

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 4 1980
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Riverbend

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Lower Falls Road (Highway 28)

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Kohler

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth

STATE

Wisconsin

__ VICINITY OF

CODE
55

COUNTY

Sheboygan

CODE
117**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	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Estate of Mrs. John M. Kohler

STREET & NUMBER

Riverbend

CITY, TOWN

Kohler

__ VICINITY OF

STATE
Wisconsin 53044**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Sheboygan County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

615 North Sixth Street

CITY, TOWN

Sheboygan

STATE
Wisconsin 53081**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1975

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

Madison

STATE
Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

General Description

Riverbend, the Kohler family estate, is located on a wooded site in a bend of the Sheboygan River west of the Village of Kohler in eastern Wisconsin. South of Lower Falls Road (State Highway 28), the landscaped grounds include the main house, greenhouse, a large chauffeur's cottage and garage, man-made stream, (lily pond, formal flower garden, vegetable gardens, polo field,) rustic picnic pavilion, and well.

The Riverbend house is a long, curved two-story-plus-attic string of Tudor-style gable-roofed units joined by a long Vermont slate shingle gable roof. The picturesque assemblage of brick wall surfaces is interspersed with octagonal towers and bays. Leaded-glass casement windows are trimmed with contrasting Bedford limestone, and grouped to provide vistas of the surrounding woodlands. Tall, simplified Tudor chimneys punctuate the lavender-and-blue roof. Entrances are recessed within limestone Tudor arches. The west end of the house extends to a greenhouse and toolshed, and across the drive to the two-story-plus-attic chauffeur's cottage and garage. The rear of the estate is broken up into a variety of stuccoed overhangs, downspouts, dormers, and buttresses.

The decorative interest of the interior of the house is invested in the use of warm, rich materials and handsome architectural features. Floors throughout are part of the decorative scheme: warm brown split-face granite slabs in the entry and hall to complement the cased oak beam ceiling; Moravian tile in the billiard room, dining room, and library as a more delicate blend with the ornamented plaster ceilings; and natural cork to suit the kitchen. Plain wall surfaces are contrasted with oak casings, millwork, and doors, varied with tile walls in the library and master bath. Madison sandstone is carved into corbels, acanthus leaves, scrolls, mutules, and grotesqueries on fireplaces, chimney breasts, and medallions. Bas reliefs over mantels in the library and game room relate to the themes and color schemes of those quarters. Original bronze chandeliers, wall sconces, torcheres (with isinglass shades), and decorative fire screens are still all in place. Furnishings designed especially for the house include simplified Jacobean furniture, crewel-work draperies, and needlework chairs; the seventeenth century Teniers tapestry hung in the stairs seems integral to that place. Leaded glass set with medallions opens the house to the grounds in the drawing room, sun porch, dining room, billiard room, and bedrooms.

The grounds have been landscaped in the English tradition to accentuate the natural features of the site on the Sheboygan River, using carefully-chosen vegetation and added picturesque elements. Immediately surrounding the house are an open bowling green circumscribed by the front drive, a wooded lily pond to the east of the house near the river bank, and a sunken formal garden enclosed by a Lannon stone wall. Within sight of the front door to the north a small stone bridge crosses a man-made stream. A rustic log picnic pavilion and well are located to the west of the drive to Lower Falls Road.

Adjoining the house to the west are the low tool shed and chauffeur's cottage and garage, all of brick and in the Tudor tradition. The glazed greenhouse to the east rear of the house is located convenient to the tool shed.

There are no known sites of archaeological importance on the property.

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 checked="" 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> _1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> _ART	<input type="checkbox"/> _ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> _MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> _1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> _INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> _POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY): Association with significant persons
	<input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1921-23¹ BUILDER/ARCHITECT Richard Philipp;¹ Olmsted Brothers¹

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Riverbend, the rambling, Tudor-inspired estate of industrialist and former governor Walter J. Kohler, is one of Wisconsin's outstanding private residences. Distinguished in the quality of its architectural design and interior decoration, the site is also significant for the landscape design of the world-renowned Olmsted firm of Brookline, Massachusetts.

Architecture

Few large twentieth-century houses are designed and executed with the appreciation of quality and coloristic and textural possibilities of materials readily evident at Riverbend. Designed by architect Richard Philipp (1874-1957) of the Milwaukee firm of Brust & Philipp, the house was several years in design and construction (1920-23) and several more in conception. Philipp and patron Walter Kohler traveled together to Europe in 1914 to study industrial communities in England and Germany before planning the company village of Kohler in eastern Wisconsin.² Then, and during study trips at the turn of the century, Philipp gained a first-hand exposure to architecture abroad. An added boon to Philipp's training was a ten-year apprenticeship with prominent Wisconsin architects Ferry & Clas following graduation from a Milwaukee high school. In 1906, Philipp formed a partnership with Peter Brust which was to last until 1927, after which Philipp continued to practice alone.³ Designs by Philipp or the firm include the Sensenbrenner House (1927) in Appleton, a half-timbered manor; the American Lace Paper Company factory, the Marshall & Isley Bank (1911), the A. F. Gallun Residence (1914), the Walter Kasten Residence (1908), and the William F. Luick Residence (1922-23), all in Milwaukee. The last three works are included in Milwaukee's premier residential National Register Historic Districts.

A simple list of the rooms included or the materials employed in the construction of Riverbend attests to the calibre of the residence (see DESCRIPTION). Yet, it is the talent of the architect which is transcendent at Riverbend; his plan is orderly without being static, the exterior picturesque without being **overdone**, and the interior rich without being pretentious. The extension of the residence itself into service structures and servants' quarters is both vaguely historical and efficient.

¹Richard W. Perrin, The Architecture of Wisconsin, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967, p. 109.

²Ibid.

³John G. Gregory, History of Milwaukee, Vol. 4, Clarke Publishing Company, 1931, p. 242.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Perrin, Richard W. E., The Architecture of Wisconsin, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967.
 Williams, Henry L. and Ottalie K., Great Houses of America, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1966.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 20

Quadrangle name: Sheboygan Falls
 Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	43,63,8,0	4,84,21,2,0
B	1,6	43,64,3,0	4,84,18,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	1,6	43,63,3,0	4,84,17,5,0

C	1,6	43,67,1,0	4,84,14,9,0
E	1,6	43,61,1,0	4,84,20,2,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Government Lot 3, Section 31 and that part of Government Lot 2, Section 31 lying south of center of State Highway 28 except commencing at intersection of center of paving of State Highway 28 with west line of Government Lot 2, then south 0°23' east along west line of Government Lot 2, 587.5 feet to north bank of Sheboygan River.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marie Kohler Cabot

ORGANIZATION

DATE

November, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

2722 North Farwell Avenue

TELEPHONE

(414) 964-9978

CITY OR TOWN

Milwaukee

STATE

Wisconsin 53211

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Richard M. Murray

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

5/2/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

12/4/80

ATTEST:

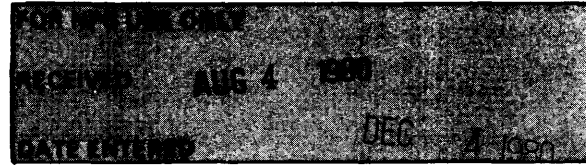
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12-4-80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



Riverbend, Kohler, Wis.

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Significance (continued)

Landscape Architecture

The Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, whom Walter Kohler also commissioned to plan the Village of Kohler, further enhanced the house and the setting with their romantic design. Continuing in the tradition of its brilliant founder, Frederick Law Olmsted, the Olmsted Brothers office (so-named from 1898 on) was engaged in a number of prominent commissions in the early decades of the twentieth century. Headed by John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., nephew and son of the founder, the Olmsted Brothers' works included Boston's Franklin Park, Arnold Arboretum, and Riverway, and the great mall in Washington, D. C. Frederick Law, Jr. was principle of the firm and "the outstanding practitioner of his time."⁴ Percival Gallagher and Edward Clark Whiting, "two of the professions's most skillful designers,"⁵ were chiefly responsible for the level of distinction reached by the Olmsted office in the design of country places. Although the specific designer of the Riverbend plan is unknown, the long curving drive, bowling green, and gardens are characteristic of the most celebrated Olmsted designs of the time. The course of the drive winds past the picturesque inclusions of well, picnic pavilion, stone bridge, running stream, and chauffeur's cottage, offering views of the bends of the river and house in between. The enclosure of the long axis of the house within the shaded lily pond, garden, and green adds intimacy to the scale. The owners hope to replace vegetation lost through Dutch Elm Disease to restore more of the sense of refuge to the site.

The Riverbend estate has been the subject of major essays in Henry and Ottalie Williams' Great Houses of America (G. B. Putnam's Sons, 1966) and Richard W. Perrin's The Architecture of Wisconsin, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967.

Association with Significant Persons

The estate of Riverside is a fitting home for the Kohlers, one of Wisconsin's most prestigious families. The builder of Riverbend, Walter Kohler, Sr., was also the creator of the community of Kohler, a model industrial village built in the 1920s.⁶ Walter Kohler, Sr. (1875-1940) was the son of the founder of the Kohler industries and as a conservative Republican, became a major rival of Progressive Republican Robert M. LaFollette. Kohler was elected to the governorship in 1929 despite the

⁴Norman T. Newman, Design on the Land, Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1974, p. 390.

⁵Ibid., p. 429.

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RECEIVED **AUG 4 1980**

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Riverbend, Kohler, Wis.

See

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER below PAGE 2

8. active opposition of the Progressive wing of his own party.⁷ Likewise, Walter Kohler, Jr. (1904-1976), whose lifelong home was the Riverbend estate built by his father, was a governor of Wisconsin, serving three terms between 1951 and 1957,⁸ and became prominent in national as well as state politics.

⁶For the Kohler planned community, see Arnold R. Alanen and Thomas J. Peltin, "Kohler, Wisconsin: Planning and Paternalism in a Model Industrial Village", Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 44, (1978), p. 145-159.

⁷Dictionary of Wisconsin Biography, p. 212; Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement 2, p. 366-367.

⁸Milwaukee Journal, November 18, 1951; New York Times, May 6, 1973.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Diane H. Filipowicz, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

March 1980

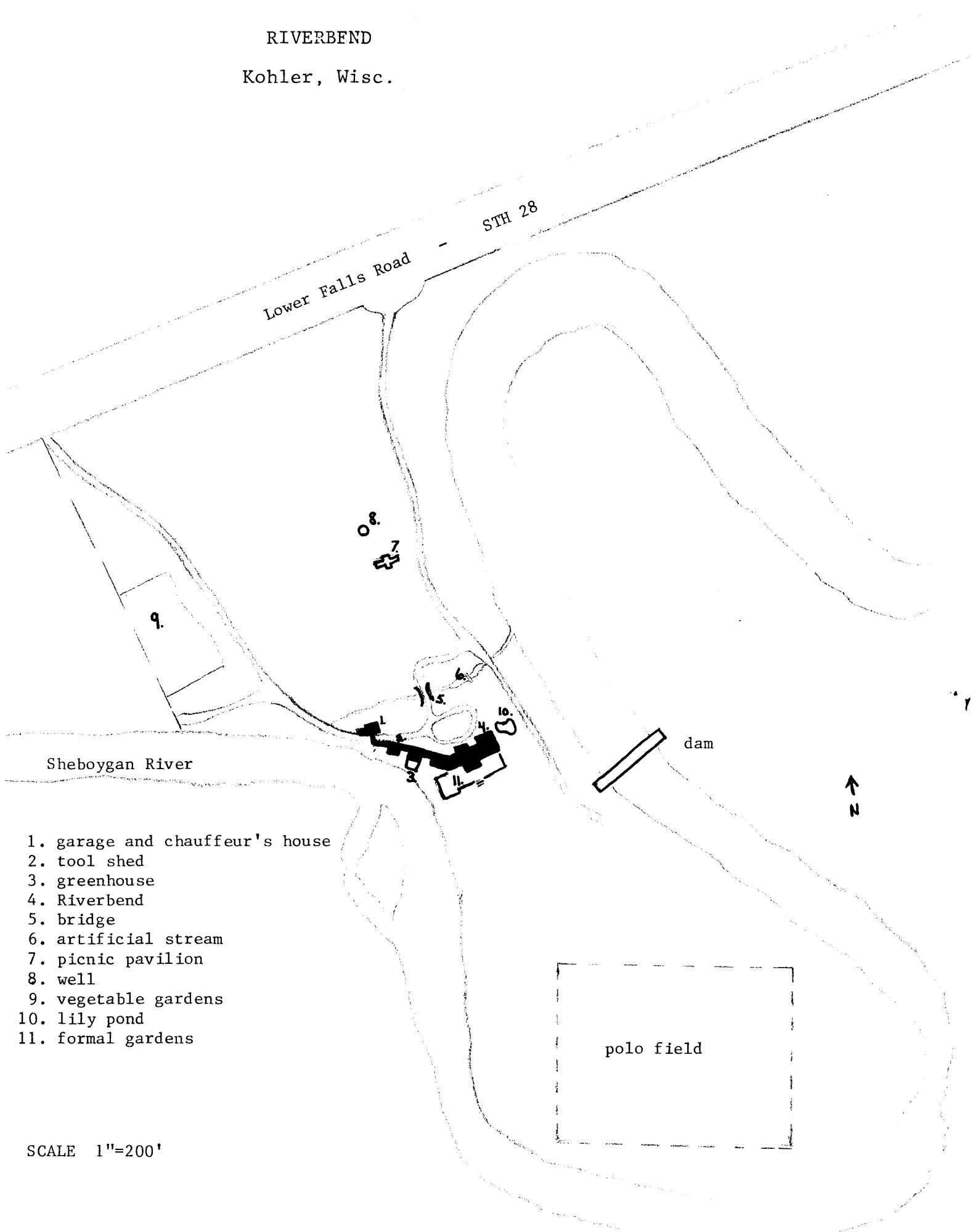
816 State Street

608/262-2970

Madison

Wisconsin 53706

RIVERBEND
Kohler, Wisc.



- 1. garage and chauffeur's house
- 2. tool shed
- 3. greenhouse
- 4. Riverbend
- 5. bridge
- 6. artificial stream
- 7. picnic pavilion
- 8. well
- 9. vegetable gardens
- 10. lily pond
- 11. formal gardens

SCALE 1"=200'