrity: As shown in historic and current topographical maps (see Figures B and C), the overall topography has remained relatively stable from the early 1950s through the present day.

Vegetation:

Vegetation on the site, both historically and currently, reflects Caponi's desire to work within and enhance the land's natural state. Most of the existing vegetation on the property is informal and unplanned. Exceptions are the large grass lawn in the core (Photos 0015 and 0016), which is mowed regularly and is separated from the wooded areas in the east zone by a concrete curb, and some small planted beds near the Diffley Road underpass, the Caponi Home, and the studio building. Brick and concrete block curbs also border The Grove in the east zone.

When Caponi first acquired the site, the land was being used as pasture, and the east and west zones were less heavily forested. Historic aerial photographs suggest that by 1970, both had assumed the general tree density that exists today (see Figures D and E), with thick undergrowth and tall tree canopies. Most vegetation is deciduous, with the exception of a group of red pines near the ravine at the east side of the park, which Caponi planted in the 1950s (Photo 0026) and a few coniferous trees along the entrance drive. The Grove was cleared of trees during the period of significance (Photo 0022), though the sculptures in this area were installed after 1994.²

Much of the core zone was originally heavily wooded, with many red oaks. Beginning in the 1950s, oak wilt began to kill many of these trees (a situation that continues today). Historic photographs suggest that by the 1970s, the core had developed the savanna-like character that it retains today (see Figure F and Photos 0003, 0015, and 0019), with mature oaks and birch dispersed across a grass lawn. The grassy knoll at the north end of the core was intentionally cleared of trees in the 1960s, to show off its natural sculptural qualities (Photo 0019).³

Integrity: As indicated by a 1991 aerial photograph of the site (see Figure G), tree cover has remained relatively stable since the end of the period of significance. While vegetation has continued to change and evolve since 1994, the general character has remained much the same.

Circulation:

Current pedestrian access from the south 40 acres of the park is located at the southwest corner of the site, where a paved sidewalk passes beneath Diffley Road via the underpass.⁴ Direct vehicular access from Diffley Road to the northern 20 acres is provided in two historic locations along Diffley Road. The gravel drive at the southwest corner of the site has been located in this spot since the 1950s (Photo 0004). It was at one time composed of reclaimed wooden blocks; these were replaced with gravel sometime in the early

² Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, January 26, 2022 and in email to author, January 26, 2022.

³ Cheryl Caponi, in conversation with author, August 2021, and in email to author, January 26, 2022.

⁴ Cheryl Caponi, in conversation with author, August 2021; Debra O'Connor, "Creating a Soft Spot for His Art," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 9, 1993.

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1990s. This gravel drive runs east and north, leading to a gravel parking area used only by the Caponi family and visitors who require accessible parking. The studio building is located on the east side of the parking area (Photo 0011). From here, another gravel drive continues in an arc around the north side of the house to provide access to the activity shelter (Photo 0015). The second vehicular entrance at the southeast corner of the site, restricted by a gate, also dates from the 1950s. A third access point from Diffley Road is located directly to the south of the studio building and was installed by 1982; this entrance is used by maintenance equipment only.⁵

Most of the remaining circulation on the site consists of trails and walkways designed for pedestrian use. Trails in the east and west zones are composed of dirt, gravel, and grass (Photos 0001 and 0026). The west zone has one large trail loop accessed via the sidewalk at the Diffley Road underpass. The east half of this loop was installed in 1993; the west half was installed in 2008 and is non-historic. The east zone has several trail loops that intersect at The Grove, all of which were developed between the 1950s and the late 1980s. The east trails are accessed near the studio building and at the knoll in the core zone.⁶ These trails also provide access to the labyrinth constructed in 2015 at the north side of the east zone (Photo 0020).⁷ The labyrinth is centered on a tree and features paths created by granite blocks set into the ground.

At the core zone, narrow, curving pedestrian walkways with hairpin switchbacks are located immediately to the north of Diffley Road and around the studio building (Photos 0003 – 0010). These hand-crafted walkways were constructed by the late 1980s and consist of cobblestone and concrete paths and concrete and stone curbs. One walkway composed of reclaimed wooden blocks also runs across the north side of the parking area to connect the studio building to the house (Photo 0013). To the north of the studio building, a gravel and dirt switchback trail with concrete and concrete block curbs leads from the studio and parking area down to the grassy lawn (Photo 0012). This was also constructed by the late 1980s.⁸

Integrity: As shown on the site development diagram (see Figure KK), the majority of the circulation on the site was installed by 1994. While paving materials may have been added or altered since the end of the period of significance, historic circulation patterns remain.

Structures and Site Furnishings:

The Caponi Art Park contains several structures and objects that were hand-crafted by Caponi during the period of significance, as well as one non-contributing structure, the activity shelter. These features, which are included in the resource count in Section 5, are listed with their contributing/non-contributing status below. The letter in parenthesis next to each feature corresponds to its label on the sketch map.

Stone Walls: Contributing (C)

The areas surrounding the studio building, Caponi Home, and fireplace feature rubble masonry walls constructed by Caponi using fieldstone collected from neighboring farms. Most are uncoursed, though the stone wall along the east side of the studio building has regular coursing. The majority of the existing

⁵ Cheryl Caponi, in conversation with author, August 2021, and in email to author, January 26, 2022.

⁶ Cheryl Caponi, in conversation with author, August 2021, and in email to author, January 26, 2022.

⁷ Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, January 26, 2022.

⁸ Cheryl Caponi, in conversation with author, August 2021.

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walls were in place by 1994, though some have been rebuilt and repaired since that time.⁹ The most notable and unique walls are located in the core and include:

- Stone walls along the south side of the parking lot and the south edge of the site along Diffley Road, which have circular planting beds set into the wall plane (Photo 0009)
- Stone walls to the north of the studio building, which have arched concrete borders that create pendentive-shaped rock walls (Photo 0012)
- The stone wall to the east of the house, which is topped with stone arches (Photo 0017)

Metal Picket Fence: Contributing (D)

A hand-crafted metal picket fence, installed in 1981, runs along the south side of the park between the drive on the west and the studio building on the east (Photo 0006).¹⁰ This hand-crafted fence is a contributing feature.

Shed: Contributing (E)

A concrete-block, flat roofed shed with double wooden doors is built into the hill to the east of the studio building (Photo 0024). This shed was constructed by Caponi sometime before 1993 and is a contributing resource.¹¹

Fireplace: Contributing (F)

An outdoor fireplace composed of brick and stone and constructed by Anthony Caponi in the 1960s is located to the northeast of the Caponi Home (Photo 0018). Curved stone walls with concrete slab bench seating define the fireplace area. The fireplace itself was rebuilt in 1986, when the concrete bench was also added.¹²

Activity Shelter: Non-contributing (G)

The activity shelter is a flat concrete slab with fabric canopy on metal poles located to the north of the Caponi Home. From the park's opening in 1994 until the present day, this area has been used for activities and events, though the current canopy was not added until 2000 and the slab was not installed until 2020. Movable wood and metal picnic tables are located in this area.¹³

In addition to these resources, the site contains several minor, non-contributing site furnishings that are small in scale and/or moveable and are not included in the Section 5 resource count. These include a couple of movable, pre-fabricated benches (added around 2014), wooden signs (installed throughout the

⁹ Cheryl Caponi, in conversation with author, August 2021.

¹⁰ Photograph of construction of the Diffley fence, 1981, courtesy of Cheryl Caponi; "Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal," *Thisweek Newspapers*, December 8, 1986; Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, January 26, 2022.

¹¹ Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, January 26, 2022.

¹² Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, January 26, 2022.

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site in 2023), a wood information kiosk along the entrance driveway (rebuilt in 2023), and portable restrooms to the west of the house. Additionally, a chain link metal fence installed in 1994 borders the west and north edges of the park.

Sculptures:

Scattered throughout the park site are 31 sculptures designed by Caponi, 30 of which are considered contributing to the park. Materials include stone, including fieldstone, granite, and limestone; metals, including steel, aluminum, lead and copper; and concrete. Some works featured recycled components such as railroad spikes, car parts, and saw blades. With the exception of *Snake*, which was begun in 1982 but finished in 2005, all were crafted by Caponi between 1950 and 1990. All but six were installed in the park before 1994. Though these six sculptures were *installed* after the end of the period of significance, it appears likely that Caponi's intention to place them within the park pre-dates 1991; as a product of the art park's designer, these sculptures are also considered contributing, with the exception of *Praying mantis*, which was designed for a private home and not originally intended for the park. Eight additional sculptures – the *Observatory*, *Serpent of the Low Lands* (both temporary installations that have fallen into disrepair), *Last Turtle Wain*, *Coiled Perch*, *Hephaestus Throne*, *Unicorn*, *Make Believe*, and *Hull-Rust-Mahoning Table* – were designed by other artists in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries and therefore are non-contributing.¹⁴

Sculpture numbers correspond to the sketch map. All sculptures are by Anthony Caponi and are contributing resources unless otherwise noted.

1. Untitled, c. 1968
2. Tree of Life, 1955 (tree no longer standing; visible in Photo 0003)
3. Pompeii, 1980 – 1987 (Photo 0005)
4. Winter Nesting, 1980 (installed by 1982)¹⁵
5. Struggle of the Elements, 1968 (installed by 1981; visible in background of Photo 0006)¹⁶
6. Observatory by Christopher Lutter-Gardella, 2020 (non-contributing)
7. Steel Helmets, 1968 (visible near entrance of studio in Photo 0011)
8. Snake, 1982 – 2005 (Photo 0008)
9. Skyroot, 1965
10. Untitled, 1950
11. Nugget, 1986 (installed in 1998; Photo 0021)¹⁷
12. Coiled Perch by Korrin Lohmann, 2016 (non-contributing)
13. Lovers, 1967 (installed post-1994)
14. Cornerstone, 1971 (installed post-1994)
15. Praying mantis, 1967 (originally installed at private home; relocated to Caponi Art Park in 2011, non-contributing)
16. Bundle, 1951
17. Monument to a Lumberjack, 1970 (Photo 0013)
18. Trinity, 1969

¹⁴ Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, January 26, 2022; Caponi Art Park, "Caponi Art Park Guidebook," accessed January 31, 2022, <https://www.caponiartpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-Guidebook.pdf>.

¹⁵ Linda Hanson, "Eagan Sculptor Focuses on Basics of Life," *Eagan Chronicle*, August 2, 1982.

¹⁶ Photograph of Diffley wall under construction, 1981, courtesy of Cheryl Caponi.

¹⁷ "Proprietor of Unusual Park Seeks Strategy to Preserve It," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 22, 1998.

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19. Adam's Rib, 1957
20. Walk in Outer Space, 1968 (installed in current location in 1991; Photo 0014)¹⁸
21. Dean Bryan, 1950
22. Hand-crafted stone bench beneath the Walk in Outer Space, 1991 (Photo 0014)¹⁹
23. Old Crows, 1962 (Photo 0023)
24. Wall #2, 1967 (installed post-1994)
25. Queen, 1983 (installed 1987)²⁰
26. Sisters, 1953
27. Capriccio, 1971 (installed post-1994)
28. Fossil, 1968 (damaged 2016)
29. Birds, 1964
30. Diamond, 1964
31. Two Lovers, 1990
32. Serpent of the Low Lands by Christopher Lutter-Gardella, 2020 (non-contributing)
33. Hull-Rust-Mahoning Table by Tamsie Ringler, 2016 (installed in 2022: non-contributing)
34. Unicorn by Michal Staszczak, 2019 (installed in 2022: non-contributing)
35. Hephaestus Throne by James L. Hayes, 2019 (installed in 2022: non-contributing)
36. Make Believe by Rian Kerrane, 2019 (installed in 2022: non-contributing)
37. The Last Turtle Wain by Wayne Potratz, 1976 (installed in 2021; non-contributing)
38. Snakes, 1994

Buildings:

There are two buildings on the site – the Caponi Home and Anthony Caponi's studio. Both are located in the core zone. The letter in parenthesis next to each building corresponds to its label on the sketch map.

Caponi, Anthony Home: Contributing (A) (Photos 0015 – 0017; 0027 - 0033)

Exterior (Photos 0015-0017)

The two-story Caponi Home is built into a hill near the center of the core zone. The house was constructed by Anthony Caponi beginning in 1950. A below-grade bomb shelter was added to the west side of the house in 1961, and an office/aviary addition was constructed at the south side of the west elevation in the 1970s.²¹

The house is constructed of insulated concrete blocks and redwood, painted in shades of grey and terracotta to reflect the original colors of the unpainted materials. The two-story building is constructed into the hillside. Due to the elevation change, the lower (ground) level is completely below grade at the west elevation, causing this elevation to read as a single story. The east elevation, which is a wall of windows that opens to the surrounding landscape, shows the full two stories.

¹⁸ Photograph of sculpture bench area, 1991, courtesy of Cheryl Caponi.

¹⁹ Photograph of sculpture bench area, 1991, courtesy of Cheryl Caponi.

²⁰ Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, January 15, 2022.

²¹ Cheryl Caponi, personal communication with Tamara Halvorsen, 2020.

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The primary entrance is located on the south elevation. A flat-roofed overhang covers the entrance and there is a cast concrete pelican created by Anthony Caponi to the west of the door. The west side of the south elevation includes a single-story triangular glazed addition that dates to the 1970s. A prominent concrete block chimney rises above the sloping roofline behind the addition. The south elevation appears to drop to the east as the house emerges from the hillside and the full two stories appear. The roofline also slopes dramatically to the east, a characteristic that is most visible facing the south elevation.

The east elevation is two stories with an asymmetrical wooden porch that juts out over the lower level. Both levels are walls of windows that look out over the surrounding landscape. Windows are separated by tall narrow screened louvers that can be opened from the interior to allow for air circulation within the house.

The north elevation is two stories with concrete block walls at the lower level and a glass three season porch at the second level.

The west elevation is built into the hillside. Concrete block walls dominate this façade, with two stories of tall narrow windows at the northwest corner.

Interior (Photos 0027 - 0033)

One enters the Anthony Caponi home on the second, or main, level. A small, glazed office and former aviary is located to the west of the primary entry hall (Photo 0027). The original exterior concrete block wall is exposed on the north side of the office.

The kitchen is located on the east side of the primary entry hall (Photo 0028). The kitchen features a hammered copper sculpture depicting Romulus and Remus over the stove; the wooden cabinets and laminate countertop came from Montgomery Ward, which was close to Caponi's office at Macalester. An extra-long table divides the U-shaped kitchen and the primary living room. The table can be lengthened or shortened by an extension that folds up against upper cabinets when it is not in use.²²

Red tile floors connect the kitchen and living room. The living room includes a large concrete block fireplace on the south side of the room, built-in furniture, and enormous picture windows that look east over the landscape (Photos 0029 and 0030). Between the windows, Caponi built slender wooden louvers lined with cork that can be opened to reveal tall narrow screened openings which allow fresh air to circulate through the main living space. A glazed three season porch is located on the north side of the living room.

The lower level is devoted to the family's private spaces, including bedrooms, bathroom, a utility room, and a root cellar. The bedrooms are located on the east side of the house and have the same large picture windows as the living room. The master bedroom includes wood built-in bookcases, a built-in headboard, and a tall, hammered copper sculpture (Photo 0031).

A switchback stair separates the lower-level bedrooms and bathroom from the subterranean bomb shelter to the west. The bomb shelter is constructed of concrete blocks and includes a large open room with built in cabinets (Photo 0032), small office/archive, and a bathroom (Photo 0033) that features walls of quarry

²² Cheryl Caponi, personal communication with Tamara Halvorsen, 2020.

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tile that Caponi glazed and fired at Macalester College -- some of the tiles expanded during the firing process and include large bubbles that Caponi integrated into the bathroom design.²³

Integrity:

The Caponi Home retains integrity of setting and location. It also retains good integrity of design and materials: historic insulated concrete block foundation and walls, redwood cladding, and windows at the exterior and original exposed wood paneling, laminate tile floors, concrete block fireplace, wood kitchen cabinets and laminate countertop, and bathroom tile and fixtures at the interior. The house also retains original metal sculptures created by Caponi. Integrity of workmanship is expressed throughout the building, in everything from the orientation of the house on its lot to the Caponi-glazed and fired bathroom tile. The house continues to function as a private residence for the Caponi family and maintains integrity of association and feeling.

Caponi, Anthony Studio: Contributing (B) (Photos 0007, 0011, 0012, 0034 and 0035)

Exterior (Photos 0007, 0011, and 0012)

The studio building is located in the core zone, built into a hill near the south edge of the site. The northeast half of the building is composed of a front-gabled, two-story studio that faces northeast overlooking the park; the southwest half is a one-story, shed-roofed block that now houses the offices of the Caponi Art Park organization. Due to the site topography, the ground level is completely below grade at the southeast elevation and some of the northeast elevation and exposed at the northwest and southwest elevations. The grade change allows one to access both the ground-level studio and the upper-level office directly from the exterior; the former at the level of the parking lot and the latter via a concrete ramp with metal handrail (handrail installed 2010) that leads to the primary entrance on the southwest elevation.²⁴

The building is constructed of reinforced concrete block with a poured concrete frame. Upper portions of the façade are clad with wood paneling. The building has a metal roof with skylights, a central brick chimney, and external wood and metal gutters.

At the southwest elevation, the shed roof of the one-story office block is extended to the southwest via a skylight/translucent roof extension that runs the full length of the façade and is composed of wood framing with panes of translucent fiberglass. The west half of the building's façade is recessed beneath this translucent roof and holds the building's primary entrance, which consists of a metal door with full light. The entrance is accessed from a small concrete patio, which holds the *Steel Helmets* sculpture and a built-in concrete table and benches. The remainder of the southwest elevation has fixed and sliding aluminum windows with dark frames.

Due to the site grading, at the southeast elevation, the building's ground story is progressively revealed as one moves northeast along the switchback trail at this location. A concrete bench - an oval-shaped concrete slab resting on concrete pillars - is located at the top of the switchback trail. At the east corner of the building, one window with dark aluminum frame and operable upper sash is located at the ground

²³ Cheryl Caponi, personal communication with Tamara Halvorsen, 2020.

²⁴ Photograph of handrail installation, 2010, courtesy of Cheryl Caponi.

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level of the studio block. A wood louver is located in the gable end of the office block's shed roof, and a skylight is located at the southeast-facing roof slope of the studio block.

At the building's northeast elevation, the gabled roof of the studio has deep eaves and is composed of a large skylight similar to the skylight on the southwest elevation. A hoist is attached to a metal beam that projects from the center of the gable. This elevation features a flat-slab, metal door, and two sets of dark aluminum windows with hopper-style upper sash that overlook the grassy lawn of the core zone.

At the northwest elevation, one overhead metal door at the ground level provides vehicular access to the studio from the parking lot. At the office block, the upper level of the façade has a sliding window with dark aluminum frame; a wood louver is located near the top of the façade.

Interior (Photos 0034 and 0035)

At the interior, the studio is a two-story open volume space with concrete floors (Photo 0035). The one-story office block consists of one office room and a small bathroom (Photo 0034). It features tile floors and gypsum board walls and ceilings, with some exposed concrete, brick, and concrete block structure.

Integrity:

The studio building retains integrity of setting and location. The building retains its historic materials, including concrete block, wood paneling, aluminum windows, and metal roof. The studio retains excellent integrity of design at both the interior and exterior, and unique details like the large skylights and built-in concrete table and benches allow the property to communicate its integrity of workmanship. The property continues to reflect its historic function as a studio and retains integrity of association and feeling.

Overall Integrity of the Caponi Art Park

The Caponi Art Park retains excellent integrity to communicate its historic significance under Criterion B for association with Anthony Caponi and under Criterion C as a unique example of a late twentieth century sculpture garden. The park retains integrity of location. While the surrounding area of Eagan has become more intensively developed since the early 1990s, including additional commercial and residential development around the intersection of Diffley Road and Lexington Avenue, the park retains its historic setting in a residential neighborhood, with city parkland immediately to the north.²⁵

The park also retains excellent integrity of design and materials. While Anthony Caponi did not view the park in terms of distinct "zones," the patterns of use, circulation, and vegetation that historically defined the park's spatial organization remain today.²⁶ Features added after 1994, such as the activity shelter and several of the park's sculptures, are consistent with Caponi's intended uses for the site; furthermore, Caponi himself oversaw changes to the park until his death in 2015. Though a small amount of circulation

²⁵ Aerial photographs of Eagan, 1991, 1997, and 2021, Dakota County Air Photo Time Machine, <https://dakotacounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/ImageryViewer/index.html?appid=1ba2626c699c4d59a95da121e8e76283>.

²⁶ Email, Cheryl Caponi, January 26, 2022.

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has been added since 1994, the park retains the majority of its historic vehicular and pedestrian routes. As is typical for a designed landscape, vegetation has continued to grow and evolve but retains the informal and natural character that Caponi cultivated and maintained during the period of significance. The park's current topography likewise contributes to integrity of design. Integrity of materials is expressed in the excellent integrity of structures and buildings on the site, including the Caponi Home and Caponi Studio. Integrity of workmanship is particularly well-preserved through the handcrafted stone walls and the stone, metal, and concrete sculptures placed throughout the park.

The Caponi Art Park continues to operate as both the private Caponi residence and a public art park, retaining the functions for which Anthony Caponi intended it, and it retains excellent integrity of feeling and association.

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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.

Criteria Considerations

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

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ART

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1949-1994

Significant Dates

ca. 1953

1987

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Caponi, Anthony (Tony)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Caponi, Anthony (Tony)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Caponi Art Park is locally significant under Criterion B in the area of Art for association with artist and art educator Anthony (Tony) Caponi and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture as a notable and unique local example of a late twentieth century outdoor sculpture park. Beginning in 1949, Caponi constructed his house and a studio on the site and shaped the surrounding landscape into an art park. More than just an outdoor gallery to display his works, the rolling acreage was also the canvas and substance of his art. The site was Caponi's home, his studio, and, as a professor and the head of Saint Paul's Macalester College's art department, often his classroom. The park is the best representation of Caponi's significance as an artist, as it is the work most strongly associated with Caponi and clearly demonstrates his artistic philosophy about the interrelationship between art and nature. Additionally, Caponi's intent to develop the site into a public art park demonstrates his desire to expand art education and enjoyment beyond the walls of the museum and classroom and reflects his significance as an educator. While the development of Caponi Art Park aligns with the outdoor sculpture garden trend of the late twentieth century, Caponi's focus on the landscape itself as his primary canvas, and his desire to work within the existing natural setting, was a unique design decision that distinguishes this designed landscape from other late twentieth century sculpture gardens in the Twin Cities. The period of significance begins in 1949, when Caponi purchased the property and began construction on his home, and ends in 1994, when Caponi opened up his land for public enjoyment, shifting the primary purpose of the site from personal canvas and studio to public gallery. As a site of exceptional significance within the context of Anthony Caponi's work, the park meets Criteria Consideration G.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Anthony Caponi: Artist and Educator

Anthony (Tony) Caponi was born in Pretare, a village in the Apennine Mountains of Italy, in 1921. According to Caponi, he was raised "in a poor region of Italy that for centuries was Papal territory, where the Catholic Church still dominated cultural values. Only five years of school was available and considered adequate to educate country folk."²⁷ Because only a half-day of school was required, the rest of Caponi's day was devoted to work and play. "At work we learned practical skills, how to use tools and how to grow food. At play we invented games and made our own toys but mostly we enjoyed the freedom of exploring the outdoors without supervision."²⁸ In interviews, Caponi stated that there was not one specific moment at which he began to pursue art; rather, as a child in Italy he and his playmates, "dug up

²⁷ Anthony Caponi, *Meaning Beyond Reason* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2011), Introduction.

²⁸ Ibid.

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our own clay and made our own things...it was play, it was natural.”²⁹ Caponi’s childhood in Italy influenced many of his philosophies and ideals about the relationship between, art, nature, and humanity.

Caponi immigrated to the United States in 1936, to Akron, Ohio, at the age of 14. His artistic talent was quickly noticed by his school art teachers.³⁰ Upon graduating high school, Caponi obtained a scholarship to the Cleveland School of Art, but was drafted into the United States Army during World War II and returned to Italy as an army interpreter.³¹ Caponi documented his wartime experiences through artwork, using available everyday materials like tent canvas and earth as mediums, and creating portraits of fellow soldiers to send to their families back home. In a Red Cross-sponsored military art competition in Florence, Caponi won first prize for his painting, a “still life in oil, grapes, a bottle of beer, peaches and a package of Luckies, all on a copy of Stars and Stripes.” While in Italy, Caponi was also able to attend the University of Florence and to observe the works of modern and classical Italian sculptors, an opportunity that encouraged him to turn his attention from painting to sculpture.³² Upon returning to the United States, Caponi enrolled in the Cleveland School of Art. He then moved to Minneapolis, where he studied sculpture first under Evelyn Raymond at the Walker Art Center and then under John Rood at the University of Minnesota. Caponi received his undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota in 1948. By the time of his graduation, he was already serving as an assistant instructor for university art students, and he continued on in this capacity as a graduate student until he obtained a Master’s Degree in Art Education in 1949.³³ Caponi’s unique contributions to the art community began while still a student, when he “rediscovered how to cast metal [specifically, bronze] using the Lost-Wax Process by reading Benvenuto Cellini’s autobiography in its original medieval Italian.” With the support of the University of Minnesota’s Art Department chair, Caponi used university facilities and a makeshift oven constructed on university grounds to produce a sculpture demonstrating his mastery of the technique.³⁴

Upon receiving his master’s degree, Caponi joined the faculty at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, beginning a career as an art professor that would last until 1991. Caponi had a

²⁹ TPT, “Minnesota Originals,” Season 4, Episode 4, airdates 12/30/12, <https://www.tpt.org/mn-original/video/Anthony-Caponi--Storyhill-24980-2/>.

³⁰ Nicholas J. Polles, “Recreation Center,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 1940.

³¹ Peri Tucker, “Anthony Caponi Records His Native Italy in Paintings Sent Home,” unknown paper, 1945, on file at Caponi Art Park; Doris Minney, “Wins Bravery Metal,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, November 24, 1944.

³² Peri Tucker, “Anthony Caponi Records His Native Italy in Paintings Sent Home,” unknown paper, 1945, on file at Caponi Art Park; Stan Carl, “East Side On Parade,” *Minneapolis Argus*, February 13, 1948; “Two GIs Win Prizes in Italian Art Contest,” unknown newspaper, 1945, courtesy of Caponi Art Park; Bluestem Heritage Group, “Anthony Caponi: Life In Art,” Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020, p. 7.

³³ “Professor Likes ‘Freedom,’” *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963; Cheryl Caponi, personal communication with Tamara Halvorsen, 2020; Margaret Allison, “Wrestler Carves an Art Career,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 24, 1947; “New Color Effect Sought for Ceramics,” unknown newspaper, March 12, 1948, on file at Caponi Art Park; Angelo Cohn, “Sculptors Dominate Fair Exhibit,” *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, August 26, 1948; Peri Tucker, “Minnesota State Fair Awards Won by Caponi and Students,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, September 26, 1948; Aileen Reynolds, *St. Paul Dispatch*, “‘U’ Art Students Walk Off with Three First Prizes,” 1949, on file at Caponi Art Park; Macalester College Art Department, *Anthony Caponi: A Vision and Legacy* (Macalester College: 1991), 16.

³⁴ “Founder,” Caponiartpark.org, accessed November 17, 2020, <https://www.caponiartpark.org/about/founder/>; Bob Erickson, “U Artist Seeks Sculpture Secret,” *The Minnesota Daily*, August 12, 1949.

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significant impact at Macalester and within the field of art education more broadly. From 1954 until his retirement in 1991, Caponi was the chair of the college's art department – a unique honor, given that the position was usually reserved for art historians, rather than studio practitioners.³⁵ While at Macalester, Caponi worked to develop a permanent collection for the college's art department,³⁶ and also succeeded at “elevating studio art to the same level as other academic subjects.”³⁷ Caponi was also “the driving force in the creation of the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center at Macalester College, the first building in the country designed and built specifically for teaching the fine arts,” which “became a prototype for liberal arts college art facilities.” Described by the college as “cutting edge when it opened,” the Brutalist-style Center was designed by Boston-based firm Perry, Shaw, Hepburn and Dean and was completed in 1964.³⁸ As the authors of a recent exhibit plan on Caponi's life note,

In an extension of Caponi's belief that every student should study art, he believed that the art curriculum should be supported with dedicated, state-of-the-art facilities...As the head of the art department, Caponi was deeply involved in the design and construction of the Arts Building. He knew that they faced a particular design challenge in that there was a lack of precedent for what they were attempting to create. He and his staff received a grant for funded travel to look at other facilities.³⁹

Caponi's efforts included advocating for faculty needs in the design of the new building.⁴⁰ According to a later chair of the department, Ruthann Godollei, one of Caponi's specific contributions to the development of the art center was to convince administrators to include cutting edge equipment and art facilities like a bronze foundry and compressed air tools for stone carving.⁴¹ Caponi's work on the Janet Wallace Center led the Ford Foundation to select him to consult on the designs of art facilities on other campuses across the United States.⁴²

³⁵ Patricia Heikenen, *Anthony Caponi: Encounter with Artists #8* (St. Paul, MN: North Central Publishing Company, 1972), 2; Maxine Shedlov, “Interiors,” *Midwest Retailer*, September 1982; “Founder,” Caponiartpark.org, accessed November 17, 2020, <https://www.caponiartpark.org/about/founder/>.

³⁶ Bluestem Heritage Group, “Anthony Caponi: Life In Art,” Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020, p. 8.

³⁷ “Hillcrest Community School and More Receive Ordway's 2012 Sally Ordway Irvine Awards,” *Broadway World*, April 8, 2013.

³⁸ Macalester College, “Step Forward Campaign,” <https://www.macalester.edu/stepforward/finearts/>; Jerry Rudquist, “Anthony Caponi's Life of Art and Art of Life,” *Macalester Today*, February 1992, <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=macalestertoday>, “St. Paul,” *Architectural Record*, November 15, 2015, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/10220-janet-wallace-fine-arts-center>.

³⁹ Bluestem Heritage Group, “Anthony Caponi: Life In Art,” Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Bluestem Heritage Group, “Anthony Caponi: Life In Art,” Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020, p. 11.

⁴¹ Pat Pheiffer, “Art Park Founder Created From ‘What the Land Was Telling Him,’” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 14, 2015.

⁴² “Rock ‘Collection’ Set as Art Center Exhibit,” untitled publication, November 1972, courtesy of Caponi Art Park. In 2012, the Center underwent a \$24 million renovation and expansion that resulted in “new Art History classrooms, a new Art Gallery, a new, inviting “commons” area for the entire campus community, faculty offices, new music ensemble rehearsal rooms, and a renovated Concert Hall” (see “Step Forward Campaign Results,” accessed January 31, 2022, <https://www.macalester.edu/stepforward/finearts/>). Caponi also consulted on the design of the renovation, though the final design and construction work was completed after his retirement from

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Reflecting in 1991 at Caponi's retirement on his significance as an educator, fellow Macalaster professor Jerry Ridges noted,

The legacy that Anthony Caponi leaves through his teaching is found in the greater richness in the lives of the general student who had the opportunity to work with him, in the high level of accomplishment as shown here in the professional work of his former students, and not least in the challenging example he provided to us who taught with him. For those forty years Macalaster has had a unique educational leader of unparalleled energy, commitment and depth.⁴³

Caponi's significance, however, extends far beyond his position as an educator of budding artists and into his talent as an artist himself. Caponi's works as an artist encompassed commissions for churches, gardens, and private collections nationally and internationally. His significance as an artist in the United States received official recognition in 1955, when Caponi was first listed in *Who's Who in American Art*, an honor that would continue for six decades. By 1980, his creative works were located across Minnesota and other locations in the United States as well as Italy, and in public collections at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, St. Cloud State College, and the Minnesota Museum of Art.⁴⁴

The significance of Anthony Caponi's work during the mid-twentieth century is further indicated by his participation in local art exhibitions and reception of numerous awards. According to an exhibit plan for a traveling exhibit on Anthony Caponi, "from 1950 to 1960, Caponi participated in most major competitive and interpretation of art exhibitions in Minnesota and neighboring states, and received 24 blue and red ribbon awards. He contributed to four traveling sculpture exhibitions that covered most of the country."⁴⁵ During the mid-1960s, Caponi was also identified by the *Minneapolis Star* as one of several sculptors who were bringing a renewed vitality to sculpting in the Twin Cities.⁴⁶

In 1968, Caponi received a year-long sabbatical from Macalester, funded by a Ford Foundation humanities grant. The leave resulted in twenty sculptures and over 25 poems and hundreds of photographs, which Caponi combined into his first book, *Boulders and Pebbles of Poetry and Prose*.⁴⁷ Much of this creative output was in turn used to create a one-man exhibit of Caponi's work at the

Macalester. Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, March 30, 2025.

⁴³ Macalaster College Art Department, "Anthony Caponi: A Vision and a Legacy," 1991, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Mark Brunswick, "Artistic Realities Challenge Owner of Sculpture Park," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 22, 1998; Sharon Stanton, "Council Views Art Council's film, 'The Granite Trio,' by sculptor Anthony Caponi," *St. Cloud Daily Times*, September 18, 1974; "Three-Ton Stone Sculpture by Mac Prof Caponi Unveiled," *Highland Villager*, July 14, 1982; Joan Waldock, "Caponi Creates Durable Art," *Thisweek*, July 3, 1979.

⁴⁵ Bluestem Heritage Group, "Anthony Caponi: Life In Art," Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020, p. 7. See for example "Yolanda' By Caponi Wins Fraternity Award," *The Mac Weekly*, March 31, 1950; "St. Paul Artist Wins First Prize in Fair Art Show," *St. Paul Dispatch*, August 24, 1950; "Thirty-Eighth Minneapolis-St. Paul Annual Local Artists Exhibition," October 14 – November 15, 1953, courtesy of Caponi Art Park; "The Sisters," *The Mac Weekly*, November 6, 1953.

⁴⁶ Walter Johnson, "Twin Cities Area is Carving Out New Image in Sculpture," *Minneapolis Star*, December 10, 1965.

⁴⁷ Anthony Caponi to Dean Goodrich, June 3, 1969, courtesy of the Bluestem Heritage Group.

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Minnesota Museum of Art in 1972, the eighth in a series of exhibits “featuring work by artists associated with the area who have made a noteworthy contribution to the arts” (see Figure H).⁴⁸

Caponi’s artistic talents encompassed several disciplines, including photography, art philosophy, and poetry. In his own words, “there is no such thing as a sculptor or a painter or a poet. There is only an artist.”⁴⁹ By 2010, he had written three books and been involved in the production of several art films.⁵⁰ However, Caponi favored sculpture as the activity that allowed for a synthesis of expression of the body with expression of the emotions and intellect, and it is for his sculpture that he is best known.⁵¹

Critics hailed Caponi’s sculptures for their strength, boldness, and clarity. In 1953, at the beginning of his career, the *St. Paul Dispatch* described Caponi as

an artist of strong and rugged expression...[who] seems to enjoy pitting himself against unyielding materials – granite, mesquite, ironwood – and the results generally give the impression of the great energy which has gone into the struggle for mastery. Caponi is not a subtle artist. He deals in elemental things and feelings and his expression is direct and unequivocal, whether it deals with the pathos of gawky adolescence, a sleeping child exhausted by play, the comic dignity of a water bird, or the tortured inner life of an introverted personality.⁵²

Similarly, another reviewer writing for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* in 1965 asserted that “Caponi’s sculpture...always bears the stamp of a strong, individual personality, firmly rooted in tradition and basic human experience and capable of absorbing what he chooses from new developments into a direct personal expression which communicates clearly.”⁵³ Writing in 1991 at Caponi’s retirement, critic Bruce Wright summarized Caponi’s artistic output, noting that “it is Caponi’s passion for life that is most openly expressed in his work...Through his forceful, but gentle shaping of the material, we feel the vital energy of natural things: the growth of trees, the swell of the earth, the biomorphic forms that emerge from the rock-like fossils brought into high relief by the artist/archaeologist’s hand...”⁵⁴

At the heart of Caponi’s artistic philosophy was the inspiration and instruction that he took from nature. Caponi believed that interaction with nature was vital to personal expression through art.⁵⁵ As the catalog at his 1991 retirement exhibition explained, “for the irrepressible Anthony Caponi, earth and art are inextricably bound together; the earth and natural forces bring forth life and in turn give cause for creative expression.”⁵⁶ The source of Caponi’s inspiration was reflected in the natural materials he chose

⁴⁸ “An Artist of Many Facets,” *Lively Arts*, September 3, 1972; “Multifaceted Caponi Show...,” *Mac Today*, fall 1972, on file at Caponi Art Park.

⁴⁹ Jackie Germann, “Art Combined in 3 Forms,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, October 24, 1965.

⁵⁰ “Multifaceted Caponi Show...,” *Mac Today*, fall 1972, on file at Caponi Art Park; Bluestem Heritage Group, “Anthony Caponi: Life In Art,” Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020, p. 22 – 23.

⁵¹ “Professor Likes ‘Freedom,’” *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963.

⁵² J. H. H., “Caponi Gives One-Man Show,” *St. Paul Dispatch*, 1954, courtesy of the Caponi Art Park.

⁵³ John H. Harvey, “Faculty Show Highlights Macalester Exhibit,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, November 12, 1965.

⁵⁴ Bruce N. Wright, “A Vision,” in Macalester College Art Department, *Anthony Caponi: A Vision and Legacy* (Macalester College, 1991), 5 – 6.

⁵⁵ “Professor Likes ‘Freedom,’” *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963.

⁵⁶ Bruce N. Wright, “A Vision,” in Macalester College Art Department, *Anthony Caponi: A Vision and Legacy*

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for his sculptures - wood, metal, and, primarily, stone. Rather than imposing preconceived ideas onto these materials, he sought to draw out the essence of the medium in his artwork, so that "most of [his] stone and wood sculptures spring from the nature and shape of the materials themselves..."⁵⁷ Or, in the words of Wright, "Caponi works in a manner not unlike that described by Michelangelo: he "discovers," or unearths the shapes that are already there within the stone."⁵⁸

The guidance that Caponi took from nature is expressed in this quote from one of Caponi's lectures at Macalester:

Because I trust in the order of nature, I lend myself to its harmony and beauty. If I explore it, it is not to prove or disprove its meaning. I want to establish contact with it, not conquer it. I want to become a part of its harmony, so I subordinate myself to its ways; and, in so doing, I experience the truth, even before I can begin to understand it.⁵⁹

For Caponi, this harmonious collaboration with nature defined successful art. In his own words, "I think my stone sculptures are successful when, after the creative struggle, the material seems to accept its transformation into a new identity without apparent strain to its physical structure and general character."⁶⁰ This goal was reflected in Caponi's practice of sculpting without first creating preliminary models, "a method intended to bring a shape out of the stone rather than recreate it" and to allow the project to evolve throughout the process.⁶¹ This goal was also reflected in the instruction Caponi passed on to his art students to "get involved with the materials" and "let the ideas grow within their final media."⁶²

Caponi's artistic philosophy also encompassed a desire to integrate art into the everyday experiences of individuals. In a 1963 interview, Caponi emphasized the importance of art as an everyday experience, noting that "in Italy, people are used to seeing art works in their public squares and as a part of their daily lives...But [in the United States], by thinking of it as something to put in a museum, we have downgraded art."⁶³ He also argued that art needed to be practiced, not just theorized, stating,

I have taught theories of art and translated the non-verbal process of creative activities. I achieved the psychological distance that permits intellectual detachment from the subject of discussion. In so doing, I was losing the presence of spirit that energized my own work, that very quality of intense being that I expected to teach others. Having crossed and re-crossed

(Macalester College, 1991), 5 – 6.

⁵⁷ J. H. H., "Caponi Gives One-Man Show, *St. Paul Dispatch*, 1954, courtesy of the Caponi Art Park.

⁵⁸ Bruce N. Wright, "A Vision," in Macalester College Art Department, *Anthony Caponi: A Vision and Legacy* (Macalester College, 1991), 5 – 6.

⁵⁹ "Caponi Last Lecture See Formal Education as Adjustment to Life," *The Mac Weekly*, May 13, 1960.

⁶⁰ Anthony Caponi, in *Anthony Caponi: Encounter with Artists #8*, ed. Patricia Heikenen (St. Paul, MN: North Central Publishing Company, 1972).

⁶¹ T. Fines, "Anthony Caponi Retires," *Mac Weekly*, Fall 1991; Linda Hanson, "Eagan Sculptor Focuses on the Basics of Life," *Eagan Chronicle*, August 2, 1982.

⁶² Jerry Rudquist, "The Legacy," in Macalester College Art Department, *Anthony Caponi: A Vision and Legacy* (Macalester College, 1991), 10.

⁶³ 'Professor Practices What He Preaches,' *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963.

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the threshold between doing and explaining, I concluded: one may speak of love or eulogize the dead, but the ones deeply involved rarely talk.⁶⁴

These underlying ideas are expressed in the numerous sculptures that Caponi created for individuals and institutions across Minnesota. Among his notable works are “Reredos,” a bas-relief stone sculpture for Trinity Lutheran Church in Rochester, Minnesota (1956); the “Granite Trio,” a 32-ton granite sculpture installed on the St. Cloud Mall in St. Cloud, Minnesota (1972; see Figure I); the “Cathedral,” a bronze sculpture designed for St. Cloud State University (1974); “Copper Christ,” a 24-foot hammered copper sculpture for Normandale Church in Edina, Minnesota (1978; see Figure J); and “Boulders on Boulders: Monument to the North Shore,” a three-ton limestone piece installed at the Kenosha Building in Minneapolis, Minnesota (1982).⁶⁵

The culmination of Caponi’s achievements and ideas, however, was the Caponi Art Park in Eagan, Minnesota. The shaping of the acres of rolling hills surrounding his home into an artistic landscape was Caponi’s longest-lasting project, spanning his entire productive life as an artist (1949 – c. 2013). As artwork created on and with the canvas of nature, designed with the ultimate purpose of making art more accessible to the general public. The park is the best representation of Caponi’s artistic philosophy and an enduring tribute to his significance as an artist and educator. Furthermore, when considered within a local context of late twentieth century sculpture gardens, the park is significant for its unique landscape design.

Caponi Art Park: 1949 - 1994

Early Development: 1949 - 1979

Caponi discovered the site that would become his life-long project in 1949, when he visited his friend, architect Myron Keene, in Eagan (a modern-day suburb of St. Paul). At that time, Eagan was a rural farming community, on the verge of explosive residential development and transformation into a suburban area. In 1949, Caponi purchased 40 acres of land on the north side of County Road 30 (modern day Diffley Road) from a local farmer. In 1957, he purchased another 43 acres across the road directly to the south.⁶⁶

Unlike the typical residential development occurring in Eagan at this time, however, Caponi did not intend to develop the land into rows of tract housing. Instead, he began to sculpt the site into a unique homestead and work of art, starting with his own home (see Figures K, L, and M). As a 1951 article in the *St. Paul Dispatch* noted, Caponi embodied in his home “all of the principles of art in which he believes.”

⁶⁴ Bluestem Heritage Group, “Anthony Caponi: Life In Art,” Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020.

⁶⁵ Bill Morgan, “Granite Trio Marks 25 Years as Downtown’s Crown,” *St. Cloud Times*, August 4, 1998; Lora Lee Watson, “Small Towns Enjoy an Art Boom,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 14, 1973; “Three-Ton Stone Sculpture by Mac Prof Caponi Unveiled,” *Highland Villager*, July 14, 1982; “An Inspirational Copper Sculpture...” *Mac Today*, Winter 1979, on file at Caponi Art Park.

⁶⁶ Jill Olson, “Man Shapes Land to Fulfill Dream,” *Eagan Thisweek*, September 22, 1991; Cheryl Caponi, personal communication with author, January 12, 2022; Eagan Historical Society and Dakota County Historical Society, “The City of Eagan: Highlights of Our History and Heritage Map,” c. 1998, <https://www.dakotahistory.org/images/HistoryMaps/Eagan-History-Map.pdf>.

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Caponi designed the home himself, enlisting the help of an architect friend to transfer the design to paper, and completed all of the construction work by hand – carpentry, brick laying, glazing installation. Caponi intended his house to harmonize with its natural surroundings. Of the opinion that “anything that breaks the contour of the landscape is pretty terrible,” Caponi built the house to look like it was “growing out of the hill” that existed on the property.⁶⁷ The sizing and placement of the house was also determined by the location of trees already on the site. “Sometimes a person takes so much pride in what he makes that he scars the natural beauty in the process,” noted Caponi. “I wanted my home to blend with nature.”⁶⁸

In line with his belief in the importance of art as an everyday experience, Caponi’s home was a practical work of art – art seamlessly integrated into everyday life. The result was a house with a unique and avant garde design: natural materials left in their natural state and uncovered by carpets, curtains, paint, or wallpaper; cork-lined louvers designed specifically for ventilation set between large, fixed picture windows that provide clear views of the surrounding acreage, and hand-crafted sculptures in the kitchen, staircase, and master bedroom. The house was an ongoing project for Caponi, but based on a 1953 newspaper article appears to have been substantially complete by that year.⁶⁹

The house was only the beginning of Caponi’s plans for the site. Over the next several decades, Caponi used the surrounding acreage as an art medium that seamlessly integrated nature with human design. His next notable project was the *Tree of Life*, a 25-foot, three-dimensional wooden image carved out of a dying oak tree in 1955 (Figure N). The image, which Tony designed as he carved based on the “natural qualities of the tree,” consisted of four intertwined figures that (in Caponi’s own words) “signifie[d] man’s quest for a goal in life that is just beyond his reach.” Commenting on the design process, Caponi noted that he “made the figures to conform with the lines, grain and knots of the tree...one must recognize the tree first and last... The artist must work in cooperation with the material and accept its limitations.” To make the artwork more durable, however, Caponi treated the tree’s roots, surrounded the base with concrete, and covered the entire structure in Creosote.⁷⁰

The first showing of the sculpture was made to Caponi’s art students at Macalester, reflecting Caponi’s practice of using his property as not only his studio but also his classroom.⁷¹ Throughout his time at Macalester, Caponi brought groups of students to the property to learn and relax.⁷² He felt that

⁶⁷ “Art Teacher Incorporates Own Ideas in Unorthodox Home,” *St. Paul Dispatch*, May 30, 1951.

⁶⁸ Jean Worall, “You Can BUY a House – But You Must MAKE a Home,” *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, November 8 1953.

⁶⁹ Jean Worall, “You Can BUY a House – But You Must MAKE a Home,” *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, November 8 1953; Debra O’Connor, “Laughter, Life Shape Sculptor’s Passion,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, October 12, 1988; “Professor Practices What He Teaches,” *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963.

⁷⁰ “Sculptor Gives ‘Second Life’ to Dying Tree,” *Dakota County Tribune*, September 2, 1955; Joan Hubers, “Macalester Artists See Caponi Sculpture Unveiled at Outing,” *The Mac Weekly*, October 28, 1955; Dan Musch, “Dying Oak Hatched into Art Work by Prof,” *St. Paul Dispatch*, October 21, 1955.

⁷¹ Joan Hubers, “Macalester Artists See Caponi Sculpture Unveiled at Outing,” *The Mac Weekly*, October 28, 1955.

⁷² See for example Joan Waldo, “Caponi Creates Durable Art,” *Eagan Thisweek*, July 3, 1979 and Gary Gunderson, “Sculptor Makes Park by Hand,” *Eagan Chronicle*, August 31, 1988.

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students benefitted from seeing their professor outside of the confines of academia – as “a human being, husband, father, and nature lover.”⁷³

By 1963, the *Minneapolis Tribune* had taken notice of the unique setting of Caponi’s home. The article described the property’s unique characteristics: “sculptures dot his lawn and line his driveway. A dead oak tree has been turned into a 30-foot carving. Old street paving blocks form the front walk. A fence is made of telephone pole crossbars, complete with their green glass insulators. Sheep and goats graze in the yard and the house has no garage” (see Figures O – R).⁷⁴

During the 1970s, Caponi made plans to develop part of his acreage into a dedicated sculpture garden. However, the death of his first wife Yolanda in 1972 put a temporary halt to the work. That same year, Caponi sold the northern 20 acres of the north half of his property to the City of Eagan (which eventually converted the acreage into current day Patrick Eagan Park), leaving him with 20 acres north of Diffley and 40 acres to the south (roughly corresponding to the park’s current day boundaries – see Figure A). By 1975, Caponi was again turning his attention to the sculpture garden project on the northern 20 acres, telling a local newspaper that he planned to bring sculptures from his studio at Macalester back to his Eagan property for installation “on a small knoll south of his home’s driveway, next to County Road 30.” Caponi planned to use the “‘natural contour’ of the land to enhance the sculptures” and incorporate existing rocks and vegetation into the garden. By this time, circulation on the site included not only the entrance drive and pedestrian pathway to the house but also a couple of trails on the east side of his 20 acres (see Figure KK and Figures P - U). At least one sculpture, *Undertow* (no longer present on site) was installed at the entrance to the property by 1965 (Figure V). By 1974, Caponi had also begun constructing his own studio building to the southeast of his house, just north of Diffley Road (Figure W).⁷⁵

It wasn’t until after Caponi met his second wife Cheryl in the late 1970s, however, that the development of the northern 20 acres began in earnest.⁷⁶ In 1979, Caponi told a local newspaper that he wanted “to work here in this location [in Eagan], and use my grounds as an exhibit... Sculpture is suitable for outside, and working the ground is esthetic in itself.”⁷⁷ Over the next 15 years, Caponi would develop the land around his home into a sculpture garden unparalleled in the Twin Cities area – not merely a gallery for his own sculpture but also a park where art and nature were seamlessly integrated for public enjoyment.

⁷³ “Professor Likes ‘Freedom,’” *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963.

⁷⁴ “Professor Likes ‘Freedom,’” *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963.

⁷⁵ Betsy Becker, “Eagan Sculptor Plans to Create Sculpture Garden Near Home,” *The Dispatch*, June 3, 1975; Cheryl Caponi, in email to author, January 12, 2022.

⁷⁶ Bluestem Heritage Group, “Anthony Caponi: Life In Art,” Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020, p. 6; Katherine Lanpher, “Sculptor’s Roots Nourish His Works of Art,” *The Dispatch*, September 28, 1982; “Eagan Sculptor Focuses on the Basics of Life,” *Eagan Chronicle*, August 2, 1982; Christy Clapp, “Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal,” *Thisweek Newspapers*, December 8, 1986.

⁷⁷ Joan Waldock, “Caponi Creates Durable Art,” *Thisweek*, July 3, 1979; Jill Olson, “Man Shapes Land to Fulfill Dream,” *Eagan Thisweek*, September 22, 1991.

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The local significance and uniqueness of Caponi's approach to this art park is apparent when considered in the context of outdoor art and sculpture garden design in the late twentieth century. During the mid-twentieth century, several different trends in art and architecture encouraged the display of sculpture outdoors. Mark Treib, professor of architecture at the University of California Berkely, asserts that "modern architecture, stripped of ornamentation and figuration, relegated art to the role of the disparate piece set on a plaza in front of a building." As architecture lost its symbolic elements, plaza artwork was used to provide "cultural signification," and the size of sculptures increased to match the scale of the buildings for which they were intended. The increase in size was also an outcome of the "artist as hero" sentiment intertwined with the post-World War II Abstract Expressionism movement. On a practical level, these larger sculptures were better suited to outdoor, rather than indoor, display.⁷⁸

In the late 1960s and 1970s, the advent of "Earth Art" (also known as Land Art or Earthworks) led some artists to take outdoor sculpture to a new level. As defined by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Earth Art "is made by shaping the land itself or by making forms in the land using natural materials like rocks or tree branches. Earthworks range from subtle, temporary interventions in the landscape to significant, sculptural, lasting alterations made with heavy earth-moving machinery."⁷⁹ Coinciding "with a growing interest in ecology and an awareness of the dangers of pollution and the excesses of consumerism," the movement rejected traditional methods of showcasing art in museums and galleries and the idea that art was meant for public consumption and financial profit. Instead, artists like Robert Smithson (creator of "Spiral Jetty," 1970) and Michael Heizer (creator of "Double Negative," 1970) placed an emphasis on site-specific art, often choosing wide-open spaces in remote areas. They created their works from natural materials, embracing the transitory nature of artwork left exposed to the elements. By creating works that were inextricably tied to the landscape, they blurred the boundaries between art and environment.⁸⁰

During the 1980s, these trends encouraged the development of sculpture parks and gardens. John Dixon Hunt, professor emeritus of landscape architecture at the Weitzman School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania, notes that while sculpture has a long history of being located within gardens, the creation of sites specifically designed for the display of sculpture represented a notable shift in practice.⁸¹ These outdoor displays ranged from "small museum courtyards to entire university campuses, former private estates, corporate art parks, and vast acreages in the countryside." By 1988, there were 55

⁷⁸ Marc Treib, "Sculpture and Garden A Historical Overview," *Design Quarterly* No. 141 (1988), 50 - 51; Debra N. Lehane, "Art, Nature, People: The Sculpture Park Experience," (masters thesis, John. F. Kennedy University, 2006), 15 - 16.

⁷⁹ "Earthwork," Museum of Modern Art, accessed January 20, 2022, <https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/earthwork>.

⁸⁰ Amy Dempsey, *Art in the Modern Era: A Guide to Styles, Schools & Movements* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002), 260 - 262, 263 - 265; The Art Story Contributors, "Earth Art Movement Overview and Analysis," TheArtStory.org, first published Jun 17, 2015, accessed January 20, 2022, <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/earth-art/>; 7.

⁸¹ John Dixon Hunt, "Sculpture Gardens and Sculpture in Gardens," in *Thinking the Sculpture Garden: Art, Plant, Landscape*, ed. Penny Florence (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2020).

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such sites in the United States.⁸² The most popular included the Storm King Art Center in Mountainville, New York – a several hundred-acre landscaped park – and the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden at New York City’s Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and the Hirshom Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. – two smaller, more formal parks associated with museums.⁸³

In the Twin Cities, the opening of the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden adjacent to the Walker Art Center in 1988 drew significant attention. Designed by New York architect Edward Larrabee Barnes and Boston landscape architect Peter Rothschild, the garden was inspired by classic, formal European gardens, with allées and “roofless” galleries arranged in a symmetrical pattern (Figure X).⁸⁴ Other sculpture gardens developed in the Twin Cities around this time included a converted courtyard at the St. Paul Arts and Science Center (by 1971), the redesign of 75 acres surrounding the General Mills Corporate Headquarters (1988) in Golden Valley, a sculpture garden added to the Honeywell Corporate Campus in Minneapolis (1978), and a garden developed adjacent to the Humphrey School of Public Affairs on the West Bank of the University of Minnesota (1988).⁸⁵ As described by the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, the small-scale University of Minnesota garden was a “low-key, geometric arrangement of grass, pathways, and benches from which visitors may contemplate quotations by the former vice president [Hubert Humphrey] inset in brick walls”.⁸⁶ The redesign of General Mills campus grounds resulted in “over 75 acres of undulated hills carefully sculpted to appear untouched.” Several sculptures already owned by the company were repositioned in the landscape and four new pieces were added, as well as a large stone amphitheater.⁸⁷ Aerial photographs indicate that the 1980s landscaping was a significant change from the undeveloped condition of the property in the 1950s (prior to the construction of General Mills’ headquarters) with added ponds, paths, and vegetation (see Figures II and JJ). Honeywell likewise undertook a significant redevelopment of a parking lot to create a landscaped plaza next to its corporate headquarters, adding a terraced lawn with two prominent sculptures, a series of reflecting pools, and vegetation (see Figure HH).⁸⁸ Northeast of the Twin Cities, the Franconia Sculpture Park was developed in 1996 in Shafer, Minnesota. Founded by sculptor John Hock, the park was located on 16 acres of

⁸² Mary Abbe Martin, “U. S. Sculpture Parks, Gardens Range from Big Acreages to Courtyards,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 4, 1988.

⁸³ Mary Abbe Martin, “U. S. Sculpture Parks, Gardens Range from Big Acreages to Courtyards,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 4, 1988.

⁸⁴ Lauren Bima, “Minneapolis Sculpture Garden: 1988 Opening Day,” July 16, 2015, <https://walkerart.org/magazine/minneapolis-sculpture-garden-1988-opening-day>; “Minneapolis Sculpture Garden,” accessed January 20, 2022, Walkerart.org, <https://walkerart.org/minnesotabydesign/objects/minneapolis-sculpture-garden>.

⁸⁵ “Town and Country Club Plans Have Aquatennial Flavor,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 10, 1966; Mary Abbe Martin, “Sculpture Garden Made Major Mark on Arts Landscape,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, December 25, 1988; Dick Youngblood, “Honeywell Inc. to keep home in city with new tall office,” *Star Tribune*, May 5, 1976.

⁸⁶ Mary Abbe Martin, “Sculpture Garden Made Major Mark on Arts Landscape,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, December 25, 1988.

⁸⁷ Mary Abbe Martin, “Sculpture Garden Made Major Mark on Arts Landscape,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, December 25, 1988.

⁸⁸ Aerial photograph of Honeywell Campus, 1988, Hennepin County Property Map, accessed July 15, 2024, <https://gis.hennepin.us/property/?pid=3402924410104>; “What’s Going On?” *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 22, 1979.

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farmland and meadow, which provided not only extensive open space for the display of large sculptures, but also an outdoor studio for artists. The park relocated to its existing location sometime after 1998.⁸⁹

Caponi Art Park was developed and established within the context of this heightened interest in outdoor sculpture parks and is distinguished within this local context from others in the Twin Cities. In contrast to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and Franconia Sculpture Park, the landscape at Caponi Art Park formed not just the backdrop to manmade sculptures but also the substance of Caponi's art. In contrast to the extensive redevelopment of the natural landscape at the General Mills and Honeywell sculpture gardens, Caponi worked within the existing natural setting, preserving and enhancing it to provide a seamless integration of art and nature.

Caponi repeatedly emphasized the difference between his art park and the typical sculpture garden concept. In interviews, Caponi stated that the park would not resemble a typical sculpture garden, where "walls of plants make rooms in which to display individual pieces of art" and where sculptures were "lined up like tombstones at a cemetery."⁹⁰ Rather, the development of the landscape followed the same principles as Caponi's earlier work on the site, and his overall artistic philosophy – a seamless integration of art and nature and everyday human experience.

As Caponi would later remark, there were at least two themes underlying the park - "remarriage of nature and art" and "make art approachable."⁹¹ The former was clearly expressed by Caponi in newspaper interviews during the 1980s and 1990s, in which he emphasized that the landscape itself was his canvas, and all individual pieces of artwork on the site were intended to function as an integrated whole with their surroundings. "All the art in this place is born of its own environment," Caponi asserted. "Art or beauty should arise spontaneously from a natural environment. I don't want to separate the beauty of nature from man-made beauty."⁹² Caponi's preference for working with durable materials like stone and metal lent itself well to the concept of an outdoor sculpture garden, which had to withstand the harsh Minnesota climate. Developing artwork that was meant to last also aligned with Caponi's belief that "art should have extended life and not just meet current fashions."⁹³

For Caponi, the setting was just as important as the artwork itself. This conviction was frequently expressed in his statements about the art park, such as:

- "The place has to be a whole work of art, not just a recipient of art."⁹⁴
- "The park is the main object of art, and the sculptures in it are subordinate details."⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Mary Abbe, "Group Energy Drives Sculpture-Park Artists," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 10, 1998; Adam Hammer, "Trippin' to Franconia Sculpture Park," *St. Cloud Times*, July 5, 2007.

⁹⁰ Debra O'Connor, "Laughter, Life Shape Sculptor's Passion," *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, October 12, 1988; Gary Gunderson, "Sculptor Makes Park by Hand," *Eagan Chronicle*, August 31, 1988; Jill Olson, "Man Shapes Land to Fulfill Dream," *Eagan Thisweek*, September 22, 1991.

⁹¹ Anthony Caponi, interview by Wendy Huckaby, "Still Life," *The Nightly*, October 13, 1994.

⁹² Rob Hotakainen, "He Envisions Turning Eagan Hill Into Sculpture," *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, March 19, 1987.

⁹³ Christy Clapp, "Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal," *Thisweek*, December 8, 1986; Katherine Lanpher, "Sculptor's Roots Nourish His Works of Art," *The Dispatch*, September 28, 1982.

⁹⁴ Christy Clapp, "Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal," *Thisweek*, December 8, 1986.

⁹⁵ Jim Adams, "Park Blends Art, Nature, Love," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 30, 1991.

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- “It’s not a place upon which you exhibit works of art...the place is going to be a work of art and conventional sculptures are subordinate to it.”⁹⁶
- “The park is not here to exhibit art...but to reunite art with nature and people.”⁹⁷

The manner in which Caponi added man-made elements to the park reflected this goal. Some works of art, like “Pompeii” and the “Snake,” were built directly into the landscape; others were relocated from elsewhere and placed in carefully designed settings.⁹⁸ As one newspaper article explained, “each slope, contour, and tree in Caponi Art Park has been carefully planned to heighten the impact of the metal, concrete and stone pieces of art visitors find as they saunter through the park.”⁹⁹ Caponi shaped the earth with shovels and a tractor, built “gardens of granite boulders, concrete and moss...and winding trails of stone, wood and grass that follow[ed] natural contours of the land.”¹⁰⁰ Retaining walls were created using stones collected from nearby farmers.¹⁰¹

Caponi’s goals for how people would interact with this artwork were also very different from the typical art museum experience, which he viewed as inadequate for imbuing individuals with true appreciation for art.¹⁰² Rather, Caponi believed that “a child should come into this place of natural setting without any instructions as how to proceed, view art and respond to art. Aesthetic experience should be spontaneous and involve a sense of discovery.”¹⁰³ The art park was designed as a way to integrate art into everyday experience. “I want art to be an integral part of life, a place to play, a place to work...I don’t like that a person should go to a museum and only there to become sensitive. I come from a country where art is outside, in buildings and in parks.”¹⁰⁴ As another article in a local newspaper explained, “the park embodies Caponi’s philosophy that the aesthetic can be joined with the practical” – or in Caponi’s words, that “life and art will not be separate elements.”¹⁰⁵ The author of yet another interview noted that Caponi “believes art should be accessible and interactive, not intimidating and hands-off like many people think. The art park is his way of providing that access.”¹⁰⁶

⁹⁶ Jill Olson, “Man Shapes Land to Fulfill Dream,” *Thisweek*, September 22, 1991.

⁹⁷ Bruce N. Wright, “A Vision,” in Macalester College Art Department, *Anthony Caponi: A Vision and Legacy* (Macalester College, 1991), 8.

⁹⁸ “Eagan Sculptor Focuses on the Basics of Life,” *Eagan Chronicle*, August 2, 1982; Margaret Cuneo, “Eagan’s Caponi Art Park an Adventure in Sculpture,” *Eagan Sun Current*, October 14, 1992.

⁹⁹ Lori Haugen, “Artistic Vision Becomes Reality,” *Eagan Sun Current*, June 8, 1994.

¹⁰⁰ Jim Adams, “Park Blends Art, Nature, Love,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 30, 1991; Lori Haugen, “Artistic Vision Becomes Reality,” *Eagan Sun Current*, June 8, 1994.

¹⁰¹ Jill Olson, “Man Shapes Land to Fulfill Dream,” *Thisweek*, September 22, 1991.

¹⁰² Rob Hotakainen, “He Envisions Turning Eagan Hill Into Sculpture,” *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, March 19, 1987

¹⁰³ Christy Clapp, “Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal,” *Thisweek*, December 8, 1986.

¹⁰⁴ Debra O’Connor, “Laughter, Life Shape Sculptor’s Passion,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, October 12, 1988; “Professor Practices What He Preaches,” *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963.

¹⁰⁵ Lori Haugen, “Artistic Vision Becomes Reality,” *Eagan Sun Current*, June 8, 1994.

¹⁰⁶ Anthony Caponi, interview by Wendy Huckaby, “Still Life,” *The Nightly*, October 13, 1994.

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By constructing his studio on the site, Caponi intended that the public could observe art being created, which would further encourage true appreciation of art.¹⁰⁷

Appreciation is forthcoming much easier when people see work in progress, when the people become mental participants in the development of a continuous idea. The dynamics are of the making being part of the experience. The studio is part of that whole idea. It's not excess baggage...I want the project to be approachable both in a physical and mental sense. It should not be a mystery how things are made because an artist uses the creative quality every human being is endowed with. Its self-identification constitutes appreciation. In a physical sense, I want my work to be touchable, when possible to be climbed, caressed, embraced -- all the things that are discouraged in museums.¹⁰⁸

Caponi's work on the site continued during the 1980s. A metal picket fence was installed along the south side of the park in 1981 (Figure Y).¹⁰⁹ By 1986, a newspaper article noted that "Caponi's garden consists of winding paths adorned with bronze, steel and rock patterns and sculptures."¹¹⁰ His studio building, under construction since the 1970s, was completed in 1987 (Figure Z).¹¹¹ By 1989, most of the existing paths in the east trail zone and the core zone had been completed (see Figure KK, site development diagram). By 1991, a newspaper article indicated that there were "over a dozen steel, granite, and bronze works blended into the shady, well-trimmed lawns surrounding the home Caponi shares with his wife, Cheryl, and two daughters."¹¹² When Caponi retired from Macalester in 1991, the developing park featured prominently in his retirement exhibition.¹¹³ As the exhibition catalog noted:

[Caponi's] sensibility of discovering and shaping the underlying presence within a stone and his early love of and attachment to his native landscape, have inspired both [his sculptures] and the creation of the sculpture park that surrounds his home in the churning hills of Eagan, Minnesota. Here the land – his home itself, is the medium. Carved paths contour through the sloping woods. Mounded moss embankments, and sculptures of stone, rock, cast bronze and concrete embed into the hillsides. For Anthony Caponi, art and life are inseparable. Family, home, leisure and labor are each inextricable ingredients of the creative process.¹¹⁴

Photographs of the park taken in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Figures AA – GG) illustrate the experience of one visitor to the site in 1992:

Visitors are greeted by a long private driveway following the contour of the property. The rolling land, shaded by ancient oaks, pines and birch trees, has been carved up by walkways and

¹⁰⁷ Bruce N. Wright, "A Vision," in Macalester College Art Department, *Anthony Caponi: A Vision and Legacy* (Macalester College, 1991), 8.

¹⁰⁸ Christy Clapp, "Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal," *Thisweek*, December 8, 1986.

¹⁰⁹ Photograph of Diffley fence under construction, 1981, courtesy of Cheryl Caponi.

¹¹⁰ Christy Clapp, "Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal," *Thisweek*, December 8, 1986.

¹¹¹ Cheryl Caponi, "Timeline of Development for Caponi Art Park," January 2022.

¹¹² Jim Adams, "Park Blends Art, Nature, Love," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 30, 1991.

¹¹³ T. Fines, "Anthony Caponi Retires," *Mac Weekly*, Fall 1991.

¹¹⁴ Cherie Doyle Riesenbergh, "Introduction," in Macalester College Art Department, *Anthony Caponi: A Vision and Legacy* (Macalester College, 1991), 3.

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retaining walls. One retaining wall has circles of soft green moss surrounded by hard gray rocks, providing interesting texture clashes. A hand-laid walking path above it separates another wall of boulders and moss, the negative and positive spaces creating a long, uncoiled serpent.

A painted iron fence creates a decorative border around the park...a stone ramp winding around a hill made just for climbing...Numerous metal or rock sculptures, both upright and horizontal, adorn the paths which lead the way through his park...“linear walks” as [Caponi] calls them, which never become monotonous and always follow the natural lay of the land.¹¹⁵

As the suburb of Eagan grew and land values increased, Caponi’s foresight in setting aside land for a public art park became increasingly clear.¹¹⁶ As he told a local newspaper in 1982, “I hope this will be a major art place in Eagan someday...This is where I’m building my monument. Now I’m doing it for me. But later on, I hope, Eagan will consider it its own.”¹¹⁷ Beginning in the mid-1980s, Caponi sought to formally partner with the City of Eagan on the project. After several years of formal conversations, it was determined that the city could not afford to acquire or operate the art park. However, in 1990, the city and Caponi entered into a working partnership whereby the city would help Caponi to establish a foundation to fund the park’s development and city staff would provide support in legal matters and landscape architecture design.¹¹⁸

In 1991, the Caponis partnered with the city to host a one-day-only public opening of the park. Within a span of two hours, over 1,500 people attended to hear Caponi’s vision for the property.¹¹⁹ In 1992, the Caponi Art Park was incorporated as a non-profit organization, creating an entity that could acquire and operate the park long term.¹²⁰ That same year, the City and Caponi agreed to split the cost of constructing an underpass beneath Diffley Road, which would serve not only the Eagan bike trail system but would also connect Caponi’s northern 20 acres with the 40 acres to the south.¹²¹ At this point, the southern 40 acres were largely undeveloped and being used for cattle grazing, but Caponi planned to use the land for a visitor parking lot and, eventually, additional features like an amphitheater and pavilion. The underpass was completed in 1993, and the first trail was added to the west trail zone that year as well. In the first weekend of August 1994, the art park was officially opened to the public for self-guided tours.¹²²

¹¹⁵ Margaret Cuneo, “Eagan’s Caponi Art Park an Adventure in Sculpture,” *Eagan Sun Current*, October 14, 1992.

¹¹⁶ Christy Clapp, “Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal,” *Thisweek*, December 8, 1986.

¹¹⁷ “Eagan Sculptor Focuses on the Basics of Life,” *Eagan Chronicle*, August 2, 1982.

¹¹⁸ Debra O’Connor, “Eagan, Artist Partners in Sculpture Park,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, November 22, 1990; Cheryl Caponi, “Timeline of Development for Caponi Art Park,” January 2022.

¹¹⁹ “Caponi Art Park Open House,” September 1991, on file at Caponi Art Park; Cheryl Caponi, “Timeline of Development for Caponi Art Park,” January 2022.

¹²⁰ Jill Olson, “Man Shapes Land to Fulfill Dream,” *Thisweek*, September 22, 1991; Cheryl Caponi, “Timeline of Development for Caponi Art Park,” January 2022; Margaret Cuneo, “Eagan’s Caponi Art Park an Adventure in Sculpture,” *Eagan Sun Current*, October 14, 1992; Bill Gardner, “Artist, City to Share Tunnel Cost,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, December 30, 1992.

¹²¹ Bill Gardner, “Artist, City to Share Tunnel Cost,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, December 30, 1992; Debra O’Connor, “Eagan’s New Park Offers Art Lovers a Broader Horizon,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 31, 1994.

¹²² Lori Haugen, “Caponi’s Art Opens for Public,” *Eagan SunCurrent*, August 3, 1994; Debra O’Connor, “Creating a Soft Spot for His Art,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 9, 1993; Cheryl Caponi, in conversation with author, August

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Even prior to its formal opening, the park was identified as a site of potential regional significance.¹²³ As noted in a 1990 publication, the park “is regional in scope and national in importance because of its unique blending of art and passive recreation in a park setting.”¹²⁴ A 1994 publication of the National Recreation and Park Association further described the park’s unique qualities, noting that it

is a place where people, art, and nature come together to evoke a sense of beauty and a state of relaxation - where art is an inseparable part of daily living. The land is used as a medium to achieve a singular work of art at the 60-acre site. Unlike art museums that use space as a natural background to arbitrarily display their art collections, Caponi Park uses conventional art as an integral part of the whole. Sculptures are conceived and developed on site, as a natural outgrowth of the environment. Anthony Caponi has crafted pathways which lead from the studio and twist back upon themselves, through thickly wooded slopes and across brief openings.¹²⁵

For Caponi, the art park was the culmination of his life’s work as an artist and educator. As he told a newspaper in 1986,

The [art park] started before it was started. Thoughts have been in the making since the beginning of my professional life. This is merely a culmination of the things that have been in the making in my mind ever since I became aware of my place in society and whatever contribution I might be able to make... This project will make tangible those ideals and philosophy I've been teaching for many years.¹²⁶

Caponi Art Park: 1995 - Present

While Caponi Art Park was formally opened to the public in 1994, Caponi repeatedly emphasized that the park was designed for continued evolution and would perpetually be an unfinished work.¹²⁷ For the next two decades, until his death in 2015, Caponi continued to shape and develop the landscape, particularly the 40 acres to the south of Diffley Road, which Caponi envisioned as a site for “cultural activities, classes and hands-on programs.”¹²⁸ In 2000, he added an outdoor amphitheater (“Theater in the Woods”), which was expanded in 2006.¹²⁹ From the 1990s until the present day, the park has offered cultural and educational programming, including musical performances, plays, and workshops.¹³⁰

2021.

¹²³ Jim Adams, “Park Blends Art, Nature, Love,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 30, 1991.

¹²⁴ “The Caponi Art Park of Eagan,” *A Minnesota River Valley Review* 1, No. 2 (Winter 1990).

¹²⁵ “#10: Arts, Parks and Partnerships – The Public/Private Connection,” *Parks & Recreation*, June 1994, on file at Caponi Art Park.

¹²⁶ Christy Clapp, “Anthony Caponi: Local Artist Carves Out Cultural Center Proposal,” *Thisweek*, December 8, 1986.

¹²⁷ Margaret Cuneo, “Eagan’s Caponi Art Park an Adventure in Sculpture,” *Eagan Sun Current*, October 14, 1992; Lori Haugen, “Caponi’s Art Opens for Public,” *Eagan SunCurrent*, August 3, 1994.

¹²⁸ Mark Brunswick, “Artistic Realities Challenge Owner of Sculpture Park,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 22, 1998.

¹²⁹ Gwendolyn Freed, “Pearl of the Park,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 15, 2000; David Gustafson, “Music Events Mark Expansion of Theater at Caponi Art Park,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, July 5, 2006.

¹³⁰ Shira Kantor, “Art Park’s Creator Tries to Avoid Sale of Eagan Property to Developers,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, October 15, 2003; Heron Marquez Estrada, “Future of Art Park May Be in Question,” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*,

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In 2005, the Caponis sold half of their property to the City of Eagan and the other half to the Caponi Art Park nonprofit, under an arrangement by which the Caponis would continue to live on the site, the nonprofit organization would assume responsibility for programming, and the City of Eagan would provide tree maintenance. In 2013, the City of Eagan purchased the rest of the park from the non-profit organization.¹³¹ Today, the site retains its historic functions as both the private Caponi home and a public art park, an enduring tribute to the vision and talent of Anthony Caponi.

February 27, 2011; "Caponi Art Park in Eagan Plans Open House as Kickoff," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 4, 2014; Erin Adler, "Art Park Calls for Entries for New Exhibition," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 19, 2017; "Three Sculpture Parks Open This Month," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, June 8, 1996.

¹³¹ Bluestem Heritage Group. "Anthony Caponi: Life In Art." Draft Exhibit Plan, 2020, p. 10.

Caponi Art Park

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Photographs, Maps, and Documentaries

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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 # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☒ Other

Name of repository: Caponi Art Park

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DK-EGC-040; DK-EGC-041

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 20

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15 Easting: 487778 Northing: 4961269

2. Zone: 15 Easting: 487790 Northing: 4961410

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3. Zone: 15

Easting: 488036

Northing: 4961415

4. Zone: 15

Easting: 488037

Northing: 4961265

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See Figure A, property map, for property boundaries.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic site boundaries encompass the northern 20 acres of the current 60 acre park and were chosen to encompass the area of land developed by Anthony Caponi as an art park during the period of significance. The southern 40 acres of the current park primarily functioned as cattle pasture until the construction of the Diffley Road underpass in 1993, and most of the features on this section were constructed after the end of the proposed period of significance for the property in 1994. Therefore, they are excluded from the historic boundaries.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lauren Anderson

organization: New History

street & number: 575 9th St SE Suite #215

city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55414

e-mail: anderson@newhistory.com

telephone: 612-843-4146

date: 04/03/2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Caponi Art Park

City or Vicinity: Eagan

County: Dakota

State: Minnesota

Photographer: Lauren Anderson

Date Photographed: August 2021, October 2024, March 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Number	Description	Facing
0001	View of trail and ravine in west trail zone	NE
0002	View of Diffley Road underpass (Bridge 97873)	S
0003	View of stone walls and gravel drive near entrance	SE
0004	View of gravel drive	NE
0005	View of Pompeii along gravel drive	SW
0006	View of walkway, stone wall, and metal fence along Diffley Road	E
0007	View of the Anthony Caponi Studio	NW
0008	View of Snake	SW
0009	View of stone wall near Anthony Caponi Studio	SW
0010	View of walkway near Anthony Caponi Studio	NE
0011	View of Anthony Caponi Studio	E
0012	View of trail near Anthony Caponi Studio	SE
0013	View of Monument to a Lumberjack	S
0014	View of Walk in Outer Space	N

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0015	View of core zone	NE
0016	View of Anthony Caponi Home	NE
0017	View of Anthony Caponi Home and stone walls	SW
0018	View of outdoor fireplace	SW
0019	View of core zone from the knoll	SW
0020	View of the Labyrinth	SE
0021	View of Nugget	SW
0022	View of The Grove	NE
0023	View of Old Crows	NW
0024	View of shed	SE
0025	View of trail in east trail zone	SE
0026	View of pines in east trail zone	S
0027	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Home, main level office.	W
0028	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Home, main level kitchen.	S
0029	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Home, main level living room.	SW
0030	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Home, main level living room.	E
0031	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Home, lower level bedroom.	N
0032	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Home, lower level bomb shelter.	N
0033	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Home, lower level bathroom.	W
0034	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Studio, upper level office.	S
0035	View of interior of Anthony Caponi Studio, ground level studio.	NE

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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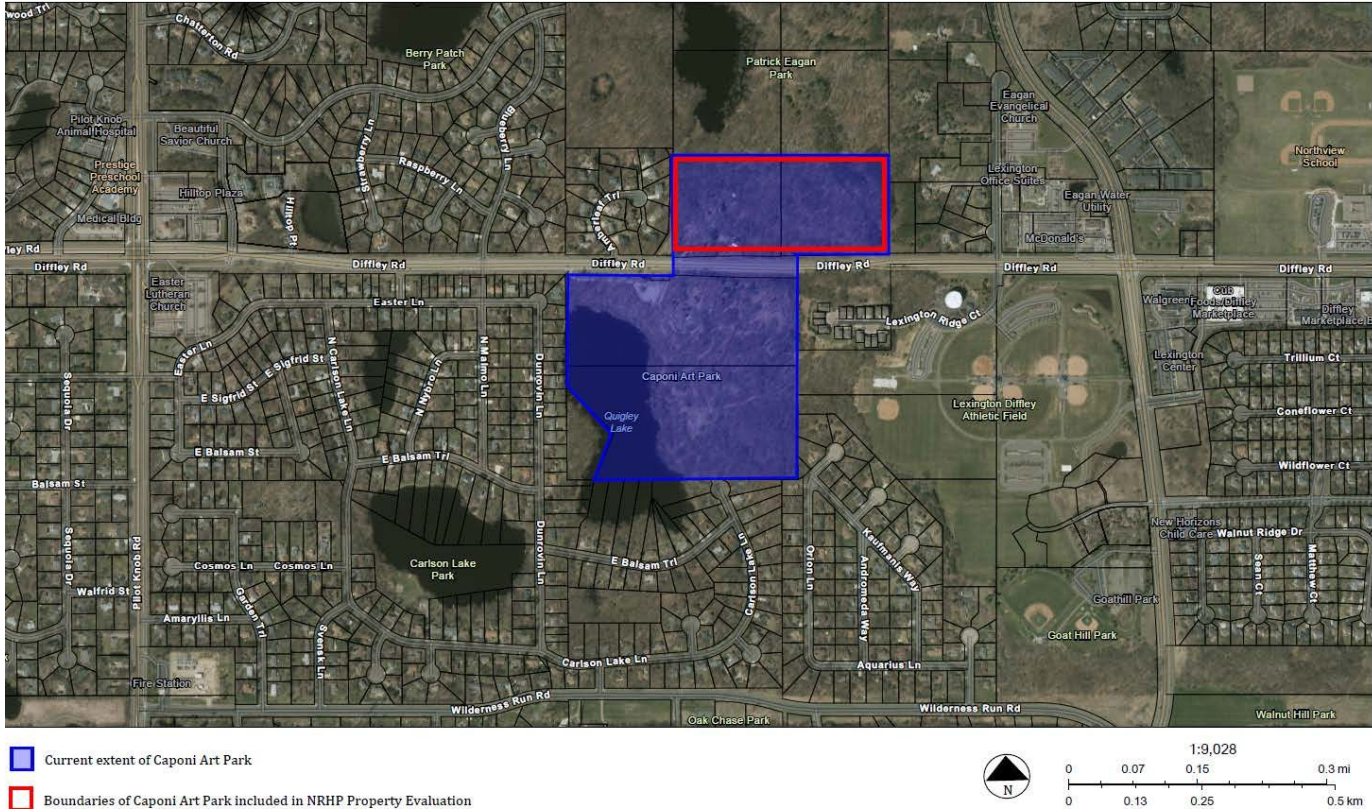


Figure A: Historic boundaries of Caponi Art Park (shown in red). Courtesy of Dakota County.

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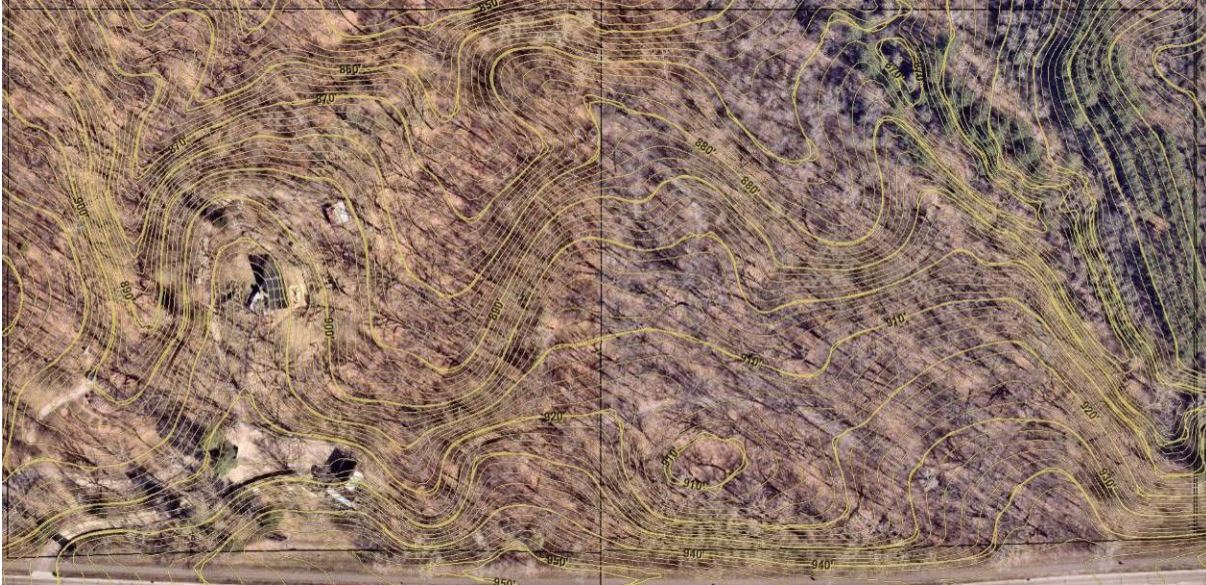


Figure B: Topographical map of Caponi Art Park, 2020. North is up. Courtesy of Dakota County.

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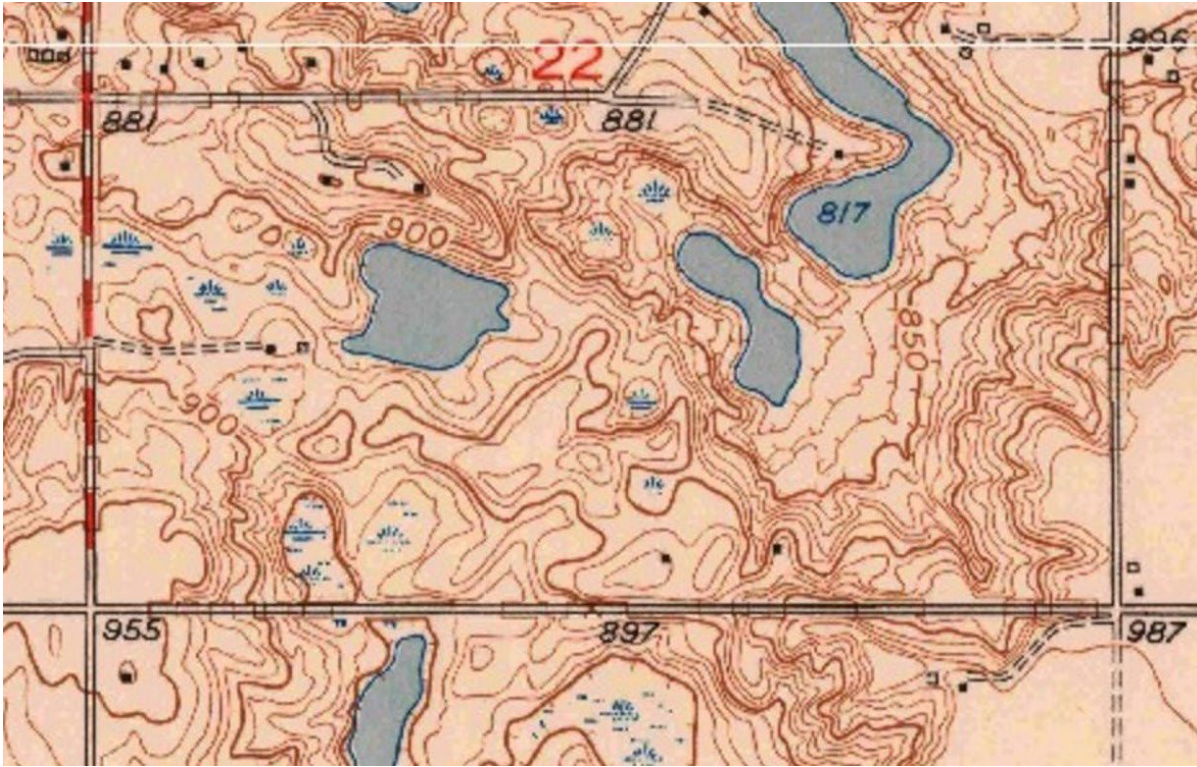


Figure C: Topographical map of Caponi Art Park, 1951. North is up. Courtesy of Dakota County.

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Figure D: Aerial view of Caponi Art Park, 1970. Courtesy of Dakota County.



Figure E: Aerial view of Caponi Art Park, spring 2020. Courtesy of Dakota County.

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Figure F: View of Caponi Home, looking northwest, 1969. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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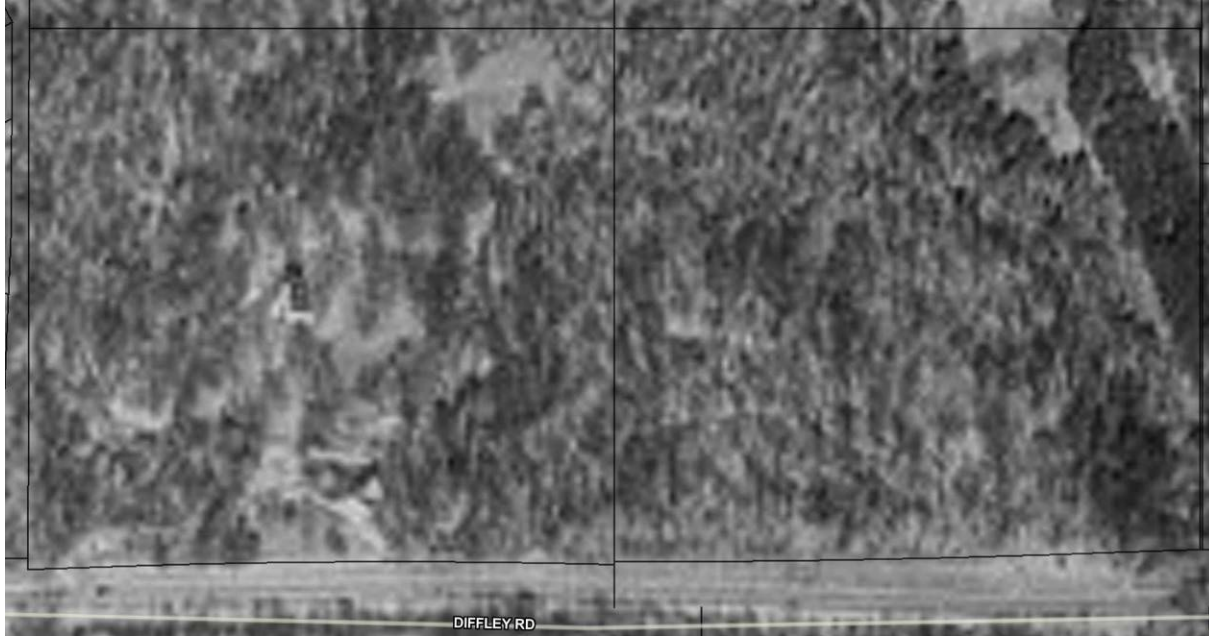


Figure G: Aerial view of Caponi Art Park, 1991. Courtesy of Dakota County.

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Figure H: View of 1972 Minnesota Museum of Art exhibition by Anthony Caponi, September 10, 1972. Anthony Caponi at left of picture. Courtesy of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*.

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Figure I: View of *Granite Trio*, St. Cloud, Minnesota. October, 1980. Courtesy of Minnesota Digital Reflections.

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Figure J: View of *Copper Christ*, Edina, Minnesota. Photo by Phil Prowse in *Mac Today*, Winter 1979.

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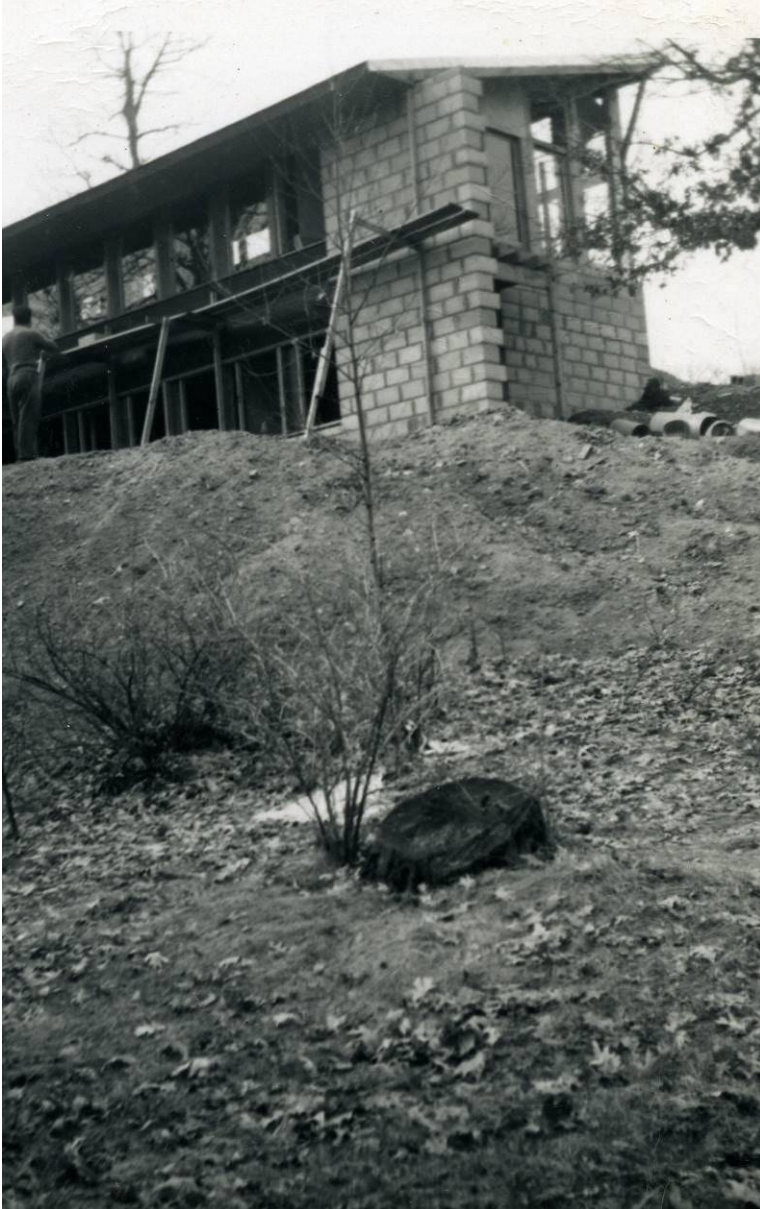


Figure K: View of Caponi Home under construction, looking southwest, 1950. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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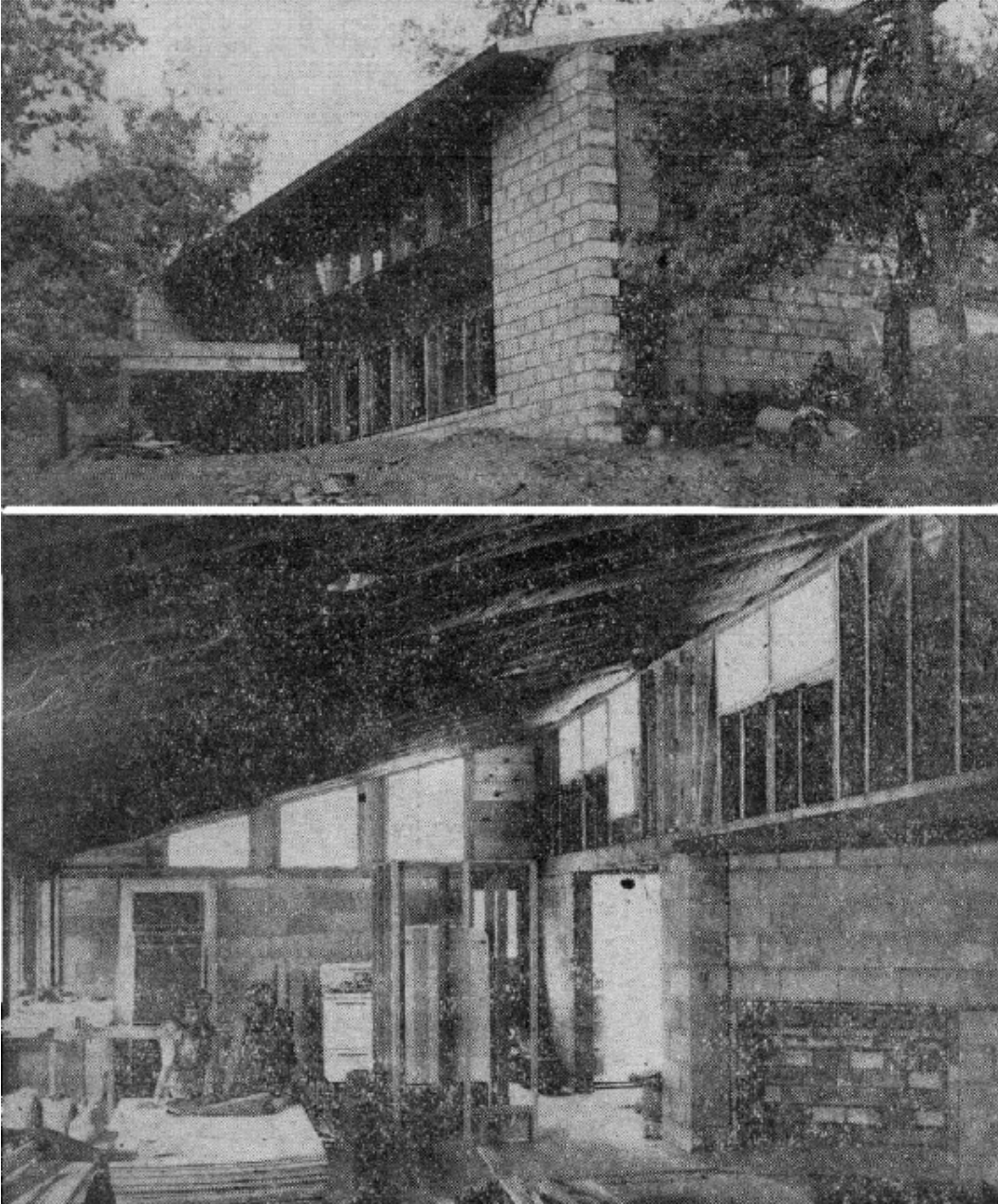


Figure L: Top: view of Caponi Home, looking southwest. Bottom: view of interior of Caponi Home under construction. May 30, 1951. Courtesy of the *St. Paul Dispatch*.

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Figure M: View of entrance drive, looking west, 1950. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure N: View of Anthony Caponi with students at the *Tree of Life*, looking south, 1957. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Minneapolis Star photos by Gerald Brimacombe

IN A STAIRWAY, ART BECOMES PART OF EVERYDAY LIFE
Gesturing, Caponi explains hammered lead panel depicting his family



BACKYARD SWING PROVIDES RELAXATION
Close to nature, Anthony Caponi finds freedom

Figure O: View of Anthony Caponi at his home and surrounding landscape, *Minneapolis Star*, October 22, 1963.

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Figure P: View of stone wall along entrance drive, looking southwest, 1969. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure Q: View of entrance drive, looking southwest, May 1969. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure R: View of *Tree of Life*, looking south towards Diffley Road, 1969. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure S: View of access drive to the north of the Caponi Home, looking west, 1974. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure T: View of Caponi Home, looking north, 1974. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure U: View of Caponi Home, looking southwest, 1974. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure V: View of *Undertow* at entrance drive, looking southwest, 1965 Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure W: View of Caponi Studio under construction, looking southeast, 1974. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure X: View of Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, <https://minneapolisparkhistory.com/tag/minneapolis-sculpture-garden/>.

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Figure Y: View of fence along Diffley Road, looking southwest, 1981. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure Z: View of Caponi Studio, looking southeast, 1988. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure AA: View of *Snake*, looking south, 1990. Photograph taken from *Currents* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1990).



Figure BB: View of Caponi Home, looking northwest, 1990. Photograph taken from *Currents* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1990).

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Figure CC: View of paths by Caponi Studio, looking southeast, 1990. Photograph taken from *Currents* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1990).

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Figure DD: View of *Pompeii* and entrance drive, looking east, 1988. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure EE: View of Caponi Art Park, looking north, 1991. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.



Figure FF: View of Caponi Art Park, looking southeast, 1991. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure GG: Caponi Studio area, looking southeast, 1990. Courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

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Figure HH: Landscaped plaza at Honeywell Corporate Campus, 1978. Courtesy of Hennepin County Library Digital Collections.

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Figure II. Farmland in Golden Valley, MN prior to redevelopment as General Mills Corporate Headquarters, 1956.
Courtesy of John R. Borchert Map Library Minnesota Historical Aerial Photographs Online.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Caponi Art Park

Name of Property

Dakota, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 4



Figure JJ. General Mills Corporate Headquarters in Golden Valley, MN, 1992. Courtesy of Nationwide Environmental Title Research Historic Aerials.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Caponi Art Park

Name of Property

Dakota, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 5

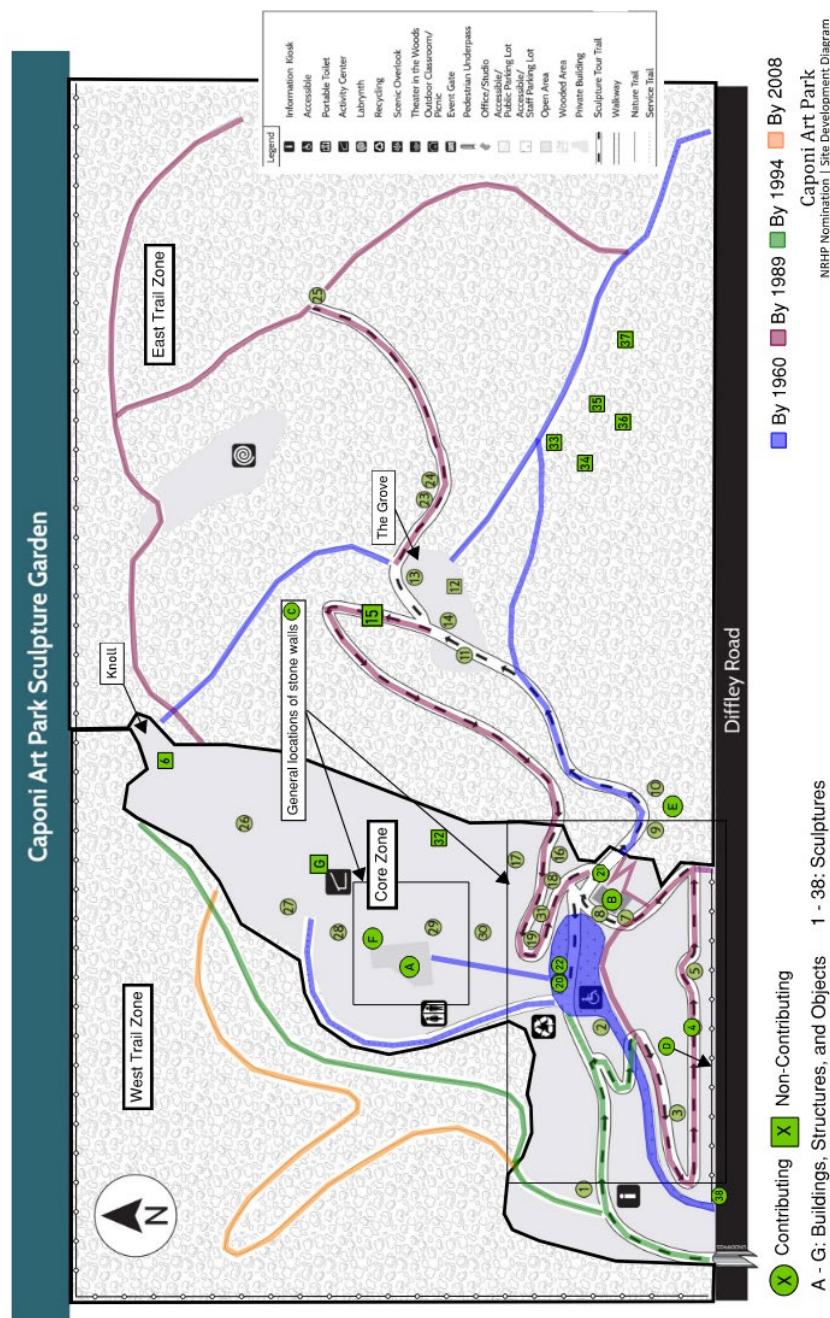


Figure KK. Site development diagram. Background map courtesy of Caponi Art Park.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Caponi Art Park

Name of Property

Dakota, Minnesota

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 6

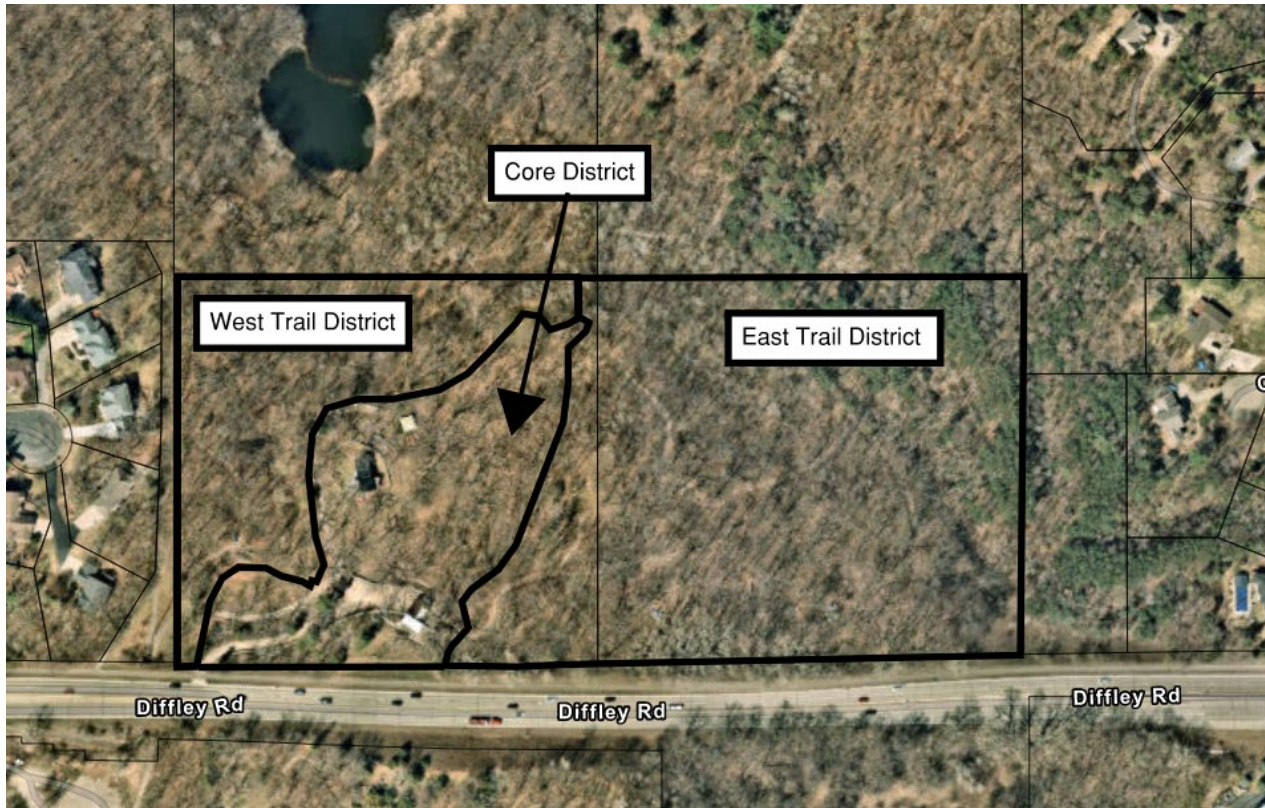
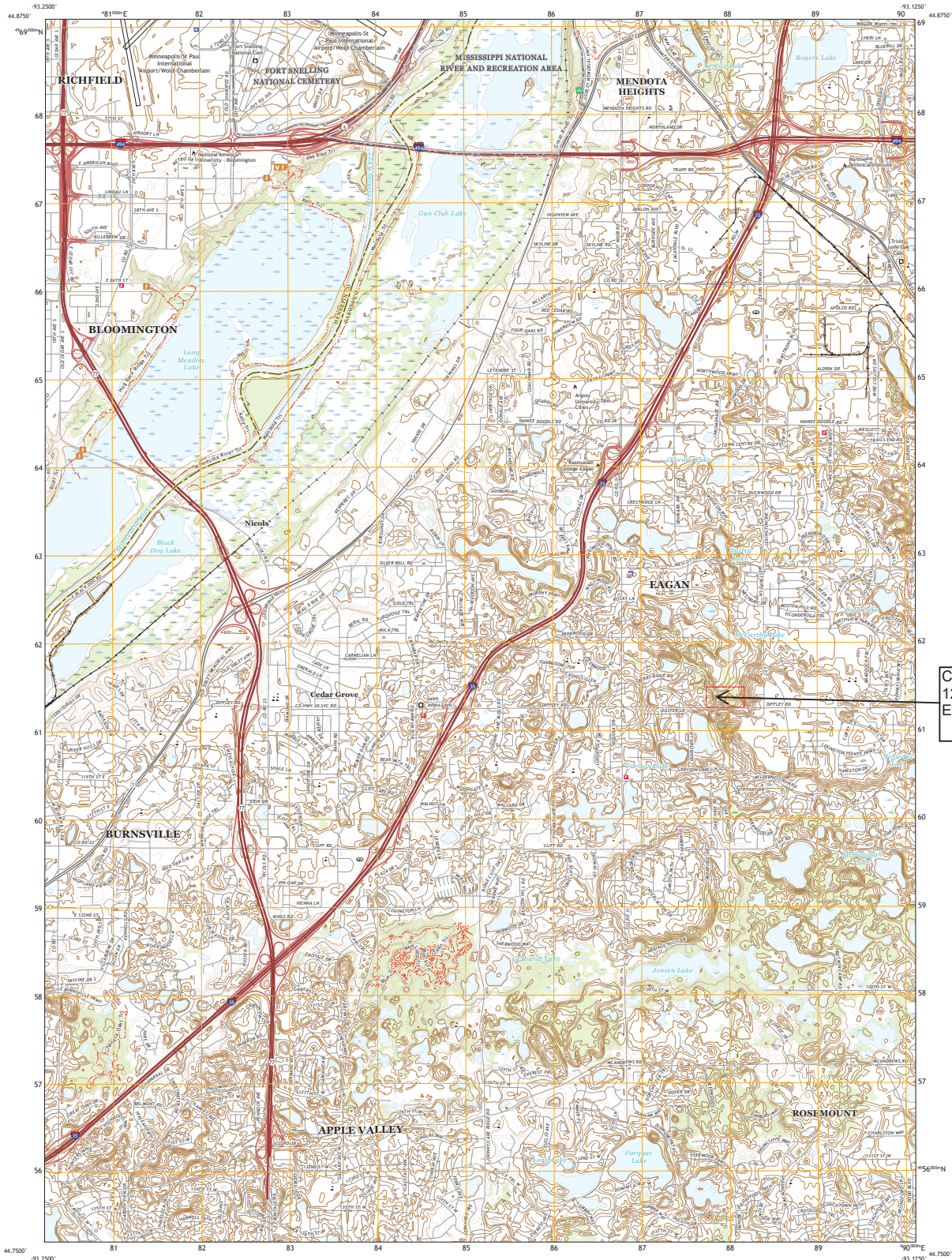


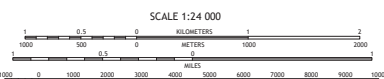
Figure LL. View of approximate boundaries of three park “zones” overlaid on aerial view of the current day park. Aerial courtesy of Dakota County.



Caponi Art Park
1215 Diffley Road
Eagan, MN 55122

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) Projection and
1 000-meter geotriangular Transverse Mercator, Zone 15T
This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be
generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before
entering private lands.

Imagery	NIP, August 2017 - November 2017
Roads	U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Names	U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Hydrography	National Hydrography Dataset, 2001 - 2019
Contours	National Elevation Dataset, 2014 - 2016
Boundaries	Multiple sources; see metadata file 2013 - 2021
Public Land Survey System	Bureau of Land Management, 2020
Wetlands	FWS National Wetlands Inventory 2010



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

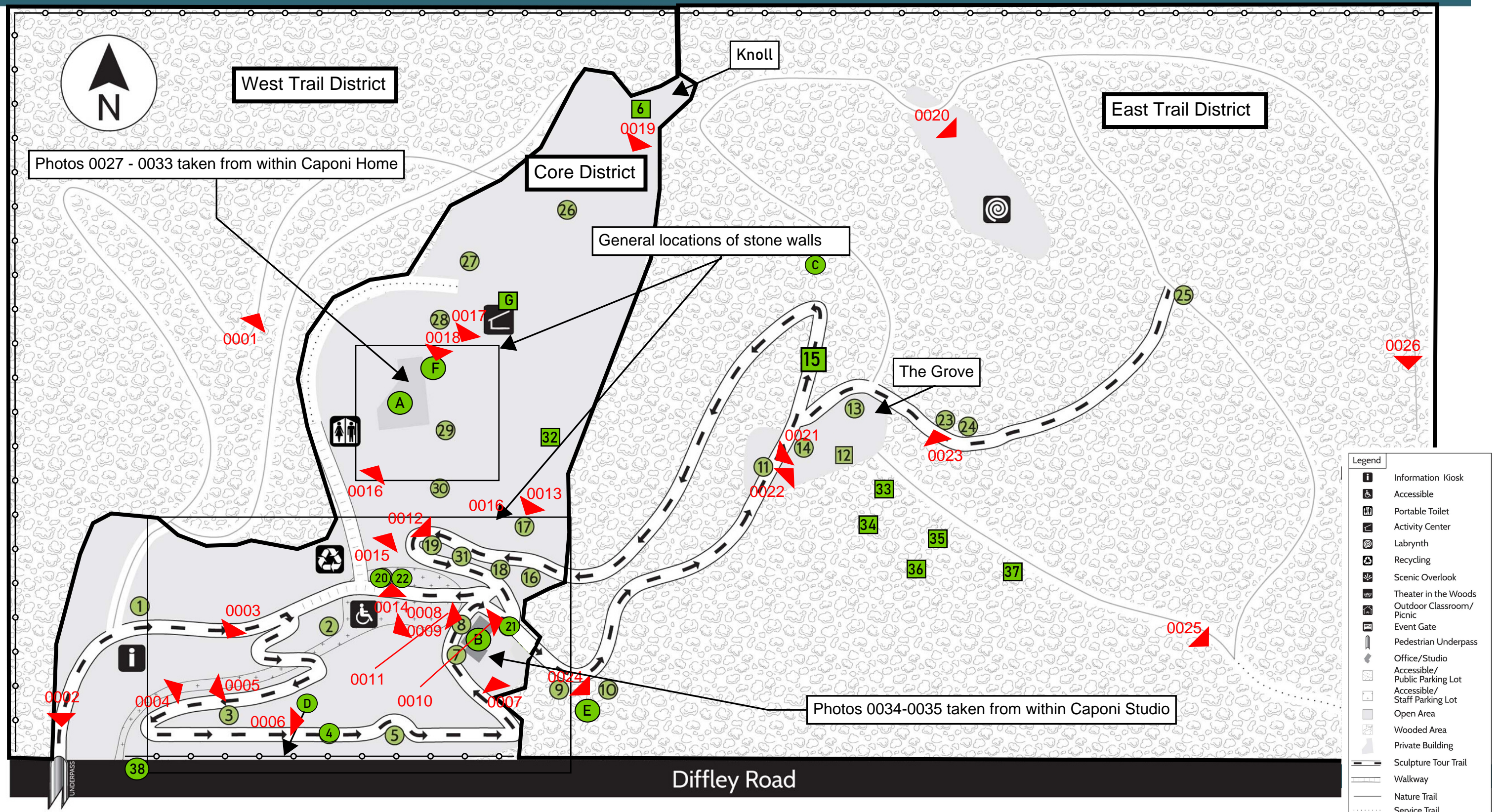
ABSOLUTE QUADRANGLE

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Expressway	Local Connector
Secondary Hwy	Local Road
Route	US Road
Interstate Route	State Route



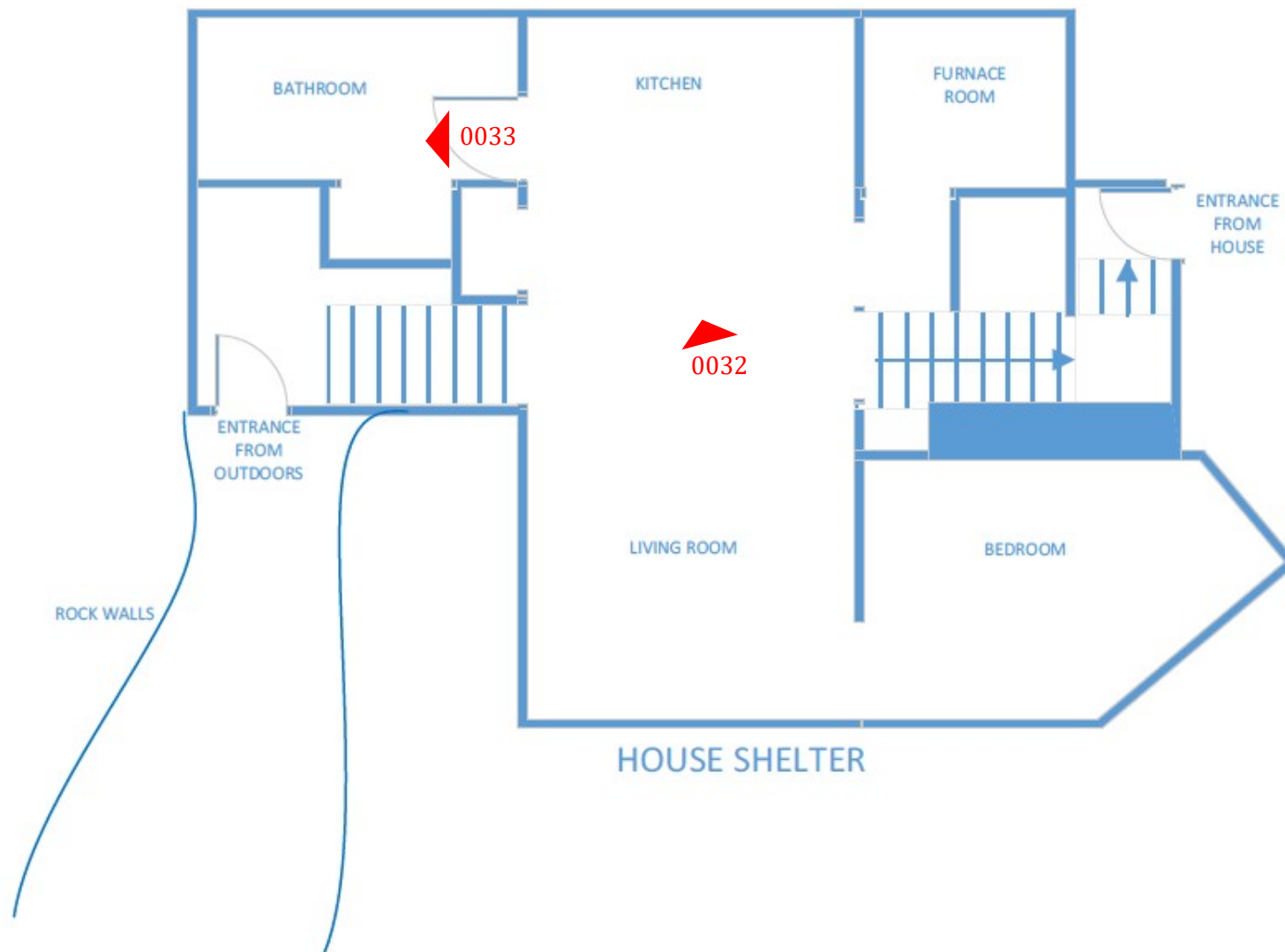
Caponi Art Park Sculpture Garden



X Contributing X Non-Contributing

A - G: Buildings, Structures, and Objects **1 - 38:** Sculptures

Caponi Art Park
NRHP Nomination | Photo Key



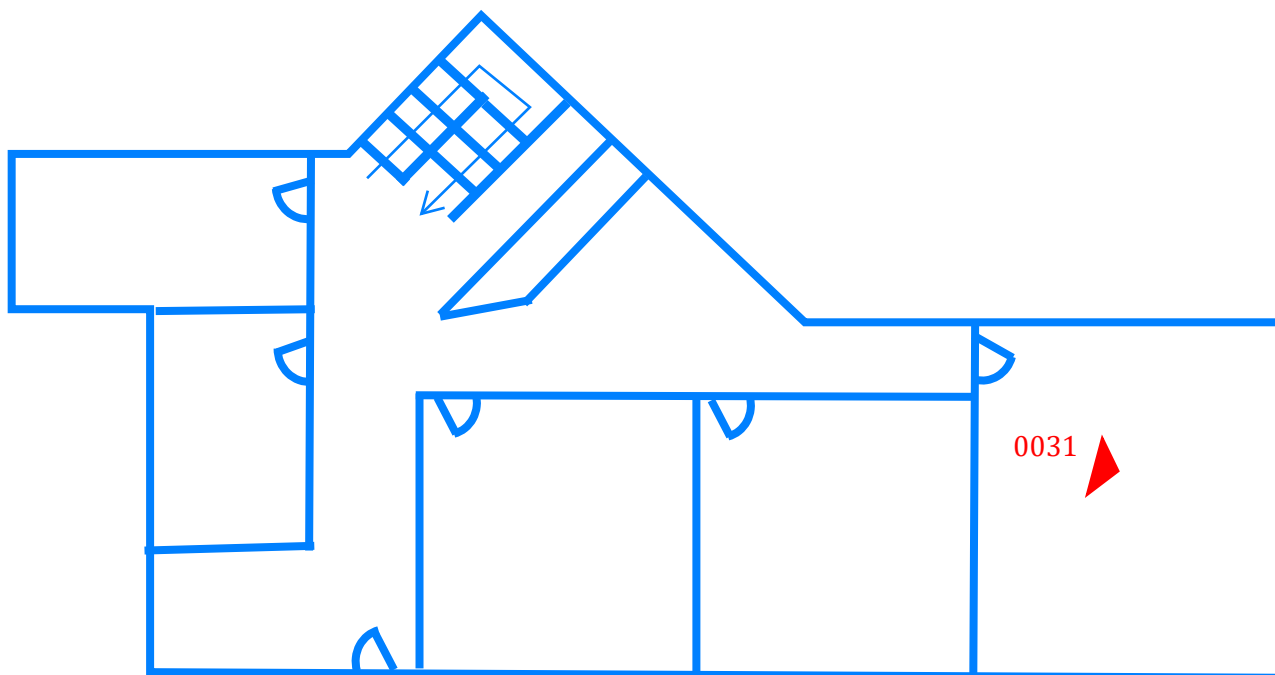
True N

Caponi Home

NRHP Nomination | Lower Level Bomb Shelter

Photo Key

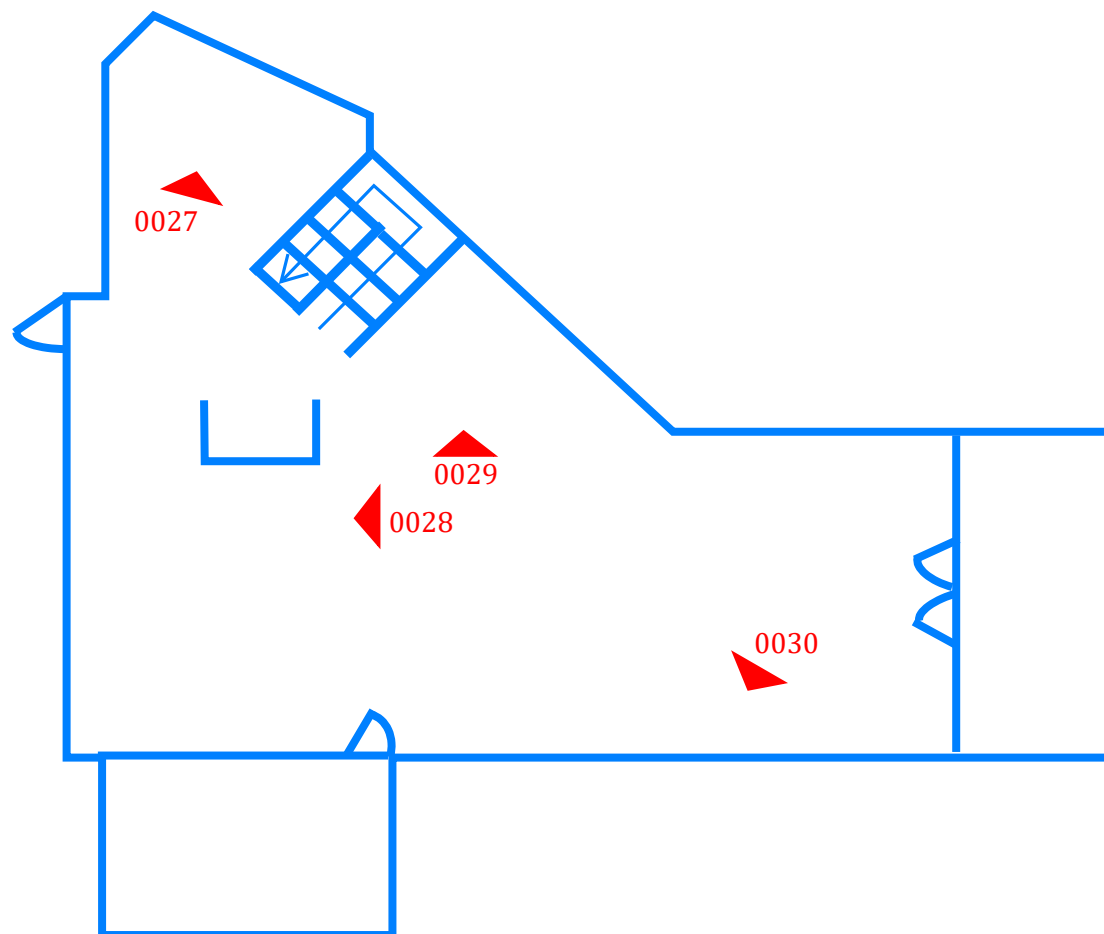
* Courtesy of Miller Dunwiddie Architecture



Caponi Home

NRHP Nomination | Lower Level House
Photo Key

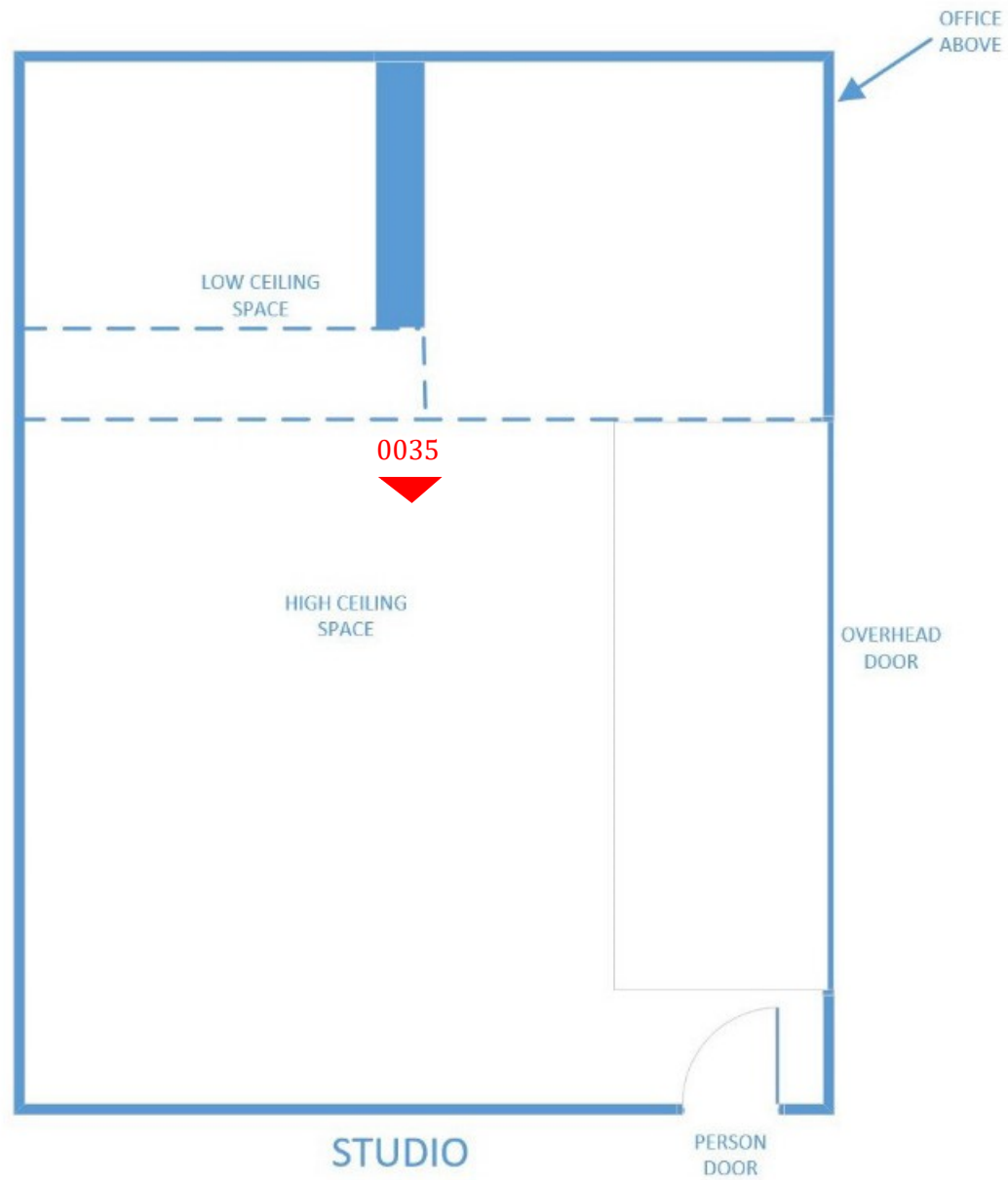
* Not to scale; approximate floor plan



Caponi Home

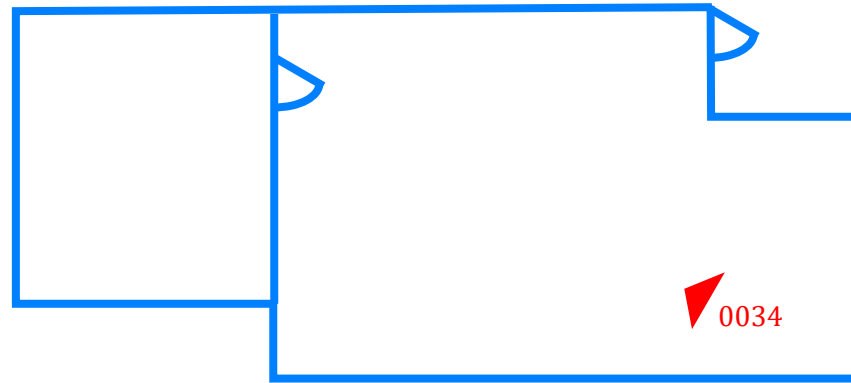
NRHP Nomination | Main Level House
Photo Key

* Not to scale; approximate floor plan



Caponi Studio

NRHP Nomination | Lower Level Photo Key
* Courtesy of Miller Dunwiddie Architecture



Caponi Studio

NRHP Nomination | Main Level Photo Key

* Not to scale; approximate floor plan