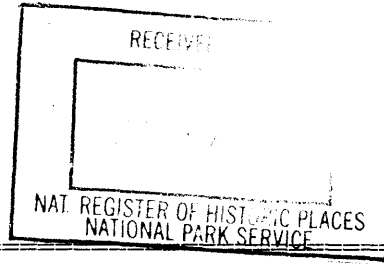


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

877



1. Name of Property

historic name Dornick Hills Country Club

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 519 North Country Club Road not for publication N/A
city or town Ardmore vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Carter code 019 zip code 73402

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 nationally statewide locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official

7/21/03
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

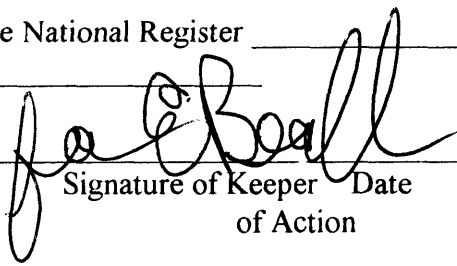
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the _____
National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
 removed from the National Register _____
 other (explain): _____


Signature of Keeper of Action

SEP 2 2003

Date
of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: Sports Facility

SOCIAL Clubhouse

FUNERARY Cemetery

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: Sports Facility

SOCIAL Clubhouse

FUNERARY Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT:

Ranch

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT: Asphalt shingle

walls BRICK

WOOD: Weatherboard

other METAL: Steel

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance 1913-1953

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Significant Dates 1915
1924
1952

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Maxwell, Perry Duke

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 141

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing	
1	<u>14 671100</u>	<u>3788230</u>	3	<u>14 671760</u>	<u>3788140</u>
2	<u>14 671570</u>	<u>3788100</u>	4	<u>14 671870</u>	<u>3788320</u>

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jim Gabbert, Architectural Historian

organization Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office date October 31, 2002

street & number 2704 Villa Prom, Shepherd Mall telephone (405) 522-4478

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73107

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Dornick Hills Country Club
Carter County, Oklahoma

Page 8

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Dornick Hills Country Club, Inc.

street & number PO Box 1787 telephone (580) 223-2995

city or town Ardmore state OK zip code 73402

United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Dornick Hills Country Club
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SUMMARY

Dornick Hills Country Club is located on the north side of Ardmore, Oklahoma, the seat of Carter County. The 141 acres that comprise the club are bounded on the west by US 77, on the north by the property of the Ardmore Gun Club, and on the east and south by residential development. The clubhouse, parking, and maintenance facilities sit on a bluff overlooking the south side of the golf course. The course itself features a rolling topography broken by rock outcroppings, a creek and small ponds. On a high bluff overlooking the 7th fairway is the family cemetery of the course's designer, Perry Duke Maxwell.

The course was constructed over a fourteen-year period, beginning with Maxwell's original four holes. He expanded the course to nine holes in 1915 and then to eighteen in 1924. Over time, changes have been made to both the course and facilities. A fire destroyed the original clubhouse; new facilities were constructed to reflect the course's growing importance in the sport, and the course itself matured. The most distinct visual change is the maturation of trees planted over the years. None of these changes affect the importance of the golf course in the history of Oklahoma golf nor do they severely affect its importance as Perry Maxwell's seminal design.

DESCRIPTION

US Highway 77, a divided four-lane thoroughfare that connects Dallas and Oklahoma City, forms the western edge of the Dornick Hills Country Club. The southern edge of the club property is marked by a number of private homes that line the north side of Country Club Drive. These homes were constructed after World War II and are perched along a slope that overlooks the 12th hole of the Club. The main Club facilities are located at the intersection of Country Club Drive, Woods Lane, and Country Club Road. Country Club Road veers southward toward Ardmore and Woods Lane bends to the north. Houses fronting Woods Lane back onto the practice range as well as the 3rd and the 5th fairways of the Club. Just east of the intersection of Woods Lane, Country Club Road and Country Club Drive stand the Galt-Franklin and Johnson houses, both listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The northern boundary of the Club property is shared with the Ardmore Gun Club and is marked by a simple wire fence. The shape of the property is a lazy "L." (see map)

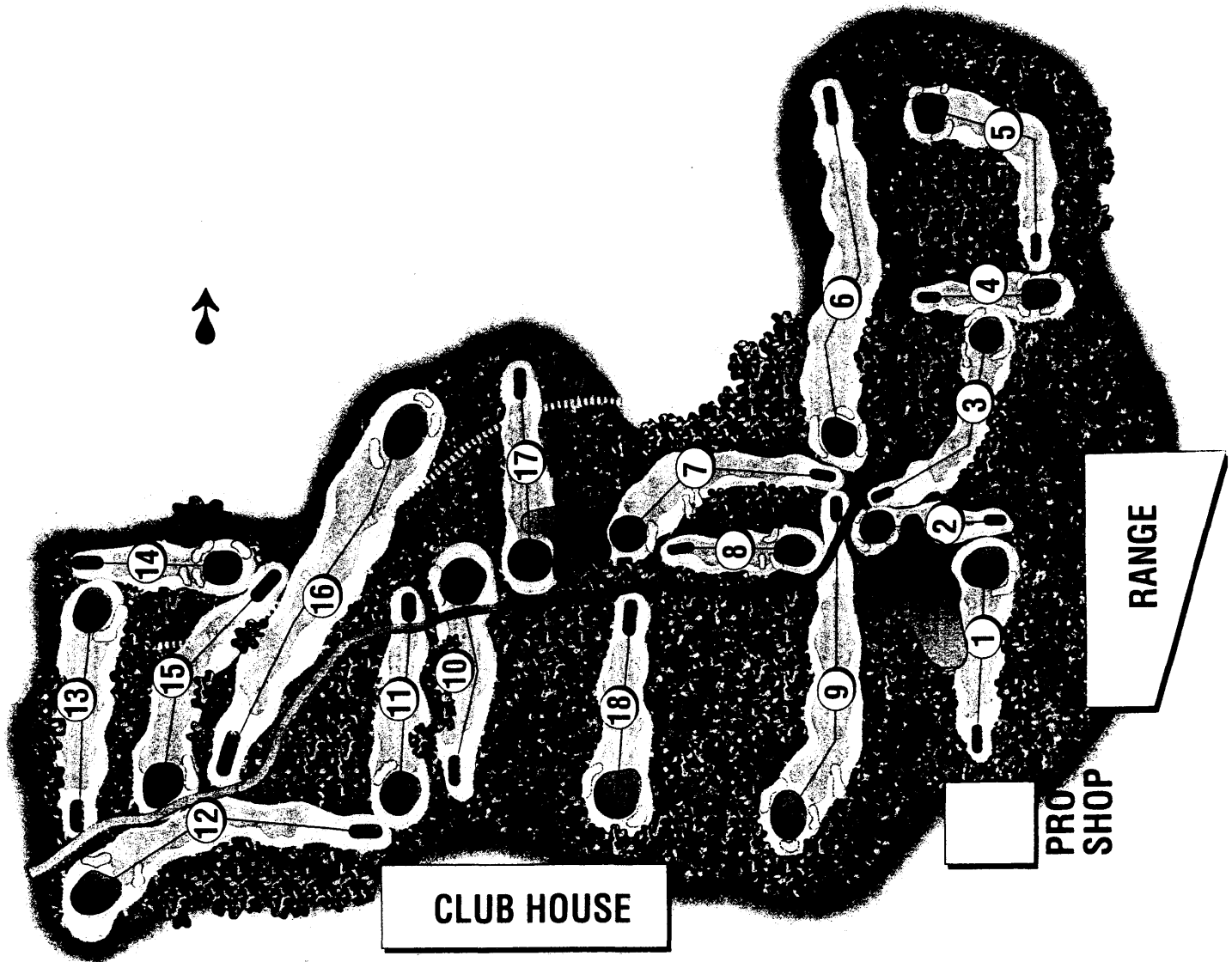
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Map



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The featured resource of Dornick Hills Country Club is the golf course. Epitomizing Perry Maxwell's philosophy of golf course design, the Dornick Hills course takes maximum advantage of the natural lay of the land. A small creek winds its way from the northeast to the southwest, draining the area between two ridges. The ridges are part of the foothills of the Arbuckle Mountains, an ancient folded range lying to the north of Ardmore. Rocky outcroppings play an important role in defining the look and play of the course and the creek serves as a hazard or a backdrop on many of the course's holes.

The first hole has been altered from its original design. Once teeing off at a spot just west of the pro shop and heading to the northeast, the tee has been relocated immediately north of the pro shop and the green has been moved west of the original, making the hole play almost directly north. The original tee and green are still evident. The original green is now used for practice in the driving range area. The second hole is a short par 3, over a small pond. Work has been done on this hole as well, modifying the size of the pond and moving the tees to accommodate the new #1 green.

Number Three is a dogleg left. Placement of the drive is important here because of the terrain and trees. An errant drive can land behind a tree or on an awkward lie. Number Four is a par 3, hitting over the creek, uphill to a shallow, undulating green (See photo #1). Number Five is a wonderful risk/reward par 4. It doglegs left down a hill. A long drive can cut the corner, but a bad lie or tree awaits the errant shot. The sixth hole, the only par 5 on the front nine, is a double dogleg measuring just over 500 yards from the tips. The creek can come into play on the left side and the rolling terrain can offer some awkward stances. The seventh hole is a short par 4, dogleg left, which rewards the well-placed tee shot.

Number Eight is shorter than Maxwell's original layout. Once measuring over 200 yards, the original tee was located such that the golfer had to tee *over* the # 18 tee box. Shortened now to 175 yards, it has become a less challenging hole. The ninth hole tees off over the creek toward the clubhouse. One alteration to this hole has been the elimination of a mound that once obscured the fairway from the tee. The green sits on a shelf in the bluff on the south side of the course and features the trademark undulations, or "Maxwell Rolls," that characterize Perry Maxwell's courses (Photo #2 and #3).

The back nine, or holes 10-18, was originally the front nine. Hole number Ten is a par 4 that heads north from the

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clubhouse. Number Eleven comes back toward the clubhouse, teeing off over the creek. In 1936, Maxwell redesigned the green, locating it slightly east of the original location. (Photo # 4) Number Twelve is a par 4 that heads west from the clubhouse area. Originally a hard dogleg left, over time the angle has softened, straightening the hole and taking the rock outcropping on the right side of the fairway further out of play.

Number Thirteen is a long par 4, measuring 450 yards from the tips. The tee lies on the north side of the creek and the hole heads directly north, slightly uphill. Number Fourteen is a deceptively short par 4. Measuring at only 275 yards, the hole is straight but with the left side guarded by mature trees. The hole is uphill the entire way, with a well-bunkered, undulating green set into a shelf on the bluff that demarks the north side of the course. Number Fifteen, a par 4, tees off from the top of the bluff back to the south. The green lies near the creek and has been completely rebuilt and raised. The original green always had drainage trouble.

Number Sixteen is the signature hole of the course. Known as the "Cliff Hole" to most and "that damned cliff hole" to many, this hole epitomizes Maxwell's philosophy. The hole is a par 5, measuring just over 530 yards from the tee. Originally, the tee was located on the south side of the creek and the hole has a slight dogleg right. The bulk of the hole is flat with a tree-lined fairway. The green, however, lies atop a sheer cliff of exposed stone that measures around twenty-five feet high. The green itself is shallow, with small mounds behind it. The hole is the ultimate risk/reward hole. Played conventionally, with a layup short of, but not too close to, the cliff and a high-arching approach to the small green, the hole is less than daunting. Those who try to score on the hole, though, by going for the green in two or those coming too close to the rock face risk having the ball bounce off the face of the cliff or miss the small green. The hole is only punitive if the golfer tries to exceed his or her capabilities. (Photo #5 and #6)

Hole number Seventeen tees off atop the cliff. It is a par 3 with a green guarded by a pond on the front and left sides. The pond replaces what once was a large sand trap. (Photo #7) The finishing hole, number Eighteen, is a par 4 that tees off on the north side of the creek and heads south directly toward the clubhouse. The hole moves steadily uphill toward a two-tiered green guarded by traps and trees. A good finishing hole, it again shows Maxwell's philosophy of rewarding well played, well thought out shots. (Photo #8)

The golf course that Perry Maxwell designed and constructed still exists on the links at Dornick Hills. There are those who lament the changes made to the course, especially in the use of mounds around some of the greens. Also of

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concern is the growth and maturation of trees on a course that was essentially wrought out of a pasture. The changes are minimal in the overall concept of what Maxwell laid out. The mounds are anathema to what Maxwell believed in – that a good course should exist in the natural lay of the land and that moving earth to create a course is the incorrect approach. However, the mounds can be removed. The trees, though, are part of the maturation of the course. Golf architects build not only for the present but also for the future. The maturation of trees on this otherwise windswept course has done much to mitigate the effects new technologies in equipment has had on the game. Mature trees at strategic locations alleviate the need to reshape an otherwise wide-open course physically.

While the course is the focus of significance for Dornick Hills Country Club, there are a number of other resources located on the property, some of which contribute to the integrity of the resource and others that are intrusions.

The clubhouse sits on the highest piece of ground on the south side of the club property. A long, two story brick building, its style is vaguely Colonial Revival, with a modernistic influence. It was constructed c. 1948, replacing an earlier Dutch Colonial Revival building that burned in 1944. The clubhouse is brick, painted white. It has a gabled roof with an off-center chimney. The formal entry is on the south side, also off-center. Fenestration is regular consisting of a pair of glass doors and multiple steel casement windows with plain surrounds. The north side of the building features a large open deck on the second floor with a glassed-in dining area below. Entry is offset to the west, allowing easy access to the pool and pool house. Although there have been a number of minor changes made to the building, it still retains its integrity of feeling, association, materials, workmanship, and location and is a contributing resource to the district. (Photo # 9)

Just north of the west end of the clubhouse is the pool complex. The pool itself is "L" shaped, with a deeper diving area forming the leg of the "L." The original pool was built around 1940 and the diving well was appended in the 1960s. It is considered a noncontributing structure. (Photo #10) The pool house (Photo #11) is a noncontributing building. It is a simple gabled building with a full wrap-around verandah that gives it the appearance of a gable-on-hip roof. It is noncontributing due to age.

To the southwest of the clubhouse are two tennis courts surrounded by a high, woven wire fence. These two courts serve as a single noncontributing structure.

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East of the clubhouse is the pro shop building. Club president, oil man Waco Turner financed the construction of this building in time for the 1952 Ardmore Open. It is two stories with a simple gabled roof. A wide colonnaded porch surrounds the north and west sides; these are later additions. Entry is on the west side and fenestration consists of steel sash casement windows with a single, steel sash Chicago window on the north side. This building is a contributing resource. (Photo #12)

East of the pro shop are a pair of metal utility sheds. These newer, pre-fabricated buildings house the equipment for the course. They are noncontributing (Photo #14). Just east of these buildings is a simple, brick, ranch style house that houses the greenskeeper. Red brick with a hipped roof, it is noncontributing due to age. (Photo #13)

The final contributing resource at the Dornick Hills Country Club is the Maxwell Cemetery. The cemetery is located on the highest piece of land on the club property, on a bluff overlooking the 7th fairway. Perry Maxwell designed the cemetery for his wife Ray, who died in 1919. A low wall of native stone surrounds the plot of land. In the northeastern corner, a classical colonnade creates a semi-circle opening up toward the graves of Maxwell, his wife and children and in-laws. The cemetery can be reached by a path from the 7th fairway, up the steep slope, or by an unpaved cart path behind the 17th tee, which lies to the west. (Photo #15)

Taken as a whole, Dornick Hills Country Club retains a high degree of its historic integrity. The historic design of the course remains virtually unchanged since its opening in 1924 as an eighteen hole layout. The setting has been altered somewhat, by Nature for the most part. Organic changes have occurred over time; trees have matured and new grass strains have been introduced. The original and ground breaking Bermuda grass green have long given way to bent grass. The clubhouse has had minor alterations done to it since its construction after World War II, but still maintains its integrity of design, setting, feeling and association. Ancillary buildings and structures have little effect on the integrity of the primary feature – the golf course.

Dornick Hills is where Perry Maxwell made his mark on the world of golf course design and where he chose to spend eternity. Dornick hills is where the attention of the state, the region, and on occasion the country was turned when it came to competitive golf. The famous "Maxwell Rolls," the Cliff Hole, and the natural beauty of the course speak well for Perry Duke Maxwell's vision of how golf should be played and courses should come into being.

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SUMMARY

Dornick Hills Country Club is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as a seminal and defining work of a master golf course architect, Perry Maxwell. It is also significant under Criterion A for its role in the development of competitive golf in the state of Oklahoma. Dornick Hills, located in Ardmore, Carter County, was opened in 1913 as a local private club, designed by a local banker. By 1953, it had blossomed into one of the most respected golf courses in the Southwest, hosting numerous amateur and professional tournaments and adding to the growing national recognition its designer, Perry Duke Maxwell.

BACKGROUND

The City of Ardmore got its name from a railroad town in Pennsylvania. A branch of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway pushed north from Texas through central Oklahoma in 1887. Stations along the way are named after towns in Pennsylvania, home of the Railway executives and engineers. Ardmore was established as a station town, but did not see much growth for its first few years. Being located in the Chickasaw Nation, whites could not own land. Prospective businessmen could only lease lots in the town or marry into the tribe to secure land. Both conditions had their adherents, but for the most part whites were reticent to move into any of the railroad towns in Indian Territory. This changed with the passage of the Dawes Act, which allotted Indian lands to the tribal members individually and opened the "surplus" lands for sale to all comers. By 1897, land in the Chickasaw Nation was up for grabs and towns like Ardmore experienced surges in growth.

By the time of statehood in 1907, the population was approaching 9,000 and the city was selected to be the seat of Carter County. Ardmore quickly became the preeminent city in south central Oklahoma. Ardmore's location on a major rail line connecting Dallas and Oklahoma City made it a natural shipping center. Agricultural products, especially cotton, were processed and shipped out of the city. Cattle ranching was profitable in the rolling prairie of the surrounding countryside and Ardmore became a major shipping point for the ranchers. Booster organizations hailed the prospects of the city, attracting new residents and investors. A vibrant commercial area grew to the west of the railroad tracks and a thriving industrial section straddled the rail line. Civic consciousness led to the establishment of numerous public institutions and amenities like the Carnegie Library, established in 1903.

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The discovery of oil in the nearby Healdton Oil Filed spurred a 65% increase in population between 1910 and 1920. Great wealth flowed into the local economy as reflected in homes like the Galt-Franklin and Johnson house (NR 1986) located north of Ardmore near the site of Dornick Hills Country Club.

It was into this community of growth and industry that Perry Duke Maxwell moved and which served as his springboard into golf course design.

PERRY DUKE MAXWELL

Beginnings

Perry Duke Maxwell was born in the western Kentucky town of Princeton on June 13, 1879. His father, Dr. James A. Maxwell, was of direct Scottish descent and his mother, Caroline Harris Maxwell, was an eighth generation American, descending from a prominent Virginia family. Perry was an excellent student, graduating with honors from Marion High School and attending the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Poor health forced a move to Stetson University in Florida for his sophomore year. While his academic record was impeccable, the warmer climate of Florida did little to help his health and he was forced to leave never to return to school.¹

Maxwell spent two years traveling the world and the United States before returning to Marion, Kentucky where he took on a job as a bookkeeper in a local bank.² On June 12, 1902, Perry Maxwell married Ray Woods, daughter of a prominent and long-time Kentucky family. Following the advice of his physician, Perry and Ray Maxwell moved to Ardmore, Indian Territory in 1904, to begin a new life.

The Maxwells' new life began with the help of Press Woods, Ray's Father, who purchased shares in the newly formed Ardmore National Bank for his new son-in-law. As cashier of the bank, Maxwell entered into the financial

1 Evans, Charles, "Perry Duke Maxwell," in The Chronicles of Oklahoma, 31 (Summer 1953) 131-136.

2 Gilday, John P. and Mark H. Salt, eds., "Perry Duke Maxwell," Oklahoma History South of the Canadian: Historical and Biographical, Vol. 2, (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing) 1925. Pp. 797-798.

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world of the growing town.³

Perry Maxwell flourished in his new position, gaining a reputation as a shrewd, but fair businessman and becoming active in the town, especially through the Presbyterian Church. Maxwell kept a home on McLish Street in Ardmore but also purchased a piece of land north of town. Called "Primrose Farms," he leased it to his brother-in-law, Mort Woods.

Ray Woods Maxwell introduced her husband to golf some time after he arrived in Indian Territory by showing him an article about the new National Links. A trip to Scotland, where he visited a number of the landmark courses in the home of golf and met some of the golf course designers of the day got him hooked. Upon his return to Ardmore, he began to construct his own course on a corner of his Primrose Farm. Around 1909, Maxwell had completed four holes, utilizing the natural features of the land to direct the holes.

Around 1913, Maxwell began to take \$100 subscriptions from business acquaintances and other interested citizens in Ardmore to expand his small golf course into a full nine-hole golf and country club. Building on three of the original four holes, over the next couple of years Maxwell and his family worked to clear brush, remove rocks and stones and to lay out the beginnings of the new country club. Drawing on his Scottish heritage, Maxwell named the club Dornick Hills, from a Scottish work for pebbles or small rocks. Family members were drawn into the construction of the course, picking up stones from the new fairways and raking soil where needed.⁴ (This trend in using family in the golf course construction business would carry on to the end of Perry Maxwell's career. Son Press joined in the design end of the business and brother-in-law Dean Woods would be the chief construction foreman.)

On June 17, 1915, the Dornick Hills Country Club officially opened. The *Daily Ardmoreite*, in its report on the events of the day, noted the amenities of the club, including "...the tennis court and the sheep with the black sheep nearby employed to trim the lawn and make the yarn(s)." With much emphasis on the beauty of the course, the facilities, and the surroundings, the article ended with the thought that "Ardmore is as proud of the Country Club as she is of her first

3 See: "The True Story of Dornick Hills," *Daily Ardmoreite*, April 4, 1982 and Gilday and Salt, p. 198. There is some confusion as to the relationship between Perry Maxwell and his benefactor. The *Ardmoreite* article identifies the man as Maxwell's uncle, Presley Maxwell. Evans, a long-time friend of the Maxwell family, never mentions an uncle so named, but does tell of Ray Woods' father, Press Woods. It is likely that this is really the man referred to in the *Ardmoreite*.

4 Pitts, Robbie, "Dornick Hills Country Club," promotional flyer, vertical files, Ardmore public Library, n.d.

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school building, as she was of the courthouse, the paved streets, the library, the High School..."⁵

In 1919, Ray Woods Maxwell died. Ray had been Perry's biggest supporter. It was she who had introduced him to the game of golf through an article in a magazine. She had helped him discover his love for the game and helped him create his first course. Her death came as a crushing blow. They were in the midst of planning a fine new house to be constructed overlooking the golf course that they had wrought. Distraught, Perry never built the house, instead he designed a burial plot on the north side of the course in which to inter his wife. Surrounded by a low, stone wall and highlighted by a free standing colonnade, the cemetery would eventually hold not only Ray and Perry Maxwell, but members of the direct family.

Maxwell retired from the banking business and traveled, going to Scotland and England, where he met some of the great names in golf and golf course design. Upon his return to the United States, he decided that designing golf courses would be his profession.

Career

Perry Maxwell got his new career as a golf course designer off to a start with the expansion of his own course. With the help of oilman Wirt Franklin, whose house abutted the course property, \$50,000 in private bonds were sold for the expansion of the country club. A swimming pool was added and Perry Maxwell laid out nine more holes. Recognition came immediately with the playing of the first Oklahoma State Golf Tournament being held on the course in 1924, barely a year after its completion. With rolling greens of Bermuda grass, the new Dornick Hills course was acknowledged by golfers and pundits to be the finest course not only in the state of Oklahoma, but in the southwest.⁶

Maxwell had made a number of influential contacts during his days as a banker and the immediate recognition of the quality of his Dornick Hills course caught the eye of others. His next commission was to recreate and expand the Muskogee Country Club, a nine-hole layout with sand greens. In 1924, Maxwell laid out an eighteen hole course,

5 "Dornick Hills Country Club," *The Daily Ardmoreite*, June 18, 1915.

6 Hamilton, Bill, "Man Who Designed Dornick Hills Not on Hand for Big Golf Feature," *Daily Ardmoreite*, undated (1952) article found in vertical files of the Greater Southwest Historical Museum, in Ardmore. Also, see untitled, c. 1983 article by Mac Bentley from *Daily Oklahoman* found at same location.

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installing his trademark rolling, Bermuda grass greens. The construction and layout of the course followed his philosophy of letting the natural contours of the land dictate the placement of holes, a trademark of Maxwell-designed course.

After Muskogee, Maxwell purchased land northeast of Oklahoma City. Here he laid out what would become Twin Hills Country Club. He developed the course himself as a speculative venture, and then sold it to a friend in the oil business, Dorset Carter. In 1926, he designed Rolling Hills Country Club in Tulsa. Maxwell's success at this time was not limited to Oklahoma. In 1927 and 1928, he designed two courses in Pennsylvania, Chester Valley Country Club and Melrose Country Club, and in 1928-29, he laid out two courses in North Carolina, Old Town and Starmount Forest Country Club. 1930 saw his return to Oklahoma with the design of the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club.⁷

It was at the start of the Depression that Perry Maxwell began to attract serious interest in the golfing world. He met Alister Mackenzie and started a partnership. Together, they designed the University of Michigan course, Crystal Downs in Frankfort, Michigan, and the Scarlet and Grey Courses at Ohio State. Mackenzie remarked once to scholar Charles Evans, a friend of Maxwell, that "Mr. Maxwell speaks of my ability to make a good fairway or develop a worthy green, but I wish to tell you that in laying out a golf course and to give it everything the science and art of golf demand, Mr. Maxwell is not second to anyone I know."⁸ After Mackenzie's death, Maxwell was invited by Bobby Jones to do some work on Mackenzie's masterwork, Augusta National. Maxwell redesigned a number of greens and moved hole locations on numbers 7 and 10.

Perry Maxwell continued to do work outside the Great Plains, but always returned to Oklahoma for projects. In 1936, he began work on another of his signature course, Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa. Laid out on a tract of rolling land owned by oilman Waite Phillips, Southern Hills would mature into one of the most important course in the Southwest.

As noted with Augusta National, Perry Maxwell's reputation resulted in his being asked to "work over" or "improve" other, established golf courses. Included among these are such storied courses as Colonial Country Club in Fort

⁷ Bentley.

⁸ Evans, page 133.

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Worth, where he redesigned three holes and other greens, Westchester Country Club in New York, and the East and West courses at Merion, in Ardmore Pennsylvania (a National Historic Landmark).

The Second World War brought a temporary halt to Maxwell's work. He lined up future work during this time and resumed his career in 1946. Prior to the war, much of his work had been a family affair with brother-in-law Dean Woods serving as construction foreman. After the war, the family aspect of the business expanded, with son Press Maxwell joining his father. Together they designed a number of courses, including the Dogwood Course at Lakewood Country Club in Point Clear, Alabama and the Lake Hefner Golf Course in Oklahoma City. One of their most notable collaborations is Prairie Dunes, in Hutchinson, Kansas. Perry Maxwell designed the first 9 holes in 1937; Press finished the course after Perry's death in 1952.

Perry Maxwell died November 17, 1952, at the age of 73 from complications due to cancer. His obituaries in the Tulsa papers extolled his virtues as a golf course designer. The *Tulsa World* noted that "Bobby Jones, outstanding U.S. golfer, considered Maxwell's courses among the finest on which he played."⁹ He is also attributed with building 75 courses throughout the United States and rebuilding 50 others.¹⁰ Interestingly, the *Daily Ardmorite* spoke less about his accomplishments as a golf architect than on his accomplishments as a member of the community. It speaks well of his character that he was remembered for his deeds to his community on par with his accomplishments in his profession. He was laid to rest beside his first wife, Ray Woods Maxwell, in the elegant cemetery he designed overlooking the first golf course he built, Dornick Hills.

Design Philosophy

Perry Duke Maxwell committed little to paper. He preferred to walk the terrain of a golf course and let the land dictate the location of the holes. He made crude sketches on napkins and scraps of paper. He used stakes and string to lay out a course on the ground. Golf course designer Floyd Farley remarked, "We considered him an artist. He'd design things with his arms and his hands, waving his arms around. He didn't need a lot of plans, he'd just go out there and just

⁹ "Rites For Golf Architect Set," *Tulsa World*, November 18, 1952.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* and "Maxwell Rites Set," *Tulsa Tribune*, November 18, 1952 and "Maxwell Funeral Rites Wednesday," *Daily Ardmorite*, November 18, 1952.

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plot it in." ¹¹ His art, his courses speak for themselves; they tell the story of Maxwell's design philosophy.

One of Perry Maxwell's few interviews appears in the February, 1935 issue of *The American Golfer*. Writer Bob Davis drew out of Maxwell the story of his career to that point, and noted even then what made Maxwell and his courses so distinct. In his introduction, Davis remarks that "Wherever he (Maxwell) is called to perform his service there springs into life a playground for those who follow the ancient game; a course that blends with the natural lay of the land, retaining its comeliness."¹²

"The less of man's handiwork, the better a course." So goes Perry Maxwell's philosophy. Noted the professional at Prairie Dunes, "He didn't manufacture a golf course. He didn't move a lot of dirt, he just took a piece of property and worked the holes in there."¹³ Maxwell eschewed the wholesale destruction of land for the purpose of creating a golf course. He sums up his philosophy by relating the story of Dornick Hills, where cost was a major consideration in the initial creation of the course.

"It is my theory that nature must precede the architect, in the laying out of links. It is futile to attempt the transformation of wholly inadequate acres into an adequate course. Invariably, the result is the inauguration of an earthquake. The site of a golf course should *be* there, not *brought* there. A featureless site cannot be economically redeemed. Many an acre of magnificent land has been utterly destroyed by the steam shovel, throwing up its billows of earth, biting out traps and bunkers, transposing landmarks that are contemporaries of Genesis.

We can't blame the engineers, surveyors, landscape experts and axmen for carrying out the designs in the blueprints, most of which come into existence at the instigation of amateurs obsessed with a passion for remodeling the masterpieces of nature. A golf course that invades a hundred or more acres, and is actually visible in its garish intrusion from several points of observation, is an abhorrent spectacle. The

¹¹ Bentley, page 3.

¹² Davis, Bob, "Photo-Biographies – No. 33: Perry D. Maxwell, Creator, of Ardmore," *"The American Golfer,"* Greenwich, CN: Conde Nast Publications, Vol. 37, No. 5, February 1935. Page 17.

¹³ Bentley, page 3.

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less of man's handiwork the better a course."¹⁴

This point is reinforced when asked about his design for Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, 'First you need a suitable piece of land and then you should do as little to the land as possible to make it a playable course. In this way you give the place character and you make it different from any other golf course in the world.'¹⁵

Maxwell believed in natural hazards and little bunkering. He let the lay of the land dictate the position of holes. He tried to reward good shot-making and successful risk-taking. He abhorred the punitive nature of modern American golf courses, preferring the Scottish and English models. "We have learned nothing from Scotland or England where the ancient and honorable game can be enjoyed on marvelous links..."¹⁶

Perry Maxwell's courses vary in their layouts. They reflect the natural conditions of the land on which they were built. There is no "typical" Perry Maxwell hole, but they do all share one common trait – the greens. Dubbed "Maxwell Rolls," the undulating greens of a Perry Maxwell course are his indelible signature. He tailored his greens to fit the character of the hole. Smaller greens on shorter holes were a better test of shot-making. He believed that par is best defended at the green. His greens often featured bold contours; he did not deign to level out a green to make a flat tabletop like many courses. While his greens were known for their wicked contours during his lifetime, they have since become legend. Bermuda grass was his turf of choice (and often necessity); today bent grasses are typically used. Bermuda has more grain and is much slower than bent and those courses that have converted have increased the difficulty of their "Maxwell Rolls" measurably. They define a Maxwell course; Ernie Klappenbach wrote of Southern Hills, "to him, every green should be set and displayed as carefully as a rare emerald. A golf course designed by Perry Maxwell would always be the perfect blending of art, architecture, sculpture, and nature."¹⁷

Dornick Hills Country Club serves as a significant example of Perry Maxwell's design philosophy. Its creation fostered not only Maxwell's future profession as a designer, but also sowed the seeds of his design philosophy. The course is

¹⁴ Davis, *op cit*.

¹⁵ Klappenbach, Ernie, Southern Hills Country Club – A 42 Year History, 1935-1977, Tulsa: Tulsa litho Company, 1977. Pp. 83-84.

¹⁶ Davis, *op cit*.

¹⁷ Klappenbach, page 84.

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indelibly linked to the landscape and features the nascent ideas that would spring forth in his later designs. The first course in Oklahoma to have grass greens, Dornick Hills showcased them on undulating putting surfaces. It remains the seminal work of a master designer – Perry Duke Maxwell and is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

Recreation/Entertainment

Dornick Hills Country Club served as the premier golfing venue in Oklahoma and the southwest for most of the first half of the 20th century. The first design of noted golf architect Perry Maxwell, Dornick Hills quickly gained a reputation as a tough, but fair test of golf. Since its opening as a full 18 hole championship course in 1924, Dornick Hills has played host to tournaments and exhibitions of state and national importance, both amateur and professional. It was the first country club in Oklahoma affiliated with the United States Golf Association (USGA) and from 1914 to 1920, was the only such affiliated course in the state.¹⁸

Dornick Hills began its storied career as a championship venue in 1924, when it hosted the Oklahoma Open. This was the second and last year that the Oklahoma Open had been held as an official Professional Golfers Association (PGA) tour event. It was won by William Creavy, a pro from Kansas City. Dornick Hills would host the Oklahoma Open seven more times, including 1929, 1960, a four year run from 1968-1971, and 1975.¹⁹ In other years, Maxwell designed courses such as Twin Hills, Muskogee Country Club, Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club, and Southern Hills Country Club hosted the tournament.

In addition to the Oklahoma Open, Dornick Hills hosted other tournaments, including the 1937 State Amateur. But the event that brought national attention to the course was the Ardmore Open.

Oilman and club president, Waco Turner was an avid fan of golf. He took over the presidency of Dornick Hills in 1944 and personally financed the new clubhouse, the original having been destroyed by fire when leased to the Army Air Corps during the war.²⁰ His love of sports, including golf, led him to try to lure a PGA tour stop to Ardmore. In 1951, he conceived a plan to do so.

¹⁸ "3rd Annual Ardmore Open," Official Program for the 1954 event, played May 6-9, 1954.

¹⁹ Lemon, Dale, The Story of Golf in Oklahoma, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. Page 72, pages 351-352.

²⁰ Hamilton, page 12.

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In order to attract the pros, Turner and his wife, Opie, needed to bring Dornick Hills up to par. Years of neglect and poor finances during World War II had taken an accumulative effect. Turner had already invested in a new clubhouse. He spent a year and a fortune getting the course into shape. He hired a new club professional and built a new pro shop. More importantly, they announced the purse for the tournament would be \$10,000, one of the richest on the PGA circuit. This got the attention of the professionals. As the tournament neared in 1952, the purse was bumped up to \$15,000, the richest on the tour. In addition, Turner promised to pay out bonuses for eagles, birdies, and holes-in-one.²¹

Turner spoiled the professional and amateur golfers who participated in his Ardmore Open. He arranged for a big banquet and continued to pour money into the prize pool. In 1953, the second Ardmore Open's purse was raised to \$21,300. 1954 marked the last Ardmore Open; Waco Turner moved his money and his tournament to a new course.²²

Dornick Hills never hosted another major professional tournament, but over the years it has hosted many amateur events, most notably the Maxwell Collegiate Invitational, named after the father of the course. Dornick Hills has served as a tournament venue for most of its lifespan, sharing honors as one of Oklahoma's best tests of golf with other Perry Maxwell designed courses. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its role in the development of golf in Oklahoma.

Conclusion

Dornick Hills Country Club is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as a seminal and defining work of a master golf course architect, Perry Maxwell. It is also significant under Criterion A for its role in the development of competitive golf in the state of Oklahoma. Initially constructed in 1913 and expanded to 18 holes in 1924, by 1953, it had blossomed into one of the most respected golf courses in the Southwest, hosting numerous amateur and professional tournaments and adding to the growing national recognition its designer, Perry Duke Maxwell.

²¹ Lemon, pp. 112-113.

²² Lemon, pp. 117-119.

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Perry Maxwell is recognized as one of the country's finest golf architects. Acknowledged during his lifetime by his contemporaries and numerous golfers as a genius, his courses have stood the test of time. Southern Hills Country Club has hosted recent US Opens and Prairie Dunes recently hosted the US Women's Open. Dornick Hills was Maxwell's first course, defining his philosophy. It remained close to his heart; he is buried along with his wife and family overlooking the course. The course reflects his philosophy of design and economy and retains a high degree of historical integrity. It is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C.

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	Zone	Easting	Northing
5.	14	<u>671840</u>	<u>3788560</u>
6.	14	<u>672050</u>	<u>3788580</u>
7.	14	<u>671770</u>	<u>3787560</u>
8.	14	<u>671500</u>	<u>3787540</u>
9.	14	<u>671500</u>	<u>3787620</u>
10.	14	<u>671130</u>	<u>3787620</u>

Verbal Boundary Description

From the County Assessor:

5 AC of N 1/2, NW1/4, SW1/4; S 1/2 NW 1/4, SW 1/4; S 1/2 NE 1/4, SW 1/4; 5 AC on NE 1/4, NE 1/4; 3.03 AC E 1/2 SE 1/4 NW 1/4; 3 AC NW 1/4, SW 1/4, NE 1/4; SW 1/4, SW 1/4, NE 1/4; 7 AC NW 1/4, NW 1/4, SE 1/4; 2.76 AC SW 1/4, NW 1/4, SE 1/4; N 1/2 SW 1/4, SW 1/4; SW 1/4, SE 1/4 SW 1/4; 5 AC of SE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 7, Township 4 South, Range 2 East.

See topographic map for boundaries

Boundary Justification

The boundaries indicate the property of the Dornick Hills Country Club and include the golf course and ancillary property associated with the club. This represents the historic boundaries of significance for the property.