

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001219

Date Listed: 8/13/90

Water Witch Club Casino  
Property Name

Monmouth  
County

NJ  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Patrick Andrews*  
for \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

8/13/90  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Criterion A should be added to correspond to the area of significance "Entertainment and Recreation".

The nomination is officially amended to include this change.

Confirmed by telephone with Sue Pringle of the NJ SHPO, 8/7/90.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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**R** **RECEIVED**  
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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Water Witch Club Casino  
other names/site number Monmouth Hills, Inc. Clubhouse

2. Location

street & number Corner of East Twin Road and West Twin Road  NA not for publication  
city, town Highlands  vicinity  
state New Jersey code NJ - 034 county Monmouth code 025 zip code 07732

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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.  See continuation sheet.  
*William C. Smith* 1/12/90  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. *Patrick Andrews* 8/13/90  
 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:)  
*for* Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social/Clubhouse

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social/Clubhouse

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Shingle Style

Colonial Revival

other: Craftsman Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls shingle

roof slate

other wooden porches and trim

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Water Witch Club casino, the social center of the residential community, is located in Highlands, N.J., about twenty-three miles south of New York City. It sits on a 1.4 acre graded lot between East Twin Road and West Twin Road at approximately 228 ft above sealevel--the highest point in the area (plan 2). The site is the only cleared area on a heavily wooded hillside overlooking Sandy Hook, the Atlantic Ocean, and (on a clear day) Manhattan (photo 4). The grounds in front of the casino have been landscaped and include a gravel path leading to a flagpole with benches (photo 5). The grounds behind the casino include a tennis court and a gravel parking lot. The present structure consists of two buildings: the original casino and a large clubhouse addition of 1911. The casino is a large, one and one half story Colonial Revival/Shingle Style structure with an impressive Craftsman interior (photos 1 & 5). The site and building have a very high level of integrity: after 1911 few alterations were made.

The Casino, 1905. The casino was built in 1905; its architect is unknown. The building replaced an earlier clubhouse by Lamb & Rich that had been moved to an adjacent lot (and which subsequently burned in 1911). The original casino, consisting of an assembly room and billiard room, was a rectangular building with a gambrel roof that extended out over eastern and western porches. The eastern (front) porch runs the length of the building but originally turned the southeast corner to form a porch outside the billiard room; a flight of steps was located in this corner as well as at the center of the porch (photo 1). The entire porch area is covered by the sloping Dutch Colonial Revival roof and is supported by square classical columns paired at the corners. The roof on the eastern side has five dormers with shed roofs: the southernmost, a cluster of three 6/2 windows, provides light for the largest bedroom; the other four are all single, nine pane windows that light the assembly room. Atop the roof is a wooden, white painted widow's walk; at the southern end of the walk a stone chimney from the interior fireplace projects. A postcard dated from 1907 suggests that the western side of the building was quite similar except that the porch extended only from the northernmost French door to the

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southernmost (photocopy 1 and photo 2); it also had square classical columns and was covered by an extension of the roof. To the left of the porch were one 6/6 window and one 3/3. The postcard further shows a 6/6 window in the wall to the right of the porch which most likely lit the billiard room. On the roof of the west facade were four shed-roofed dormers, each having a nine pane window. What the original configuration of the south facade was is unknown, although a plan from 1911 suggests that windows in the billiard room opened onto a porch. The north facade has a bay window almost the width of the building that contains six nine pane windows (photo 3). This bayed projection rises approximately fifteen feet and is supported on a brick foundation. A fanlight is located in the wall above the window. The whole exterior of the building is sheathed with weathered shingles and white painted trim. Originally, the roof was also shingled. The building sits on a brick foundation approximately three feet above ground level.

Assembly Room. The interior of the assembly room rises the full height of the building; exposed wooden beams that form a scissor truss support the roof and enhance the Arts & Crafts atmosphere of the interior (photo 7). Three sets of French doors, alternating with three sets of 6/6 windows, open off of the assembly room's east and west sides onto the porches (photo 8 & plan 1). At the southern end of the room is a large stone fireplace; it has a jack arch opening and a wooden plank mantel resting on corbels. A raised stone hearth extends approximately four feet and is bounded by wooden benches that form an inglenook (photo 6). Within the inglenook are two acetylene sconces and a plate rail that flank the stone chimney. Above the inglenook and running the width of the assembly room is a minstrel gallery; the railing and brackets are sawn in an Eastlake manner (photo 7). However, how access was gained to this gallery originally is unknown. At the northern end is the stage, raised three steps (photo 8). It is backlit by a bayed row of 6 nine pane windows. To the left is a small off-stage room which can be entered from the stage or through a panelled door facing the assembly room (photo 8). It is lit by a 3/3 window and also contains a toilet. A similar room is located to the right of the stage. It contains a narrow stair that leads to a storage area directly over the stage. This space is lit and ventilated by a fanlight on the north side (photo 3). At the front of the stage, overhead, is the original acetylene gas lighting fixture--an interesting surviving example of early light fixtures (photo 9). The entire room is panelled with thin wooden strips to the height of the doors; the panelling is capped by a continuous plate rail. Stick style framing boards ornament the area over the stage (photo 8).

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Each of the French doors has a four light transom. Small benches are built in on the east and west walls directly underneath the center window.

Sometime shortly after 1909, the assembly room was electrically lit by a number of small, wall-mounted lanterns and a hanging chandelier of wrought-iron and opalescent glass (photo 7). Gas nipples visible beneath each of the lanterns suggest that these fixtures replaced earlier gas lights. Apparently, the club planned on the imminent arrival of electricity: during construction in 1905, the beams behind the lanterns were hollowed out wide enough to accommodate electrical wiring. There was, therefore, little or no destruction of material or space when electricity was installed in 1909. Also evident on the beams are hooks for cords to control the dormer windows. Once opened, these windows would aid circulation of air in the room: cool air, entering through the french doors, could rise when heated and escape easily. The floor is of tongue-in-groove construction.

The Billiard Room. Through panelled doors to the left of the inglenook lies the billiard room (photo 10 and plan 1). It extends the width of the auditorium and is lit by 2 6/6 sash windows. An early rendering of the casino suggests that originally there was no divisional wall between the assembly and billiard rooms: the only demarcation would have been the fireplace and inglenook with the free-standing stone chimney bisected by the minstrel gallery. In the rendering, the areas on either side of the chimney are open and the ceiling of the billiard room, like the assembly room, rises the full height of the building. However, the minutes of 9/26/05 mention a plan with a second floor containing five small bedrooms above the billiard room. It is hard to tell which plan, if either, was adopted. Currently, the room is panelled with thin dark wood strips, similar to those in the assembly room; these same strips, painted white, are used for the ceiling. There is a plate rail two feet from the ceiling. Built-in seats with cupboards below, are placed to the left of the fireplace; built-in cupboards, about three feet high line the east wall (plan 1). The fireplace is constructed of white painted brick and is ornamented by corbelled recessed panels. A dark brick hearth extends forward approximately two feet. The room has a hard wood floor. An early plan mentions the presence of a dumbwaiter and flight of steps along the southeast wall. The room contains Sticklely-like card tables and chairs and a billiard table. It is electrically lit by two brass overhead lights.

The original casino would also have had a running water supply: water and sewerage had already been installed at the club in 1896-7. The cement slab covering the cistern for the casino

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is visible underneath the dining room windows. The copper water tank is still visible in the attic. Gas mains were not introduced at the club until July 5, 1910.

The Casino and Clubhouse, 1911. Less than six years after the initial construction, in 1911, the casino was altered to accommodate a new clubhouse. Lyman T. Ford, a resident of Water Witch, was selected as the architect. The clubhouse addition projected westward from the southern end of the casino (off the billiard room) and was also 1 1/2 storeys (photo 2). It included an entrance hall and reception room, lounging room, dining room, bar, butler's pantry on the first floor; the second floor had 4 bedrooms (plan 1). A telephone room and flight of steps (leading down to the clubhouse safe) were put between the billiard room and lounging room. Alterations to the original casino rooms were also done at this time.

Ford's design was a sympathetic addition to the casino: the gambrel roof was repeated, as was the shed-roof of a three window dormer on the north side. The southernmost dormer of the casino was altered to contain two windows (photo 2). A fanlight on the west facade provides ventilation for the attic and is similar to the fanlight on the north facade. The exterior was wood shingle with white trim; the brick foundation is visible on the south side. The clubhouse addition was given a slate roof as a precaution against fire. At the same time the casino was also reroofed with slate, placed directly over the wooden shingles. This included the dormer cheeks as well.

Alterations to Existing Rooms. Assembly Room. In a 1911 plan, the southernmost French door on the west side was moved four feet to the left (i.e. replacing one of the alternating windows) to accommodate a flight of steps up to the gallery (a second flight of steps from the gallery level lead to the widow's walk).

Billiard Room. In the same plan, the porch off the southeast wall of the billiard room was enclosed--the dumbwaiter and stairs being removed--to form a bar area (plan 1). This alteration could account for the splicing visible in the floor boards. It is also possible that the divisional wall between the assembly room and the billiard room was created at this time: the plan mentions the installation of fire block on each side of the fireplace and the panelled door on the east side (plan 1). Finally, it is possible that the rooms over the billiard room were added at this time.

The New Addition Rooms. Pantry. The addition included a kitchen in the basement (the hearth and cabinetry still exist) with stairs leading up to a pantry. A dumb waiter (perhaps the one from the billiard room) was installed in the pantry to

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facilitate food distribution; the pantry was also equipped with a sink and cabinets. The pantry had swinging panelled doors with one light which opened into the dining room.

The Dining Room. The dining room is a long rectangular room with dark stained wainscotting about 6' high capped by a plate rail; the wall above us papered (photo 11). A white painted brick fireplace is located in the northwest corner; it has a jack arch opening and dark brick hearth. The fireplace has a wooden overmantel the height of the wainscotting. A china closet is built into the left of the fireplace. The dining room is lit by 5 6/6 windows on the south side and 1 6/6 on the east. It is electrically lit by opalescent glass lanterns mounted between the windows and overhead. A transomed, 10 pane glazed French door in the eastern end leads to the bar area and billiard room.

Lounging Room. French doors also open from the dining room onto the lounging room. This room, which lies on axis with the billiard room, is a very lightly colored room in comparison with the others (photo 12). Its walls are plastered and painted. A white painted molding fills the roof/ceiling juncture and there is also a similar white baseboard. The fireplace shares a flue with the dining room fireplace; it has a brick arched opening, painted black, with a brick hearth. There is a white wooden Colonial Revival mantel with columns and entablature. Next to the fireplace is a built-in bookcase, about 5 feet high, with diamond pane casement windows. The ceiling is also plastered and contains a trap door leading to plumbing fixtures. The floors are hardwood. To the right of the entrance to the billiard room lies a small telephone room, to the left a flight of stairs leading to the basement safe.

The Entrance Hall. The entrance hall is tiled and has a small reception desk and room. The main entrance is in the northwest corner and opens onto the western porch. Next to the door is a 6/6 window. Behind the desk in the hall is a small room, lit by two 6/6 sash windows. Stairs from the hall lead up to the second floor.

The Second Floor. The old section (directly over the billiard room) contains a bathroom, closet and two bedrooms; the new section contains two bathrooms, a shower, and four bedrooms. All of the doors are panelled--the bedroom doors are all equipped with a second louvered door. The rooms have plastered walls and each has a sink (photo 13).

Despite the difficulties in determining the arrangement of space over the billiard room, the casino and clubhouse have a straightforward history: no major alterations occurred after 1911. The present Board has concerned itself with maintaining the structure: sanding and painting wood work, replacing slates,

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restoring windows, modernizing the pantry, etc. The ground floor rooms are in very good condition.



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PHOTOGRAPHS, PLANS AND PHOTOCOPIES

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Name of property:     | Water Witch Club Casino                               |
| 2. City/State:           | Highlands, NJ   |
| 3. Photographer:         | Constance Greiff (CG) or<br>Marie Frank (MF) as noted |
| 4. Date:                 | June, 1989  |
| 5. Negatives located at: | Heritage Studies, Inc.                                |

Exterior:

1. Water Witch Casino, east facade (front) (CG)
2. Water Witch Casino, west facade (rear) (CG)
3. Water Witch Casino, north facade (MF)
4. View of Sandy Hook from east porch (CG)
5. View of flagpole from east porch (CG)

Interior:

6. Assembly Room looking south towards inglenook (MF)
7. Assembly Room looking south towards gallery (MF)
8. Assembly Room looking north (MF)
9. Assembly Room, detail of light fixture (MF)
10. Billard Room, north wall (MF)
11. Dining Room looking west (MF)
12. Lounging Room looking west (MF)
13. Upstairs bedroom (MF)

PLANS:

1. Plan of first floor
2. Site plan
3. Map, F.A. Dunham, 1895

PHOTOCOPIES:

1. Postcard, Atlantic Highlands Historical Society, 1907

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Entertainment and Recreation

Period of Significance

1905-1930

Significant Dates

1905

1911

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Casino: unknown. Addition: Lyman T. Ford

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The casino at the Water Witch Club represents a unique American building type--a communal gathering place for games and entertainment. Most of New Jersey's other 19th and early 20th century casinos have been significantly altered or destroyed. Elberon's casino was removed in 1959; Short Hills' burned in 1978; Monmouth Beach Casino was moved, renovated beyond recognition and turned into the Borough Hall. The Water Witch casino is thus an important surviving example of resort architecture at the turn of the century. However, not only is it a surviving example, it is also a very high quality example: architecture was an important element within the club and close attention was paid to designs and fitments. The exterior is a good example of the Colonial Revival/Shingle Style popularized in the last decades of the nineteenth century by large firms such as McKim, Mead & White; the interior, with its impressive one and a half story assembly room, exposed wooden beams and inglenook, is a delightful example of the Craftsman style promoted in the contemporary publications of Gustav Stickley (photos 1 & 6). The building has a very high level of integrity: after a clubhouse addition in 1911, few alterations were made.

By the end of the nineteenth century, there was an incredible increase in the number of building types constructed in the U.S. Industrialization had spurred the creation of a variety of specific types for specific functions. However, not all of these new building types were necessarily commercial. An important by-product of industrialization was the wealth and leisure it provided to an increasing number of people. This group needed a place to spend free time and, as so often before, they looked to their European cousins. Buildings for entertainment, called casinos, populated the spa and resort areas of 18th and 19th century Europe. (The word casino is taken from Italian and meant a small summer house or garden pavilion originally; it soon took on the generic meaning of a place of

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Unpublished Sources

"Communication of the Board of Directors" Flyer. n.d. Water Witch Club Casino, Highlands, N.J.

Dunham, F.A., "Map of Lands of Water Witch Club." 1895. Photocopy in the files of the Office of New Jersey Heritage, Trenton, N.J.

"Monmouth County Historical Survey." Located at the Office of New Jersey Heritage, Trenton, NJ.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Monmouth Hills, Inc.

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 1.4 acres Sandy Hook NJ-NY Quad

UTM References

A 18 585365 4472435  
Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Water Witch Club casino occupies a 1.4 acre lot bounded by East Twin Road and West Twin Road. It includes the casino and clubhouse, tennis court, gravel parking lot, and landscaped frontage. See accompanying sketch map (plan 2).

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire lot of land historically associated with the casino and clubhouse. See historic map (plan 3).

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Marie Frank, Architectural Historian, and Constance Greiff, Director.  
organization Heritage Studies, Inc. date July 31, 1989  
street & number 20 Seminary Avenue telephone 609-466-9606  
city or town Hopewell, state NJ zip code 08525

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entertainment, often associated with games of chance.) Between the years of 1876-1910, casino building flourished in the U.S., but although the American casino followed its European prototype in function, it developed its own architectural form.(1) With only one or two exceptions, such as Saratoga Springs, gambling was significantly absent. Instead, the central space was often given over to a large auditorium or hall with a stage at one end. Casinos became popular among the wealthy and leisure classes: they were places to have fun, places to play games. The most popular and well-known of the early casinos was the one built at Newport by McKim, Mead & White of 1879-80. Other communities soon built their own casinos, such as those at Narragansett, R.I. and Stockbridge, MA. New Jersey played a substantial role in the development of the casino. The very wealthy had already begun summering in Elberon, a resort town equal to Newport in wealth and popularity. Peabody & Stearns designed a large shingle style casino for this community in 1883. Before that, Stanford White designed a casino for the residential community at Short Hills in 1880. Later, casinos would be built in Cape May, Monmouth Beach, and Asbury Park. The Water Witch casino is part of this tradition, and except for the much later and more public example of Asbury Park, the sole survivor.

Concurrent with the growth of a new building type, the late nineteenth century also saw the rise of the residential community. Although the earliest planned private community could be traced as far back as Llewellyn Park, the concept gained in popularity by the end of the century. As railroads made parts of New Jersey more easily accessible, resort enclaves and private summer communities populated the Jersey Coast. The summer community became especially popular among the wealthy and professional classes. The Water Witch Club is among these exclusive neighborhoods. Its proximity to New York and its picturesque setting at Sandy Hook made it both practical and romantic: the professional was within commuting distance, yet surrounded by a landscape on a par with the more affluent summer residents of Newport. Communities such as the Water Witch Club were essentially professional class imitations of the very wealthy. Hence it is not unusual that the Water Witch Club members would emulate Newport and erect a casino as the center of their summer social activities.

## Background information

The Water Witch Club was founded by Ferdinand Fish, a New York City developer, in 1895 as a summer colony in Highlands, N.J.

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The romantic novelist James Fennimore Cooper described the area as "the most beautiful combination of land and water in America." The club actually derived its name from the title of one of Cooper's novels, The Water Witch, on the supposition that the ship, Water Witch, coved in the area. The club was managed by a President, Secretary, and Treasurer plus six directors, collectively referred to as the Board. Each member was elected annually, but for not more than three terms. It was a private club and cost \$400.00 to join; one lot was included in the membership fee: subsequent lots could be purchased, but not to exceed four. Membership was largely drawn from the business and professional community of New York. The object of the club was clearly outlined in the constitution: "To buy, improve, and apportion land among its members; to provide suitable club buildings, water, lighting, and sewerage systems, to promote social intercourse among its members, and to encourage aquatic and athletic sports." The proposed configuration of club lands and location for a communal building can be seen in a historic map (plan 3).

From the beginning architecture played an important role at the club. There were 50 charter members, many of whom were architects or engineers: for example, F.A. Wright, C.A. Rich, F.E. Waller, F.L. Ellingwood, J.H. Duncan, C.H. Humphreys, E. Machado, and F.P. Hill. Furthermore, the first Board of Governors had four architects and two civil engineers on it. The architect F.A. Wright became an early and active Secretary for the club. Their presence would affect the stylistic development of the club. As mentioned in the constitution, the club planned to build community buildings. Designs for these buildings were collected and published in a promotional booklet of 1895: they included a gatehouse by C.H. Humphreys, a boathouse and water station by the Constable Bros., stables and a bowling/billiard house by Rossiter & Wright, and a clubhouse by Lamb & Rich. It was certainly an impressive group of buildings; unfortunately, only the Colonial Revival clubhouse made it off the paper.

The clubhouse was started in the summer of 1896 and finished June 15, 1897. Lamb & Rich, a New York firm, had already played an important part in the development of New Jersey suburbs (for example at Short Hills in the late '70's) and Rich was also a resident at Water Witch. A register from the clubhouse dated from its opening in July of 1897 suggests that the clubhouse functioned as a community center for the Water Witch Club: in addition to maintaining any guests of the club, many of the residents themselves signed in for meals, get-togethers, and social events (C. Rich and L. Ford for example).

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However, in September of 1902 a committee was appointed to investigate the feasibility of a new club house; a competition was held and six sets of plans were submitted. The competition advisor was E.L. Tilton of the firm Boring & Tilton. The committee chose a plan submitted by F.P. Hill of Hill and Stout. Hill was also a resident of Water Witch. The committee resolved to move the existing clubhouse from its site and fit it up for rent as a cottage; the new clubhouse was not to exceed 15 bedrooms plus bathrooms, assembly room, dining room, kitchen, servants rooms, etc. All bedrooms were to be above the first floor. Then, for reasons not recorded, there was some delay and nothing further was done.

In June of 1904 first mention is made of the casino: a committee was appointed to look into raising funds to build "a Casino and a small lodge." In September of 1904 the Board again recommended that the present clubhouse be moved or, that it be turned and annexed to the new Casino. On September 26, 1904 it was resolved to move the clubhouse to the Woodward lots and to build a casino of five bedrooms. This was approved on November 25, 1904.

An architect was instructed to prepare working plans on March 30 of 1905 but it is not clear who the architect was or even if the plans were based on the 1902 competition designs. A flyer for a stockholders' meeting on April 19, 1905 mentions a proposal to raise \$17,000.00 from members, part of which would pay for the casino and removal of the clubhouse. By June of 1905 \$8660.00 worth of materials had been purchased and the contracts for construction closed. The minutes of Sept. 26, 1905 mention a plan with five bedrooms.

The casino at Water Witch is closest to Short Hills in plan (both are rectangular with a stage at one end) (plan 1); there is even some possibility that Short Hills' casino would have been known at Water Witch. As mentioned, Lamb & Rich, the architects of the clubhouse at Water Witch, were very active in the development of the Short Hills community. Thus they would have been familiar with the Stanford White casino. As a resident, Rich could have suggested something similar for his own small community. In elevation the casino does not have the energy of White's but it nevertheless exhibits a competent hand.

As mentioned in the introduction, the interior of the casino is a fine example of the Craftsman style. The Craftsman style had its origins in the British Arts & Crafts Movement; this movement attempted to develop a native/national architecture that drew from the vernacular buildings of the English countryside. The exposed A-frame beams, inglenook, and minstrel's gallery of the casino are typical characteristics of this movement and give

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it an air of rusticity; it recalls the English manor halls recreated by British architects such as R.N. Shaw. Of particular note in the Assembly Room are the small lanterns mounted between the French doors and the hanging chandelier; the wrought-iron frame and the opalescent glass resemble models provided by Gustav Stickley in his Craftsman magazine. Stickley wrote that, "...it is of the utmost importance that the metal accessories should be of a character that fits into the picture." According to Stickley, highly polished trim was out of place in a Craftsman interior: "articles of wrought iron in plain rugged designs and possessing the same structural and simple quality as the furniture..." was preferable.(2) It is unlikely that the architects at the Water Witch Club were unfamiliar with Stickley's proscriptions; the lanterns are a further example of the architectural interest at the casino.

In March of 1911, the casino received its only major alterations. After the Lamb & Rich clubhouse was destroyed by fire, plans were made to attach a new clubhouse to the casino. This addition would be designed by Mr. Lyman Ford and closely follow the stylistic characteristics of the casino. By Sept. 29, 1911 Ford's plans were finally accepted and by June 1, 1912 the clubhouse addition was ready for guests. The addition of the clubhouse cemented the position of the casino as the community center.

The casino was a great success. Although community owned, it was run by a committee of five members--with each member overseeing the casino activities for a portion of the summer. The committee would hire someone to organize events for the club which ranged from cards, billiards, and recitals to vaudeville, dancing, music, and plays. Thursday evenings were reserved for cards and games. Many of the old programs and invitations still remain in the club's files. Members were charged admission for these events and the receipts were used for running expenses. However, the coming of the Great Depression in the 1930's changed the social life of the club members. The cost of theatrical productions, and the increasing popularity of movies, led to a decline in use of the casino. Members, unable to maintain two residences, sold their townhouses and winterized their summer residences. The club became a year-round community with less of a recreational emphasis. The club presently uses the casino for four club events per year; each member has a key and may use the billiard room and tennis court at any time. Recently, the club has begun to rent the building out to private parties.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Water Witch Club Casino  
Highlands Borough  
Monmouth County, NJ

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(1) Richard Guy Wilson, "From Informality to Pomposity: The Resort Casino in the Later Nineteenth Century." p. 111.

(2) Gustav Stickley, The Best of Craftsman Homes. pp. 198-99.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetWater Witch Club Casino  
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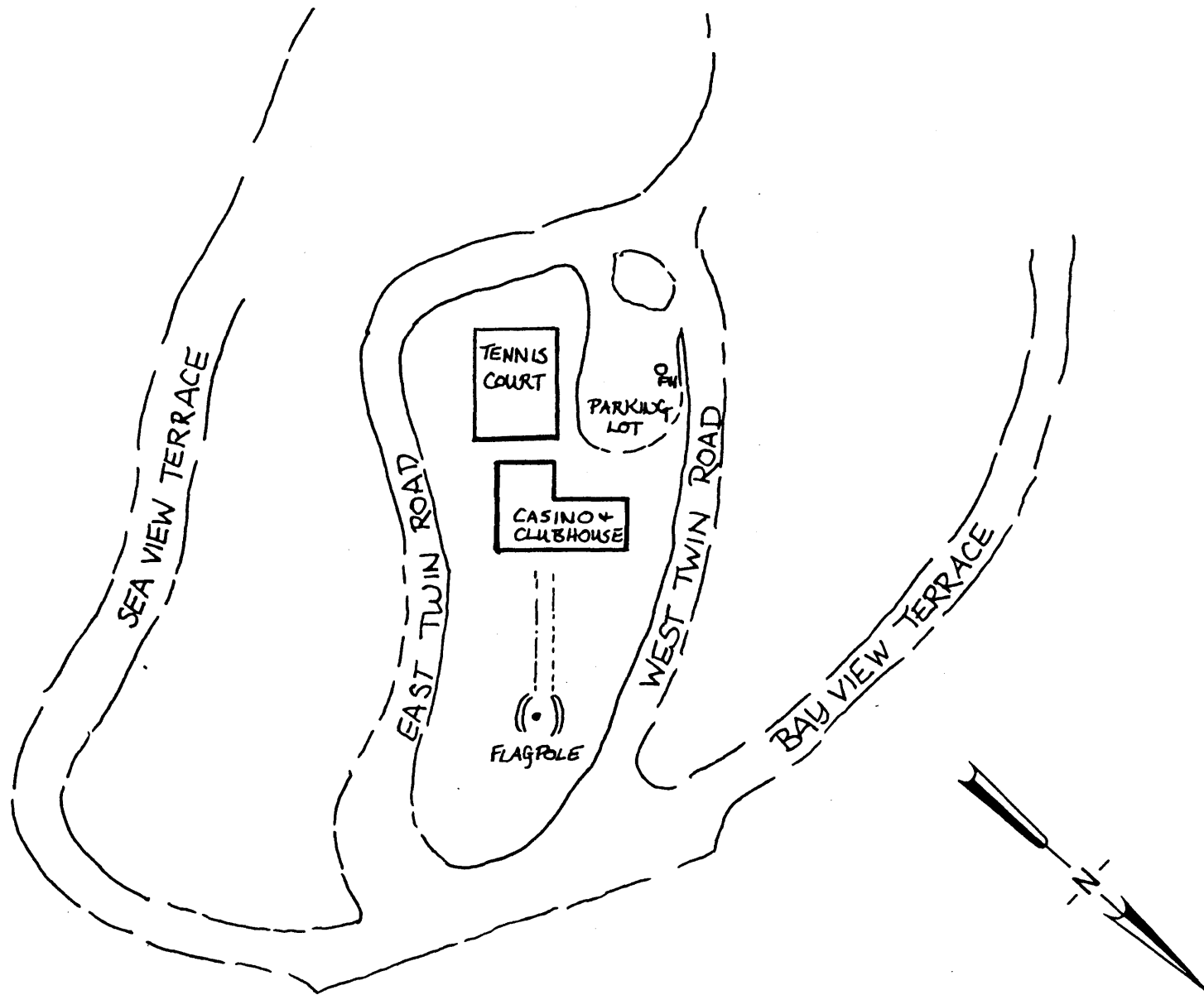
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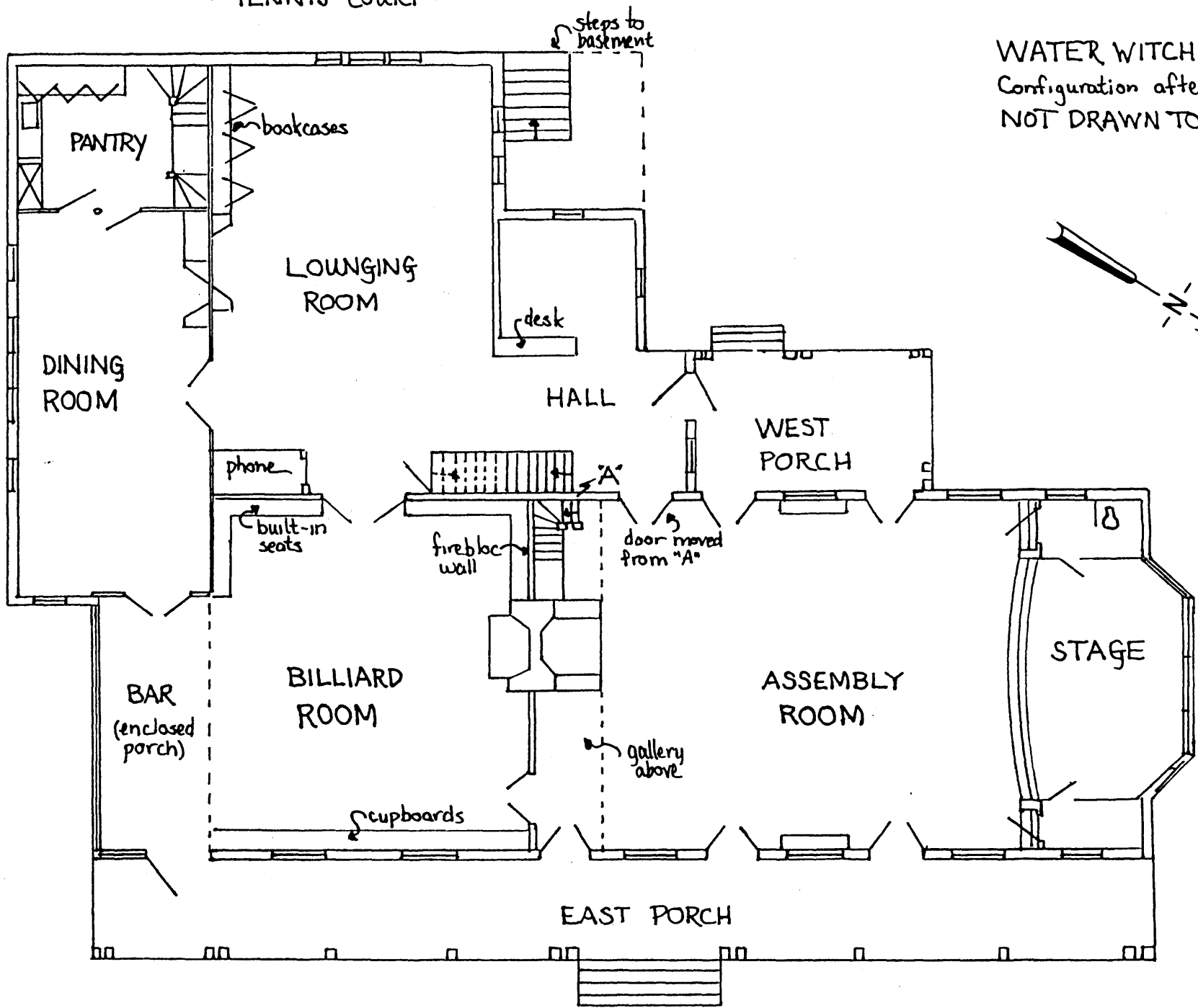
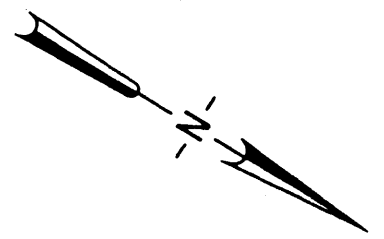
Plan 2. Site Plan

Water Witch Club Casino  
Highlands Borough  
Monmouth County, NJ

Prepared by  
Marie Frank, 1989

- TENNIS COURT -

WATER WITCH CLUB CASINO  
Configuration after 1911  
NOT DRAWN TO SCALE



Water Witch Club Casino  
Highlands Borough  
Monmouth County, NJ

Plan 1.

PREPARED BY:  
MARIE FRANK, 1989



Map  
of Lands of  
**WATER WITCH CLUB.**  
Highlands of Navesink,  
Morris County, New Jersey  
Made by  
**F. ADUNHAM, C.E.**  
Nov 1883

Scale - 1 in. = 50 ft.

Distances measured straight between  
points and not along curves

Hartshorne Eaton

Plan 3. Historic Map