

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | JUN 5 1980 |
| DATE ENTERED | JUL 9 1980 |

**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 St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 536 4th Avenue North
CITY, TOWN St. Petersburg VICINITY OF 5
STATE Florida 33701 CODE 12 COUNTY Pinellas CODE 103

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE | |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Recreational |

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME St. Petersburg, City of
STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 2842
CITY, TOWN St. Petersburg VICINITY OF STATE Florida 33731

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Pinellas County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Clearwater STATE Florida

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE City of St. Petersburg Cultural Resource Survey
DATE 1977-1978
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS City of St. Petersburg Planning Dept.
CITY, TOWN St. Petersburg STATE Florida

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

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 _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club comprises a clubhouse complex, two sheds, two bowling courts, and covered walkways located on a 1 1/10 acre plot of land in Mirror Lake Park in central St. Petersburg, Florida. The club property is located on the northeast boundary of the park, just northeast of Mirror Lake. The neighborhood surrounding the bowling club contains a mixture of residential, commercial, and governmental buildings. Some of the city's oldest buildings are located in this area as it is the original core of the community. The construction of buildings and associated parking areas by state and local governments have made serious intrusions into Mirror Lake Park so that its identity has been largely lost, except immediately around Mirror Lake. The residential structures in the area are slowly being replaced by commercial and governmental buildings. Low-rise structures, however, are still the more prevalent in the area.

The principal features of the lawn bowling club are its clubhouse complex and its two bowling courts, one of which contains 19 rinks, the other, 6 rinks. The larger court, used by the male members of the club, occupies the entire southern half of the property. Originally this court contained 25 bowling rinks, but this was reduced to 19 in 1976 when the City of St. Petersburg constructed the Sunshine Center, a senior citizens facility, on the southeast edge of the bowling club property.

The south court is separated from the clubhouse complex and women's bowling court by a covered walkway. There are similar walkways at the south end of the large court and at the east and west ends of the smaller court. These walkways are paved with hexagonal concrete blocks which were laid in 1926. The shelters have raised seam metal roofs supported by round metal posts.

The clubhouse complex lies in the northwest corner of the bowling club property. The complex consists of a wood frame vernacular building erected in 1918 and enlarged in 1923 and 1928, and a Mediterranean Revival style concrete block addition constructed on the west of the original building in 1933.

The more recent section is used as a separate clubhouse by the male members of the bowling club, while the women occupy the older structure. The main entrance facade of the men's clubhouse overlooks Fourth Avenue North, the north border of Mirror Lake Park. The rear facade, which is virtually identical with the street facade, overlooks the large south court. The facades are both three bays wide, with a central arched doorway flanked by two tall narrow windows. The doorways contain double leaf wood and glass doors. Each doorway has an arched fan light.

The street facade still has its 6/9 double hung sash windows, whereas those at the rear have been replaced by metal frame awning windows. The windows on the side elevations of the men's clubhouse are similar in proportions to those on the north and south facades. They contain, however, single leaf, three light casement windows with fixed four-light sashes above.

(See continuation sheet)

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PAGE 2

Present and Original Physical Appearance

The main roof of the stuccoed concrete block addition is a cross gable. There are sloping parapets on the gable ends. The roof is covered with slate and the tops of the parapets have a terra cotta coping. Each gable end has an arched attic vent, and all but the one on the south facade is fitted with wood louvers. The south vent has a metal exhaust cowl.

The women's portion of the clubhouse is a wood frame vernacular structure which is connected to the men's clubhouse on the west by a short wing. The exterior siding of the building is weatherboard. The main roof is composed of three intersecting gables. One ridge is oriented east-west intersected by two parallel ridges oriented north-south. The building also has short shed roofs on its south and east elevations. There appears to be no main entrance facade and the placement of doors and windows is very irregular.

A photograph dating circa 1924-25 indicates that the clubhouse was a single-story L-shaped building with a small flat roofed addition. The long axis of the gable roofed building was oriented north-south. The roof of the east ell terminated in a jerkin head. The small flat roofed addition was found at the end of the east ell. The main roof had widely projecting eaves with exposed rafter ends. The exterior siding on the building was weatherboard. The principal windows were six light double casements throughout. There was a small exterior brick flue on the north end of the building. This flue is still in existence today. The black and white photograph shows that the building was painted a dark color with a light trim. The only photograph available from that period shows the clubhouse from its east elevation. It is not possible to determine, therefore, what the main facade which overlooked the bowling court to the south looked like.

The small concrete block building located near the northeast corner of the lawn bowling club property is the bowls testing building. The one-story, gable roof structure was erected in 1940 and has remained essentially unchanged since that time. The long axis of the building is oriented north-south. The three-bay main entrance facade is located on the north end of the building. The door in the entrance facade is wood with a louvered glass panel. The fenestration consists of awning windows.

A small rectangular concrete block storage shed is located near the northeast corner of the clubhouse addition erected in 1933. This building was erected in 1976. It is one-story high, has a shed roof and no windows.

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 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) Recreational | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

+ 1916

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club is significant as the oldest formally organized lawn bowling organization in Florida and the tenth oldest club in the United States.¹ It is also the only location officially recognized by the American Lawn Bowls Association for the testing of bowls.²

During the winter of 1915-16, Al Mercer, a regular visitor to St. Petersburg from Toronto, Canada, investigated the possibility of using Marl-surfaced roque courts in St. Petersburg as bowling rinks. The grasses used for lawn bowling did not thrive in Florida, and the Marl of the roque court- a game similar to croquet- seemed to offer a suitable alternative surface. Mercer and an associate named William Armstrong found that Marl covered with a thin layer of sand provided an acceptable bowling surface. Shortly thereafter, the two men requested that the City of St. Petersburg construct Marl bowling rinks in Mirror Lake Park. The city agreed, and in 1917 the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club, Incorporated was formed.³

Although lawn bowling had been a popular sport in Europe, particularly England, it had enjoyed little vogue in America after the American Revolution. The bowl used in the game of lawn bowling is aimed at a small white ball which remains stationary at one end of a fifteen feet by one hundred and twenty feet rectangular area which forms the "rink". The main objective of each player is to roll his bowl closer to the white ball, called a "jack", than his opponent's bowl. An accurate profile for the bowl is therefore, essential.⁴ The sport began to receive attention in the United States after the Middlesex Bowling Green Club was organized in New Jersey in 1885. A second club was formed in Boston in the same year. The first club on the west coast appeared when the St. Andrews Society of San Francisco and Oakland had a bowling green constructed in Golden Gate Park.⁵ In 1915, the American Lawn Bowls Association was formed in Buffalo, New York, for the purpose of promoting lawn bowling throughout the United States.⁶ The St. Petersburg Club became a member of the A.L.B.A. in 1920.⁷

The first "clubhouse" for the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club was a tent which could be set up as needed in Mirror Lake Park. The first permanent structure was a wood frame building erected in 1918. This building still exists today.⁸ It has, however, been altered considerably.

(See continuation sheet)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A Look at Lawn Bowls. Brochure published by the American Lawn Bowls Association.

Farr, Noel. "Lawn Bowling". Unpublished monograph on file at the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club.

(See continuation sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY LT. 2

QUADRANGLE NAME St. Petersburg 1956 (PR 1969)

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 min.

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,7 3,3,8 3,2,0 3,0,7,3 2,8,0

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See continuation sheet)

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

| | | | |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Shiver, W. Carl, Historic Sites Specialist

5/15/80

ORGANIZATION Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

The Capitol

(904) 487-2333

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Tallahassee

Florida 32301

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

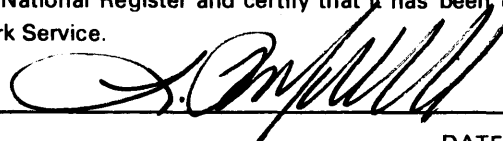
NATIONAL X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

5/15/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Luce
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7/9/80

ATTEST: Carol Duke

DATE

7/8/80

CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

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Originally, there were just two bowling rinks at Mirror Lake. In 1922, this was increased to nine rinks, and six more rinks were added in 1926 when the women bowlers formed a separate organization. Eventually the number of rinks was increased to twenty-five.⁹ Four rinks, however, were lost in 1976 when the City of St. Petersburg erected a senior citizens service facility at Mirror Lake.¹⁰

The clubhouse was enlarged in 1928, and a new concrete Mediterranean Revival Style Clubhouse was added to the existing structures in 1933.¹¹ The membership of the club grew steadily until it reached a peak of 483 in 1952-53. The members decided that the Mirror Lake facility could not accommodate so many members, and \$12,000 was raised to establish a separate club, called the Bartlett Park Lawn Bowling Club which was officially formed in 1954.¹²

In 1940, the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club was designated as the only sanctioned facility for testing the accuracy of bowls by the American Lawn Bowls Association.¹³ The bowl is not perfectly spherical but has slightly flattened sides and bowls are sent to St. Petersburg from all over the country for testing and adjusting to proper profile by a resident technician.¹⁴

In 1956, the rinks of the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club were rebuilt and the bowling surface changed from Marl to a durable synthetic surface called "rubico".¹⁵ The club's facilities today accommodates 370 bowlers. These facilities include not only the rinks, but also a 2,500 book library that is used extensively by the members. Benches and chairs, all protected by a covered walkway along the ends of the rinks are also provided for the comfort of bowlers and spectators.¹⁶

The club has habitually sponsored a variety of functions for its members. These include lectures and A.L.B.A. recognized bowling tournaments. The first National Open Lawn Bowling Winter Tournament was hosted by the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club in 1926. This tournament is still held at the club on alternate years. The tournament for the championship of the Southeast Division of the A.L.B.A. is also held at the club each year.¹⁷

¹St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club. Yearbook, 1926/27.

²St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club Fiftieth Anniversary. Brochure published by the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club, 1966

³Ibid.

⁴Harvey C. Maxwell. The American Lawn Bowler's Guide. Santa Ana, Calif.: Foundation Press, 1966, p. 19.

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⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 20

⁷St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club Fiftieth Anniversary.

⁸Noel Farr "Lawn Bowling" unpublished Monograph on file at the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰F.G. Norman Smith, interview with George Dunfield, President, St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club, December 6, 1979.

¹¹St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club Fiftieth Anniversary.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵A Look at Lawn Bowls. Brochure published by the American Lawn Bowling Association.

¹⁶St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club Fiftieth Anniversary.

¹⁷Ibid.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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Maxwell, Harvey C. The American Lawn Bowler's Guide. Santa Ana, California:
Foundation Press, 1966.

St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club Fiftieth Anniversary. Brochure published
by the St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club, 1966.

St. Petersburg Lawn Bowling Club. Yearbook. Published by the St. Petersburg
Lawn Bowling Club, 1922-1979.

Smith, F.G. Norman, interview with George Dunfield, President, St. Petersburg
Lawn Bowling Club, December 6, 1979.

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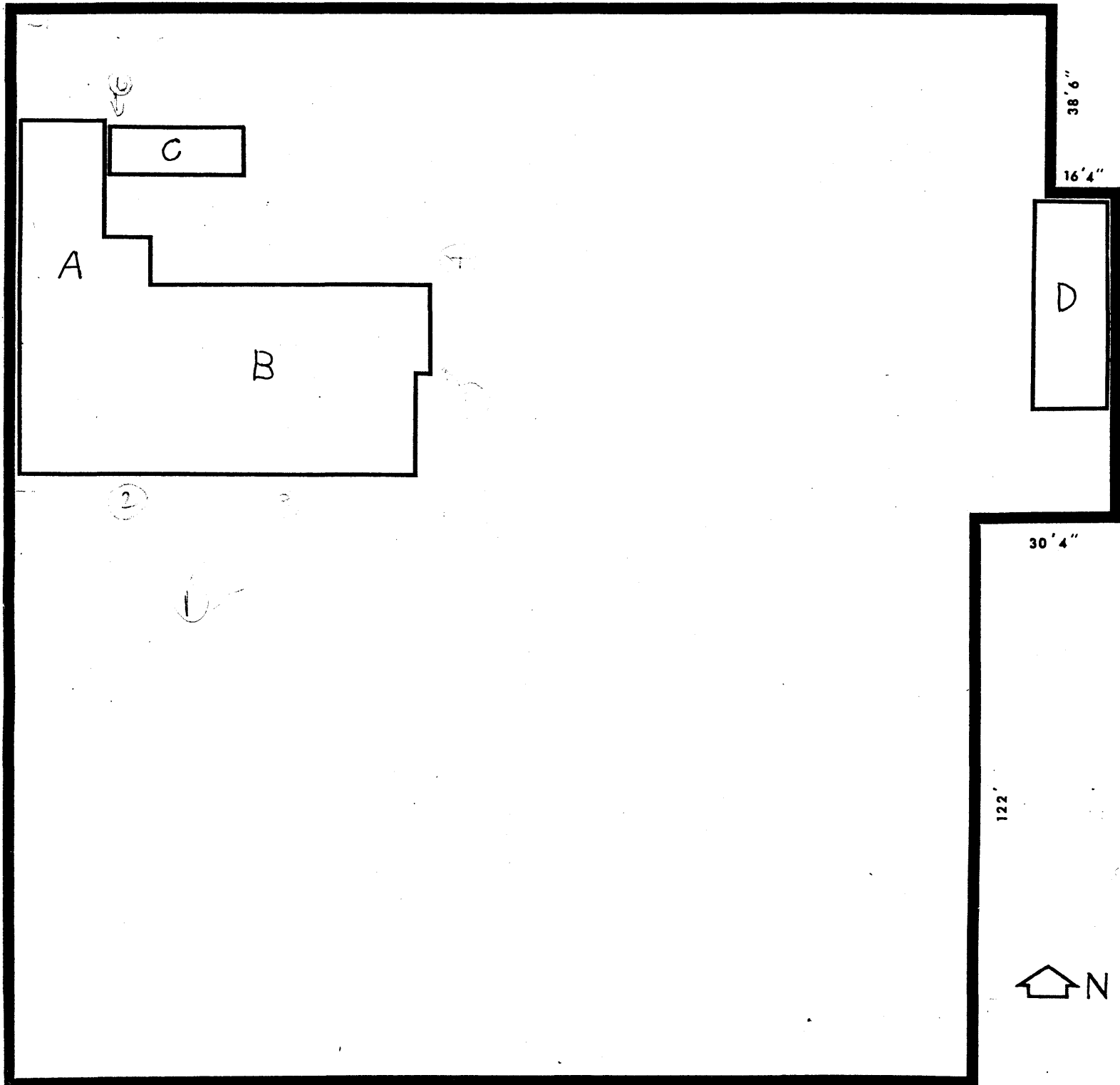
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Commencing approximately 40 feet west of the southwest corner of Fifth Street North and Fourth Avenue North, run 226 feet west along Fourth Avenue North, then run 232 feet 6 inches south, run thence 212 feet east, run thence 122 feet north, run thence 30 feet 4 inches east, 70 feet 6 inches north, 16 feet 4 inches west, and 38 feet 3 inches north to the point of beginning.

ST. PETERSBURG LAWN BOWLING CLUB

226'



38'6"

16'4"

D

30'4"

122'



212'

234' 0"

A

C

B

2

1

Dates of Bldg; photo views

ST. PETERSBURG LAWN BOWLING CLUB

coliseum

Mediterranean details

226'

⑦

↓
concrete curb fence

