

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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OCT 14 1992

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Athletic Park Band Shell

other names/site number Plainview Band Shell; (NeHBS PC06-010)

2. Location

street & number Northwest Corner Harper & Main not for publication [NA]

city or town Plainview vicinity [NA]

state Nebraska code NE county Pierce code 139 zip code 68769

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. ( ) See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Lawrence Sommer  
Signature of certifying official

10/8/92  
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society  
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 certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

Gregory S. Laporte  
Entered in the National Register 11/2/92

for \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Plainview Band Shell  
Name of Property

Pierce County, Nebraska  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
10		objects
11	1	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

NA

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/music facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Recreation and Culture/music facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement/Art Deco  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation Concrete  
walls Concrete  
roof Concrete  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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.)

Property is:

- 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1939-1942

Significant Dates

1942

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Watson, Elbert B.

Plainview Band Shell  
Name of Property

Pierce County, Nebraska  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property less than one

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	599420	4689600	3.			
2.				4.			

[ ] 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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Carol Ahlgren, Architectural Historian  
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date July, 1992  
street & number 1500 R Street telephone (402) 471-4773  
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

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**Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name City of Plainview  
street & number Box 757 telephone (402) 582-4928  
city or town Plainview state NE zip code 68769

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).  
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Plainview Band Shell  
Name of Property

Pierce County, Nebraska  
County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Description

The Plainview Band Shell complex is located near the northwest corner of a city park in Plainview, a small town in northeastern Nebraska. Constructed between 1939 and 1942 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the concrete band shell and its related features are excellent examples of the moderne architectural style used for public buildings and structures constructed by the WPA and other New Deal public works programs. The nomination consists of one contributing building: the band shell, and 10 contributing objects: 5 concrete benches; 1 concrete drinking fountain; and 4 concrete light posts. The nominated area measures less than one acre and is partially surrounded by original landscaping consisting of rows of Scotch pines and elm trees. The area contains a small (8 x 16 feet), non-contributing rest room building (c. 1960). A large concrete basketball court is located between the band shell, fountain, and benches, surrounded by basketball hoops and lights; these features, however, do not detract from the overall architectural and historic integrity.

The Plainview Band Shell, fountain, benches, and light posts are located near the southeast corner of Harper and Main streets in Plainview, a small northeastern Nebraska town (1990 population: 1,333). Designed by Norfolk, Nebraska architect Elbert B. Watson, the band shell, benches, fountain, and light posts were constructed between 1939 and 1942 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. When the band shell was constructed in the late 1930's and early '40's, it was part of a large, four block area known as Athletic Park which was later divided.

Currently, the band shell is located in a 3.26 acre area known as Band Shell Park. Due to later construction and alterations within this area, including playground equipment and modern shelters, the present nomination is limited to an area of less than one acre at the extreme northwest corner of Band Shell Park near the intersection of Harper and Main streets. The band shell is located near the northwest corner of this area and its main facade faces to the southeast. A 205 x 260 foot concrete basket ball court extends 30 yards south of the main facade of the band shell; nine yards south of the court are five cast concrete benches which face the band shell. Less than 10 feet south of the benches is a covered, cast concrete drinking fountain.

The area is accessed by a gravel road which enters on the west edge (Main Street). The area is bordered on the north and west by symmetrical rows of Scotch pines and elm trees, part of the original WPA landscaping. An undetermined number of cast concrete benches were originally located in rows parallel to the east, south and west sides of the band shell. Through time most of these benches deteriorated or were vandalized; today only five remain.

The main features within the nominated area are described as follows:

1. Band shell (Photos 1, 2, 3, and 4). The moderne style round arched, half-domed band shell features cast concrete construction, a raised stage, integral storage and dressing rooms. The building measures approximately 50 by 16 feet; the semi-circular round arch is approximately 33 feet in diameter. A concrete platform extends the entire length of the main (southeast) facade in front of the shell; an additional tier of three steps extends 3/4 the length of the platform. The main facade of the band shell is flanked by concrete piers which extend above the round arch; these piers feature moderne style fluting.

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Plainview Band Shell  
Name of Property

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**Description (continued)**

The rear (northwest) facade of the band shell has a 50 by 16 foot rectangular projection which contains men's and women's dressing rooms, rest rooms, and storage areas. The projection is accessed by a rounded doorway located in the center of the band shell which opens into a 4 foot wide hallway that extends along the north wall, and by exterior doors at the northwest and northeast corners of the building. Each side of the hallway has a storage area, dressing room, and steps which descend to the exterior doors and rest rooms.

2. Benches (Photos 1, 3, and 5). Five cast concrete benches are located 39 yards south of the main facade of the band shell. Each bench is approximately 8 feet long and 3 feet tall with a flared concrete base and narrow arm rests.

3. Drinking Fountain (Photos 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7). A covered drinking fountain constructed of cast concrete with a brick base is located less than 12 feet south of the benches. The drinking fountain, 6 feet square and approximately 9 feet in height, features Gothic arched openings on all four sides and fluted, corner piers similar to the band shell.

4. Light Posts (Photo 1). Four cast concrete light posts are symmetrically located 6 1/2 feet from the northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast edges of the concrete basketball court. The light posts, approximately 12 feet in height, feature glass globes and flared concrete bases.

The concrete basketball court located between the band shell, fountain, and benches is a later alteration to the site. The court, however, is likely an extension of the band shell's original "asphalt paving" cited in newspaper accounts (Plainview News: June 24, 1942). Basket ball hoops, a flagpole, modern lights, and a wooden birdhouse on a metal pole are located to the east, west, and southeast of the court, but are not sufficient scale, or size, to detract from the overall integrity of the nominated area. The non-contributing (c. 1960) rest room building is located at the southwest edge of the nominated area.

**Statement of Significance**

The Plainview Band Shell, fountain, benches, and light posts are being nominated to the National Register at the state level of significance under Criterion A for their association with the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and under Criterion C as excellent examples of cast concrete construction executed in the moderne style. The period of significance, 1939-1942, includes the year of initial construction through the completion of the band shell and its associated structure and objects.

The Plainview Band Shell, fountain, lights, and benches, were constructed between 1939 and 1942 through labor and funds made possible by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Established during the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the WPA was the most extensive and far-reaching of several nationwide work relief programs designed to alleviate the unemployment of the Great Depression. Like its contemporaneous work programs the WPA was developed to provide employment in public works that would benefit society as a whole. Projects included art, music, and literature as well as roads, dams, bridges, schools, post offices, and courthouses.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Plainview Band Shell

Name of Property

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

As noted in Phoebe Cutler's The Public Landscape of the New Deal (1985), a far-reaching legacy of the WPA is found in the thousands of parks and recreational facilities constructed in cities and towns throughout the nation. The Plainview Band Shell is a typical example of the intentions and results of the WPA. Designed to accommodate a variety of community uses such as plays, concerts, and speeches, construction of the band shell provided employment for as many as 20 WPA workers for several years. Since its completion in 1942, the band shell continues to serve as a recreational and cultural facility for the residents of Plainview and the surrounding area.

In 1935, the area that would become Athletic Park was purchased by the city of Plainview from a local resident. A year later it was leveled and graded by Works Progress Administration (WPA) labor. At the beginning of 1938, extensive plans for the park were announced in the Plainview News (Jan. 19, 1938). New developments would include construction of a grandstand with seating for approximately 475 people; tennis courts, baseball diamond improvements, picnic and playground areas, horseshoe pits, tennis courts, and landscaping. The plans also cited a band shell with raised platform, dressing rooms and storage space.

In March and June of 1938, Norfolk, Nebraska architect Elbert B. Watson received payment from WPA funds for his band shell plans. Due to other WPA park developments occurring in the park at the time, construction of the band shell was gradual. According to the Norfolk Daily News (July 17, 1941), the project was initiated in June, 1939; two years later, in July, 1941, the building was not yet completed because of intervening park projects. The newspaper noted that 15 to 20 men had been employed almost exclusively on the band shell for several months and would soon finish.

The history of the Plainview Band Shell is indicative of the gradual end of the WPA and the nation's increasing involvement in World War II. According to available newspaper accounts and historical sources, although the band shell was a substantial new building for a community the size of Plainview, it was never officially dedicated. In the summer of 1942, the paving in front of the shell was completed but the facility had already been used for concerts. An opening dance was held in July 1942; it was also a "Victory rally." A month later in August, 1942, the American Legion invited all Pierce County inductees to an evening's entertainment prior to their departure for military service. (Plainview News, July 29, 1942; Aug. 5, 1942).

The Plainview Band Shell is significant on the state-wide level for its association with the WPA and as an excellent and well-preserved example of cast concrete construction executed in the moderne style. To date, the on-going Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) has identified four comparable band shells; two are already listed as part of courthouse square nominations (JO07-001; SW09-196). The others are located in Grant and Auburn, county-seats in southwestern and southeastern Nebraska, respectively (PK04-023; NH01-069). Both the Grant and Auburn band shells are c. 1936 features within larger WPA parks. Constructed of brick and concrete, and stone and concrete, these buildings do not feature the distinctive cast concrete construction or moderne architectural style of the Plainview Band Shell.

### Bibliography

Cutler, Phoebe. The Public Landscape of the New Deal. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

The Norfolk Daily News. July 17, 1941.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Plainview Band Shell  
Name of Property

Pierce County, Nebraska  
County and State

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**Bibliography (continued)**

The Pierce County Call. Jan. 9, 1936.

The Plainview News. Jan. 19, 1938; June-July 1938; March 22, 1939; June-August, 1942.

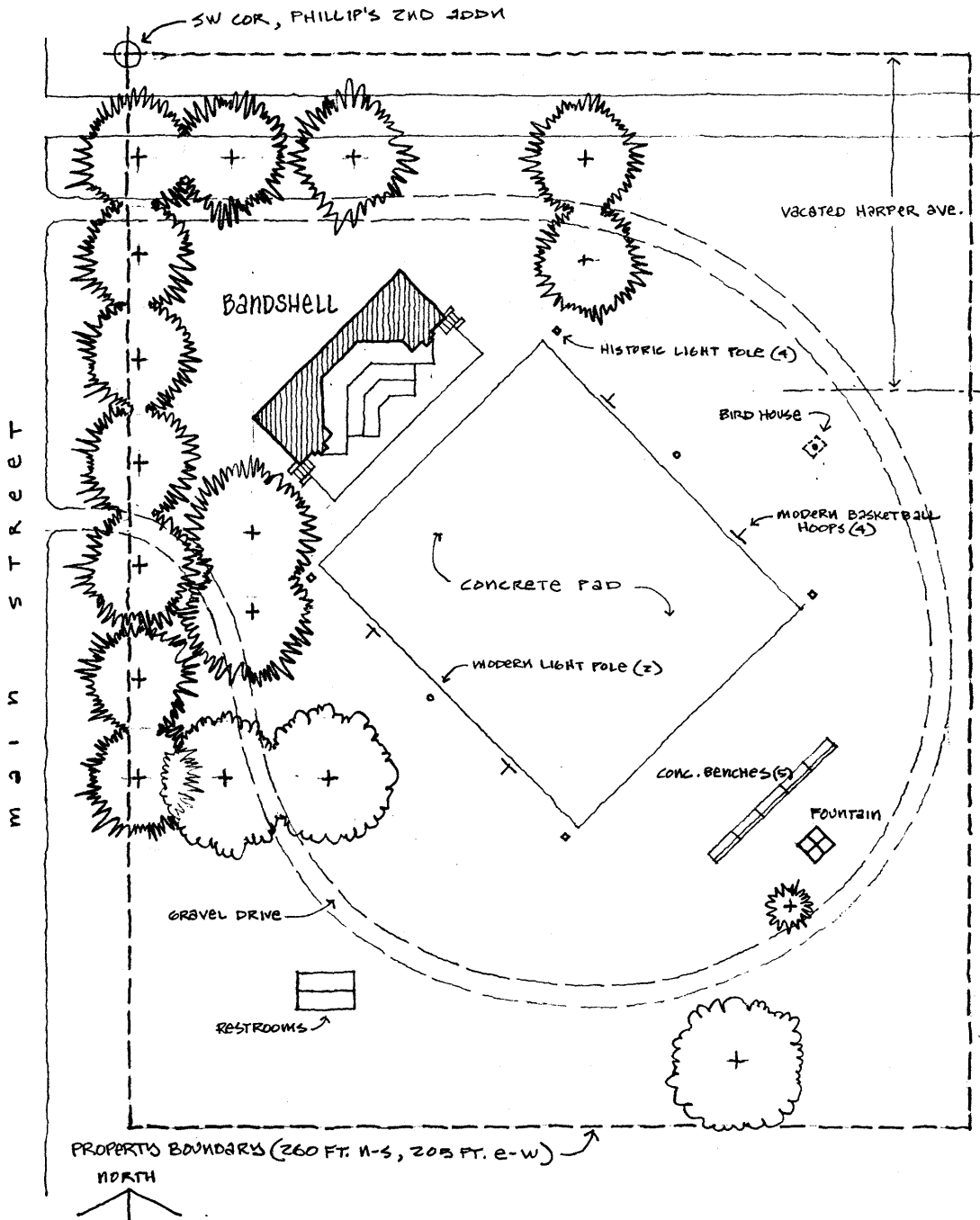
**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated area is described as follows: a tract of land located in the southwest quarter of Section 33, Township 28 North, Range 4 West of the 6th Principal Meridian in Pierce County, Nebraska, particularly described as follows: commencing at the southwest corner of Block 6, Philip's 2nd Addition to the City of Plainview, then commencing south 260 feet along a line parallel to Main Street, then due east 205 feet, then due north 260 feet, then due west a distance of 205 feet to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary contains the tract of land which has historically been associated with the band shell, fountain, light posts, and benches.

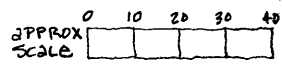


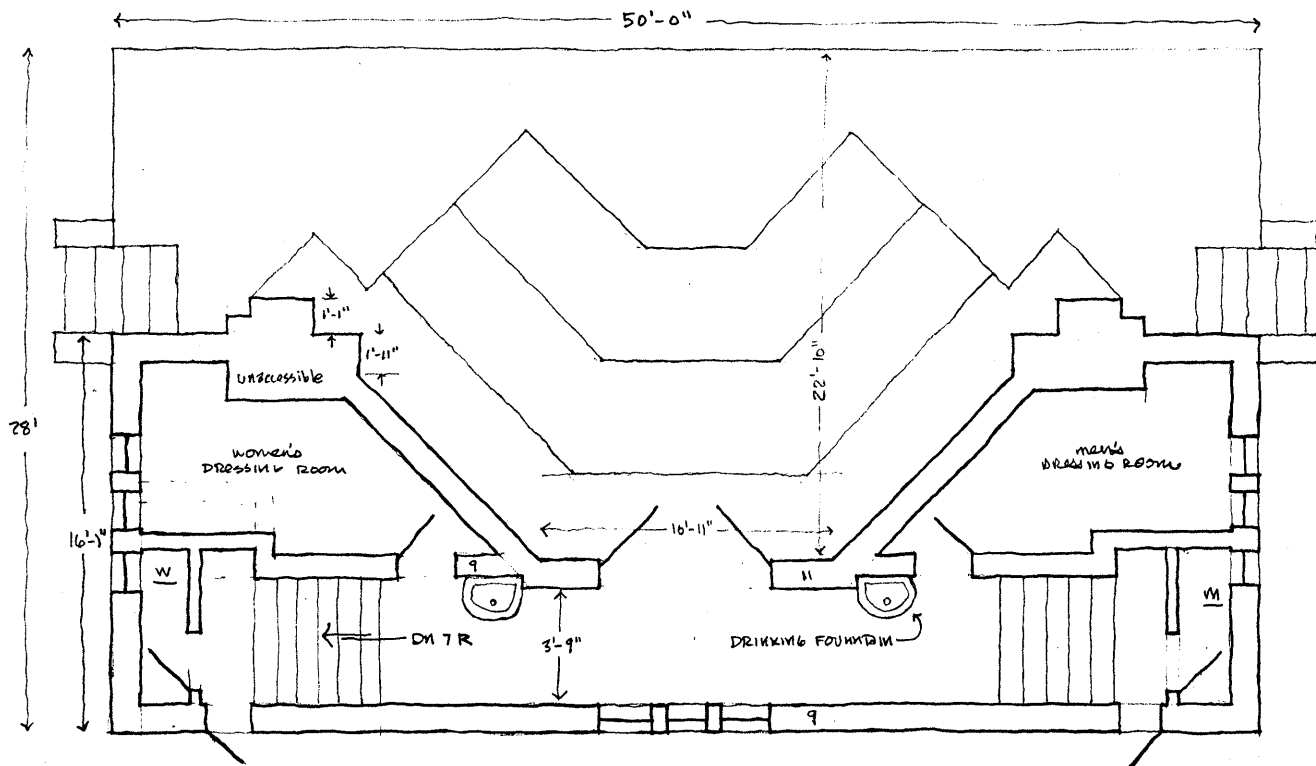


PCOG-010

PLAINVIEW BANDSHELL COMPLEX  
 PLAINVIEW, PIERCE COUNTY, NEBRASKA

D. MURPHY FROM 8 JUL 92 FIELDNOTES  
 NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



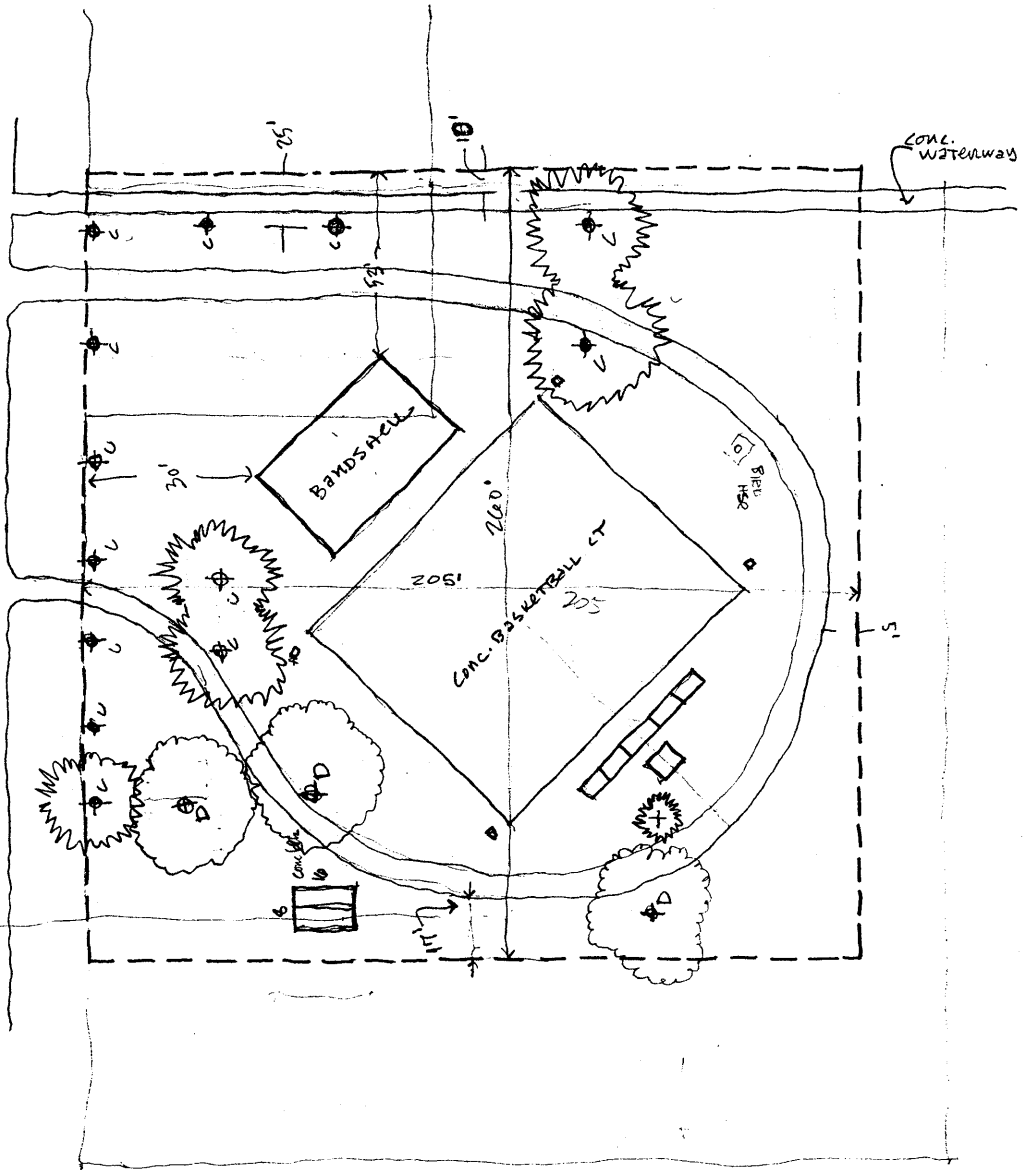


PC06-10

PLAINVIEW WPA BANDSHELL

8 JUL 92 -- D. MURPHY, C. BILGREN, G. MILLER





PROB-10

8 JUL 92

D. MURPHY, C. DALGREN, C. MILLER