

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: **The Newport Casino**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
194, Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE: **Rhode Island, 02840** CODE: **38** COUNTY: **Newport** CODE: **005**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In Process <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
No: <input type="checkbox"/>				

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	Sports	
Entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY **and**

OWNERS NAME: **Newport Casino, ~~Bellevue Avenue~~ National Lawn Tennis Hall
of Fame and Tennis Museum, Inc. (part of property owned by each)**

STREET AND NUMBER:
194, Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: **Newport** STATE: **Rhode Island** CODE: **38**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broadway

CITY OR TOWN: **Newport** STATE: **Rhode Island** CODE: **38**

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **less than one acre.**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
To be included in a survey now under way.

DATE OF SURVEY: **1970** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90, Smith Street,

CITY OR TOWN: **Providence** STATE: **Rhode Island, 02903** CODE: **38**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/>	Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input type="checkbox"/>		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Newport Casino was constructed in 1880 for James Gordon Bennett, from plans drawn by McKim, Mead & White. Two contracts were executed on January 8, 1880, one for a "block of stores," and one for "restaurant, theatre, piazza, etc." After completion the property was deeded to a new corporation, "The Newport Casino," to operate as a gentlemen's club. The clubrooms were on the second floor of the main building, over the stores; and there were facilities for sports and games, including court tennis, lawn tennis, squash, bowling etc., on the grounds at the rear of the property.

The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island describes the buildings as follows:

"The firm's first masterpiece in Newport was the Casino of 1879-81. It is the first of those suburban and resort country clubs which were a new feature in the eighties and of which McKim, Mead & White soon built other examples ... Since the site was next to the Travers Block on Bellevue Avenue, near the heart of the shopping center, McKim kept the street façade unobtrusive and simple, symmetrical and ordered; it is not academic.

"Above the smooth brick piers of the first story, between which shops are set, the shingled upper story, containing club rooms, corbels out beyond the plane of the piers and rides cleanly across them. The side gables produce ... subsidiary gables which corbel out further, and the center gable is hollowed by a deeply shadowed loggia from which a curving balcony projects. There is not only a variety of surface here in the shingle patterns of the wall, but also a subtle play between solid and void, open and closed, dark and light. The symmetrical order which controls the whole is given vitality by this movement. Behind the shops and the clubrooms, and reached through a flat-arched passageway, is a courtyard surrounded by piazzas which curve out into an apsidal shape at the rear. This interior court is developed more picturesquely than the street façade. A fat shingled tower bulges near the entrance and represents those "Valley of the Loire" forms which were assimilated into the shingled style. It bright yellow clock face contrasts with its textured shingled surface."

There have been many alterations and additions to the buildings, beginning, we believe, in 1881. The clubrooms on the second floor of the main building--with their admirable trim and fireplaces--have not been used as such since World War II. There were rooms for reading, dining, cards, billiards etc.; and the original architectural design is largely intact. The north wing of the main building was seriously

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1879 - 1881

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric	Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Phil-		Other (Specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	osophy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sports	_____
Agriculture	Invention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Art	Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Commerce	Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social/Human-		_____	_____
Communications	Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	itarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Conservation	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theater	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
	Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

This property is significant both architecturally and as a landmark in the history of sports in the United States.

It is an outstanding example of the "shingle" style of architecture as employed by the great firm of McKim, Mead & White and is so described by such prominent critics as Edward Durrell Stone, Aline Saarinen, Vincent Scully and Antoinette Downing.

As a sports center, it is unique in being the site of the first official United States Lawn Tennis Championships in 1881, which were continued here annually through 1914. An important grass-court tennis tournament for men has been held here each year since then, and it is safe to say that every prominent United States male tennis player has competed on the Newport Casino courts, as have also a majority of the international men players.

Richmond Barrett, in his book Good Old Summer Days, says: "The Casino courts were the finest in the United States, and the Casino itself was first and foremost a tennis club." He devotes an entire chapter in this book to the National Championships held here 1881-1914.

Maud Howe Elliott, in her This Was My Newport, says: "Looking back at the many champions whose skill I have watched at the Casino with breathless enjoyment, I see Larned, Clothier, the fiery McLoughlin, Kumagae the Japanese, Cochet the Frenchman, and towering above all others the long, lean figure of Big Bill Tilden, the greatest of tennis players." Since her book was written, in the 1930's, the Newport Casino Cup has been won by Budge, Talbert, Mulloy, Schroeder, Richardson, Rosewall, Anderson, Laver, Mark, McKinley, Emerson, Ralston, Bowrey and others.

The present tennis grandstand was built in 1906-07 for the Annual Horse Show which was an early September feature for many years.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Downing, Antoinette F., and Scully, Vincent J., Jr.: The Architectural Heritage of Newport ... (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), pp. 149-151.
 Scully, Vincent J., Jr.: The Shingle Style ... (New Haven, Conn., 1955), pp. 131 ff.
 Elliott, Maud Howe: This Was My Newport (Cambridge, Mass., 1944).
 Barrett, Richmond: Good Old Summer Days ... (Boston, 1952).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		71° 18' 27" W		
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mrs. Grace Mason Haire

ORGANIZATION: **National Lawn Tennis Hall of Fame and Tennis Museum, Inc.** DATE: **June, 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER:
194, Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: **Newport** STATE: **Rhode Island** CODE: **38**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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7. Description.

damaged by fire about 1948, and the second story and porches of this wing were not rebuilt. When the clock tower was recently reshingled, the decorative rows of variously shaped shingles were not replaced; but plain shingles were used, as previously, on the part of the rear wall which had been burned. There has also been a recent brick and shingle addition at the rear of this section--one story high--in designing which the architect tried to conform to the original wall plan insofar as possible. In 1963 the entire Bellevue Avenue façade was repaired and restored, but some items of the restoration plan had to be omitted because of lack of funds.

The present tennis locker and lounge rooms are located within the walls of the original "court tennis" court, which was so badly damaged by fire in 1945 that it was not rebuilt as such.

The "Casino Theatre,"* beautifully designed by Stanford White, was built as a ballroom, but included a stage. Numerous dances and entertainments for the summer colony took place there during the early years. Since then it has been enlarged and altered, but its interior architectural design has been preserved in its unique beauty. That building has recently been renovated.

The "Horseshoe Piazza" and "upper court" were designed as a social gathering-place. There is now a carpet-type tennis court in this area, but otherwise it is close to its original design, although there have been recognizable alterations.

The grass tennis courts to the rear of the property have been in continuous operation since 1880.

The south wing of the main building, which was an open porch in 1880, has been over the years transformed into a two-story structure containing four large rooms now used as the museum of the National Lawn Tennis Hall of Fame.

* The theatre is now, itself, a separate nomination to the National Register.

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8. Significance.

The National Lawn Tennis Hall of Fame and Tennis Museum, Inc., a non-profit corporation, now owns or controls about 80% of the capital stock of the Newport Casino. Its headquarters and museum were opened in 1955 and have continued here for fifteen years. The museum is open during the summer months (May through October) and has attracted thousands of visitors from all over the world. One of the foremost objectives of this organization is to preserve and maintain the entire Newport Casino property in its original uniqueness and beauty and to continue it as an active tennis center. The Tennis Hall of Fame also owns the so-called "Casino Theatre," which is an integral part of the Casino complex.