

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 30 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Edgewater Beach Cottages
other names/site number Stovewood Cottages

2. Location

street & number 321 Park Lake Blvd. not for publication N/A
city, town Detroit Lakes vicinity N/A
state Minnesota code MN county Becker code 005 zip code 56501

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>2</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>2</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<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.

Nina M. Archabal 1/23/89
Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal Date
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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. Beth Boland 3/15/89
 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 the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/camp

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)NO STYLE

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/sandstonewalls WOOD/stovewood

roof ASPHALTother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Edgewater Beach Cottages consist of two buildings that were part of a cluster of eight rental cabins and a chateau which originated as the Edgewater Beach Resort Hotel and Cottages. Located on the north shore of Detroit Lake, the structures are built using a rare type of construction popularly known as "stovewood" in which walls are made from short, fireplace-length logs piled like a stack of firewood in concrete. This nomination includes only two of the original eight Edgewater Beach Cottages because the remaining six buildings have undergone extensive remodeling and no longer retain their historic architectural integrity. The chateau and some of the original grounds have been replaced by a series of condominiums.

Conventional American log construction utilizes round and hewn logs laid horizontally, joined at the ends by a variety of interlocking notching techniques. Stovewood construction is significantly different "in that walls were made from logs cut into short uniform sections and stacked perpendicular to the length of the wall," according to University of Wisconsin Professor William Tishler, an expert on stovewood buildings. He points out that "in many instances, the log units were split lengthwise to halve or quarter them into smaller sections. The pieces were then laid up in a bed of wet lime mortar, which encased each chunk of wood, but left the cut ends exposed." The reasons for using such an unusual type of construction are varied. First, stovewood does not require massive amounts of high grade, straight timber as in traditional log buildings. Further, drying timber to prevent warping was not a factor in stovewood, thereby speeding the time required for lesser-skilled builders to erect a building. Second, stovewood is an energy efficient building material which effectively retains heat in winter and remains cool in summer. Third, because stovewood comes from an abundant and readily-available source, it is less expensive to use than other materials. Tishler reports that stovewood has been associated with the economic downfall of the 1930s by elderly residents of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, who referred to stovewood construction as "Depression building."

While the origin of stovewood construction is unknown, it has been documented in Sweden, Norway and Czechoslovakia. In North America, examples of stovewood are plentiful in southern Quebec; although perhaps the largest concentration of buildings in the U.S. can be found in northeastern Wisconsin. Many stovewood structures including barns and houses also have been located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, but their number and distribution is not known. One example has been found in Decorah, Iowa. In Minnesota, two rural stovewood buildings have been observed, and a company originated by Louis Butler called Formless Concrete Construction specializing in stovewood construction reportedly built several in the St. Paul area, but neither their existence nor location can be verified.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Edgewater Beach Cottages, Detroit Lakes, Becker Co., MN

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In Detroit Lakes, the first five Edgewater Beach Cottages were built in 1937 by the owner, Frederick Wright, with assistance from a local carpenter named George Jewell and several other friends. They completed the remaining three cottages a year later. Structurally, the buildings are unusual because the stovewood walls were built without any supporting framework. The first step in the construction process was to lay a concrete floor the size of each building, add a concrete area for the screened porch (with which each cottage was equipped), and build the stone foundation. Next, tamarack trees were cut into 10" lengths, dipped in a preservative, and laid in concrete with barbed wire interwoven between the stack of logs and mortar. The reason for adding barbed wire to the wall is unknown, although it may have been thought to increase the wall's strength and stability. The problem of joining at right angles the exterior stovewood walls was solved by Wright and Jewell by mitering short sections of log and placing them together at each corner for the full wall height. Finally, window frames were added in the appropriate locations using mortise and tenon joints and then the roofing system was built.

Apart from the solidly-constructed stovewood walls, a high degree of skill and craftsmanship is evident in the construction and finish work of the Edgewater Beach Cottages. Window and door frames exhibit tightly-fitting multiple miter and mortise and tenon joints; closet doors and cabinets are double thickness with extra bracing. Large, attractive masonry fireplaces have heat ventilators; knotty pine paneling abutting the fireplace is cut to precisely follow the contour of each stone. On the exterior, large overhanging eaves protect the walls from moisture. Eave brackets and the porch framework are built with false mortise and tenon joints exhibiting wooden pegs where beams are jointed.

Cottage 1A-1B, as it was originally known, is a one-story building with intersecting gables covered by asphalt shingles. It was built as one building but could be rented as two separate units connected by a screened porch. 1A had a bedroom, living room with fireplace and a bathroom, while 1B, with its gable to the lake, had a bedroom and bathroom. The building is used as a single family dwelling today. The lakeside facade has two screened porches, one attached to the gable end of 1B. Four six-light casement windows in a row light the west gable end, which has board and batten siding from the eaves to the ridge, and overhanging, bracketed eaves. The north wall is pierced by a series of casement and newer aluminum windows of identical size. Three windows light the east wall.

Cottage 3 is a rectangular-shaped symmetrical, one-story building with an asphalt-shingled gable roof. It has a fully screened porch attached to the west gable end. Fenestration is nearly the same on the north and south walls: there are four casement windows in a row and a pair of newer sliding glass windows in the original frame. The south wall also has a small casement in the center and the rear (east) gable has a pair of newer sliding glass windows in the original opening. Inside there is a living room with fireplace, bedroom and bathroom.

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1937-1939

Significant Dates

1937

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wright, Frederick, architect & builder
Jewell, George, builder

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

Within the statewide historic context "Northern Minnesota Resort Industry," the Edgewater Beach Cottages are significant as excellent examples of seasonal tourist cabins intended for summer recreation use, and for their association with post-Depression development of tourism in Detroit Lakes. The Edgewater Cottages gain additional significance because they embody the distinctive characteristics of a scarce method of construction known as stovewood, a technique in which walls are built using short lengths of logs placed in a pile on a bed of concrete. The known use of pre-World War II stovewood construction is limited to a highly concentrated area of the Upper Midwest including northeastern Wisconsin, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. Due to the paucity of this distinctive vernacular building type and the fact that nearly all stovewood buildings are found in remote areas, identification and recognition are vital to their continued survival.

Detroit Lakes came to be known for its outstanding natural features and aesthetic qualities soon after settlement in 1871. The Northern Pacific Railroad greatly contributed to the development and growth of Detroit Lakes and helped promote the city's reputation as the heart of the "Park Region." With nearly 400 lakes, most of which are located in southern Becker County, it was inevitable that Detroit Lakes would prosper under tourism. The city is ideally situated on the north side of 3,118-acre Detroit Lake (third largest in the county), with Lakes Melissa, Sallie and Cormorant nearby. Over a thirty year period between 1889-1919 transportation to resorts and homes on these lakes was provided by several steamboat companies which navigated through a series of canals, dams and locks. As commercial and residential growth edged south toward Detroit Lake the north shore became increasingly popular for recreation. By the early 1900s West Lake Shore Drive, which wound around to the north side of the lake until merging with Washington Avenue, had attracted residents for its picturesque, tree-lined route. The road is inviting today for its public beach area, although the opposite side is crowded with motels. East of Washington Avenue along the north shore of Detroit Lake the city set aside land for a public park, and in ca.1915 built a large beachhouse.

By 1922 there were about 12 million cars traveling America's roads, and autocamping was a fashionable pastime. Land on which the Edgewater Beach Resort and Cottages was eventually built had limited road access and was privately owned. In 1933 Frederick

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Continuation Sheet**

Edgewater Beach Cottages, Detroit Lakes, Becker Co., MN

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and Marie Wright purchased lake frontage on which to build a family-oriented resort. Three years later they opened a two-story rustic-styled chateau (no longer extant) that had a recreation room and four bedrooms. Shuffleboard courts and a playground complimented the main building. By the Fall of 1937 they had their first five stovewood cottages completed with steam heat provided by the chateau. Cabins 1A-1B were closest to the lake; Cabin 2 had two bedrooms, a living room with fireplace, and bathroom; Cabins 4-5 were built together but not used as one unit; each had one bedroom and a bath; Cabins 6-7 were connected through a porch, 6 had a large living room, one bedroom and a bathroom, 7 was smaller and contained just a bedroom and bath. In 1938 Cabins 8-9, 10-11 and 12-14 were constructed. Considered an unlucky number, 13 was not used. Each building consisted of two one-bedroom, one-bath units under the same roof.

The reason Wright chose to use stovewood for his cottages is not known. Considering the date of construction it is possible that he or the carpenter Jewell had read about or seen (in person or photographs) stovewood elsewhere. Since the country was still recovering from the Great Depression, perhaps cost influenced his choice of building material. Mrs. Wright indicated in an interview that trees for the buildings were felled just northeast of Detroit Lakes and transported to the construction site by her husband and others. Regardless of their provenance, the Edgewater Beach Cottages represent an unusual and rare construction method. These are the only two known stovewood buildings intact in Minnesota. In classic folk form, Wright and Jewell did not draft architectural plans nor prepare drawings from which to erect the stovewood cabins. Yet the buildings are solidly constructed and exhibit architect-designed, professionally-built characteristics from tight mitered joints to the practical solution of joining at right angles the exterior walls.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Interview with Mrs. Marie Wright, 30 May 1987.

Perrin, Richard W.E. The Architecture of Wisconsin. Madison, WI.: The State Historical Society, 1967.

Tishler, William H. "Stovewood Architecture," Landscape 23/3 (1979): 28-31.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one

UTM References

A

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2	8	3	2	1	5
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5	1	8	7	1	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The boundary of Cottage 1A-1B is a roughly square parcel measuring 40 x 45 feet, whose northwest corner is ten feet directly northwest of the northwest corner of the foundation of Cottage 1A-1B and whose southeast corner is ten feet directly southeast of the southeast corner of the foundation of Cottage 1A-1B. The boundary of Cottage 3 is a rectangular parcel measuring 30x60 feet, whose northwest corner is ten feet directly northwest of the northwest corner of the foundation of Cottage 3 and whose southeast corner is ten feet directly southeast of the southeast corner of See continuation sheet Cottage 3.

Boundary Justification

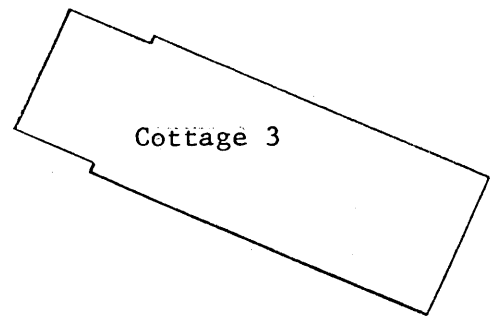
The boundary includes only those cottages that have historically been part of the Edgewater Beach Resort and that maintain historic integrity. The remaining six cottages that were originally part of the resort property have been excluded because they have lost their historic integrity due to alterations.

See continuation sheet

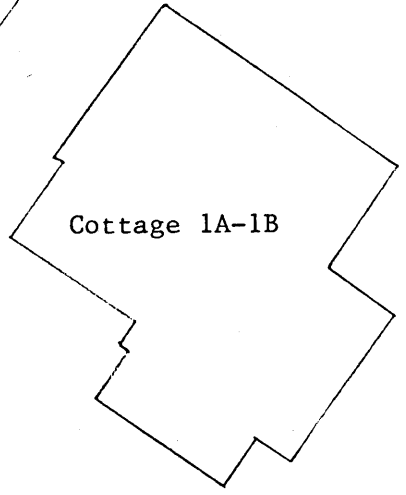
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Koop/Historic Preservation Consultant
organization N/A date July 1987
street & number 615 Jackson St., NE telephone 612-623-8356
city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55413

Edgewater Beach Cottages, Detroit Lakes
Becker County, MN
Scale: 1" = 20 feet



Parking Lot



Parking Lot



Detroit Lake

