

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SENT

6-30-95

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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 an 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 Peoria Automobile Club

other names/site number Shore Acres Park Clubhouse

2. Location

street & number 100 Park Boulevard  not for publication

city or town Chillicothe  vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Peoria code 143 zip code 61523

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

William L. Wheeler 6-26-95  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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 the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Peoria Automobile Club  
Name of Property

Peoria, IL  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

Social/Clubhouse

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

Landscape/Park

Other Park Pavillion

**7. Description**

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

Classical Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood

roof Asphalt

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 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

**Period of Significance**

1915 - 1935

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Hotchkiss & Harris, Architects

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Peoria Automobile Club  
Name of Property

Peoria, IL  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of Property 2.2 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 1 6	2 9 0 2 7 0	4 5 3 0 8 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Leslie H. Kenyon, Architect, and Amelia Ulrich, Researcher

organization Kenyon and Associates, Architects date April 3, 1995

street & number 735 N. Knoxville Avenue telephone 309 674-7121

city or town Peoria state IL zip code 61602

**Additional Documentation**

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)

**Property Owner**

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

name Chillicothe Park District

street & number 100 Park Boulevard telephone 309 274-3409

city or town Chillicothe state IL zip code 61523

**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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Peoria Automobile Club

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DESCRIPTION

The Peoria Automobile Club building, built in 1915 for the Peoria Automobile Club, is sited on the banks of the Illinois River, in Shore Acres Park, on the south edge of Chillicothe, approximately seventeen miles north of Peoria, Illinois. The building is surrounded by broad lawns and many mature trees.

The building is set back from the road a considerable distance, thus the planners followed the pleasure drive concept popular in this time by creating a formal boulevarded entrance drive from the road to the Club complete with a circular turn around at the Club. The driveway curbs and walks are original but the Catalpa trees, that were in the boulevard strip died. They have been replaced very recently with new trees. Similar park drives exist in East Peoria (Fondulac Drive) and in Peoria (Grand View Drive).

The building is approximately fifty-five feet wide and over one hundred feet long and is constructed of wood on a masonry foundation. The shape of the building is a central pavilion with two wings, one on the north and one on the south. The central pavilion has a gable roof and each wing has a gambrel roof with asphalt shingles. The first story is finished on the exterior with horizontal siding, bevel edged. The central pavilion has siding on the second story as well. The windows are generally wood, double-hung, with divided lights; the doors are wood French doors with divided lights. The original chimneys have been taken down with the exception of the heating plant chimney located at the south end of the building.

Interior finishes are generally plaster walls and ceilings, hardwood floors, wood trim, painted except in the Parlor where wallpaper is found above the wainscot.

Since its construction, several changes have been made including the enclosure of the porch on the east side in 1925 and the enclosure of the south porch at an unknown date sometime prior to World War II. The four columns on the west elevation were boxed in, circa. 1955.

On the west elevation, four, two-story columns support the central gabled portico of the building, including the entablature which supports the pediment. In the tympanum is a fanlight window. Classical inspired dentils and corbels are found in the cornice. The four columns at the front edge of the porch were boxed in, circa 1955, but the pilasters on the face of the building are still intact with volutes and Corinthian capitals.

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Peoria Automobile Club

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Underneath the front portico on the first story are three sets of French doors with fifteen lights in each door that open onto the front portico. A fanlight is over each pair of doors. On the second story, there are three pairs of French doors, each with ten lights and a false transom (really part of the door) with a circular window in each door, opening out to three balconies off the second story. These balconies have balustrades with square corner posts with inset panels. Double scrolled brackets support each balcony.

On each side of the main building are wings two stories in height. As is sometimes found in this style, each wing has a shingled gambrel roof with full-width shed dormer windows. The west elevation of the north wing contains three sets of French doors on the first story with ten lights in each door and a fanlight over each pair of doors. The west elevation of the first story of the south wing contains three sets of French doors; however, the French doors in the set on the left have been replaced with a full-vision metal framed door set in the existing opening. The remaining French doors contain eight lights in each door with a solid panel below. There are fanlights over each of the three doors in the south wing. Between the French doors on the first story of each wing are double half columns with Ionic capitals. A scroll bracket on top of each column capital meets the overhanging eave of the gambrel roof. The second story of each wing contains three sets of double-hung windows with six-over-six panes.

As part of the original construction, a portion of the south wing is offset from the main wing due to the fact that it is narrower in width. This offset portion contains two double-hung windows with six-over-six panes in the upper sash on the first story and one double-hung window with six-over-six panes on the second story. One double-hung window with six-over-six panes in the upper sash is located on the south elevation on the first floor where the off-set portion steps in.

At the end of the south wing and stepped back again from the rest of the wing, is a one story addition that was created at an unknown date sometime prior to World War II, by enclosing a south porch, thus, adding a kitchen delivery entrance. This addition contains two double-hung windows and a door on the west elevation, five double-hung windows and one fixed window on the south elevation of the first story, and eleven various size windows and two doors on the south elevation at the basement level. The east elevation at the basement level of this addition contains four double-hung windows.

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Peoria Automobile Club

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The second story of the south elevation of the main building contains two double-hung windows with six-over-six panes in the upper sash and a single opening with a vent at the attic level.

A small second story shed roof extension on the southeast corner contains one fixed window on its west elevation, three fixed windows on the south elevation, and two fixed windows with sliding windows on each side and one jalousie window on its east elevation.

The river side or east elevation has a long porch which was enclosed in 1925 with thirty-five double-hung windows and wood panel wainscot on the first story. The original French doors that opened onto the porch are still intact on the interior. As in the front doors, a fanlight is over each pair of doors.

The second story of the east elevation of the main building contains a fanlight window in the tympanum like the one found on the west elevation; however, two small louvers are found, one on each side of the fanlight window. The three original French doors on the second story were replaced with small windows when the porch was enclosed. The east elevation also has two wings, two floors in height, with gambrel roofs and full-width shed dormer windows on the second story. The south wing contains two double-hung windows with six-over-six panes with a sliding window in the center. The north wing contains three sets of double-hung windows with six-over-six panes.

Since the grade drops down to the river from north to south, the basement is exposed on the east elevation. The central portion of the basement has nine, twelve-pane windows each about 3' x 5'. There are two exterior doors from the basement level. The door at the north end is flanked by two sets of double-hung windows with six-over-six panes in the upper sash. On the south end of the basement level seven openings have been closed with wood infill. The exterior of the basement is brick. The porch enclosure on the east was accomplished with concrete block built on the original porch brick foundation.

The north elevation has the gambrel gable with the original wood shingles. The first story has two sets of French doors like those on the west elevation of the south wing (one has been modified). One window with four panes is located on the first story porch enclosure. Three double-hung windows with six-over-six panes are on the second story. One window with six panes is located at the basement level.

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Peoria Automobile Club

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Entering the main building through the French doors under the portico brings you into the Ballroom about 50 ft. long and 30 ft. wide. A fireplace with Classical influences is located on the north wall of the Ballroom. The overmantel is wood and the hearth is brick. The room has a wide board chair rail. The wainscot underneath the chair rail is divided into eight foot panels with vertical wood boards matching the chair rail. The plaster wall is grooved to imitate blocks of stone about 30" x 16". The room is two stories in height with a second floor balcony about five feet wide running completely around the room. The ceiling is coved starting at the second story picture rail and stopping about three feet onto the ceiling. The cove contains a mural of the clubhouse and nearby Illinois River and Illinois River Valley painted by a Peoria artist, Erick Arons, in 1925. French doors lead off the balcony to three exterior balconies on the front. The three balconies on the river side or east side were closed off when the porch was glassed in. A large chandelier with flame-type bulbs and tall "candle-like" stems is hung from the ceiling of the ballroom. It is circular and fabricated of brass and wood about 30" tall and 15" in diameter. Wall sconces around the walls are of similar materials each with two lights. Straight through the Ballroom to the east on the first floor is the porch that runs the full length of the east side which was glassed in about 1925.

To the left of the Ballroom is the Living Room with a fireplace located in the southeast corner of the room. This fireplace backs up to the fireplace in the Ballroom. A suspended ceiling is in the Living Room now but stenciling of the original plaster ceiling still exists above the new ceiling. This room also has a wide board chair rail with the plaster walls finished in swirls that imitate "Spanish" plaster. A closet exists at the north end of this room and contains an old safe with the name "Peoria Automobile Club" on the front.

To the right or south of the Ballroom is a set of Classical doors and pilasters leading to the Stair Hall. The Stair Hall is adjacent to a Vestibule for the exterior door to the west. This is the entrance for daily access to the building. The original entrance door has been replaced with an aluminum storefront door.

Walking south through the Stair Hall takes you into the Parlor. A brick fireplace, wide board chair rail with wallpaper above, and four large wood box beams are found on the ceiling.

Two sets of French doors to the east open into the glassed-in porch. Another door on the south side of the room is to the Kitchen. The Kitchen is really two rooms that have been modernized. The original ice box is still in use.



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The glassed-in porch to the east is used for dining and has a wood, tongue-and-groove ceiling with a bead, wood wainscot under the double-hung windows, and some ceiling beam work.

Off the porch at the east end is a small hall and exit to the outside.

Access to the second story and basement is from the Stair Hall by means of a switchback stair featuring a heavy wood handrail consisting of square posts with caps and tightly spaced (three per tread), painted balusters. The Stair Hall opens onto the balcony which runs around the perimeter of the Ballroom. The two gambrel roof wings have a central corridor running the length of the wing with guest rooms off the corridor. The rooms are used for storage today in the north wing; the rooms are part of a residential apartment in the south wing.

Access to the basement is from the Stair Hall. In the basement are recently constructed meeting rooms, lavatories, storage rooms, and mechanical equipment rooms.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Peoria Automobile Club is locally significant and meets Criterion A for Entertainment/Recreation for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Peoria Automobile Club was formed in 1911 by a group of citizens as part of a trend taking place nationwide in the early 1900's. Like the numerous other clubs in existence at that time, the Club set their goals to improve roads, promote automobile touring, sponsor runs and social events, provide a centrally located clubhouse for Central Illinois, and provide hospitality for visiting motorists. The building has been in continual use since its dedication in 1915 as a place for recreation and entertainment. Its period of significance is 1915, the year the building was completed, to 1935, when the Peoria Automobile Club (then renamed to North Shore Country Club) filed for bankruptcy and the building was sold at auction to the Club's mortgage company.

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Peoria Automobile Club

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Early Automobile Club History - General

In 1895 H. H. Kohlsaas, publisher of the Chicago Times-Herald newspaper, became convinced that the automobile was a machine to replace the horse and an automobile contest of some sort was just what America needed to arouse interest in the horseless carriage. The purpose of the event was to prove the superiority of a machine over the horse, its responsiveness and tractability,

its economy of maintenance, the unimportance of its speed in contrast to its power and docility. The contest was not to be just a race over the fifty-four mile route from Chicago to Evanston and back. Six cars with drivers took part in the contest held on November 28, 1895, one day following a heavy snowfall with fierce winds resulting in enormous snow drifts. They included the Duryea motor wagon, De La Vergne Benz, the Electrobat II, the Mueller-Benz, a Roger-Benze and the Morrison Sturges. At the conclusion of the race, the Duryea was declared the best performance for range of speed and compactness of design and the Mueller-Benz for performance and overall economy of operation.(1)

Among the immediate results of the Times-Herald contest was the formation of The American Motor League, the first of its kind in the world. "The purposes of this Association shall be the advancement of the interests and the use of motor vehicles. This shall be done by reports and discussions of the mechanical features, by education and agitation, by directing and correcting legislation, by mutual defense of the rights of said vehicles when threatened by adverse judicial decisions, by assisting in the work of constructing better roads, better sanitary and humane conditions, and in any other proper way which will assist to hasten the use and add to the value of motor vehicles as a means of transit."(2)

The first meeting was attended in Chicago by such motor enthusiasts as Charles E. and J. Frank Duryea, Charles B. King, Elwood Haynes, Henry G. Morris and Pedro G. Salom. That was November 1895.(3) However, the League was premature, the nucleus too small, the members too widely scattered, and it failed.(4)

In June 1899, George F. Chamberlain and Whitney Lyon, two enthusiastic motorists published an invitation to automobile owners interested in forming a club to attend a meeting at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. Thirty-odd motorists appeared in response to the invitation and the following objects of the organization were prepared:

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Peoria Automobile Club

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1. To provide a center for the benefit of members.
2. A depot for storage and care of motor carriages.
3. A means of exchanging motor experiences.
4. Hospitality to visiting motorists.
5. Organization and sponsorship of racers and other sporting events.
6. Establishment of a library on motor vehicles.
7. To provide a starting point for runs and tours.
8. To promote improvements of roads.
9. To exchange courtesies with other clubs here and abroad.
10. Preparation and reading of papers on motoring interests.
11. To promote friendly relations with horse owners and public.
12. To provide a suitable clubhouse centrally located.

The name Automobile Club of America was adopted and necessary steps taken for incorporation.(5) The Waldorf-Astoria served as the Club's headquarters and almost overnight the club had become one of the most desirable in the city. The club was very active socially and otherwise sponsoring balls, parties, picnics, club runs, and automobile contests. The club worked steadily for better motoring, both in structural improvement in the cars and betterment of the conditions under which they were used.

As the result of the influence of this club, similar clubs were formed in all the larger cities of the country. The Cleveland Automobile Club was organized in January, 1900. The San Francisco Automobile Club followed in March. Clubs were formed in Patterson, NJ, and Philadelphia in April. Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, Chicago, Boston, Long Island, and Rhode Island followed. Colleges also began to form clubs and Columbia and Princeton were added to the list. By the end of 1900, more than twenty-six automobile clubs were organized. The number doubled the following year.(6)

During this period motorists found that signboards, if existing at all, were in very poor state of repair and infrequent. The only signs that gave any indication of distance were those which told you how far it was to some specific store. Pressure began to be put on the newly formed clubs to do something about the country road signs. The clubs attempted to develop some cooperation on the part of the localities where signs were most needed but they found that town officials and county boards were not at all anxious to encourage city motorists to make use of their roads. As a result, the clubs began to put up an occasional signpost but they found this to be costly and ran into complications of state boundaries and invasion of other automobile club territories which in the East were never very far away.(7)

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The New York Automobile Club proposed the idea of posting a single through route at the expense of the clubs along the way. The project was successful but it had its limitations due to distances and reasonable numbers of clubs along the way. Also jurisdictional friction from one state to another was always a problem. Despite these limitations, rapid development and popularity of touring by individuals resulted. However, two great hazards still existed - bad roads and inclement weather. (8)

With the coming of cold weather, the motorcar went into winter storage. Most cars were open to the weather and after a rain, motorists would have to wait several hours for the roads to dry off. The Automobile Club of America was determined to keep working for the betterment of motoring. Accordingly, the Club issued an invitation to the more active clubs to meet in New York for the purpose of improving the roads of the country. Hardly any states had a highway department. Country roads were left by the states to the counties; by the counties to the towns; and by the towns to the farmers who were permitted to pay their road taxes by giving a couple of days of labor per year dumping gravel in the worst of the mudholes. Nothing resulted from the meeting since the feeling persisted that what could a club or several clubs do for a road condition that was nationwide. Some of the car manufacturers were trying to meet the situation by making their cars powerful enough to negotiate any kind of road. (9)

In June 1901 an article appeared in *Horseless Age* regarding the Automobile Club of America and their consideration of an alliance for common defense and advantage with other representative clubs of the United States. It was felt that "an alliance would add greatly to the effectiveness of the good roads campaign and enable the organization to guard more securely the rights of automobilists upon the highway." At this time there were thirty-six recognized clubs in the country. While the advantages of an amalgamation were obvious, a number of the clubs were reluctant to surrender their powers or privileges to other clubs. (10)

In December 1901 the Long Island Automobile Club proposed a federation of the clubs in a new nationwide organization which should be dominated by no single club but in a government of which all clubs should have a fair share. A meeting was planned in Chicago with two representatives from each club for the purpose of organizing a federation of the country's automobile clubs. The objects of the proposed federation were as follows:

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1. Enactment of liberal laws regulating the use of automobiles on the public highways.
2. Protection of the legal rights of the users of motor vehicles,.
3. Improvement of public highways.
4. Development and introduction of the automobile.
5. Equitable regulation of automobile racing and trails of endurance and efficiency.
6. A medium for counsel and interchange of information, ideas and suggestions tending to the development and advancement of the art.(11)

An organizational meeting of delegates was set for March 3, 1902. The proposal for a national organization came from five of the most active and influential clubs in the country -

The Automobile Club of America  
The Philadelphia Automobile Club  
The Long Island Automobile Club  
The Rhode Island Automobile Club  
The Chicago Automobile Club

Eight clubs were represented at this meeting. The name selected was the American Automobile Association (AAA). The first official act was to sponsor national legislation providing for a bureau of highways with appropriations to carry on a constructive program. The organization would assist in the general progress of the motor-driven vehicle by safeguarding the interests of the users and at the same time aid the maker in perfecting a better car.(12)

The first regular meeting of the Board of the AAA was held on April 1, 1903, at the clubhouse of the Automobile Club of America in New York City, which extended the use of its quarters to the new Association until it could become established.(13)

The AAA - Chicago Motor Club was organized in Chicago in 1906 to address the needs of a quickly growing group of people who had the foresight to believe the automobile was more than a passing infatuation. One of their first initiatives was to lobby for better roads. The Chicago Motor Club's accomplishments over the years have included improved road signs (1915), formation of an insurance exchange (1917), publication of road maps (1920), emergency road service (1920), development of the "police identification cards" (bond cards) (1927), and educational programs.(14)

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Peoria Automobile Club

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Since its beginning, the Chicago Motor Club has been housed in the New Southern Hotel, the Lexington Hotel, and in two buildings both located on Michigan Avenue. In 1929 they built a 15-story skyscraper at 66-68 E. South Water Street. (15)

By 1929 hundreds of automobile clubs were in existence all over the country. (16) An example is the Automobile Club of Michigan established in 1916 with similar objectives to the early American Automobile Club. In November 1935, a handful of individuals gathered in Philadelphia to join forces in appreciation of the Motor League pioneers and all those who followed. The first American car club dedicated to the history of the motorcar was created - the Antique Automobile Club of America. Other clubs to follow included the Horseless Carriage Club of America (1937) and the Veteran Motor Car Club of America (1938). This paved the way in the years following for the formation of many other clubs with varied interests. (3)

History of Peoria Automobile Club

In 1890 when the "old Wood's" property south of Chillicothe and about seventeen miles up the river from Peoria came up for sale, the Mayor of Chillicothe, James Kinloch, saw this as a site for an ideal city park. First called Columbia Park, it was a popular gathering place for picnics, ball games, band concerts, and dances with steamboats making regular stops there. (17)

With the increasing interest and use of the automobile, in circa. 1911, a group of citizens from Peoria and its surrounding areas formed the Peoria Automobile Club. Like the other automobile clubs that had already been formed around the country, the object for which it was formed was "to acquire, construct, establish, lease, equip, own, maintain, operate and conduct a club; with all suitable provision, equipment, means or facilities for housing, accommodating and ministering to the necessities, convenience, comfort, health and entertainment, or any thereof, of members of such club and their guests; with provision for athletics and recreation, and with provision for the requirements of motor vehicles". (18) With this goal in mind, they arranged for the lease and eventual purchase of Columbia Park located on the Illinois River just south of Chillicothe, Illinois.

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Peoria Automobile Club

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In 1913 the name of the park was changed to the Peoria Automobile Club.(17) Construction of a club house was begun and, after several years of work, was opened to the membership and guests on Labor Day, September 6, 1915.(19) The building, designed by Hotchkiss & Harris, Architects, of Peoria, was one of the finest in the country, accessible by automobile, steam cars, steamboats, and motor boats.(20) Dues were nominal so that membership would be in reach of everybody who desired the privilege.

Members of the Club felt that there was not a more scenic drive in this part of the country than the one up the Illinois River to the Peoria Automobile Club and they wanted to give people the opportunity to have a nice little automobile ride. One of the principal activities of the club was to wage a campaign for improvement of the roads.(21)

At the time the roads leading into Peoria were in such poor shape that many people were refusing to go to Peoria to shop, and instead were boarding the train and going to Chicago. This condition was created by the poor roads and the fact that motor owners found it cheaper to go to Chicago than to attempt to drive over the roads and break springs and others parts of their cars. A movement was started to improve the roads so that persons in the small towns would be able to drive to Peoria and do their shopping.(21)

The Club sought members from the neighboring towns. These members then served on various committees with the goal to devise a means of improving the roads toward the club house, making many new arteries throughout the county and neighboring counties. With the building of good roads from Peoria to Chillicothe, and from Chillicothe to Lacon and Henry, the Club members felt they would have a good road to Chicago. "Whenever there is a good road to

Chicago, then the citizens of Peoria can expect many tourists from the east and west who center in Chicago to work their way down to Peoria, but without this road, they can expect nothing." It was stated that at the time the Peoria Automobile Club was formed, that the area had the poorest roads of any county in the state and the state had the poorest roads of any state in the union.(21)

In November 1918, a \$60 million State Bond Issue was approved, with construction to begin at the end of World War I. One of the first roads completed under the plan was the Peoria-Henry Road, which followed the old Galena Road from Peoria to Mossville. The new road then turned away from

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Peoria Automobile Club

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Galena Road and ran along the river through Rome, past the Peoria Automobile Club, and into Chillicothe.(22) The road then continued on north toward Chicago. The road became designated as Illinois Route 29 and parts of the original road are still in use along the Rome seawall and to access the present Shore Acres Park and Clubhouse.

The Peoria Automobile Club, when constructed, contained ample room for parties with a main dining room, several private dining rooms, and sleeping rooms.(23) Social events such as dances and parties were frequently held. During the 1920's and 1930's, many sororities and fraternities from Bradley University in Peoria held their formals and Christmas dances in the Club House, traveling up the river road in their automobiles such as the Wintons, Packards, Chandlers, and even a Dusenbergs. Occasionally, Club members would arrange for a daughter or son's wedding to take place at the Automobile Club. Picnics under the trees and catered dinners were common. The Park was a popular place for river steamers to land excursion parties.(24)

By the early 1920's, the newness of cars was wearing off and the name of the Automobile Club and park was changed to Peoria North Shore Country Club. A nine-hole golf course and swimming pool were constructed in 1925.(17) The Country Club did not prove to be a financial success. The Depression caused a rapid decline and the club slowly disintegrated. On March 7, 1935, the Club was declared bankrupt. The property was sold at auction in May 1935 and was purchased by Commercial Travelers Loan and Homestead Association of Peoria.(25)

In August 1939, Frank Meyers bought the property from Commercial Travelers Loan and Homestead Association and changed the name to Shore Acres.(17) During this time a five-position trap range was constructed on the grounds up river from the Club House with shooters firing over the river. The Chicago Gun Club frequently used the range for their shooting matches, staying overnight in the sleeping rooms of the Club House and using their dining facilities. The golf course was also a popular attraction.

Mr. Meyers ran the park and club house until 1945 when the property was sold to William B. "Boso" Stone, a former Chicagoan now living in Peoria.(26) Mr. Stone owned the Avon Theater and the Grand Theater, which later became the Warner Theater, both located in the south side of Peoria.(27) During the time that the club house was owned by "Boso" Stone, the building was used as a bordello with burlesque-style shows. High-stake poker games were also held in the building during this period. State golf meets and swim meets were held on the grounds.



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Peoria Automobile Club

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In 1948 the land was sold to the Chillicothe Park Board.(17) Since that time, the building has been in constant use, currently housing the offices of the Park District and used frequently for meetings, wedding receptions, class reunions, birthday parties, a Nutrition Site for Senior Citizens, dance and aerobics classes.

Beginning in 1956 and continuing for several years, the building was the home for a group of drama enthusiasts called Village Players who erected one of the best equipped stages in the area with an electrically-controlled curtain purchased from the old Warner Theater in Peoria.(28) The 18 foot by 32 foot stage was also made available to other organizations and civic groups. They had a seating capacity of 230 on the ballroom floor with additional seating for 30 in the balcony. The Players presented two or three top royalty productions a year.(29)

Today, Shore Acres is still a popular gathering place for area residents. A new swimming pool facility was constructed in 1969 to the southwest of the Club House and is in constant use during the summer months. The original swimming pool located between the Club House and the river was filled in with dirt. A lighted softball field attracts teams from throughout the area. Tennis courts are a popular attraction. Picnics and reunions fill the park while many enjoy fishing and watching the barges and boats from the river bank. In 1993 a soil retention wall with a river walk was constructed from behind the Club House to the north property line. Wildflowers and birds are found throughout the area. The Club House is open every day to the public and is widely used by many residents of the community.

In comparing the Peoria Automobile Club to other social clubs active during the same period, the following clubs were found:

The Illinois Automobile Club had a club house built in the 1930's in Chicago; however, no further information about the Club has been found.

The Peoria Country Club was incorporated in 1897 and is still active today. A Club was constructed in 1904, destroyed by fire in 1920, and rebuilt circa 1925. The Club is located in Peoria Heights, overlooking the Illinois River. Its object is the encouragement of athletic exercises, recreation and social enjoyment. The grounds include a golf course.(30) The Club still exists today.

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Peoria Automobile Club

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The Mount Hawley Country Club, was organized in 1921 and built their club house in 1923 (31) (32) but was destroyed by fire in 1947.(33) A new club house was later built to replace the original building. The Club is located on North Knoxville Avenue (once called Mount Hawley Road) at the north edge of Peoria and overlooks the Illinois River. Their facilities include an eighteen hole golf course, swimming pool, and grounds for picnics and outdoor functions. The Club still exists today.

The Illinois Valley Yacht and Canoe Club was organized in 1907 and built a club house in 1908 on the Illinois River just north of Peoria along Galena Road. The object of the club was to promote the interests of yachting, motor boating and canoeing and other aquatic sports upon the Illinois River and to promote the social enjoyment of the members of the association.(34) The Club still exists today.

Numerous other social clubs were active in the Peoria area during the early 1900's including the Peoria University Club, Peoria Women's Club, and the Creve Coeur Club of Peoria.(35) These clubs do not include any outdoor facilities or activities.

For the past eighty years the Peoria Automobile Club grounds and Club House have played an active part in the lives of many residents in the Peoria and Chillicothe area. Through the programs of the Chillicothe Park District, these facilities will be available for many to enjoy for many years to come.

This building represents an era where the growing middle class was seeking entertainment in the form of automobile outings and family-type events. The cost of an automobile was within reach of many people in the middle class due to Ford and other automakers' assembly line techniques. The car was their "toy", one that could be enjoyed by all members of the family. The Club was also for family use as opposed to lodges and clubs that were for men only. The free time offered to people in the middle class gave rise to the building of country clubs. The Peoria Automobile Club is distinctive and the only one of its kind in the Central Illinois area.

ENDNOTES

1. Editors of Automobile Quarterly, The American Car Since 1775. New York, NY: L. Scott Bailey, 1971, p. 68, 70, 82, 83, 92
2. Ibid. p. 81

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Peoria Automobile Club

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3. Ibid. p. 492
4. Bellamy Partridge, Fill'er Up! The Story of Fifty Years of Motoring. New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1952, p. 50
5. Ibid. p. 50-51
6. Ibid. p. 52
7. Ibid. p. 72-73
8. Ibid. p. 73
9. Ibid. p. 74-75
10. Ibid. p. 78-79
11. Ibid. p. 79-80
12. Ibid. p. 80, 81, 82, and 83
13. Ibid. p. 83
14. AAA-Chicago Motor Club, Home & Away. Omaha, NE: Nels L. Pierson, September/October 1986, p. 22H, 22I, and 22J
15. Chicago Motor Club Motor News, CLUB to Erect 15 Story Downtown BUILDING. 1928
16. Chicago Motor Club Motor News, Dedicate New Building in Impressive Ceremonies. 1929
17. Sharon Scott, Chillicothe The Way We Grew. Research by Chillicothe Historical Society, July 1976, p. 36
18. Certificate of Incorporation. December 20, 1915
19. Peoria Journal, Auto Club is Opened Today. 9/6/15, p. 3
20. H. C. Roberts, Article - The Peorian entitled The New Home of the Peoria Automobile Club - A Most Beautiful and Adequate Structure. Peoria, IL: Association of Commerce, Vol. 5, No. 2, Full Issue 17, July 1915

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Peoria Automobile Club

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21. Peoria Journal, Automobile Club Holds Open House. 9/5/15, p. 4
22. Jerry Klein, Peoria. Peoria, IL: Visual Communications, Inc., 1985, p. 164
23. Edward L. Richter, Peoria of To-Day. Chicago and Peoria, IL: National Writers of History, 1915, p. 105
24. Alice Oakley, Article - Penny Press entitled The Way It Was. Peoria, IL: 10/31/74, p. 3
25. The Peoria Star, North Shore Club Is Sold. 9/7/36
26. Abstract, Entry No. 79
27. Bill Adams, Yester Days. Peoria, IL: Peoria Journal Star, Inc., 1992, p. 208 and 209
28. Peoria Journal Star, Village Players Prove Thespian Urge Wide, Deep. 12/12/57
29. Peoria Journal Star, Chillicothe Players Work On New Home. 7/9/56
30. Richter, op.cit., p. 108
31. Peoria Star, Mount Hawley Club Now Has Waiting List. 3/2/24
32. Journal Transcript, Mt. Hawley Country Club House Opens December 2. 12/21/24
33. Peoria Journal, Mt. Hawley Club May be Rebuilt This Year. 8/22/47
34. Richter, op.cit., p. 107
35. Richter, op.cit., p. 105 - 108a

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Peoria Automobile Club

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2. Chicago Motor Club Motor News, CLUB to Erect 15 Story Downtown BUILDING. 1928
3. Chicago Motor Club Motor News, Dedicate New Building in Impressive Ceremonies. 1929
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6. Certificate of Incorporation. December 20, 1915
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9. Klein, Jerry, Peoria! Peoria, IL: Visual Communications, Inc., 1985
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15. Peoria Journal, Mt. Hawley Club May be Rebuilt This Year. 8/22/47
16. Peoria Journal Star, Chillicothe Players Work On New Home. 7/9/56
17. Peoria Journal Star, Village Players Prove Thespian Urge Wide, Deep. 12/12/57
18. Peoria Star, Mount Hawley Club Now Has Waiting List. 3/2/24

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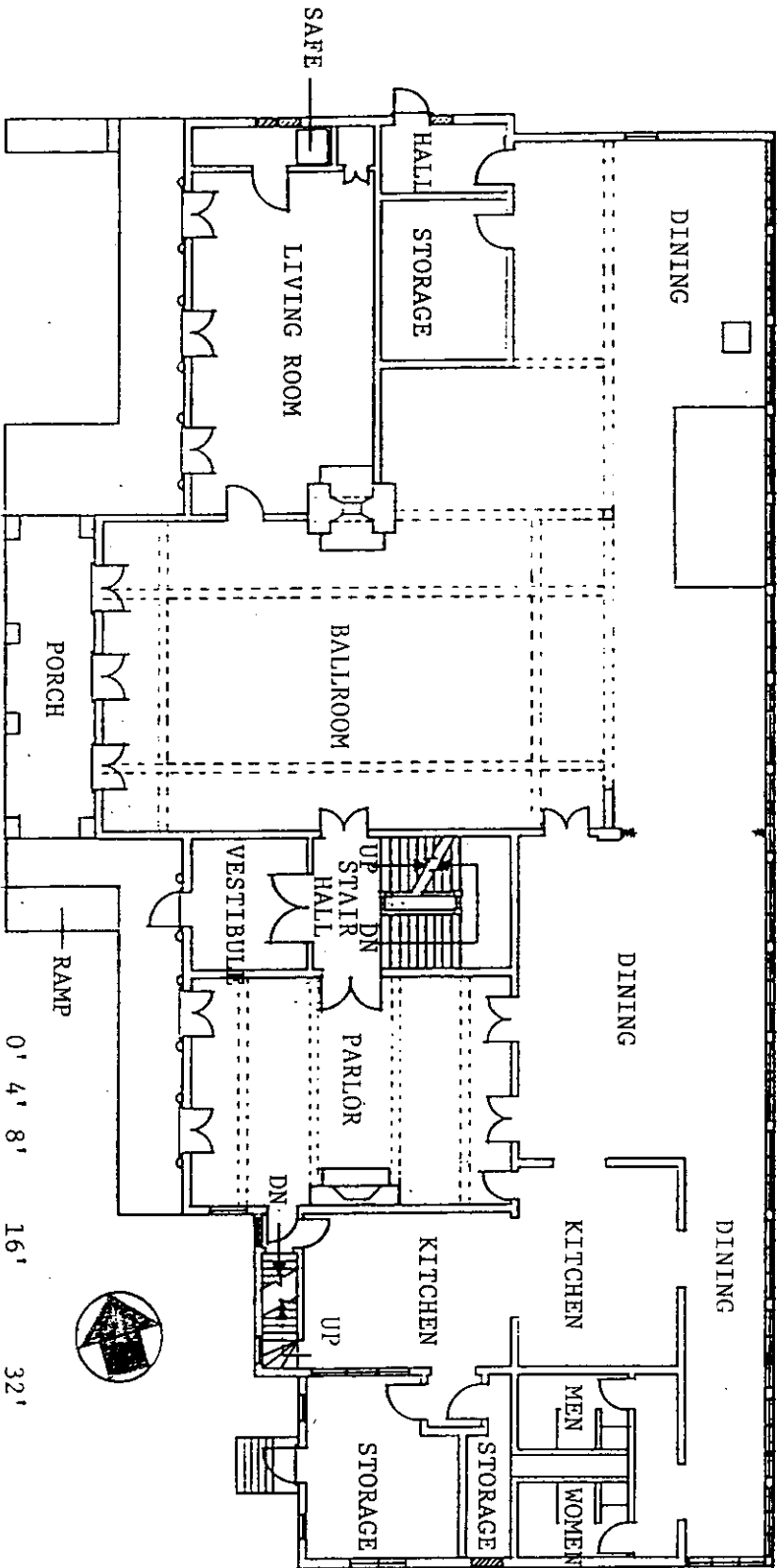
19. The Peoria Star, North Shore Club Is Sold. 9/7/36
20. Richter, Edward L., Peoria of To-Day. Chicago and Peoria, IL: National Writers of History, 1915
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22. Scott, Sharon, Chillicothe The Way We Grew. Research by Chillicothe Historical Society, July 1976

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Peoria Automobile Club site is shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map entitled "Schematic Site Plan, Peoria Automobile Club, Chillicothe, Illinois", dated 4/3/95.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

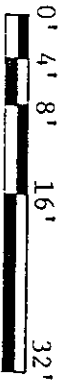
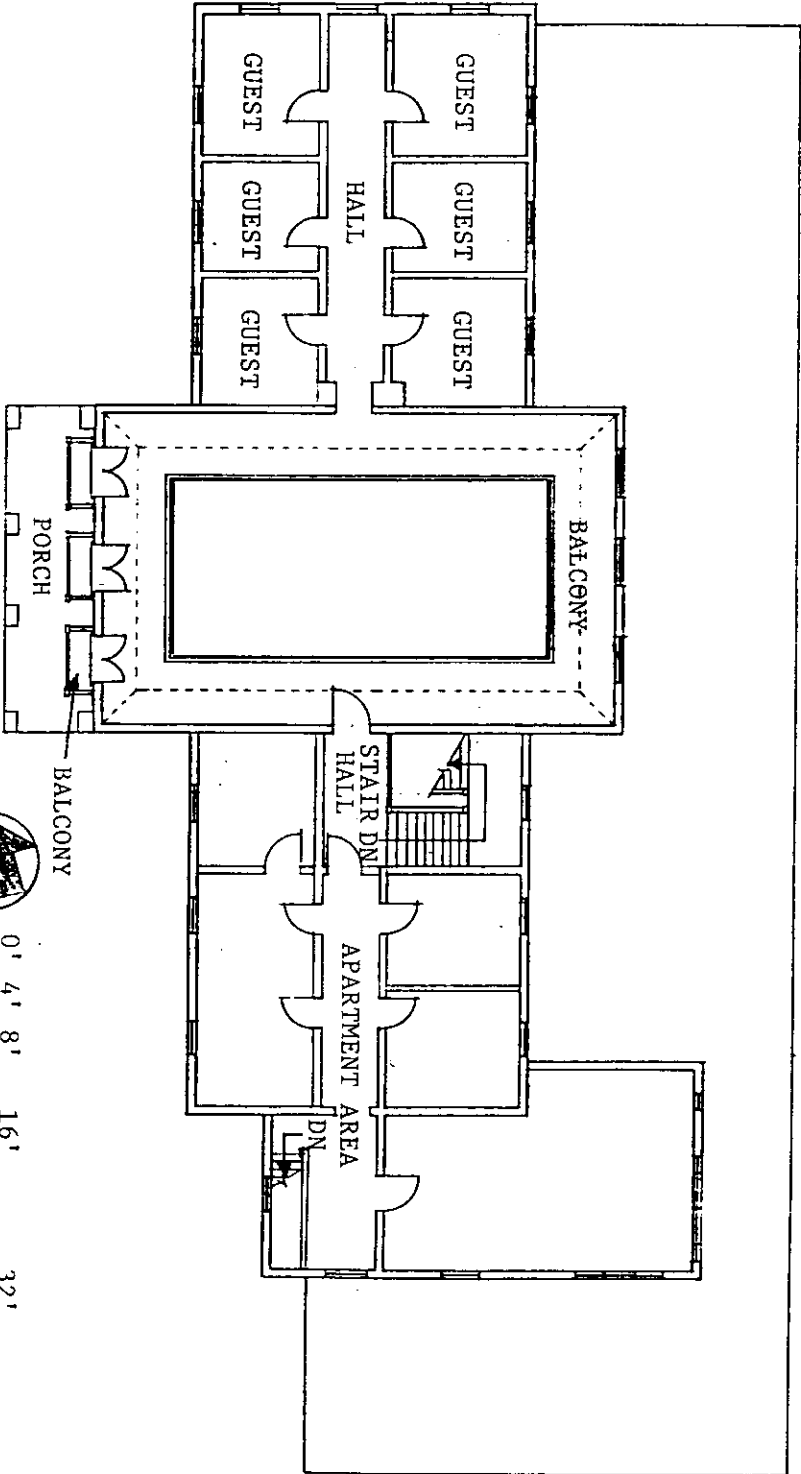
The boundary includes the Club House and the boulevard that have historically been part of the Club grounds.



SCHEMATIC FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PEORIA AUTOMOBILE CLUB  
 CHILLICOTHE, ILLINOIS  
 4/3/95

KENYON AND ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS



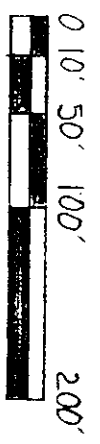
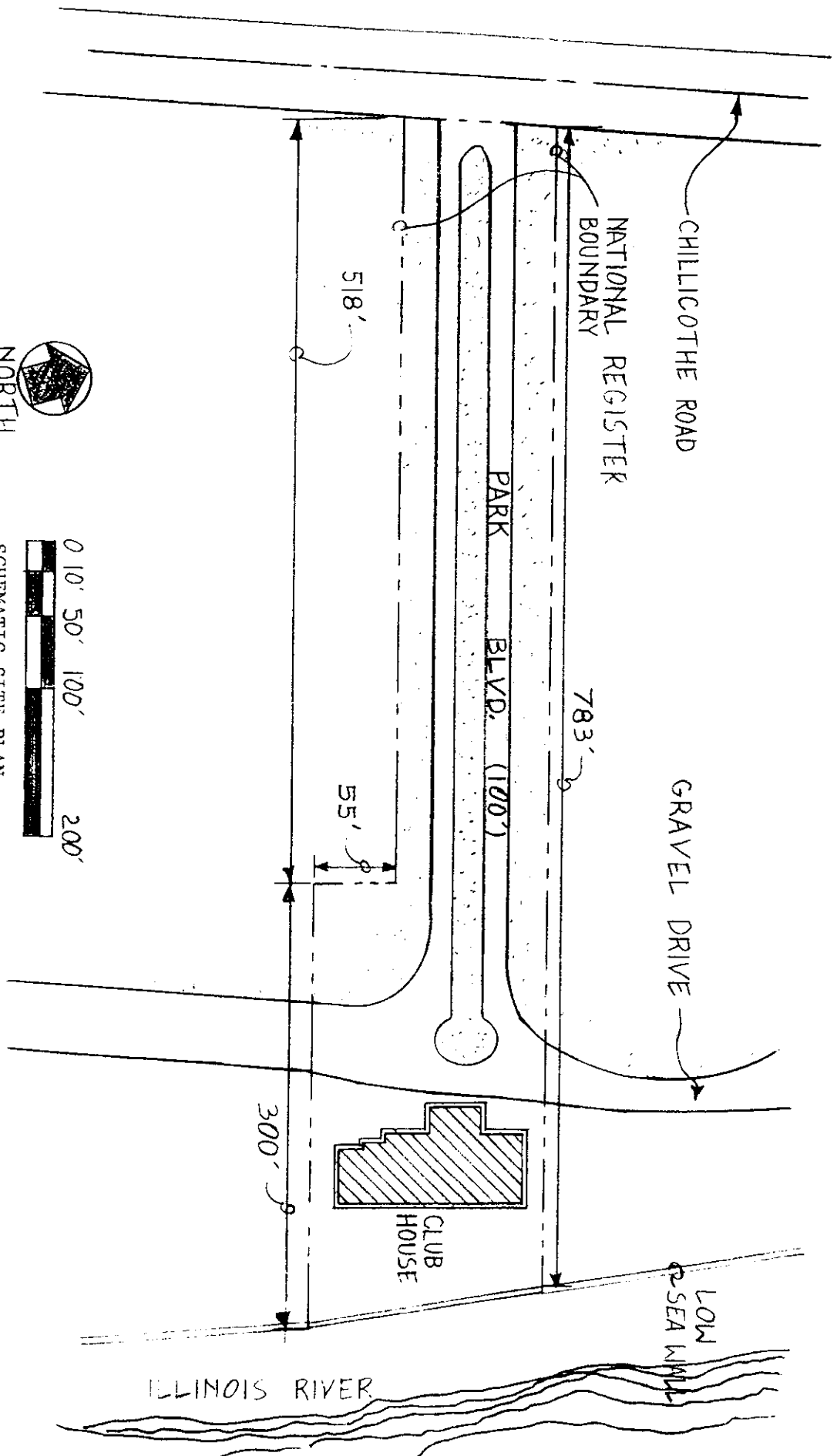
SCHMATIC SECOND FLOOR PLAN

PEORIA AUTOMOBILE CLUB  
 CHILLICOTHE, ILLINOIS  
 4/3/95

KENYON AND ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS



A part of the SE 1/4 of Section 29, and also a part of the SE 1/4 of Section 29, all in T11N, R9E of the 4th P.M., Peoria County, Illinois



SCHEMATIC SITE PLAN  
SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"

PEORIA AUTOMOBILE CLUB  
CHILLICOTHE, ILLINOIS

Taken from a Land Survey  
by Wallace Engr. & Land Surveying Co.  
Toulon, Illinois  
June 29, 1992



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

AUG 11 1995  
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National Services

IN REPLY REFER TO:

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to announce actions on the following properties for the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202-343-9542 or 202-343-1572 or you may respond via cc:Mail.

AUG 11 1995

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 7/31/95 THROUGH 8/04/95

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

- CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, Miss Orton's Classical School for Girls (Dormitory), 154 S. Euclid Ave., Pasadena, 9500998, LISTED, 8/04/95
- CALIFORNIA, MARIN COUNTY, San Francisco and North Pacific Railroad Station House--Depot, 1920 Paradise Dr., Tiburon, 9500009, LISTED, 8/04/95
- CALIFORNIA, MENDOCINO COUNTY, Olinsky Building, 401 N. Main St., Fort Bragg, 95000995, LISTED, 8/04/95
- COLORADO, JEFFERSON COUNTY, Hill Section, Golden Hill Cemetery, 12000 W. Colfax Ave., Lakewood vicinity, 94001230, LISTED, 7/31/95
- COLORADO, WELD COUNTY, Deary, Ed, Along CO 34, 11 mi. W of Wiggins, Wiggins vicinity, 95001002, LISTED, 8/04/95
- FLORIDA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, Tampa Heights Historic District, Roughly bounded by Adalee St., I-275, 7th Ave. and N. Tampa Ave., Tampa, 95000979, LISTED, 8/04/95
- ILLINOIS, BOND COUNTY, Greenville Public Library, 414 W. Main Ave., Greenville, 95000991, LISTED, 8/04/95 (Illinois Carnegie Libraries MPS)
- ILLINOIS, CRAWFORD COUNTY, Palestine Commercial Historic District, 101--223 and 106--322 S. Main St., Palestine, 95000985, LISTED, 8/04/95
- ILLINOIS, DE KALB COUNTY, Ashelford Hall, 566 Eychaner Rd., Esmond, 95000990, LISTED, 8/04/95
- ILLINOIS, IROQUOIS COUNTY, Smith, A. Herr and E. E., Public Library, 105 Adams St., Loda, 95000992, LISTED, 8/04/95
- ILLINOIS, KANKAKEE COUNTY, Kankakee State Hospital Historic District, 100 E. Jeffery St., Kankakee, 95000987, LISTED, 8/04/95
- ILLINOIS, PEORIA COUNTY, Peoria Automobile Club, 100 Park Blvd., Chillicothe, 95000984, LISTED, 8/04/95
- ILLINOIS, SANGAMON COUNTY, Oak Ridge Cemetery, 1441 Monument Ave., Springfield, 95000986, LISTED, 8/04/95
- ILLINOIS, WHITESIDE COUNTY, Malvern Roller Mill, 18858 Clover Rd., Morrison vicinity, 95000988, LISTED, 8/04/95
- MICHIGAN, WADE COUNTY, Ford Valve Plant, 235 E. Main St., Northville, 95000866, LISTED, 8/01/95
- NEW JERSEY, CAMDEN COUNTY, Glendale Methodist Episcopal Church, 615 Haddonfield--Berlin Rd. (Rt. 561), at jct. with White Horse Rd., Voorhees Township, Glendale, 95001000, LISTED, 8/04/95
- NEW JERSEY, CAPE MAY COUNTY, Saint Peter's-By-The-Sea Episcopal Church, Jct. of Ocean Ave. and Lake Dr., Cape May Point, 95000978, LISTED, 8/03/95
- NEW JERSEY, MONMOUTH COUNTY, Court Street School, Jct. of Court St. and Holmes Terr., Freehold, 95001003, LISTED, 8/04/95
- OHIO, HAMILTON COUNTY, Race Street Historic District, Roughly, along Race, W. 6th and W. 7th Sts. and Shillito Pl., Cincinnati, 95000878, LISTED, 8/04/95
- OHIO, JEFFERSON COUNTY, Steubenville Pottery Company Buildings, Co. Rd. 44 SW of jct. with OH 7, Steubenville vicinity, 920#1034, LISTED, 7/31/95
- OHIO, LUCAS COUNTY, Lasalle, Koch and Company Department Store, 513 Adams St., at jct. with Huron St., Toledo, 95001001, LISTED, 8/04/95
- PENNSYLVANIA, GREENE COUNTY, Crawford, John Minor, House, PA 2014, Monongahela Township, Glassworks, 95000122, LISTED, 7/27/95 (Greensboro--New Geneva MPS)
- PENNSYLVANIA, GREENE COUNTY, Eberhart--Gabler House, PA 2033, Monongahela Township, Glassworks, 95000123, OWNER OBJECTION DETERMINED ELIGIBLE, 8/02/95 (Greensboro--New Geneva MPS)
- PENNSYLVANIA, GREENE COUNTY, Glassworks--Core House, PA 2014, Monongahela Township, Glassworks, 95000121, LISTED, 7/27/95 (Greensboro--New Geneva MPS)
- PENNSYLVANIA, GREENE COUNTY, Glassworks--Gabler House, PA 2014, Monongahela Township, Glassworks, 95000120, LISTED, 7/27/95 (Greensboro--New Geneva MPS)
- PENNSYLVANIA, GREENE COUNTY, Reppert--Gabler House, PA 2014, Monongahela Township, Glassworks, 95000117, LISTED, 7/27/95 (Greensboro--New Geneva MPS)
- PENNSYLVANIA, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Roberts, John, House, 143 Hartman Rd., Montgomery Township, Montgomeryville, 95000892, OWNER OBJECTION DETERMINED ELIGIBLE, 8/04/95
- TENNESSEE, MAURY COUNTY, Scott, Andrew, House, 3991 Pulaski Hwy., Culleoka, 95000976, LISTED, 8/04/95
- TENNESSEE, OBION COUNTY, Bransford, Thomas Leroy, House, 815 N. Ury St., Union City, 95000977, LISTED, 8/04/95
- UTAH, SALT LAKE COUNTY, Walton, Wesley and Frances, House, 5197 S. Wesley Rd., Salt Lake City, 95000983, LISTED, 8/04/95
- UTAH, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Hurricane Historic District, roughly bounded by 300 South, 200 West, State St. and the Hurricane Canal, Hurricane, 95000980, LISTED, 8/04/95
- UTAH, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Rockville Bridge, Bridge St. over E. Fork, Virgin R., Rockville, 95000982, LISTED, 8/04/95
- VIRGINIA, ALBEMARLE COUNTY, Malvern, VA 708 W side, 1250 ft. N of jct. with VA 637, Charlottesville vicinity, 95000974, LISTED, 8/04/95

more: