

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 6 1986

date entered

APR 3 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Riviera

and/or common - (N.A.)

2. Location

street & number 810 Wrigley Drive not for publication

city, town Lake Geneva vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Walworth code 127

3. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N.A.	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Lake Geneva

street & number 626 Geneva Street

city, town Lake Geneva vicinity of state Wisconsin 53147

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Walworth County Courthouse

street & number - - -

city, town Elkhorn state Wisconsin 53121

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places
title Geneva Lake Intensive Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Riviera is a recently restored Italian Renaissance Period Revival building distinctively sited on a jut of filled-in land on Geneva Lake, one block from the city of Lake Geneva's commercial district. The two story brick structure has a rectangular plan, 129 by 103 feet, with square one-and-a-half story corner towers set at 45 degree angles to the main composition. The multi-level, hipped ceramic tile roof includes a central section which rises out of the low-pitched slope of the main roof mass. Hipped roofs cap the corner towers.

Each facade is symmetrical. On the Wrigley Avenue, or north, facade, wide integral monumental stairways lead to central, arched main entry doors on the second level open balcony. A colonnade which flanks the entry is continued throughout the second story, and fronts continuous casement windows, which vary. Most are composed entirely of small panes; others have just a narrow strip of small panes at the top and bottom. The ground level on Wrigley Avenue includes a central wide, segmental arch which opens into a concourse through to the building's lake side. This south facade ground story is composed of five segmental arches which lead to the interior. The lakeside second story opens onto a balcony enclosed by a brick wall. The east and west first story exteriors are similar, with three central doorways and half windows interspersed with period light fixtures in the upper level. Throughout the exterior, brickwork in darker tones defines and outlines openings and edges. Wood detail is confined to door panels and window frames. Overall, horizontal lines characteristic of the Italian Renaissance Period Revival style are emphasized.

The interior floor plans of the building vary greatly. The first floor is devoted to small tourist shops, public changing rooms for beach users, and restrooms. The lakeside facade includes a ticket office for the tour boats, docked next to the building. The second floor is an open hall with a central parquet dance floor measuring 42 by 68 feet. A 15 foot wide, slightly raised promenade encircles the colannaded dance floor. The arched ceiling rises 26 feet above the floor at its center. The walls and ceiling are of glazed white tile. The northeast and northwest towers include restrooms. Kitchens and bar facilities are planned for the remaining tower space on the second story.

The Riviera is skirted on Wrigley Drive by a simply landscaped grassy area crisscrossed by sidewalks. A colorful focal point in this area is the round flower bed on axis with the central arch and concourse. A sea wall, storage shed and short boat piers define the east edge of the area. To the west is the Water Safety Patrol building and beyond, the public beach. Three generously proportioned wood-constructed piers with boat docking facilities extend from the Riviera over the lake. (See plan)

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 checked="" 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) Tourism / Recreation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1932-33 (construction) **Builder/Architect** Architect: James Roy Allen¹

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

A large-scale construction project initiated with public funding during the depths of the Depression, the Riviera's architectural significance relies chiefly on its monumentality and symbolic role in the community. It is also significant in the area of tourism/recreation having been built to accommodate large excursion and mail delivery boats, as well as small rental and privately owned boats.

Architecture

The lakeside site and classic style of the Riviera are appropriate for a building that functions as marina, tourist facility, and mixed-use public meeting hall. The people of Lake Geneva felt strongly enough about the need for a new recreational facility that in January 1932 an \$85,000 bond issue was passed by a margin of three to one, despite the Depression. The site for the Riviera was selected by a citizen's committee appointed immediately after the bond issue had passed. This location at the foot of Broad Street in the center of Geneva Bay had been the site of boat piers since the 1870s.² The Riviera construction was the culmination of a long history of lakeshore improvements in this area. In 1920, city planner Arthur J. Sweet had suggested expanding the beach along Elm Park (west of the Riviera) by constructing an offshore rubble mound which would hold soil and gradually build up a wider lakeshore.³ A similar method, on a larger scale, was used to create the land on which the Riviera was constructed.⁴ An interesting side effect of this "created" land, developed after the city was surveyed, and city-owned thus tax-exempt, is that there is no official legal description for the property on which the Riviera sits.⁵ Because of the potential instability of this man-made peninsula, the Riviera was constructed on 280 piles driven into the bedrock by the local construction firm of Reinert and Malsch. The job was accomplished with remarkable speed: the contract was let on March 29, the first pile driven April 4, and the first brick laid in the building proper on May 27. Working twelve-hour days, the crews managed to have the building ready for an end of the season dance September 1, 1932. The final cost of the building was just \$55,000, well below the estimate. By 1980, parts of the building had deteriorated to the point that major restoration was necessary. Again, the city voted to finance the project, and a citizen's committee was appointed to determine the best future use for the facility. Local architect Daniel Curran was selected for the restoration, which was done with great sensitivity and concern for authenticity. The final result is not only a multi-functional center, but also a local landmark and monument to community cooperation and commitment.

The Riviera was designed by James Roy Allen, a Chicago architect who lived in Lake Geneva for several decades. (No biographical information was found on Allen.) Allen's other known projects in the area include the Grunow Estate (1927), the Williams Bay Fire Station (1933), and the Lake Geneva Regional News Building (1947). Compared to these structures, the Riviera is the most complex in design and massive in scale; it is Allen's most ambitious project in the area. The Riviera's architectural significance in the Geneva Lake area rests on its style and monumentality. Yerkes Observatory and the Northwestern Military and Naval Academy are the only other comparably scaled buildings, but these are

9. Major Bibliographical References

Curran, Daniel, Riviera restoration architect, Interview, October 30, 1985.
 Lake Geneva Regional News, April 17, 1932, May 18, 1933.
 Wisconsin Transportation Company Maps, 1916-1938.
 "The Riviera Citizens Advisory Committee Report," July 1980.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than one.

Quadrangle name Lake Geneva - WI

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

116	38	2	11	4	0	4	7	11	6	0	6	1	0
Zone	Easting				Northing								

B

Zone	Easting				Northing								

C

Zone	Easting				Northing								

D

Zone	Easting				Northing								

E

Zone	Easting				Northing								

F

Zone	Easting				Northing								

G

Zone	Easting				Northing								

H

Zone	Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Riviera at the foot of Broad Street, with an address on Wrigley Drive. There is no legal description, according to the City of Lake Geneva Assessor's office.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries (See continuation sheet)

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sharon Crawford and Pat Butler

organization Preservation Consultants

date

street & number 5 South Kenosha Drive

telephone 608-233-5627

city or town Madison

state Wisconsin 53705

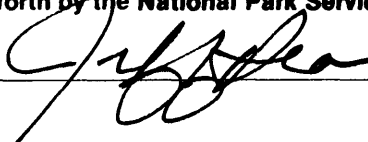
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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

date

2/2/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Entered in the National Register

date

4/3/86

by Jayne M. McPherson
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

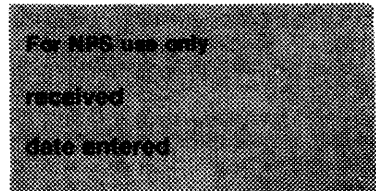
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Riviera, Lake Geneva, Walworth County, Wisconsin

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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both private educational institutions with only limited public access. The Italian Renaissance Period Revival style is represented by only one other intact property in the area--the Schwinn Estate (1922) in Williams Bay. The symmetrical design and classic details of the main house and greenhouse/guesthouse correspond to the Riviera, but are on a smaller scale. The Geneva 1 + 2 movie theater (1928) on Broad Street in Lake Geneva was built in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, but is no longer intact after a 1975 remodeling.

Tourism/Recreation

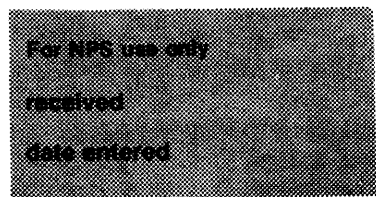
Before 1902, when a road was finally constructed all the way around Geneva Lake, the primary mode of transportation between lakeshore points was by boat. Excursion boats were a major factor in the development of Geneva Lake as a resort area in the 1870s, when tourists were attracted by drawings of the elegant side-wheeler steamboats Lady of the Lake and the Lucius Newberry, circulated in Chicago area newspapers. The lakeshore site at the foot of Broad Street became the natural center for water transportation in Lake Geneva when the railroad depot was constructed at the opposite end of Broad Street in 1871. Advertising maps produced by the Wisconsin Transportation Company, predecessor of the present Gage Marine Corporation, show the company's pier in the location now occupied by the Riviera. Prior to that, the Lake Geneva Steam Line offices were at that location, and a map drawn in 1876, before there was a consolidated transportation company, also depicts two piers near the foot of Broad Street. Passenger transport has not been the only function at this site. Since 1912, daily summer U.S. Postal service by mailboat has also originated here.

When the citizen's committee chose the site for the new recreational facility, it was intended that the traditional tourism and transportation functions would be continued and expanded. Piers for both excursion and rental boats were included in the architect's design for the building, and leases have been continuously granted to a major transportation company and a small boat rental operator since the building's completion. The Gage Marine Corporation has enhanced the public's awareness of the past by using a replica of the Lady of the Lake and the restored 1902 Louise as tour boats, and by tour guides who give background information about the lakeshore mansions seen on the excursions.

Although there are other public piers and marine structures around Geneva Lake, the Riviera is the only one that was designed to be more than merely functional. Only two other structures historically associated with transportation are extant in the Geneva Lake region: the Lake Geneva Railway Depot (1891) and the Fontana trolley station (1899). The Lake Geneva Railway Depot (NRHP 1978), designed by architect Charles Sumner Frost in the Queen Anne style, is smaller in scale, simpler in design, and in badly deteriorated condition. The tiny Fontana trolley station was removed from its original site in 1978 and is in adaptive use as part of a restaurant-bar complex. By contrast, the restored Riviera retains almost all of its original integrity and remains the most intact historic building associated with transportation in the Geneva Lake area.

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Riviera, Lake Geneva, Walworth County, Wisconsin
Continuation sheet

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1. Lake Geneva Regional News 5-18-1933.
2. Warren Beckwith, Map of Lake Geneva, 1876.
3. Arthur J. Sweet, "A City Development Plan for Lake Geneva, Wisconsin," 1921.
4. Interview with Daniel Curran, Riviera restoration architect, 10-30-1985.
5. Interview with Lake Geneva City Assessor, 11-1985.
6. Lake Geneva Regional News 5-18-1933.
7. "The Riviera Citizens Advisory Committee Report," July 1980. Copies are available in the Mayor's office and the Lake Geneva Public Library.
8. Lake Geneva Regional News 12-5-1902.
9. Wisconsin Transportation Company maps, 1916-1938; C. McKay Morrison, Lake Geneva (Lake Geneva, 1915); Beckwith, Map of Lake Geneva, 1876.
10. Walworth Times 9-8-1966.
11. "The Riviera Citizens Advisory Committee Report."

ITEM 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Beginning at the point of intersection of the center lines of Broad Street and Wrigley Drive, proceed directly southwest to the northern edge of the Riviera grounds; at said point, proceed east to the shore of Lake Geneva; at said point proceed southwest, following the water's edge, along sea wall and wood docks. Continue along the shoreline of docks and seawall to the natural shoreline firmament. At said point, proceed northeast to the intersection of the centerline of Wrigley Drive. At said point, proceed east to the point of beginning.

The nominated property includes the main structure along with the adjacent landscaping features and all docks and seawalls extending from the property as outlined on the attached map A.