

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

**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 Hillcrest Country Club
other names/site number Avalon Country Club 049-295-00042

2. Location

street & number 6098 Fall Creek Road N/A not for publication
city or town Indianapolis N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Marion code 097 zip code 46226

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 36CFR 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.)
J.C. Sn 10.12.04
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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
- district
- site
- structure
- object
- landscape

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	4	buildings
1	0	sites
1	1	structures
1	0	objects
5	5	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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Clubhouse
RECREATION/CULTURE: Sports Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Clubhouse
RECREATION/CULTURE: Sports Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls STUCCO
roof CERAMIC TILE
other METAL
CONCRETE

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A-G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1924-1954

Significant Dates

1930

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Diddel, William H. (course designer)
Cannon, Fermor S. (original architect)
Harrison & Turnock (architects)

9. Major Bibliographic 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):

- Criteria for previous documentation on file (NPS).

Primary location of additional data:

- Criteria for primary location of additional data.

Name of repository:

Indiana State Library

Hillcrest Country Club
Name of Property

Marion IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 112 acres

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

1	16	579960	4414460	3	16	580620	4414310
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	580650	4414450	4	16	580660	4413450

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 Linda Weintraut & John Warner
organization Weintraut & Associates Historians, Inc date 03-01-2004
street & number 1555 West Oak Street, Suite 20 telephone 317/ 733-9770
city or town Zionsville state IN zip code 46077

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 Hillcrest Country Club, Inc.
street & number 6098 Fall Creek Rd telephone 317/ 251-1425
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46220

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 7

Page 1

Description

Located in Lawrence Township of Marion County, just east of Indianapolis, the Hillcrest Country Club contains within its boundaries the original 18-hole golf course and its associated buildings and structures dating from the 1920s and 1930s. The club and its recreation facilities are symbolic of an important time in the history of leisure, recreation, sports, and landscape design (golf course design) in the early twentieth century.

There are five contributing resources and five noncontributing resources; however, this count does not reflect the fact that the primary contributing resource, the Hillcrest golf course, is approximately 105 acres out of the 112 acres contained within the boundaries of the historic property. The historic focus of the club has been its golf course, built in 1924 and designed by master golf course designer Bill Diddel. Over time, other components were added, including the clubhouse (1929/1930/2000), swimming pool (1934), water pump (1935), and well house (1940s) as well as buildings and structures built for the modern operation of the club including the golf pro shop building, refreshment building (commonly known as the "snack shack"), maintenance building, score board, and pump house, all of late twentieth-century vintage.

The Hillcrest Country Club golf course retains a sense of history and its historical integrity. The William H. "Bill" Diddel-designed golf course is the nexus of the recreational landscape at Hillcrest Country Club.

The 1930 clubhouse stands as the "gateway" to the landscape's built environment and evokes a sense of permanency for the club members. Notably, the clubhouse's vista of the golf course is such that upon exiting the clubhouse onto the course, one immediately takes note of the tall trees forming the boundary of the property and separating its fairways. The trees are important elements of the natural landscape, which contribute to the historic ambience of the course. (Photographs 1 through 4).

Changes to the property are described below and include a recent remodeling of the clubhouse to add space, improvements to the swimming pool, construction of support buildings, and minor changes to the golf course over time. The noncontributing resources are simple in design, unobtrusive, and have received their rating due to their age. The clubhouse, which was redesigned after a fire in 1929 and remodeled in 2000 to increase interior space, remains on the same basic footprint and retains its historic association with other facilities and functions of the club as the center of social activity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 7

Page 2

The site still retains some elements that the founders found attractive when selecting a location for their club. The course is laid out on gently rolling terrain that was originally a combination of dairy pastures and farm fields. Although once rural, the land abutting the club was developed residentially in the early 1960s. Today, the surrounding development is unobtrusive; it consists mainly of one-story houses. Although visible from the course in the winter, these dwellings are nearly invisible during the months when the trees have full foliage.

Inventory List

Clubhouse (1929/1930/ 2000, Contributing) Originally a four-story building completed in 1929 in a Tudor Revival design by architect Fermor S. Cannon, the clubhouse was redesigned by noted Indianapolis architects, Harrison and Turnock in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1930 after a disastrous fire destroyed the original upper floor. Built into the side of a hill, the clubhouse presents the visual image of a three-story edifice in the west elevation and a one-story profile on its eastern elevation that faces the golf course. During the course of this nomination, this 1930 redesign is termed a "remodel" because the entire building was not rebuilt but the architectural style changed.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style clubhouse retains an exotic air with its arched openings, stuccoed walls, and red tile roof. In 2000, Rowland Associates retained original design elements when the firm altered the façade of the building by replacing the original, narrow, one-story porte-cochere with a three-bay, two-story porte-cochere. This addition to the façade provided space for a new dining room on the third floor above the porte-cochere. Arched openings, tall arched multi-paned window units with metal balcony railings, wide bracketed eaves, and a low profile, tile roof pay homage to the Spanish Colonial Revival style. On the façade, an arched opening beside the porte-cochere is original, as are some window units (Photograph 5). Original window openings from the remodeled building (1930) are located to the right and left of the new porte-cochere, but some window units are replacements. The eastern and western elevations have original features including arched openings (some of which have been closed with an infill), stucco walls, and red tile roof (Photographs 6 and 7). The sloped garden immediately to the west of the entry driveway is in the same location and resembles one shown in a photograph from the 1930s.

The northeast elevation (rear of the clubhouse) contains design elements of both the original and a new addition to the building. Specifically, the exterior wall surfaces, arched window openings, and tile roof are either original from the era of the remodel or

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 7

Page 3

sympathetic additions, reflecting stylistic elements carried throughout the remodeled building (Photographs 8 and 9).

Much of the interior spatial organization from the 1930 building remains in the core of the building, but significant redesigns have changed the look of the interior space. A notable exception is an original dining room. It retains its original fireplaces and stylistic accoutrements. Notable features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style are the exposed beams in the ceilings, the wrought iron chandeliers, the mantels above the hearths, arches along the left side of the room, stone details around the forward edge of the firebox, the tiles in the hearth, and an original fireplace screen with a golf scene produced by an Indianapolis company (Photographs 10 through 14).

Swimming Pool (1934, Contributing) The rectangular swimming pool, built in 1934, is 73.75 feet long and 40.75 feet wide. Constructed of poured concrete, this contributing resource is in its original location and unchanged in exterior design. In the 1960s, new walls were constructed within the original perimeter of the pool to insure structural integrity. This reduced the internal dimensions of the pool by eight inches per side. In the early 1990s, the club installed a new gutter system and a vinyl liner to retain the pool's watertight integrity. A below-grade changing facility (c. 1930s) remains intact at the north end of the pool apron, but is no longer used. A metal fence, supported by regularly spaced concrete columns, surrounds the pool apron (Photograph 15).

Score Board (1990s, Noncontributing)

The score board (1990s) consists of two, 10-foot tall, shaped, concrete columns supporting a wood panel with a shed overhang. Situated near the swimming pool, the board is used to post notices and golfer's scores during tournaments. It is noncontributing due to age (Photograph 16).

Golf Pro Shop (c. 1995, Noncontributing)

The golf pro shop is a two-story irregular concrete building situated north of the swimming pool. The building has one story above and one below grade. Although much simpler in design, the concrete stucco walls, wide overhanging eaves, and arched panels mimic the style of the clubhouse. Composition shingles cover the hipped roof. The window units are tall, fixed sashes. The upper floor contains a retail shop, the golf pro's office, a snack bar, and changing rooms for the pool. The lower portion is a garage for golf carts. The building is noncontributing due to age (Photograph 17 and 18).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 7

Page 4

Maintenance Building (c. 1970, Noncontributing)

The L-shaped maintenance building is situated northwest of the clubhouse. Constructed of metal panels mounted on a metal frame, the building houses the office of the course superintendent and the equipment used to care for the course. It is noncontributing due to age (Photograph 19).

Pump House (c. 1995, Noncontributing)

The pump house is a square concrete block building with wood gable ends. The low-pitched roof is sheathed with composition shingles. Metal double doors on the east side of the building provide access to the interior. The pump house shelters the machinery used to provide irrigation to the course. It is noncontributing due to age (Photograph 20).

Well House (c. 1940, Contributing)

Immediately adjacent to the modern pump house is a well house that once provided water to the course. The well house is a small rectangular building constructed of concrete block on a concrete slab; the gable ends of the roof are wood. The roof is covered with composition shingles (Photograph 21).

Refreshment Building (c. 1970, Noncontributing)

The one-story refreshment building ("snack shack") is located east of the tees for Holes 6 and 16 and near the northern boundary of the course. Built sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s, the building is of simple construction with stucco exterior walls, a low-pitched shingled roof, and a front canopy. It is noncontributing due to age (Photograph 22).

Water Pump (c. 1935, Contributing)

Located east of the lake and between the greens for Holes 11 and 14, the hand operated metal water pump symbolizes the days when course maintenance was mostly manual and labor intensive--a period before the installation of the electric-powered pumps provided water for the fairways and greens (Photograph 23).

Golf Course (1924, Contributing)

The contributing anchor of Hillcrest Country Club is the Bill Diddel-designed, 18-hole golf course, an outstanding and nearly pristine example of a "strategic-school course," a type of design popular in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Strategic golf course design emphasized a park-like atmosphere in natural-looking grounds. The designer used existing land contours or carefully concealed the creation of contours on the course. Some principles employed by golf course designers of the strategic school

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 7

Page 5

included presenting a golfer with options to reach the pin (usually one option was safer than the other but required more strokes); presenting a natural-looking course that usually required a minimum of earth moving; and presenting a course that challenged both the cerebral and physical skills of the golfer. These principles, applied by Diddel, remain surprisingly intact at Hillcrest.

Diddel used natural slopes and land features in designing this course. Many, such as the small lake on the site, various drainage swales, and tree lines throughout the course, add variety to challenge the golfer. He employed clever routing that made use of natural features rather than elaborate sculpting of the earth. His design requires the golfer's thoughtful placement of his first shot to achieve the green in the fewest strokes. According to golfers and designers familiar with Diddel's work, that challenge and small, hard to hit greens are signatures of Diddel's work and reflective of the strategic school he championed. He also incorporated significant slopes with undulating surfaces in many of his green designs. All of these features are visible on Diddel's course at Hillcrest Country Club.

The agelessness of Diddel's design is apparent. According to retired Hillcrest club pro, Ed Knych, Bill Diddel "designed for the future." Diddel's course still challenges modern golfers who have equipment designed to achieve greater distances. His strategic design requires golfers to accept risk on the first shot to achieve the reward of reaching the green on the second shot. A more timid, or less skilled, golfer might take a safer route to the green, but the score would be higher. A strategic school course requires golfers to make decisions, rather than to simply hit a series of straight shots. Diddel mastered this school, and Hillcrest reflects his mastery.

With its original routing, placement of its greens, and most of its component parts, such as the bunkers and the lake, the course has high integrity. Over time, most vintage golf courses in the United States have undergone significant changes in order to compensate for modern equipment, such as high soaring balls and graphite-shafted clubs. In many cases, courses have been completely redesigned, and no vestige of the original remains. Hillcrest is a rare exception in Indianapolis and, indeed, in the United States. With the exception of Hole 12—the green of which has been redesigned a number of times—the course is virtually the same as Diddel's original design. In addition, the practice putting greens between the green for Hole 16 and the pro shop have been enlarged (Photograph 24). Evolutionary changes to the course include new grasses planted on the greens and the movement of tees on Hole 13. A few bunkers have been changed, but many of the original bunkers remain and depressions of some historic bunkers no longer in use are

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 7

Page 6

visible in a few places on the course. Some of the spots that once held bunkers are planted with trees now, continuing to provide obstacles where Diddel intended them. These alterations, however, are part of the natural evolution of a golf course over time; and they continue to honor the original design rather than making significant changes to it.

The golf course itself is either a par-71 or a par-73, depending on which tees the golfer selects. The par-71 course has two par-5 holes, thirteen par-4 holes, and three par-3 holes. The par-73 course has a slightly different array of holes with one more par-5 hole and one less par-4 hole.

Included with this nomination is a copy of a 1941 aerial photograph of the country club and its course, annotated for easy reference, and a line map of the same facility in 2003, for the sake of comparisons made in this narrative. On the aerial photograph, landscape elements are designated with their associated letter in the paragraph below. (Note: a 1930s aerial view is available but the details are not as clear as in the 1941 photograph. Differences in landscape are negligible.)

In addition to the overall layout of the course, including the location of greens and many of the bunkers and water features, other early landscape elements apparent in the 1941 aerial photograph and visible today are:

- A – sharply defined tree lines subdividing parcels of land and fields (pre-1924),
- B – curving tree line between Holes 10 and 15,
- C – lake near the western fence line,
- D – stream and forested area near the northeast corner of the course,
- E – ravine on the right of fairway of Hole 3, and
- F – drainage swales in the fairways of Holes 6, 10, and 15.

A goal of any course designer is to provide a variation of holes in terms of length, difficulty, and mental challenge for varying levels of golfing ability, while maximizing the use of the land available (routing). Diddel's design of Hillcrest offers a number of examples of variation as part of its design. (Refer to the line map of the course and the aerial photograph.) On the front nine, the first two holes are relatively straightforward par-4 holes with few natural and man-made obstacles; the next hole, Hole 3, is more challenging, and Hole 4 is a very short par-3 requiring a high degree of accuracy to avoid hitting the ball out of bounds. On the back nine, Hole 10's greatest risk is the trees on either side of the fairway of this long par-5. Hole 12, a short par-3 with almost no allowance for inaccuracy, requires a shot across the lake, a significant water hazard

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 7

Page 7

(Photograph 25). Hole 13, a moderate par-4, challenges the golfer to hit down an alley of tall trees before reaching a long narrow fairway. Later, Hole 15, another moderate par-4, requires accuracy to play in bounds.

To demonstrate Diddel's strategic design of the Hillcrest course, a detailed description of a few of the holes is necessary. The examples used will be associated with the par-71 course. A review of historical aerial photographs and current maps easily demonstrates that the general routing of the various fairways, the placement of greens, and the locations of many bunkers are identical to those designed into the course by Diddel.

One particularly noteworthy example of Diddel's employment of strategic design is Hole 3, a par-4, dogleg right hole in the northeast quadrant of the course. Typical of the strategic school, this hole demonstrates Diddel's use of natural terrain to offer options to the golfer: one either overcomes the hazards (a ravine, large forested area, and stream) in a direct assault or shuns them, resulting in a higher score (Photographs 26 through 29).

Hole 6, a par-5 dogleg left, rewards the long ball hitter once past the series of fairway bunkers at the angle of the dogleg and a large stand of trees. (Note that the bunkers and the trees appear in early aerial photographs.) This hole has few natural obstacles and relies on a forested dump area on the left, a narrow fairway, and a few bunkers around the green. According to the current club pro, before the trees in the angle of the dogleg attained their present height, one option was to drive the tee shot over the trees, thereby missing the bunkers to the right of the fairway (Photographs 30 through 32).

Hole 11 is a par-4 with two shallow doglegs, each with bunkers requiring a carefully placed shot to avoid the sand. This hole has few natural obstacles other than the low cross-compartments of two natural drainage swales perpendicular to the fairway. With this lack of natural obstacles, Diddel used bunkers along the fairway and around the green to challenge the golfer (Photographs 33 through 35).

Hole 15, a par-4 hole with a dogleg right, incorporates bunkers at the angle of the dogleg and around the green. Natural obstacles include drainage swales perpendicular to the fairway, a fairway that slopes right to left for much of its length, and trees that flank both sides of the tee and fairway. Bunkers in the angle of the dogleg and around the green appear in historic aerial photographs. In addition, the green appears flat, but in actuality is undulating and deceptively fast (Photographs 36 through 38).

Lastly, Hole 17, a par-3 with a short and straight fairway, demonstrates a technique employed by designers (and no doubt Diddel used it here) to make the best use of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 7

Page 8

ground available. Routing, the process of creating variety in design that fits well into the terrain, is important to the design process. Assuming one of Diddel's early aims was to begin and end the course at the clubhouse, Hole 17 is a transitional hole designed to bring the golfer to the 18th tee while using the small amount of land remaining and adding the variety of a short par-3 hole between two long par-4 holes (Photograph 39).

In summary, William H. "Bill" Diddel's design of the Hillcrest Country Club golf course epitomizes many of the principles of the strategic school of course design popularized by the growth and increase in public interest in golf in the early twentieth century. The course is remarkable in its level of integrity; man-made structures and natural features employed in the course design in 1924 remain visible and viable in the daily use of the course today. The Hillcrest Country Club golf course is a remarkably intact example of a historic designed landscape.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 9

Statement of Significance

Hillcrest Country Club is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C and illustrates two National Register areas of significance: entertainment/recreation and landscape architecture. The property is significant for its contribution to the broad patterns of our history: to wit, the growth of leisure, recreation, sports, and landscape architecture (in golf course design) in the period 1910-1930s (Criterion A). Hillcrest Country Club has one of the few remaining golf courses in the Indianapolis area demonstrating the "strategic school" of golf course design. Hillcrest Country Club is also eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as the work of a master golf course/landscape designer, William H. "Bill" Diddel, who designed many Indianapolis and Indiana courses, as well as those in other states (over 250 courses nationally). The golf course at Hillcrest is the only Diddel-designed course in Marion County, Indiana, that remains intact.

Originally called the Avalon Country Club (named after a town on Catalina Island, California), the members, by 1934, unofficially changed the name from Avalon to Hillcrest, but it was not until 1955 that they registered the current name, Hillcrest Country Club, with the Indiana Secretary of State. For the sake of clarity, the current name is used throughout the remainder of the text.

Site History

The area that is now Hillcrest Country Club was originally farmland. As early as 1840, Jonah Lemon owned a large farm at this spot in Lawrence Township, Marion County, Indiana, just east of Indianapolis. The Lemon farm was located on Millersville Road just two miles southeast of Millersville and extended to Fall Creek on the south. The family named their farm Lemona and eventually conducted a dairy business there as well as farming the land. The farmhouse faced Fall Creek in a spot just east of the intersection of what is now Fall Creek Road and Hillcrest Country Club Road.

There were six Lemon children. One of the daughters married into the Schofield Mill family, whose family business was the source of Millersville's name. Around 1890, when Jonah Lemon died, another of his daughters, Mary Lemon Hutchins, received the farm as her share of the estate. Her son, Frank Hutchins, sold the property to Felix M. McWhirter, Henry Estrum, and Fred C. Tucker when Hutchins left for service in World War I. Estrum soon gave up his holdings, and McWhirter and Tucker became partners in the farm. McWhirter was the president of Peoples Bank and Trust Company and Tucker was the founder of what would become Indiana's largest real estate company, F. C. Tucker Company. The two men hired a manager for the dairy at the farm and kept the farmhouse

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 10

and land as a retreat from city life. The McWhirters and Tuckers eventually constructed a dance pavilion on the banks of Fall Creek where they entertained friends.

Around 1924, Tucker and McWhirter purchased an additional forty acres of land along the northeast section of the property and hired Bill Diddel to lay out a golf course on the property. For the next few years, they continued to use the original farm dwelling as the "club house." In 1928, they hired Fermor S. Cannon, a member of the club and the architect of the famed Hinkle Fieldhouse (built the same year), to design the main building.¹ The construction contract was for \$40,000.²

Cannon claimed his design was patterned on a Swiss chalet. The building was four stories tall on the façade or west elevation and two stories on the east elevation overlooking the golf course. The lower two floors were constructed below grade in the side of a natural hill on the property. A porch on the fourth floor provided a "good view of the links" that Bill Diddel had designed.³ Constructed of brick and stucco with half-timbering, the building was a picturesque and "unusual style" in Indianapolis at the time and merited more than one photo in local newspapers.⁴ The grand opening was the week of April 8, 1929, and celebrations included a dinner-bridge party and a dance.⁵ By 1929, Hillcrest Country Club reported a membership of 400.⁶

Sadly, the Hillcrest Country Club members did not enjoy their new home for long. In November 1930, a fire started in one of the employee's rooms at the club and, despite the efforts of firemen, who were hampered by a lack of water because holding ponds had been drained for the winter, the building sustained more than \$50,000 in damage. Many members were in the dining room and on the golf course at the time of the fire. They formed a line and somehow managed to save some of the club's belongings, including the grand piano, an Otto Stark painting, and the club stenographer's canary.

¹ "Hinkle Fieldhouse," in *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, David J. Bodenhamer and Robert Barrows, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 682.

² Dumar's personal scrapbook located at Hillcrest Country Club.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "View of Avalon Country Club House Pictures Unusual Style of Building," photograph in *Indianapolis News*, March 23, 1929.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Indianapolis Council of Social Agencies, *The Leisure of a People: Report of a Recreation Study of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis: Crippin, 1929), 442.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 11

Not surprisingly, with so many prominent business and banking leaders as members, the club was fully insured, and it was not long before a new clubhouse was under construction. Local architects Harrison and Turnock, who also designed Crispus Attucks High School and the Indiana School for the Blind, among many other significant buildings in Indianapolis, were the architects of record for the new building.⁷ Constructed around the remaining skeleton of the original building and completed a mere six months after the fire, the Spanish Colonial Revival-style clubhouse was a full story shorter than the original building and had an exotic air with arched openings, stuccoed walls, and red tile roof. In May 1931, members celebrated another grand opening with yet another dinner-bridge party and a dance.⁸

In the 1930s, the Great Depression had a substantial impact on country clubs, with many clubs losing members or even closing during these austere years. Hillcrest Country Club probably lost members, but somehow managed to stay in business and even expand its recreational offerings. In addition to the new clubhouse, the club added a swimming pool to its property.

Over time, several new buildings have been added to the landscape at Hillcrest Country Club, including a bathhouse/pro shop combination and maintenance building. The clubhouse has recently been expanded and the interior remodeled although it remains in its original location and, with the exception of an enlarged porte-cochere, retains the footprint of the 1929 building. Hillcrest Country Club, now numbering nearly 540 memberships, has become intergenerational as members who used the club as children grew up, got married, and had children of their own who joined the club, continuing the tradition.

Recreation and Leisure Context

Following the tenets of the Progressive Era Playground Movement, Americans extolled the benefits of outdoor recreation. In 1916, the federal government had created the National Park Service, recognizing the importance of setting aside land that would provide Americans with places to spend their leisure time.⁹ In Indiana, too, the local government recognized the importance of the natural environment and created a state

⁷ "Harrison and Turnock," in *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds, 662-63.

⁸ "Avalon Country Club Sends Invitations for Clubhouse Opening Next Weekend," *Indianapolis News*. May 16, 1931.

⁹ National Park Service. Available @ cr.nps.gov/history/hishps/NPSHistory/briefhistory.htm

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 12

park system in 1916.¹⁰ Innovation made automobiles affordable and common and provided the impetus for a better roads movement, all of which combined to allow Americans to explore beyond their own backyards and to travel far beyond the dedicated routes of streetcars. Nationally, an era of prosperity and a decrease in the length of the workweek following World War I boosted an already rising interest in recreation and leisure activities.

Local manifestations of these national and state movements resulted in Indianapolis's new park law in 1919. This legislation created a public parks department that soon began to construct playgrounds, pools, and other recreation centers in the city.¹¹ In 1909, Indianapolis completed construction of Fall Creek Parkway, just south of the land where the Hillcrest Country Club would soon be located. Work began on the Kessler Boulevard and Park system in 1923, a few years before the club organized. Completed in 1929, Fall Creek Parkway simplified travel to the newly organized golf and social club.¹² By 1929, there was one passenger car for every four people in Marion County. Parkways became, on their own, an opportunity for leisure in the form of the family's Sunday drive.¹³ They also made it possible to explore leisure areas further from the city limits. According to one author, the automobile brought golf courses "within practical reach."¹⁴ By the 1920s, Indianapolis, like other American cities, was the perfect breeding ground for gathering places such as Hillcrest Country Club.

In this new leisure environment, golf became a popular activity and country clubs an important venue for the game. In 1916, there were only 743 golf courses in the United States. By 1930, a decade after Bobby Jones had won the grand slam in golf and brought the game into the national consciousness, that number had increased to 5,856—more than seven times as many.¹⁵ More money was spent on golf, in the years following World War I, than on any other sport.¹⁶ By 1929, the amount of money invested in golf courses nationally reached \$850 million and golfers were paying \$200 million annually to play the game.¹⁷

¹⁰ Clifton Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 221.

¹¹ "Parks," *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds. 1076-80.

¹² "Kessler's Boulevard and Park System," *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds., 868-69.

¹³ Indianapolis Council of Social Agencies, *Leisure of a People*, 57.

¹⁴ Foster Rhea Dulles, *A History of Recreation* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), 319.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 345 and 357.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 358.

¹⁷ Dulles, *America Learns to Play*, 358.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 13

Golf was a game with “unique status.” It became an extension of the office for businessmen. It also provided an opportunity for recreation outside the home for homemakers of the day. Before the 1920s, women did not engage in many sporting activities, but this era experienced a marked increase in women’s participation on the golf links. They could now play “without reproof.”¹⁸ Social reformers of the period were concerned that the “‘great problem’ is to create a civilization that does not degenerate under leisure.” These reformers, who worried about “misuses of leisure,” saw golf as a “constructive use” of leisure time.¹⁹ Playing golf and, even more importantly, belonging to a country club, was as much a statement of social status as it was a leisure-time activity. This era gave birth to many country clubs in Indianapolis. Broadmoor, Meridian Hills, and Avalon Hills (Hillcrest) all organized in the early 1920s. By 1929, Hillcrest had 400 members, according to an Indianapolis recreation survey.²⁰

Local officials also built municipal courses in these years, including Pleasant Run in 1921, Sarah Shank in 1925, and Douglass, a course for African Americans, in 1928.²¹ In a study conducted in Indianapolis in 1929, golf was listed more often than any other activity as a hobby of local residents. The same study included letters from three residents who provided information about their use of free time. Golf ranked high: two of the three, a bank teller and a stenographer, were golfers. The stenographer, a young woman, also took golf lessons.²²

During these same decades, swimming also became very popular in the United States and by 1930 was one of the most popular recreation activities. Indianapolis began to construct municipal pools and so did many private clubs in the city. At Hillcrest Country Club, members had planned a swimming pool at the time the first clubhouse was constructed, but it was not until 1934, in the midst of the Great Depression, that Hillcrest constructed its pool.²³ In the 1950s a number of Indianapolis’s private clubs including the Riviera Swim Club and the Indianapolis Athletic Club began to hold swimming competitions. A succession of swimming instructors made Hillcrest’s swim team competitive in the city. Of course, the pool also served as a spot for pure entertainment and for “swimming exhibitions.”

¹⁸ Reynold Edgar Carlson, Theodore R. Deppe and Janet R. MacLean, *Recreation in American Life*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), 49.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 67-69.

²⁰ Indianapolis Council of Social Agencies, *Leisure of a People*, 442.

²¹ “Country Clubs,” *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds., 478-79.

²² Indianapolis Council of Social Agencies, *Leisure of a People*, 59-61.

²³ “Hillcrest Pays Off On Its Pool Bonds,” *Indianapolis Star*, July 28, 1939.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 14

If, as Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, asserted, “this civilization is not going to depend upon what we do when we work, so much as what we do in our time off,” then Hillcrest Country Club provided a model for some Indianapolis residents who wished to make “constructive use of leisure.”²⁴

Golf Course Design

The title of golf course architect was freely used in the beginning years of the golf boom in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but these early course designers were not trained architects; instead they were player/designers—enthusiasts for the sport who used their love and knowledge of the game to design courses to challenge other enthusiasts. In fact, it was well into the twentieth century before noted course designer Robert Trent Jones customized his architecture studies to acquire the information needed to design, maintain, and construct modern golf courses. Eventually, advances in agronomy and course irrigation systems engendered an entire science related to course upkeep and maintenance.

The “strategic school” of golf course design emerged in the early twentieth century as the game of golf became increasingly popular in American communities. Unlike the “penal school” of earlier years, which required accurate, straight shots to reach the hole and severely penalized stray shots with hazards, strategic designs presented players with alternative routes to the green and raised the level of challenge to golfers of various degrees of skill. To achieve the lowest score, a golfer playing a strategic course had to take risks; those who took “safe” shots scored higher. The “avenue . . . that leads to a lower scoring possibility should be more dangerous [in a strategic course] than the longer, safer route.”²⁵

Strategic golf course design also reflected America’s growing appreciation for its natural environment. A harkening back to “the natural” became part of the American aesthetic in many forms in these years. Landscapes, whether on golf courses or in backyards, were “designed” to appear natural and untouched, no matter how difficult that goal was to attain. At a time when the United States was instituting a national park system to preserve and showcase nature’s wonders as a way to stave off the ill effects of industrial life, strategic golf course design emphasized a park-like atmosphere in natural-looking grounds. These designs used existing land contours or carefully concealed the creation of

²⁴ Indianapolis Council of Social Agencies, *Leisure of a People*, 66-67.

²⁵ Geoff Shackelford, *Grounds for Golf*, (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martins Press, 2003), 281.11.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 15

contours on the course. Strategic golf course designs were based on “clever strategy, intense variety and extreme naturalness.”²⁶ One of the earliest known American examples of the strategic type of design was the National Golf Links of America on Long Island, New York, (c. 1904), a course designed by C.B. MacDonald using what became hallmark strategic design features.²⁷

Indiana native Bill Diddel, a practitioner of the strategic school, designed Hillcrest Country Club’s golf course in the early 1920s. In a 1972 interview in *Indianapolis* magazine, Bill Diddel said, “every hole should present a challenge to a golfer. I like to think of some holes as more interesting to play than others, holes where strategy is more important.”²⁸ His carefully contoured greens were natural appearing and probably did not require much in the way of shaping the land, but they offered even good golfers a challenge getting to the pin. Diddel’s course remains challenging today; former golf pro, Ed Knych remembers a National Open qualifying event held at Hillcrest in the 1980s—in which only one player scored below par at this course designed 60 years earlier.

The strategic school reached its zenith between 1910 and 1937, with the period between 1920-1930 often referred to as the “golden age” of golf course design. The Great Depression effectively halted private golf course construction for several years. Diddel remarked in an article in the *Indianapolis Star* that he worked on courses for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Depression.²⁹ When golf course designers began building courses again after World War II, their designs compensated for new equipment that allowed even average golfers to hit longer shots. These new designers created “freeway” style courses with extremely long, straight fairways and “heroic holes” that placed significant obstacles in the path to the ball. Their course requires many more acres of land than most strategic school courses used. This evolution in design styles effectively ended the predominance of the “strategic school.”

Although golf writers and course designers express an appreciation for the playing longevity of strategic courses, few of these courses remain in pristine condition in the United States. As better golf clubs and high-soaring balls came into use, these courses

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 281.

²⁷ Geoffrey S. Cornish and Ronald E. Whitten, *The Architects of Golf: A Survey of Golf Course Design from its Beginnings to the Present, with an Encyclopedic Listing of Golf Architects and Their Courses* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1981), 56-57; Michael J. Hurdzan, *Golf Course Architecture: Design, Construction, and Restoration* (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1996), 12.

²⁸ Norm Shortridge, “Golf,” *Indianapolis Magazine* 9, no. 6 (1972): 18-21.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 39; “Bill Diddel – Hoosier in Profile,” *Indianapolis Star*, November 12, 1972.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 16

often lost their ability to challenge. Many of the most famous golf courses from this period, including one of the most famous strategic courses ever designed, Augusta National, have been nearly obliterated by redesigns that stretched out the fairways or added difficult bunkering or water features. In Indianapolis, Bill Diddel's designs for Woodland Golf course (a rare example of a bunkerless course when it was designed), Highland Country Club, Speedway Golf Course, and other courses have all been redesigned.

Hillcrest, however, retains nearly all of its significant Diddel design features. Fast, true greens with significant slopes, clever routing that made use of natural features rather than elaborate sculpting of the earth, and a design that requires the golfer's thoughtful placement of his or her first shot, in order to achieve the green in the fewest strokes, are signatures of Diddel's courses and reflective of the strategic school he championed.

William H. "Bill" Diddel, Golf Course Designer

Bill Diddel was a golf course designer in an era of player/designers. In the 1920s, the so-called "golden age" of golf course design, when Diddel began his career, there were no degree-producing schools offering golf course design as an area of study. Designers of Diddel's time learned through hands-on experience and by understanding how to play the game.

As a record-setting amateur golfer who won his first tournament when he was a senior at Manual High School in Indianapolis, Diddel learned how to route golf courses by playing on them. An accomplished athlete, Bill Diddel lettered in four sports at Wabash College: basketball, baseball, football, and track. Wabash did not have a golf team, but in his spare time, Diddel managed to win the Indiana amateur golf championship three years running while he was in college and went on to win two more times, becoming the only five-time winner of the event.³⁰

After college, Diddel had a number of jobs. His first opportunity at course design came when, as a member of Highland Country Club, he finished designing the course that was routed by Willie Park Jr., a Scottish golf course designer.³¹ This early experience at Highland no doubt raised his level of visibility in the golfing community and set the stage for his first professional job. Diddel's professional work as a course designer began in

³⁰ "Golf is Bill Diddel's Life—and Livelihood," *Indianapolis News*, June 29, 1964.

³¹ Ron Kern, Golf Course Architect website available @ www.ronkerngolfarch.com/index.html.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 17

1923, when he created the golf course at Ulen Country Club in Lebanon, Indiana. A few years later, he designed the course at Hillcrest.

Eventually, Diddel designed over 250 golf courses, including Meridian Hills Country Club, Riverside Golf Course, and the first course at Fort Benjamin Harrison (all these courses have been redesigned and bear little resemblance to Diddel's original work). In 1928, Diddel purchased 168 acres at the edge of Carmel, Indiana, and, after the Great Depression, constructed his own golf course, Woodland, on this land. Diddel's "bunkerless" design at Woodland has merited mention in golf course history books.³²

A few years later, Diddel leased the course to the Woodland Country Club, but he and his wife continued to live in a log cabin next to the course for many years. After his death, developers purchased the Woodland Country Club and decided to update the course with a complete redesign. They sold some of the property to developers and purchased other adjacent land. When the new owners approached famous golfer and course designer, Ben Crenshaw and asked him to redesign the course, he refused and urged them to keep the historically significant course intact.³³ Eventually, the course owners hired another nationally known designer who completely redesigned the course. Other Diddel courses, including the one at Fort Benjamin Harrison, have been changed to such a degree that they now bear little resemblance to Diddel's original strategic, natural-looking designs. Only the course at Hillcrest Country Club has remained significantly intact; it is the best remaining example of the courses Diddel designed in Indianapolis or nearby communities.

Diddel was a founding member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. He served as president of the society in 1950 and 1965. In 1959, he received the Fred Waring Sportsmanship award for "fostering and perpetuating the high ideals and spirit of golf." Previous winners of this award included Bobby Jones, Gene Sarazen, Chick Evans, and Babe Didrikson Zaharias.³⁴

Bill Diddel loved the game of golf. He continued to work into his 80s and played into his 90s. He achieved fame for continuing to score below his age up to the time he could no longer grip the clubs to play. Diddel died at age 101 in 1983.

³² Shackelford, *Grounds for Golf*, 281.

³³ Kern, interview.

³⁴ "William Diddel, Course Designer," *Indianapolis News*, February 25, 1983; "Honor for Diddel," photograph in *Indianapolis News*, September 16, 1959.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 8

Page 18

Local golf course designer, Ron Kern, has a great appreciation for Bill Diddel's designs, despite having redesigned a number of them over the years. Kern believes that Diddel was an expert at using natural terrain and at creating difficult, yet fair, green designs. In fact, so respected is Diddel's work that Kern keeps some Diddel green designs in his archives as resource material when designing his own courses—a fitting tribute to a master from the “golden age” of golf course design.³⁵

³⁵ Ron Kern, Golf Course Architect. Interview with John Warner and Connie Zeigler, January 8, 2004. His website available @ www.ronkerngolfarch.com/index.html.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 9

Page 19

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 9

Page 20

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet — Hillcrest Country Club, Marion County, Indiana

SECTION 10

Page 21

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

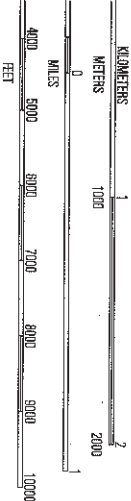
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Boundary Justification

The boundary described is the limit of the surveyed property as of 2001 and encompasses all of the individual properties.



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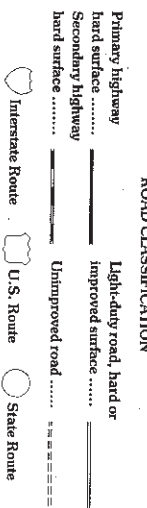
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 CULTURAL RESOURCES, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204
 PHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
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ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES
 1 Westfield
 2 Noblesville
 3 Riverwood
 4 Carroll
 5 McCordsville
 6 Indianapolis West
 7 Indianapolis East
 8 Cumberland



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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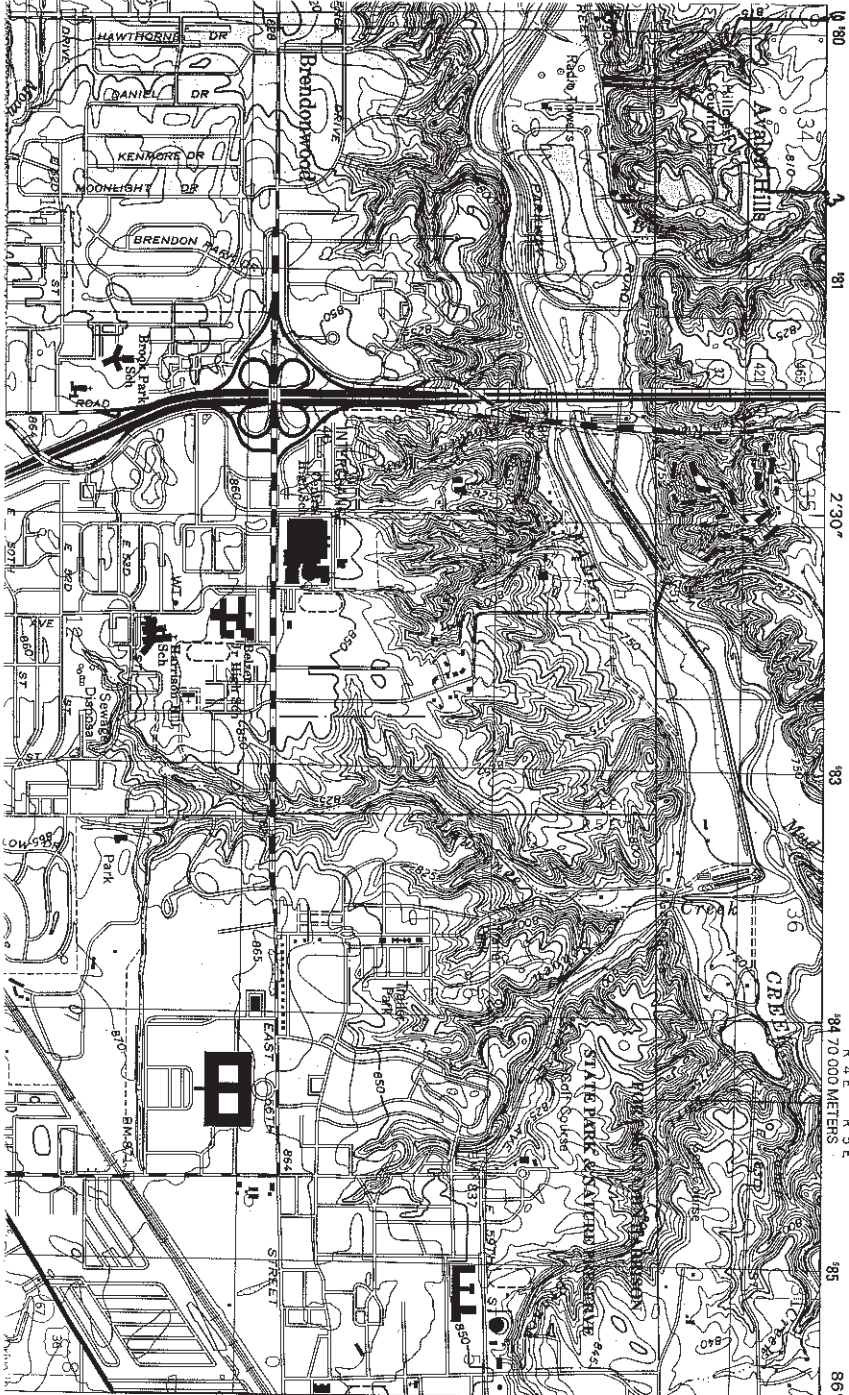
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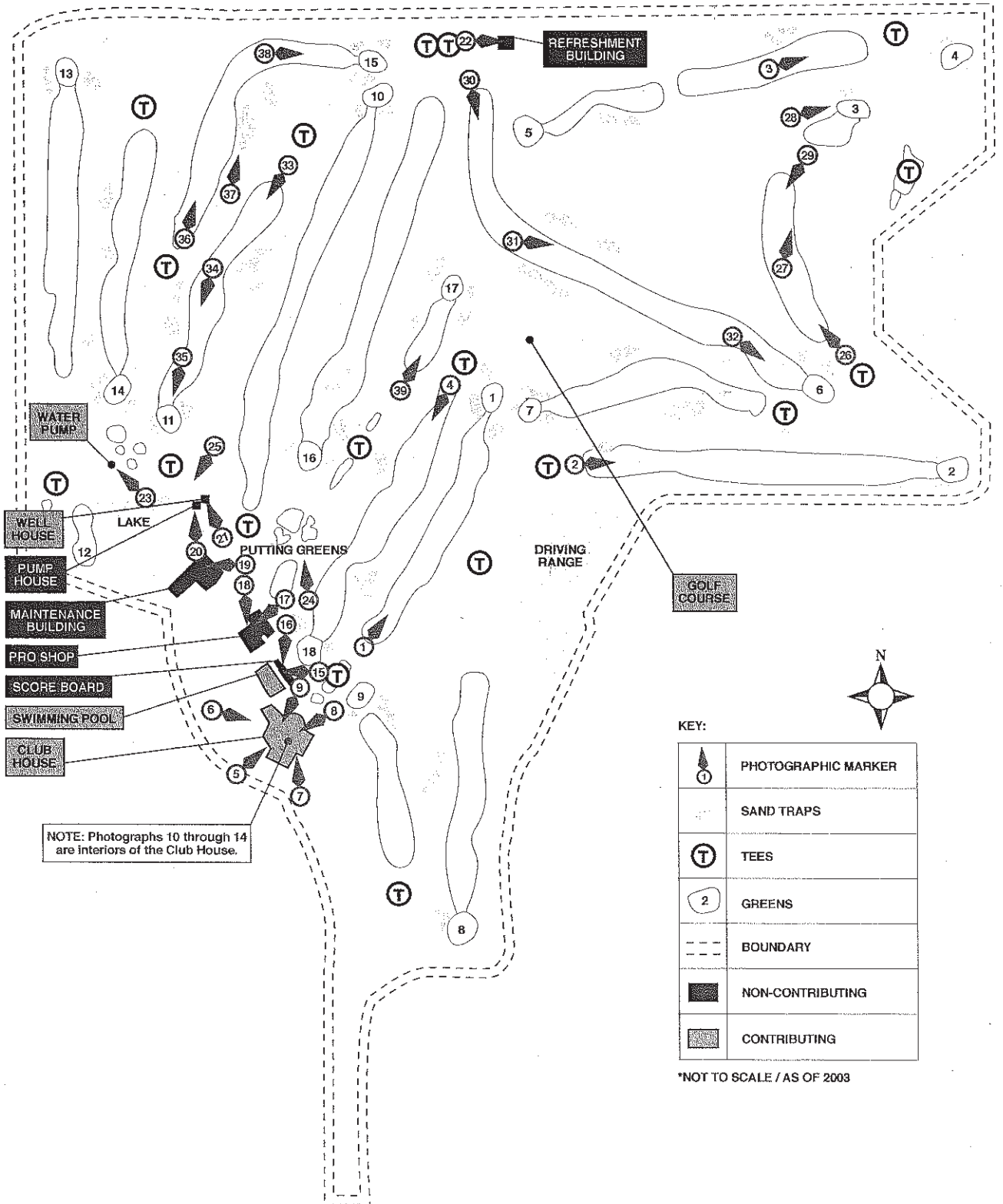
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HILLCREST COUNTRY CLUB



KEY:

	PHOTOGRAPHIC MARKER
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	CONTRIBUTING

*NOT TO SCALE / AS OF 2003