

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received **JAN 11 1984**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic (Bath House and Day Camp of the Trenton Jewish Community Center)
and/or common Trenton Bath House

2. Location

street & number 999 Lower Ferry Road. ___ not for publication
city, town Ewing Township ___ vicinity of ~~congressional district~~
state New Jersey code 034 county Mercer code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private nonprofit	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: recreation

4. Owner of Property

name Jewish Community Center of the Delaware Valley
street & number 999 Lower Ferry Road
city, town Ewing ___ vicinity of state New Jersey

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk, Mercer County
street & number 106 Court House Annex
city, town Ewing ___ vicinity of state New Jersey

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no
date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local
depository for survey records
city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>1955-57</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Trenton Bath House and Day Camp were designed by Louis I. Kahn in 1955-57 for the Trenton Jewish Community Center on Lower Ferry Road, Ewing Township, Mercer County, New Jersey. The Bath House is an enclosed cross-shaped structure 98 feet wide by 98 feet long located in the northwestern corner of an eight acre tract owned by the JCC. It serves as the changing room, storage facility, and chlorination plant for the JCC's outdoor swimming pools. Two of the existing three pools were part of Kahn's original plan. The Day Camp, located on a thirty-seven acre tract leased to the JCC for ninety years, consists of four open air rectangular structures ranging from 24 to 40 feet long by 26 feet wide. Kahn also designed a community building for this site but that design was never executed; the subsequent facility, by Kelley and Gruzen, was erected in 1962. Much of the land is flat and heavily forested, ensuring continuation of the rural feeling which originally attracted the Trenton Jewish Community to this site. The complex, which has always been secular in nature, has become increasingly a total community resource as Ewing has developed from a suburban area into a semi-industrial environment. The Bath House and Day Camp continue to be used actively during the summer. The boundaries of this nomination have been drawn to include the bath house, the pools, and the day camp (all by Kahn) and exclude the later community building (Kelley & Gruzen, archs.).

Bath House

The Bath House is a one-story building with a plan of four square pavilions arranged to form the arms of a Greek cross with central open space. Each of the 38' by 38' pavilions rests on a concrete slab and is defined by concrete block hollow columns (8 feet square and 12 feet tall) at each corner, topped by a pyramidal wooden roof (30 feet square and 10 feet high). The pyramidal roof, exposed wood construction on the interior covered by brown asphalt shingles on the exterior, is anchored at each corner by a steel hinge attached to the top of a hollow column. Since none of the four roofs touch the enclosing concrete block walls, the building is essentially an open air structure with large gaps between the roofs and walls. The Bath House has no additional doors, windows, or applied decorative details.

Each pavilion serves a particular purpose. The one to the east provides two entry openings from the parking lot. Kahn designated this pavilion the basket room, where membership is checked and users' street clothes are stored. On the western axis to this pavilion is the central open space used for circulation; it originally had a circular "atrium" in the center - a graveled area for drainage. Further along the western axis is the only pavilion which is totally unenclosed. It serves as a lounge and provides steps leading directly up to the swimming pools. The full-size L-shaped swimming pool and the square wading pool are on either side of this

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axis, consciously located in relation to the building. On the cross axis are the third and fourth pavilions, which are the men's and women's changing rooms. They contain toilets, sinks, and showers; the floors are pitched for drainage.

The Bath House is made up entirely of structural elements that create spaces to accomodate the functional needs of the building. According to Kahn each hollow column became a "servant" or "serving" space for access, storage, or service, while the spaces they create in between are "served" spaces for human activity. In the central open area, for example, the four columns on each side serve as baffled entries to the changing rooms. No doors are needed for privacy. In the changing rooms the other two columns house the toilets. The two exterior columns of the basket room pavilion serve as storage space. The remaining hollow columns of the lounge pavilion contain the pool director's office, which faces out to the swimming pools, and the stairs which go to the underground chlorination plant.

The basic integrity of the Bath House remains intact. There have been no changes to the structure (walls, floors, and roofs). The following non-structural alterations have been made, most apparently done between 1975 and 1978:

1) a wooden snack bar with kitchen was added to the south of the building against the exterior wall of the women's changing room. It encompasses only a small percentage of the total building area and does not infringe on the integrity of the building's structure.

2) the circular atrium was cemented over because it was deemed a safety hazard.

3) the secondary entry to the basket room pavilion was closed off and a wooden storage shed was located in the adjacent area on the southeast of the building.

4) the entrance mural executed by Kahn and assistants was painted over after it was considered faded.

5) various equipment such as lightposts, telephone, signs, were added to the building.

6) a third swimming pool was constructed parallel to the short end of the main pool. It is not visible from the Bath House.

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There has been no deterioration beyond normal weathering of the concrete block, mortar joints, and the roof shingles. In general the original materials are in good condition, and roof interior is exceptionally well preserved. Also in good condition is the original built-in equipment, such as counters and slate shower partitions.

Day Camp

The Day Camp is made up of four separate rectangular buildings loosely arranged to form the arms of a cross with an open area in the center. Each building has a concrete slab floor and rows of square concrete block columns forming structural bays 8 feet long by 24 feet wide. Each bay supports a precast concrete slab. The slabs together form the flat roof of each building. All buildings are approximately 10 feet tall. The first building houses the boys' and girls' locker and rest rooms and is completely enclosed by either concrete block or brick walls with clerestory windows acting as infill between the columns. The second building is also 24' by 26' with three bays, but has only one bay enclosed by brick or block infill to form a storage building with a porch. This structure is currently used as the camp director's office. The third building, 40' by 26' with five bays, and the fourth building, 32' by 26' with four bays, are not enclosed. These both serve as open-air shelters for day camp recreational activities.

The Day Camp maintains its basic structural and visual integrity. There have been no additions or changes beyond the replacement of the clerestory windows by concrete block in the restrooms. There are, however, signs of weathering.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1955-57

Builder/Architect

Louis I. Kahn

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Trenton Bath House not only has significance as an early work of the internationally renowned architect Louis I. Kahn (1901-1974), but it also has transcendent importance as the prototype for the architectural concepts and images which he later developed in larger and grander buildings. The Bath House is celebrated as Kahn's seminal work, the crystallization of his own personal solution to the integration of structure, function, and aesthetics. The principles first used at the Bath House together with its monumentality and other visual qualities make the building the source of Kahn's unique architectural style. The Bath House is considered a monument by the many architects who continue to visit it from all over the world and by architectural historians who have recently begun to focus heavily on Kahn, recognizing him as one of the greatest American architects of the twentieth century. It is one of the few Kahn buildings located in the Mid-Atlantic states and is the only major Kahn building in New Jersey. The subsequent alterations to the building in no way detract from its significance and possibilities exist for restoration without interfering with its continued use by the Jewish Community Center.

Kahn himself recognized the importance of the Bath House design. With it he began to feel his own artistic worth. He told his associate, Charles Vallhonrat, that after the completion of the Bath House he never had to look to another architect for inspiration. This personal breakthrough was explained by Kahn in the following 1973 interview:

"The Trenton Bath House gave me the first opportunity to work out the separation between the serving and served spaces. It was a very clear and simple problem. It was solved with absolute purity. Every space is accounted for, there is no redundancy. I used hollow columns as entrances to the rooms; I used them as a maze, a baffle, and I used the hollow column itself as a storage area. I use it for toilets, which must be enclosed. And I found, during the expression of this very simple building, the concept of the serving and served spaces.... I thought of a support as being a hollow column which can be used. That's the only place where I could put the services. So the source of support, the column, became the place which harbored the service of the building." (J. Cook and H. Klotz, Conversations With Architects, London, 1973, p. 215).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 8.7 acres owned plus 160' x 200' leased.
 Quadrangle name Pennington Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>517060</u>	<u>4456320</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 345 owned: lots 46-57, 140
 leased: lots 11, 119-126

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan G. Solomon, Lydia M. Soo, Peter Pressman

organization School of Architecture date October 5, 1983

street & number Princeton University telephone (609) 452-5909

city or town Princeton state New Jersey 08540

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy
 State Historic Preservation Officer signature Russell W. Myers

title Director, Division of Parks & Forestry date January 6, 1984

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
[Signature]
 Keeper of the National Register date 2/3/84

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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This concept of the "servant" space which is integral with structure was hinted at in the Yale Art Gallery (1951-53), Kahn's first major commission. There a hollow concrete floor and ceiling slab acted as both structure and utility space. This idea reached its full clarity at Trenton. Kahn's principle was developed further in subsequent buildings. At the Richards Medical Building at the University of Pennsylvania (1957-1961) vertical service shafts which serve the laboratory spaces are employed as independent forms. At the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California (1959-1965) this concept is turned on its side with huge hollow floor slabs acting as horizontal service shafts between laboratory floors.

In the Bath House, not only are the functions of the building clearly defined by the integration of structural columns and resulting free space, but what is happening is clearly expressed on the exterior of the building. Such an expression is part of the aesthetic of modern architecture, best known by the phrase "form follows function." Kahn, however, reacted against the absolute functionalism of modernism and began to seek more human qualities in his buildings. At the Bath House Kahn began to use symmetrical plans employing pure geometry to produce what he called "primal forms" - unadorned geometrical spaces and masses of monumental and harmonious quality. Kahn enhanced this quality by rejecting the use of steel and glass of the International Style in favor of more natural and sensual materials like concrete, brick and wood, used without finishes and with the construction joints clearly exposed. The concrete block walls and wooden roofs of the Bath House honestly declare what their materials are and how they were constructed. Together these qualities create spaces and forms that appeal to the human senses.

Kahn's architecture is also "historicist." It reveres the classical values which Kahn found in the ancient Greek and Roman ruins he first studied during his Beaux-Art training but which he continued to investigate throughout his life. In classical architecture he found symmetrical planning, clear and predetermined axial patterns of circulation, geometrically shaped spaces, and building masses of pure geometrical forms. The Bath House shares all of these characteristics. Its planning which uses axes of circulation and geometrical forms has direct historical precedents in the Roman house or early Christian church, while its pyramidal imagery can be traced to ancient pyramidal tombs.

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The Day Camp shares many of the same attributes. It has clear expression of structure, in this case concrete post and beam with precast concrete roof slabs - a very new type of structure at this time. Even in areas where enclosure is necessary, it is created by infilling brick concrete blocks or glass between columns so that the structural support is still clearly expressed. The materials of brick and concrete are clearly exhibited. The four buildings that form the complex are all of simple rectangular geometry using a structural bay as a module. The Day Camp, however, is also historicist. The structures recall Greek peri-style temples, loosely placed in an arrangement similar to those found in ancient temple precincts.

At Present, when the members of the architectural profession are divided between "modernist" or post-modernist" ("historicist") view points, it is revealing that Kahn's work appears to be a common ground. The Bath House is revered by some for its functionalism and structural expression and by others for its references to classical buildings and its use of classical symmetry and geometry. Even those who are not involved in such polemics still look to Kahn's work as a model. For example, a small waterfront park structure in South Carolina was recently completed by the firm of Thomas-Dezanger and was called by the AIA Journal (Dec. 1982) "an elegant solution that echoes the spirit in form and plan of Louis Kahn's Trenton, New Jersey Bath Houses." (sic) The influence of Kahn's Bath House is still active and pervasive at all levels.

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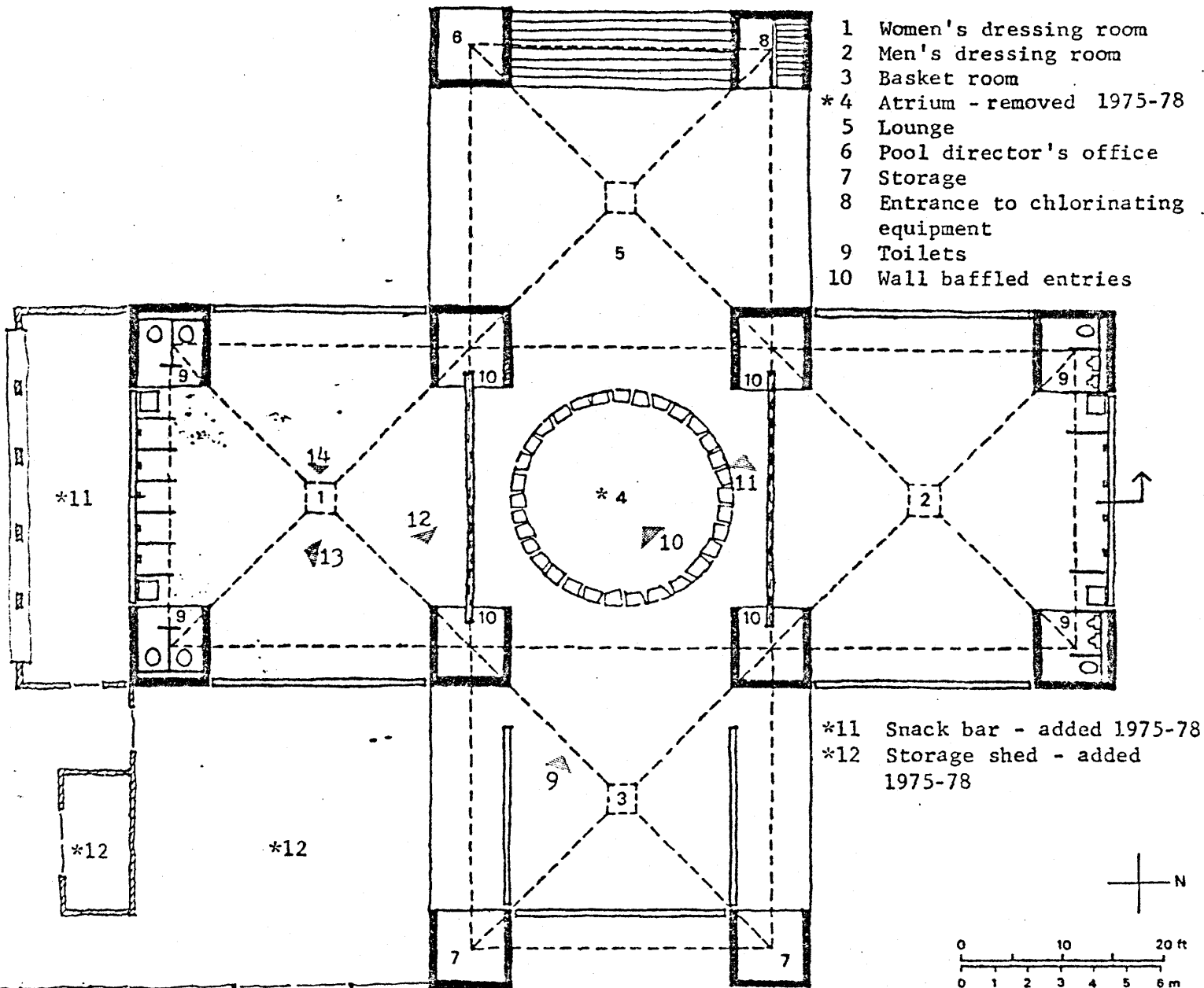
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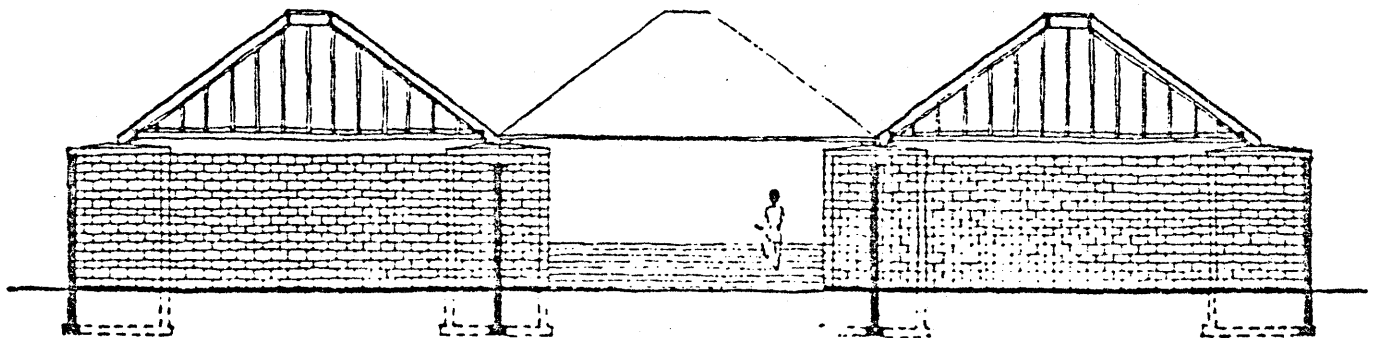
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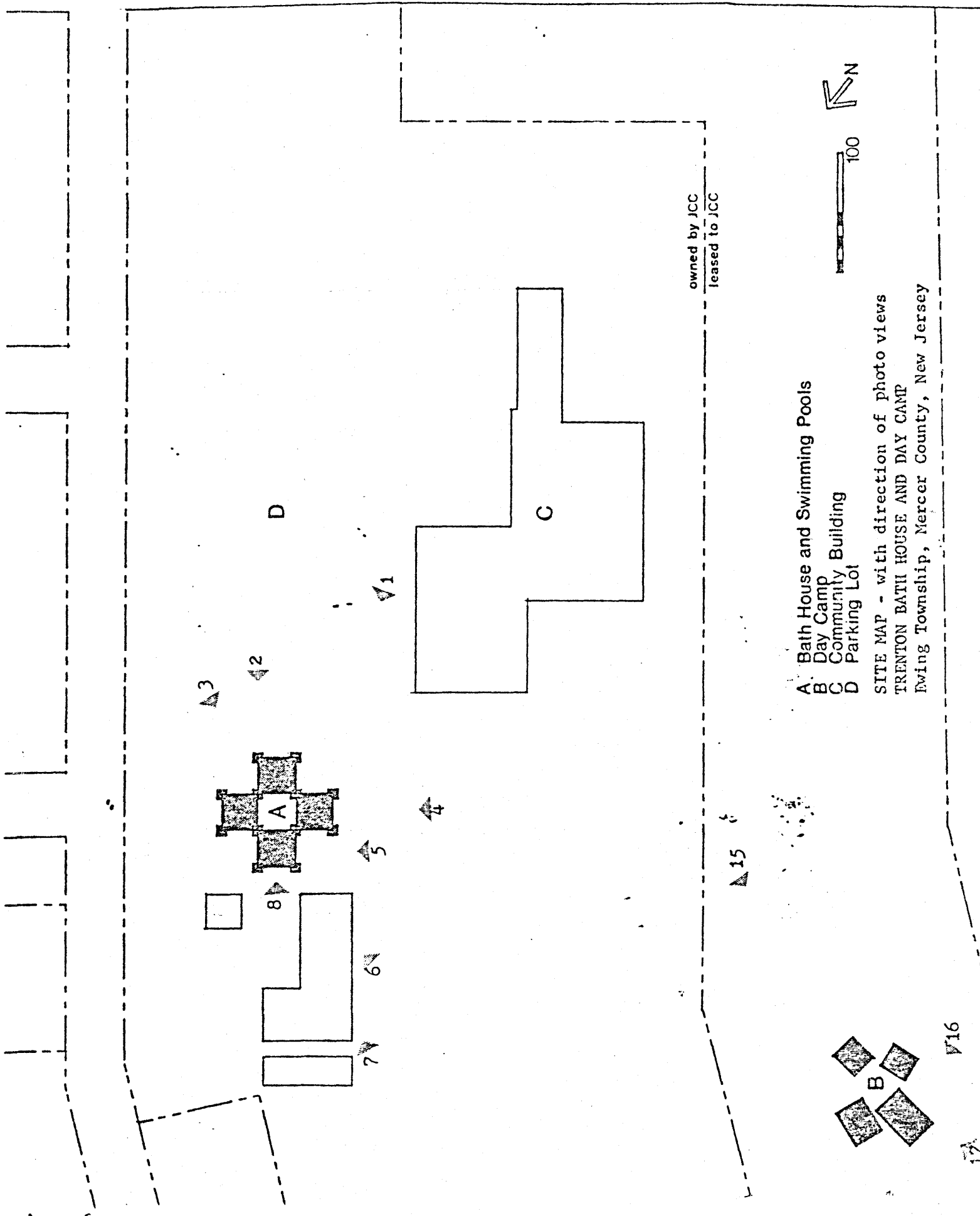


FIRST FLOOR PLAN



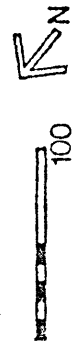
SECTION

BATH HOUSE - with direction of photo views
 TRENTON BATH HOUSE AND DAY CAMP, Ewing Township, Mercer County, New Jersey



Lower Ferry Road

owned by JCC
leased to JCC



- A. Bath House and Swimming Pools
 - B. Day Camp
 - C. Community Building
 - D. Parking Lot
- SITE MAP - with direction of photo views
TRENTON BATH HOUSE AND DAY CAMP
Ewing Township, Mercer County, New Jersey

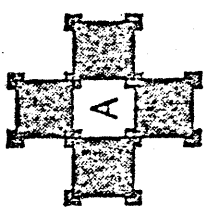
V3

V2

D

V1

C



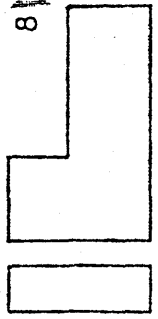
A

V4



B

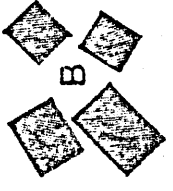
V5



V6

V7

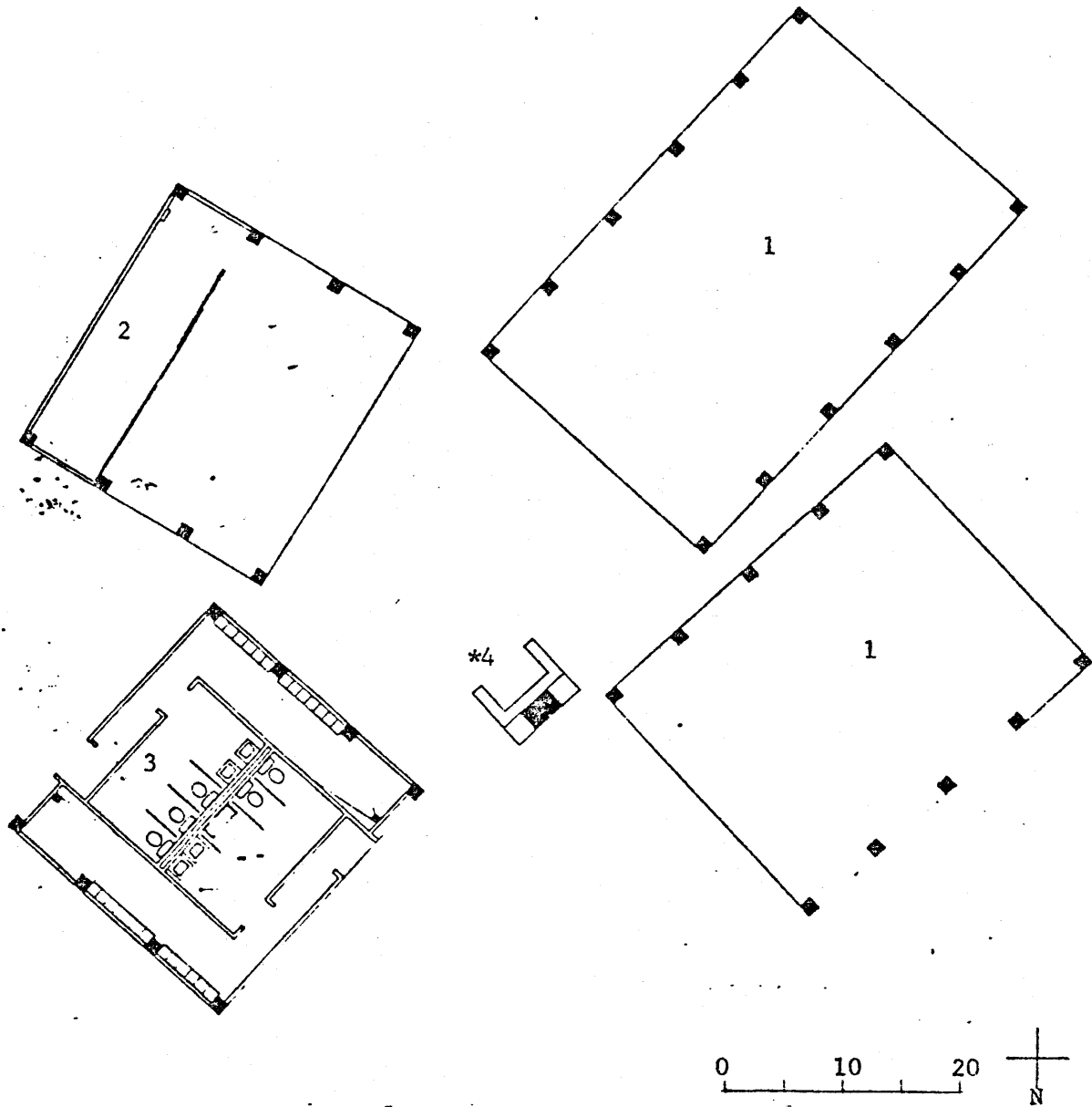
V15



B

V16

V17



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- 1 Recreation area
- 2 Winter storage and camp director's office
- 3 Rest rooms and locker rooms
- *4 Barbecue pit - not executed

DAY CAMP

TRENTON BATH HOUSE AND DAY CAMP, Ewing Township, Mercer County, New Jersey

AWARE & BOUND BROOK RAILROAD

343

26

ONE AVE

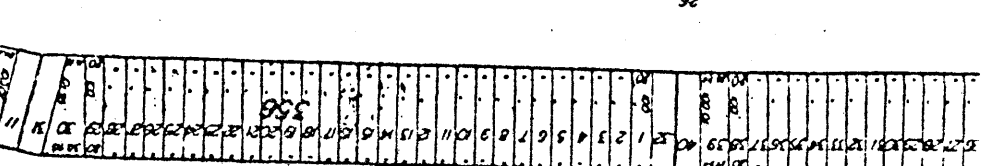
HOUSTON SHEET

TRENTON BATH HOUSE AND DAY CAMP Ewing Township Mercer County New Jersey TAX MAP

LOWER FERRY

FERRY

1" = 200' N



Day Camp

Community Building

Bath House & pools

WALTER ST

ADRIAN

AUGUST AVENUE

IRVING PLACE

ROAD 50

ST GOLD

AVENUE

PARKWAY

LOWER SHEET

FERRY

AVENUE

