

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Lake Ellyn Park

other names/site number _____

Name of Multiple Property Listing _____

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

2. Location

street & number 645 Lenox Road not for publication

city or town Glen Ellyn vicinity

state Illinois county DuPage zip code 60137

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 at the following level(s) of significance: ___ national ___ statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A ___ B ___ C ___ D

[Signature] 12/16/14
Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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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	1	buildings
1		site
1	1	structure
	1	object
3	3	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreations

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreations

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Tudor Revival (Recreational Building)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Wood

roof: Wood shingles

other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

Lake Ellyn Park, located in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, is a 28.7-acre public park owned by the village's Park District. The park consists of a 10-acre lake at its east end, a wooded area at its west end, and a landscaped parkway connecting to a small, triangular shaped nature preserve at its north end. Paved and unpaved paths wind through the park and around the lake, and benches, lamp posts, and picnic tables have been placed throughout. At the west bank of the lake sits the Lake Ellyn Recreation House, a one-story frame building erected in 1937. A patio with low stone wall extends east and south from the building, and provides access to a two-level wood dock. Other resources within the park include a small veterans memorial near the west bank south of the recreation house; a playground area at the southwest corner of the park built in 1991; a small, gable-roof, frame restroom facility north and east of the playground built in 2016, and a set of clay tennis courts originally built in 1924 in the northwest corner of the park, facing Essex Road.

Narrative Description

Lake Ellyn Park

Lake Ellyn Park is a 28.7-acre park located north and east of the central business district in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, within a well-established residential section of the village. The park is roughly bound by Lenox Road on the west, Essex Road on the north, Lake Road on the east and by Bill Duchon Field (owned by Glenbard West High School) on the south. The northern boundary of the park also encompasses Ruth Candy Parkway and the Judge Joseph Sam Perry Nature Preserve, a triangular parcel bounded by Oak Street, Grand Avenue, and Riford Road. Access to the park is open on all sides, and street parking is available to visitors along Lenox Road and sections of Lake Road.

The east half of the Lake Ellyn Park is taken up by Lake Ellyn, a 10-acre body of water created in 1889 by local developer Thomas Hill as part of the grounds of the Hotel Glen Ellyn. The lake originally encompassed the land on which Bill Duchon Field now stands—that section of the lake was drained for use as an athletic field by the high school in 1919. A small island, called “Glen Isle” on a 1919 map of Glen Ellyn, was located in the section of the lake filled in by the school. The current lake includes approximately 3,340 feet of shoreline, and is used for fishing, non-motorized boating, and ice skating.

The area of the park west of Lake Ellyn consists mainly of wooded, open park land. Mature native canopy trees, including White Oak, Red Oak, Burr Oak, Hickory, Sugar Maple, and American Elm, cover much of this western section of the park. The area north and west of the Lake Ellyn Boathouse is reserved as natural prairie. Paved and unpaved walkways circle the perimeter of the lake and connect the park's main features. Benches and lamp posts line the walkways at the western side of the park, and picnic tables are scattered throughout—these elements are not historic, and date from the 1990s.

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The Ruth Candy Parkway, which connects the main area of Lake Ellyn Park to the Perry Nature Preserve, features a manicured landscape with grassy areas dotted with scattered, younger trees. The Nature Preserve, which was first purchased by the Glen Ellyn Park District in 1957, was added to Lake Ellyn Park in the late 1960s.¹ The land was named for its former owner, U. S. District Court Judge Joseph Sam Perry, who discovered the fossilized skeleton of a Mastodon while excavating for a pond on their property just east of the preserve in 1963.

Within the boundaries of Lake Ellyn Park are two buildings—the Lake Ellyn Recreation House (1937, contributing) and a small public restroom facility (2016, non-contributing). Other resources within the park include a veterans' memorial (1994, non-contributing), playground (1991, non-contributing), and clay tennis courts (1924, contributing).

Lake Ellyn Recreation House

Perched on the western bank of Lake Ellyn, the Lake Ellyn Recreation House was designed by local architect Frederick G. Walker and built with the help of the WPA in 1937. The building is a one-story frame structure with T-shaped massing, with the rectangular main section of the building intersected by a projecting west wing. A one-story south kitchen addition was built in the mid-1950s. The building is clad in wide board cedar siding, which is stained red. Board-and-batten cedar siding covers the gable walls, and terminates with a decorative scalloped edge. The rectangular main section of the building features a side gable roof; the original west wing and the south and additions also feature gable rooflines. Cedar shake shingles cover the entire roof. The primary façade faces east-southeast toward Lake Ellyn, and features a small center entry bay. Secondary entry bays are located in the south corner between the main section of the building and the west wing. Windows on all elevations are 6/6 double-hung or four-light casement windows—all windows are aluminum-clad wood windows, and match the historic type and configuration of the original wood windows.

East (Primary) Facade

The primary facade of the Lake Ellyn Recreation House faces east-southeast onto Lake Ellyn. The façade features a projecting center entry bay with gable roof flanked by rows of 6/6 double-hung, clad-wood windows. The double doors in the main entry bay are wood, with large, single-light upper and lower glazed panels. As on the other facades of the building, the east façade is clad with wide wood boards stained red; board-and-batten siding with a decorative scallop end detail covers the wall under the gable of the entry bay. Two small eyebrow dormers with louvered openings pierce the roof on either side of the center entry bay. The south end of this elevation is part of the 1950s kitchen addition, and blends seamlessly with the original structure. Non-historic plank doors with small glazed openings mark the east wall of the addition.

Secondary Elevations

The north elevation of the main rectangular section of the building is marked by a rough-cut limestone end chimney. The original south elevation of this section is obscured by the 1950s kitchen addition, which features a gable roof and stained wood siding. A concession window is centered along this elevation of the addition. The one-story west wing features a west-facing gable and second stone chimney; eyebrow dormers pierce the north and south slopes of the roof. The north and south facades of the west wing each

¹ "Name Park to Honor Judge," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 1968, p. W3.

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feature a corner entrance bay with shed roof and shallow, flat-roof porch. The plank doors with small glazed openings at each entrance are replacement. Grouped 4-light casement windows mark the north and south walls of the wing—like the windows on the main section of the building, these windows are clad-wood replacement windows.

Interior

Much of the interior space of the Lake Ellyn Recreation House is taken up by the main recreation room. The recreation room is entered from the east entry bay through a small vestibule. The room takes up the entire length of the rectangular section of the building, and is open throughout. The room features vaulted ceilings with exposed, painted framing, historic terrazzo floors, and historic pine paneled walls.

The kitchen wing is located south of the recreation room, and was added to the building in 1959. A small prep area with granite counters is located at the at the northeast corner of the kitchen, with a pass-through along the north wall allowing access into the main recreation room. A short hallway west of the prep area leads into an open kitchen space at the south end of the 1959 addition. Vinyl sheet flooring covers the floors in the kitchen.

The west wing of the Recreation House contains the secondary entrance vestibules, men's and women's restrooms, and utility room. Both the north and south vestibules feature the original terrazzo flooring, while the rest of the floors in the wing are non-historic stone tile.

Other Resources Within Lake Ellyn Park

In addition to the recreation house, Lake Ellyn Park also includes several other structures and objects, most of which are non-historic. A small, frame public restroom facility that was added in 2016. The restrooms are located south and west of the recreation house. Along the west bank of the lake, south of the recreation house, is a small veterans' memorial consisting of a simple stone plaque flanked by decorative cannons. The memorial was dedicated by the American Legion in 1994. The playground, located at the southwest corner of the park near Lenox Road, was installed in 1991.

The clay tennis courts, first installed in 1924, are located at the northwest corner of Lake Ellyn Park, on a small rise overlooking Essex Road. The courts were re-furbished in the 1950s, and a non-historic chain link fence surrounds them.

Integrity

In its nearly 100-year history, Lake Ellyn Park has evolved to serve the community. Early additions to the park that remain and are historically valuable include the 1937 Lake Ellyn Recreation House, as well as the clay tennis courts added to the park in the mid-1920s. The character of Lake Ellyn has remained essentially as it was when Lake Ellyn Park was formed in 1919—although the south end of the original lake was filled in by Glenbard West High School for an athletic field, this change predated the opening of the park.

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In the mid-to-late-1960s, the boundaries of the original park were expanded north to include Ruth Candy Parkway and the Judge Joseph Sam Perry Nature Preserve. Both properties had been under the ownership and stewardship of the Village for at least a decade at the time of their inclusion into Lake Ellyn Park.

More recent additions to the park grounds include the playground (1991), veterans' memorial (1994), and public restroom facilities (2016). The stone walls, pergola, and wood dock surrounding the recreation house also date from 2016.

Even with these changes, Lake Ellyn Park retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to convey its significance.

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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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1919-1968

Significant Dates

1919

1937

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

Architect/Builder

Frederick Gail Walker (Recreation House)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

Lake Ellyn Park is locally significant under National Register Criterion A for its associations with the history and development of outdoor recreation in the Village of Glen Ellyn. Created from the grounds of Hotel Glen Ellyn, the site was the first public park created by the newly-established Glen Ellyn Parks District in 1919, and was among the earliest parks within the village. Centered within the park is Lake Ellyn, a 10-acre lake created in 1889 as part of the grounds for the Hotel Glen Ellyn. Improvements within the park include the Lake Ellyn Recreation House, the oldest extant structure within the Glen Ellyn Park District's system of park buildings. Designed by local architect Frederick Gail Walker, the building was erected with the assistance of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and completed in 1937.

Lake Ellyn Park continues to serve as a popular recreation destination for residents of the Village of Glen Ellyn and surrounding suburban communities. Therefore, the period of significance for Lake Ellyn Park is 1919, when the park opened, to 1968, when the Ruth Candy Parkway and Perry Nature Preserve were added to the park.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

History of Lake Ellyn Park: Development of Lake Ellyn

The history of Lake Ellyn Park begins many years before the establishment of the Glen Ellyn Park District, with the creation of an idyllic hotel and resort north of the village's central business district. Through the late 1880s, the area that is now Lake Ellyn Park was largely unimproved land—the flat area now occupied by the lake and the athletic field for Glenbard West High School was used as a field for the village's baseball team, the Danby Rustics.² By the early 1890s, the area had been transformed into a residential development centered on an elegant resort and spa, complete with mineral springs, a four-story hotel, and wooded grounds framing a picturesque, 50-acre lake.

The idea to create the resort began with resident Thomas H. Hill. A professor, author, and two-term mayor of Aurora, Hill moved to Glen Ellyn (then known as Prospect Park) in 1885. He purchased a 160-acre parcel south of Hill Avenue and created an impressive estate he called "Wildairs." Hill then turned his attention to a 650-acre parcel northeast of the village center, partnering with local investors A. E. Goodridge and Seth Riford to develop the property as the Prospect Park Improvement Association. In 1889, a stream flowing through the land was dammed to create Lake Glen Ellyn (later shortened to Lake Ellyn). The following year, four natural springs north and east of the lake were improved with stone enclosures and protective canopies, and the water was marketed by Hill and his partners (under the auspices of the Glen Ellyn Hotel and Springs Company) as "the purest waters in America."³

In 1890, construction began on the Hotel Glen Ellyn on the ridge between Lake Ellyn and Crescent Boulevard. The grand, four-story wood structure contained over 100 guest rooms, several reception parlors, a smoking room, a billiard room, and offices. The hotel was the crown jewel of Hill's development, and the resort grounds, which included the lake and springs, were used to promote the residential subdivisions surrounding them. Early

² Russ Ward, *Images of America: Glen Ellyn* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), p. 47.

³*Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 19, 1893, p. 11.

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advertisements for the subdivisions listed the advantages of living in the development, the most attractive of which was access to the Glen Ellyn Hotel picnic and pleasure grounds “of over 100 acres, owned by the Glen Ellyn Hotel and Springs Co., for the use ONLY of purchasers and guests at the hotel.”⁴ Although advertised as exclusive, in reality local residents throughout the village used Lake Ellyn and the surrounding park land for their own recreation. The property quickly became a popular spot for boating and picnicking in the summer and ice skating in the winter. It is not surprising that Lake Ellyn became a hub for recreation for Glen Ellyn residents during this period—the only publicly owned park in the village during this period was Stacy Park, a small triangular plot of land between St. Charles and Geneva Roads at its northern edge. The land was given to the village by P. W. and Betsy Stacy in 1891; management of the park was taken over by the Glen Ellyn Park District Board in 1923.

The Hotel Glen Ellyn opened in 1893 in time for the summer season. Disappointing sales in that first season proved too much for Hill, Goodridge, and Riford; the hotel and grounds were put up for sale by sales agent C. E. Raymond in 1894. The hotel building was rented to a Chicago company who ran the hotel in the summer of 1894 and 1895. In 1895, another Chicago firm leased the building as a private club. The St. Luke Society used the building as a health clinic from 1902-1903, and Ruskin College occupied it from 1903 to 1905. After the college left in the summer of 1905, the building was used as the summer hospital for the Chicago Tribune.⁵ On May 1, 1906, just as new occupants were beginning renovations, the Hotel Glen Ellyn was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. The springs remained opened in the years after the fire, but quickly fell into disrepair.

Lake Ellyn Park and the Creation of the Glen Ellyn Park District

Although Lake Ellyn and the surrounding land was Glen Ellyn’s most prized recreation spot through the turn of the 20th century, it did not become a public park until 1919. After the destruction of the Hotel Glen Ellyn, the land surrounding Lake Ellyn was sold to John A. Brown, who subdivided it and offered it for sale as residential property in 1907. An early plat of the subdivision shows a narrow road encircling the lake, with generous lots around the road offering direct access to the shoreline. Advertisements for the subdivision in local papers played up the proximity to Lake Ellyn, just as Thomas Hill and his partners had nearly 20 years earlier. Despite the push for development, the parcels surrounding the lake remained open.

As soon as the land became available for purchase, boosters in Glen Ellyn sought to secure at least some of the land surrounding Lake Ellyn for use as a public park. However, as an article in the February 14, 1914 edition of the *Glen Ellyan* explained, “In each case legal authority to accept this property was lacking and consequently no progress was made. A properly and legally constituted park commission would have the power to purchase or otherwise secure the lake and surrounding property for the park district.”⁶

After two unsuccessful votes in the 1910s, a third election to decide whether Glen Ellyn would establish a Parks District occurred on October 25, 1919. At the same time, voters were also asked approve the purchase land on the west side of the lake for use as a public park. In an article announcing the impending vote, an anonymous supporter of the plan urged:

It is not often that a village of the size of Glen Ellyn has an opportunity to own a park of such natural beauty within its village limits and near its center of population as is offered in the plan now before our citizens. . . The land itself is now subdivided. Lots are really for sale, and if the village ever is to own it,

⁴Chicago Daily Tribune, October 5, 1890, p. 7.

⁵Robert W. Chambers and Helen W. Ward, *Glen Ellyn: A Village Remembered* (Glen Ellyn, IL: Glen Ellyn Historical Society, 1999), p. 74-75; 83.

⁶“Park District for Glen Ellyn,” *The Glen Ellyan*, February 21, 1913, p. 1.

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now is its last opportunity. In a few months enough lots will be sold. . . and the opportunity will be gone forever. . . .⁷

The concern this supporter expressed was legitimate—earlier that year, Glen Ellyn’s High School District purchased Lake Ellyn and a large portion of the land surrounding it from Charles R. Raymond for \$8,000.00. The school district intended to build a new high school building on the ridge at the southeast side of the lake known as Honeysuckle Hill, close to where the Hotel Glen Ellyn had been erected 30 years before. The High School District also planned to reclaim the south end of Lake Ellyn as an athletic field. Even with this large section of land now spoken for, there were still available “82 acres skirting the west shore of Lake Ellyn, undoubtedly the prettiest tract available for park purposes in the county. And the price is the lowest that has ever been submitted once the land was subdivided, namely \$13,119.”⁸

This time, the campaign was successful, and the citizens of the village voted to organize a Parks District that would have the authority to purchase park land on the west side of Glen Ellyn. In the inaugural meeting of the Glen Ellyn Park Board on November 3, 1919, the commissioners moved to “communicate with C. E. Raymond relative to securing [an] option on the tract of land adjacent to Lake Glen Ellyn,” and voted in the December meeting to approach the High School District Board about “giving part of their property to the Board of Park Commissioners for Park purposes.”⁹

With land for Lake Ellyn Park secured by the early 1920s, the Park Board turned their attention to the improvement of the property and the construction of a boat house that would also serve as a warming shelter for ice skaters during the winter months. Construction of the shelter began in 1923 and was finished by the winter season. The January 18, 1924 edition of the *Glen Ellyan* enthused that the new shelter had led to “more skating this year than ever before in Glen Ellyn’s history,” with its “roaring fire going in the stove,” and concession stand serving “malted milk, hot coffee and wienie sandwiches to cheer up a chilled interior.”¹⁰

As soon as the first shelter was completed, park superintendent Mark B. Woods predicted that the structure would have to be enlarged to accommodate the number of skaters flocking to the park. As the popularity of the park increased through the decade, it became apparent to the Park Board that a new recreation house would soon have to be built, either attached to the existing house or replacing it entirely.

Other Parks Established in Glen Ellyn in the 1920s and 1930s

The late 1920s were years of spectacular residential expansion in Glen Ellyn and other suburban areas throughout the country. This population explosion coincided with the establishment of the village’s first zoning ordinance and master plan, which many municipalities were undertaking as a concerted effort to manage development. This interest in planning also extended to the Park District Board, which sought to provide green space and recreation opportunities for the growing number of residents in the village. Property that is now part of Prairie Path Park was acquired by the Board in 1923, and Memorial Park, a 15-acre site south of Crescent Boulevard, was built in 1926 on land donated by Roy Spalding. Memorial Park was best known in the village as the site of Glen Ellyn’s annual Memorial Day celebration, beginning in 1926 and continuing through 1994, and for its veterans’ memorial. A portion of the memorial was moved to Lake Ellyn park in the 1990s. The park was purchased by Glenbard High School in 2001. Land for Sunset Park, south of downtown, was acquired by the

⁷ “District Will Vote on Park Tomorrow,” *The Glen Ellyan*, October 24, 1919, p. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Glen Ellyn Board of Park Commissioners, November 3, 1919 and December 1, 1919.

¹⁰ “Shelter at Lake Adds Skating Joy,” *The Glen Ellyn News and the Glen Ellyan*, January 18, 1924.

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village in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and a pool was built in the park in 1941. A parcel on Elm Street, initially slated for the site of the pool, was later used to create George Ball Park.¹¹

Construction of the Lake Ellyn Recreation House

Through the late 1920s and early 1930s, Lake Ellyn Park still remained the village's most popular recreation area. Despite the hardships brought upon the Park District by the Great Depression—five park maintenance workers were let go in the early 1930s, and the Board struggled to make interest payments on maturing bonds—in 1935 discussion began in earnest among the commissioners about building a new Recreation House in Lake Ellyn Park.¹² In January, the Board moved to have an architect draw up plans for the new building.

Architect Frederick Gail Walker (1879-1957)

The Glen Ellyn Park District Board chose prominent local architect Frederick Gail Walker to design the new Recreation House for Lake Ellyn Park. Born in Nebraska December 29, 1879, Walker attended the University of Nebraska before moving to Chicago, where he joined the offices of architect and planner Edward H. Bennett. After several years in Chicago, Walker relocated to Glen Ellyn. There he partnered with local architect and artist Austin Angell. By the mid-1920s, Walker & Angell had become one of the most prolific and respected architecture firms in Glen Ellyn, with multiple residential and commercial commissions. The firm was especially well-known for their commercial work downtown, which showcased the "Old English" style put forth by the newly-minted master plan.¹³ By the time he was commissioned to design the Recreation House, Frederick Walker was practicing alone. He had also become involved with village planning and was appointed head of the Glen Ellyn Zoning Board of Appeals in 1931.¹⁴

Walker's plans for the Recreation House were submitted to the Board in mid-1935, and his design was charming and practical. The focus of the building was its large recreation hall, which measured 68 feet by 26 feet and took up most of the interior space of the building. Rows of double-hung windows on either side of the small east-facing entry bay allowed for plenty of light, and showcased views of Lake Ellyn. Rustic pine boards covered the walls of the recreation room, and a massive stone fireplace provided warmth for skaters and was a handsome focal point for the room. All service and utility spaces were contained within the west wing. A small kitchen was placed at the east end of the wing, with a counter window opening into the recreation room. Flanking the kitchen were two small coat rooms. Vestibules on the north and south ends of the wing provided outside access to the men's and women's rest rooms.

Walker's design optimized the functionality of the space, which had to be flexible enough to accommodate recreation activities during all seasons. Because ice skating was the most popular activity in Lake Ellyn, Walker designed a removable wood floor that would allow drainage for tracked in snow and prevent damage to the underlying floor from skate blades. He also designed simple lockers and benches in white pine that could be removed from the building when skating season was over.¹⁵

Walker submitted his plans for the Recreation House to the Park Board in May of 1935, and the Board approved the design with only minor changes.

¹¹ Ron Aubrey, "History of George Ball Park (2016)," <https://geparkhistory.omeka.net/items/show/1577>

¹² "Glen Ellyn Park District History," http://www.gepark.org/gen_history.htm

¹³ "Biography of Frederick Gail Walker," In collection of the Glen Ellyn Historical Society.

¹⁴ National Register of Historic Places, Glen Ellyn Downtown North Historic District, National Register Reference Number 13000716.

¹⁵ Architectural Drawings for Park Recreation House, Lake Ellyn Park, Glen Ellyn, Illinois. Glen Ellyn Park District archives.

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Works Progress Administration (WPA) Assistance in Building the Recreation House

Between 1935 and 1937, the Glen Ellyn Park District Board worked to finalize the location of the new Recreation House and sought funding for its construction. In August of 1936, the Board voted to erect the new building just north of the old comfort station. To cover some of the cost, the Park Board applied to the newly-formed Works Progress Administration (WPA) for assistance in building the new Recreation House. One of the most successful programs established under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, the WPA put millions of unemployed Americans to work building and repairing schools, police and fire stations, parks, libraries, roads, and recreation facilities like the Lake Ellyn Recreation House. For most WPA projects, local governments provided land, materials, and transportation, and the federal government took responsibility for providing wages for the labor. The Park Board began investigating the use of WPA funds to push forward several Park District projects, including a new swimming pool and bath house and the Lake Ellyn Recreation House. After the initial application was rejected, the commissioners re-submitted the application for the Recreation House only, and the project was accepted.¹⁶

Construction began on the Recreation House in early 1937 and continued into the fall. The minutes of the Park Board show that throughout the construction period the Commission continually made small adjustments to Walker's plans, mainly material changes or minor design details. The concrete flooring was changed to Moultilite before the commissioners decided on terrazzo. An extra window was added to the wall on the west side of the fireplace in the recreation room to "correspond with the one on the east side."¹⁷ The white pine skating lockers shown on Walker's 1935 plans were replaced with steel lockers. Commissioners voted for a stone wall around the east terrace instead of the pipe railing originally proposed. These records provide a fascinating window into the Park Board's influence over the design process.

Opening of the Lake Ellyn Recreation House

On November 11, the Park District held an open house and dedication for the new Recreation House, and provided refreshments from the local Jewel Food Store and music by a local dance orchestra. *The Glen Ellyn News and The Glen Ellyan* reported:

Each and every feature and detail is indicative of the park board's intention and desire to give to the residents of the park district a building of which they can be justly proud, and from the expressions of those who were present, it was evident that they were more than just well pleased with it.¹⁸

Glen Ellyn residents eagerly made use of the Recreation House, which was available for rent except during December, January and February, when the building was solely reserved for ice skaters. Park Board minutes show requests from various community and social groups to use the building for their monthly meetings even before construction was completed. In addition to regular meetings, the Recreation House also became a popular venue for larger, annual events. The Glen Ellyn Garden Club held its annual flower show for the first time in 1941—the event was such a success that the Garden Club returned to the building year after year.¹⁹ The Century Club held its annual "picnic" from the comfort of the building's main recreation room. The building was also host to numerous table tennis tournaments. Although not held exclusively within the Recreation

¹⁶ Minutes of the Regular Meetings of the Glen Ellyn Board of Park Commissioners, August through December 1936.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Glen Ellyn Board of Park Commissioners, July 19, 1937.

¹⁸ "Open House' At New Park Building," *The Glen Ellyn News and the Glen Ellyan*, November 19, 1937.

¹⁹ "Flower Show and Tour Deemed Successful," *The Glen Ellyn News and The Glen Ellyan*, September 18, 1941, p. 1-2.

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House, Glen Ellyn's tradition of holding a July 4th celebration in Lake Ellyn Park began just a few years after the structure was completed.

Some of the most popular events at the Recreation House occurred during the skating season. Lake Ellyn had long been a favorite skating spot for locals and other suburbanites, but the construction of the new building brought a flood of skaters to the park. Barely two months after the opening of the Recreation House, *The Glen Ellyn News and the Glen Ellyan* proclaimed "Never has Lake Ellyn played host to such gatherings as the last three weekends have seen there. The park board's new lodge-like lake house placed as it is in a perfect setting can be the only explanation."²⁰

In January of 1938, the Glen Ellyn Amateur Athletic Association organized its first annual Ice Derby at Lake Ellyn. The event was an undeniable success, drawing 300 skaters and over 2,000 spectators. The derby attracted the attention of the Illinois Skating Association, which chose Lake Ellyn Park as the site for its state speed skating championship meet in 1940. The meet attracted an incredible 20,000 spectators, a record for a state-wide meet.²¹ The state meet was later held at Glen Ellyn for several consecutive years.

Lake Ellyn Park after World War II

Even as the Park District expanded, purchasing land and developing new parks and recreation centers to service the growing Post-World War II suburban population, Lake Ellyn Park continued to play a central role in the recreational activities of Glen Ellyn residents. Park development picked up pace after the construction of the Recreation House—Ball Park opened in 1939 on land donated by Mr. George Ball, and the village opened its first public pool in Sunset Park in 1941. Post-war prosperity accelerated the proliferation of public parks and recreation facilities in the village, and ushered in a new era of professionalization and regulation in the Parks District.

Lake Ellyn Park, which had been open to the public for nearly 30 years by the end of World War II, had evolved slightly over that period of time. The original lake had been altered by the filling in of its south end in 1919 by Glenbard West High School. The original skating shed had been replaced in 1937 with the recreation house, and tennis courts had been installed at the north end of the park along Essex Road in 1924. In the years following World War II, improvements were already being made to the Recreation House to further enhance it for use as a warming house for the skaters and as a meeting venue, including the addition of a new heating system in 1949, the one-story kitchen addition in 1959, and further interior and exterior updates in 1973.²² The latest rehabilitation of the recreation house, completed in 2016, included the rebuilding of the deteriorating wood dock connecting the structure to the lake. In 1991, a playground was built at the southwest corner of the park, near Lenox Road. Three years later, a small veterans' memorial was moved from Memorial Park to Lake Ellyn Park, and remains at the west bank of the lake south of the recreation house. A public restroom facility was built north and east of the playground in 2016. Other minor alterations over the years include the updating of lighting, water fountains, benches and picnic tables.

²⁰ "Lake House Revives Ice Interest Here," *The Glen Ellyn News and the Glen Ellyan*, December 31, 1937.

²¹ "Local A. A. Wins 3 State Skate Titles," *The Glen Ellyn News and the Glen Ellyan*, January 11, 1940, p. 1-2.

²² "Park Board Adds New Improvements," *The Glen Ellyn News*, December 15, 1949, p. 10. In 1949, the Park Board applied for a gas line to be run to the Recreation House to service a new heating system; the Board also investigated finishing the large attic space above the Recreation Room as a secondary meeting space.²² In 1959, local architect Francis Allegretti designed a one-story kitchen addition that extended south of the main recreation room. The original kitchen was repurposed as storage. Perkins and Norris were brought in to update the bathrooms in 1973; at the same time, the crumbling stone retaining wall and knee wall around the east terrace, along with the narrow wood pier, were replaced with a concrete wall. It is also likely that the small eyebrow vents on the roof were installed at that time.

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Perhaps the most significant change to Lake Ellyn Park in the post-war period was the extension of its boundaries some time in the 1960s. In 1957, the Glen Ellyn Park District purchased a triangular parcel of land bounded by Riford Road, Oak Street, and Grand Avenue for use as a park.²³ In 1968, the parcel was dedicated as the Judge Joseph Sam Perry Nature Preserve, in honor of a local judge who was best known for his discovery of a mastodon skeleton on his property in the village.²⁴ Minutes of the Park District Commission also indicate that the Village also owned the Ruth Candy Parkway at the time, and that the Park District was maintaining the parkway. Although it is unknown when the parkway and preserve were folded into the boundaries of Lake Ellyn Park, it seems likely that the land was included within the park soon after the dedication of the nature preserve in the late 1960s.

Despite these changes, Lake Ellyn Park retains many of its character-defining historic features, most notably Lake Ellyn itself, as well as the recreation house. The park continues to serve the community in essentially the same way as it did when it opened, and remains prized by local residents and members of the greater community for its natural beauty and amenities.

²³ The Glen Ellyn Park District, "Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes February 13, 1957," *Glen Ellyn Park District History*, accessed August 5, 2016, <https://geparkhistory.omeka.net/items/show/1433>.

²⁴ "Name Park to Honor Judge," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 1958, p. W3.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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“District Will Vote on Park Tomorrow,” *The Glen Ellyn*, October 24, 1919, p. 1.

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National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Glen Ellyn Downtown North Historic District.
National Register Number 13000716.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 28.7

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Coordinates (see attached GIS map for placement of labeled coordinates):

- 1: 41.887154° -88.062814°
- 2: 41.887387° -88.053790°
- 3: 41.880619° -88.063042°
- 4: 41.880726° -88.053172°

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of Lake Ellyn Park are as follows: beginning at the intersection of Lenox Road and Hawthorne Boulevard, north along Lenox Road to Essex Road; southeast along Essex Road to Grand Avenue (Ruth Candy Parkway); north-northeast along Grand Avenue to Oak Street; northwest along Oak Street to Grand Avenue; northeast along Grand Avenue to Riford Road; south along Riford Road to Oak Street; northwest along Oak Street to Lake Road (east side of Ruth Candy Parkway); southwest along Lake Road, following the east bank of Lake Ellyn to the southeast corner of the lake; continuing west along the south bank of Lake Ellyn to a walkway dividing the southwest corner of Lake Ellyn Park and Bill Duchon Field; southwest to Hawthorne boulevard; west on Hawthorne Boulevard to Lenox Road.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The chosen boundaries correspond to the current boundaries for Lake Ellyn Park—the original park boundary from 1919, in addition to Ruth Candy Parkway and the Perry Nature preserve, both added to the park by the late 1960s.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lara and Emily Ramsey date August 1, 2016
organization Ramsey Historic Consultants telephone 312-421-1295
street & number 1105 W. Chicago Avenue, Suite 201 email lara@ramseyhcinc.com
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60642

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)

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- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Lake Ellyn Park
City or Vicinity: Glen Ellyn
County: DuPage State: Illinois
Photographer: Lara Ramsey
Date Photographed: July 27, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 16: View west across Lake Ellyn to Recreation House
- Photo 2 of 16: East elevation of Recreation House, looking north
- Photo 3 of 16: North elevation of Recreation House, looking south
- Photo 4 of 16: South and west elevations of Recreation House, looking northeast
- Photo 5 of 16: Shelter and patio south of Recreation House, looking north
- Photo 6 of 16: Interior of Recreation House, looking north
- Photo 7 of 16: Fireplace detail, Recreation House, looking north
- Photo 8 of 16: Wall between main room and kitchen addition in Recreation House, looking east
- Photo 9 of 16: Lake Ellyn, looking east
- Photo 10 of 16: East side of Lake Ellyn, looking northwest
- Photo 11 of 16: West side of Lake Ellyn Park, looking north from Recreation House
- Photo 12 of 16: Veteran's Memorial at southwest end of Lake Ellyn Park
- Photo 13 of 16: Tennis courts at northwest end of Lake Ellyn Park, looking south
- Photo 14 of 16: Restroom facility with playground beyond, southwest end of Lake Ellyn Park, looking south
- Photo 15 of 16: Ruth Candy Parkway, looking northeast
- Photo 16 of 16: Perry Nature Preserve, northwest corner, looking southeast

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the the page.)

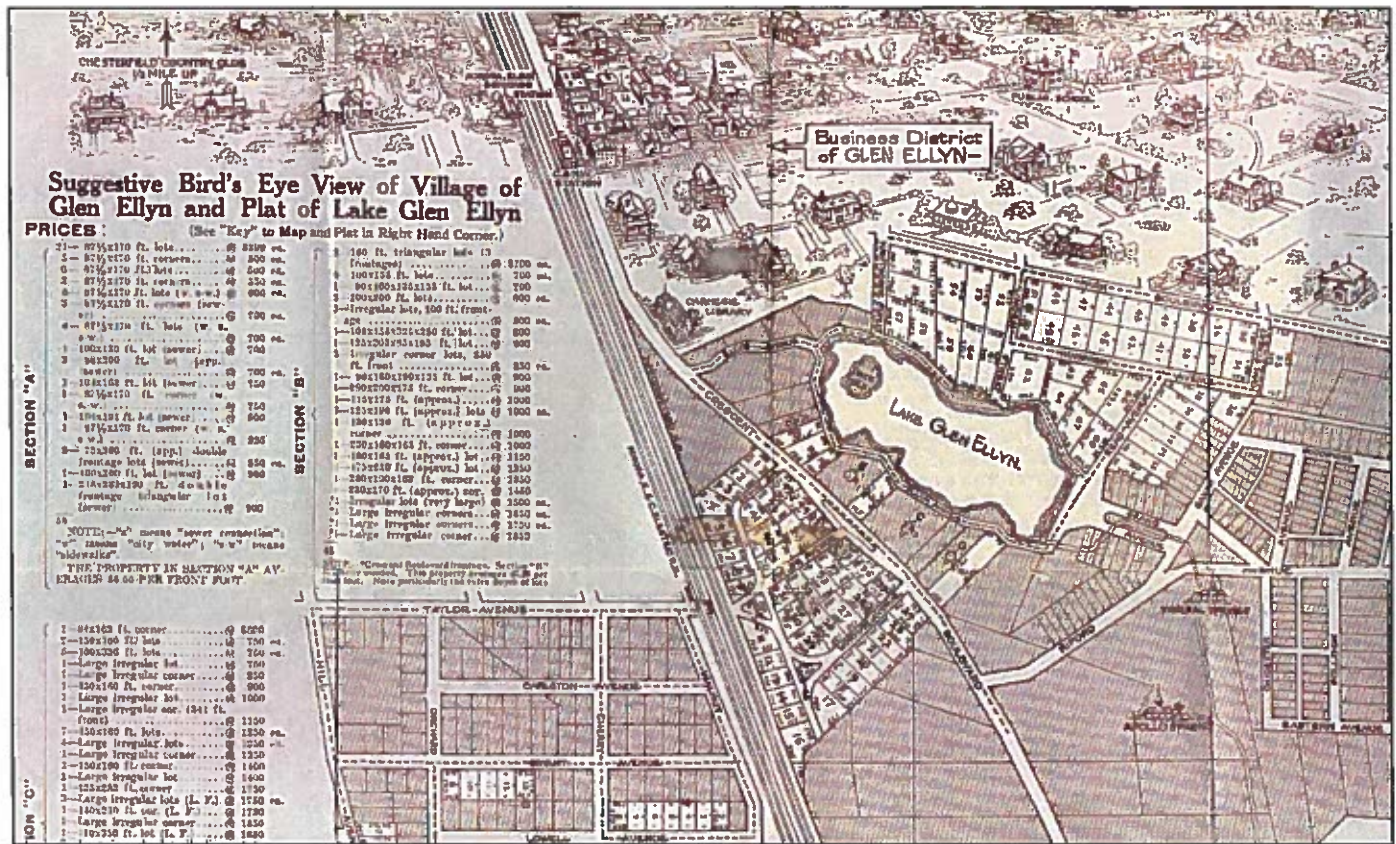


Figure 1: Map of plat for Lake Glen Ellyn development, 1919

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Figure 2: Early view of Lake Ellyn, looking north, c. 1920

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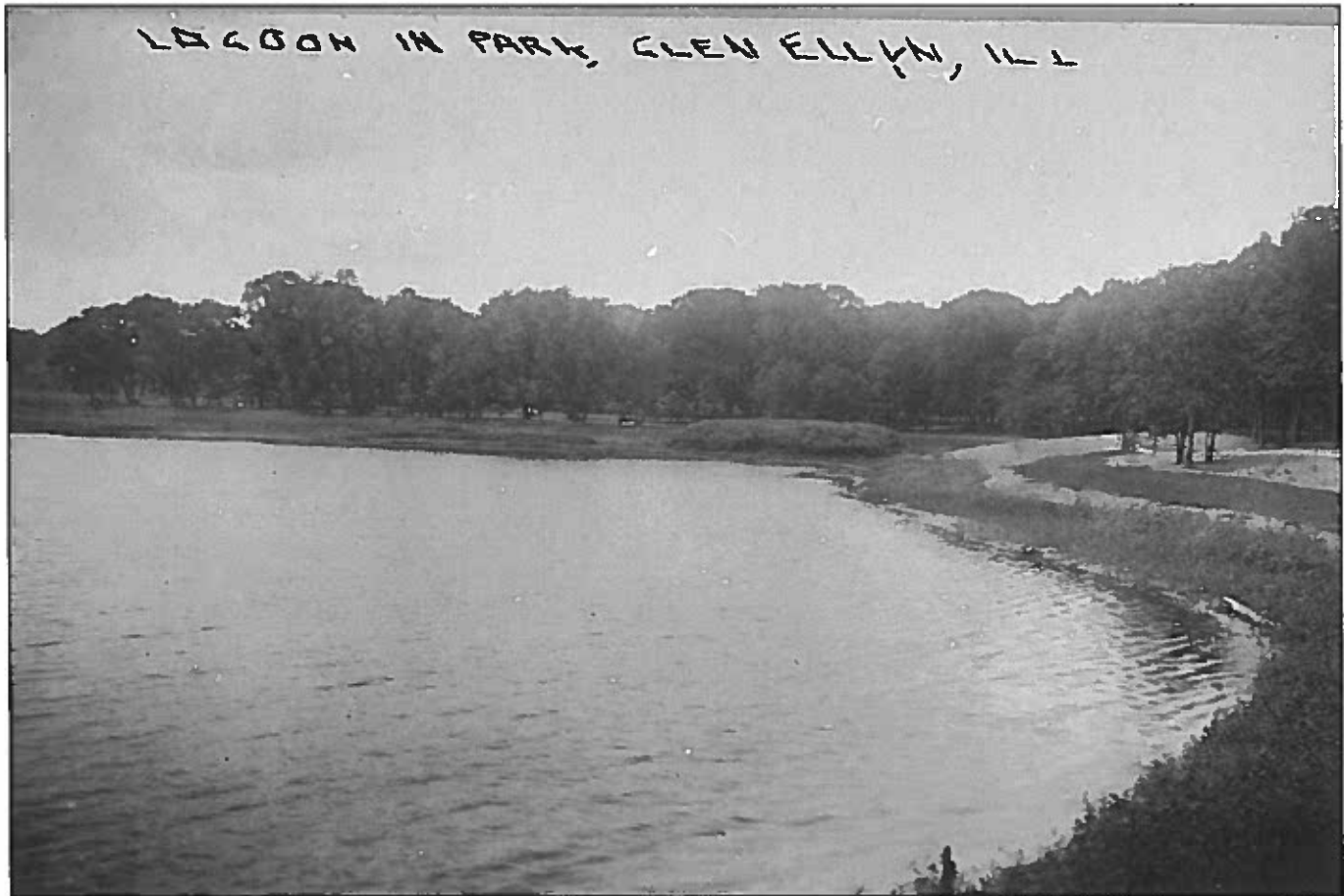


Figure 3: View of Lake Ellyn from the early 1920s

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Figure 4: View of Lake Ellyn showing Glen Isle at south end, c. 1919.

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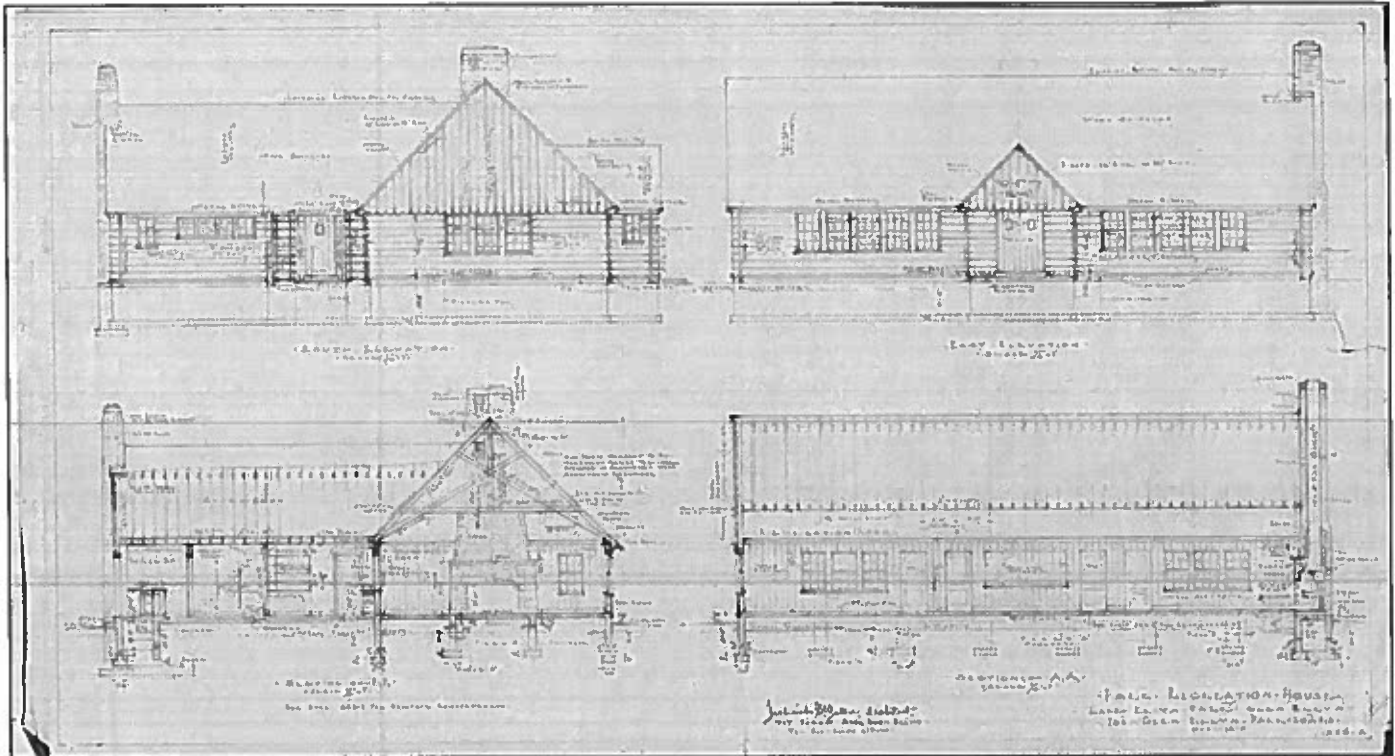


Figure 5: Original drawings for Recreation House, dated 1935

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Figure 6: Lake Ellyn Recreation House, c. 1937

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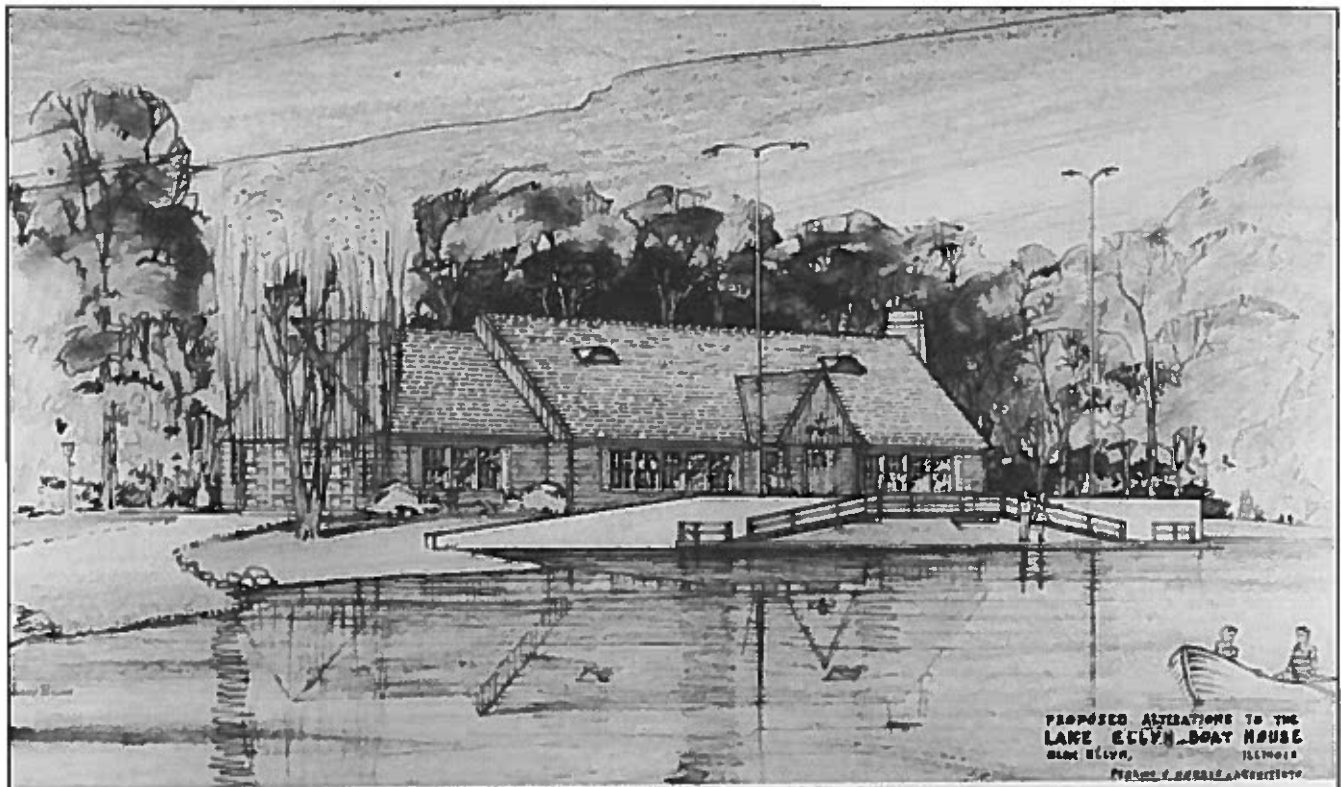


Figure 7: Rendering showing kitchen addition to Recreation House, 1959

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Figure 8: View of Recreation House from across Lake Ellyn, c. 1960

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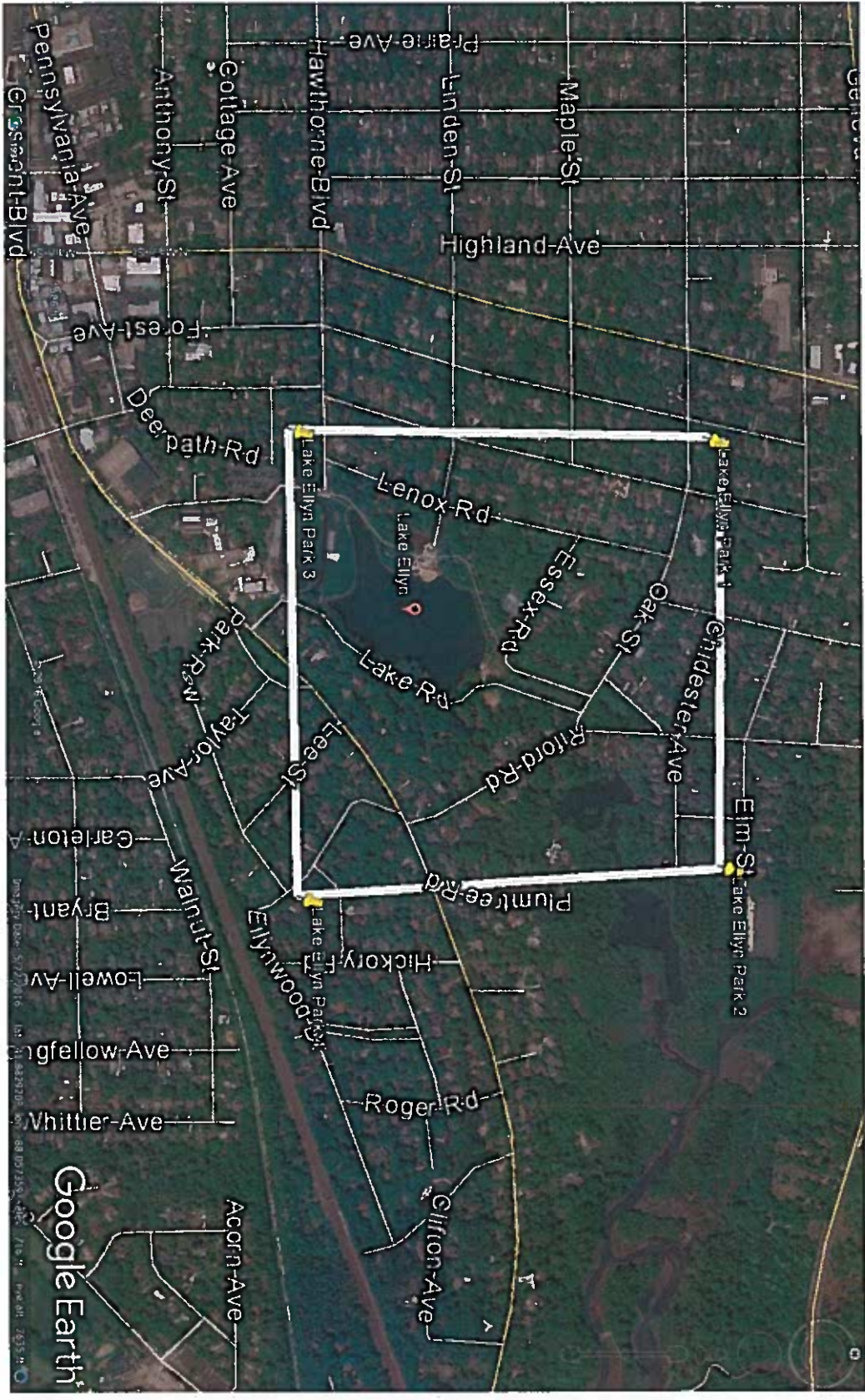
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Figure 9: Skaters in the Recreation House, photograph from the *Glen Ellyn News*, December 18, 1941



1) 41.887154, 88.062814
2) 41.887387, 88.062814

3) 41.880619, 88.063042
4) 41.880726, 88.053172

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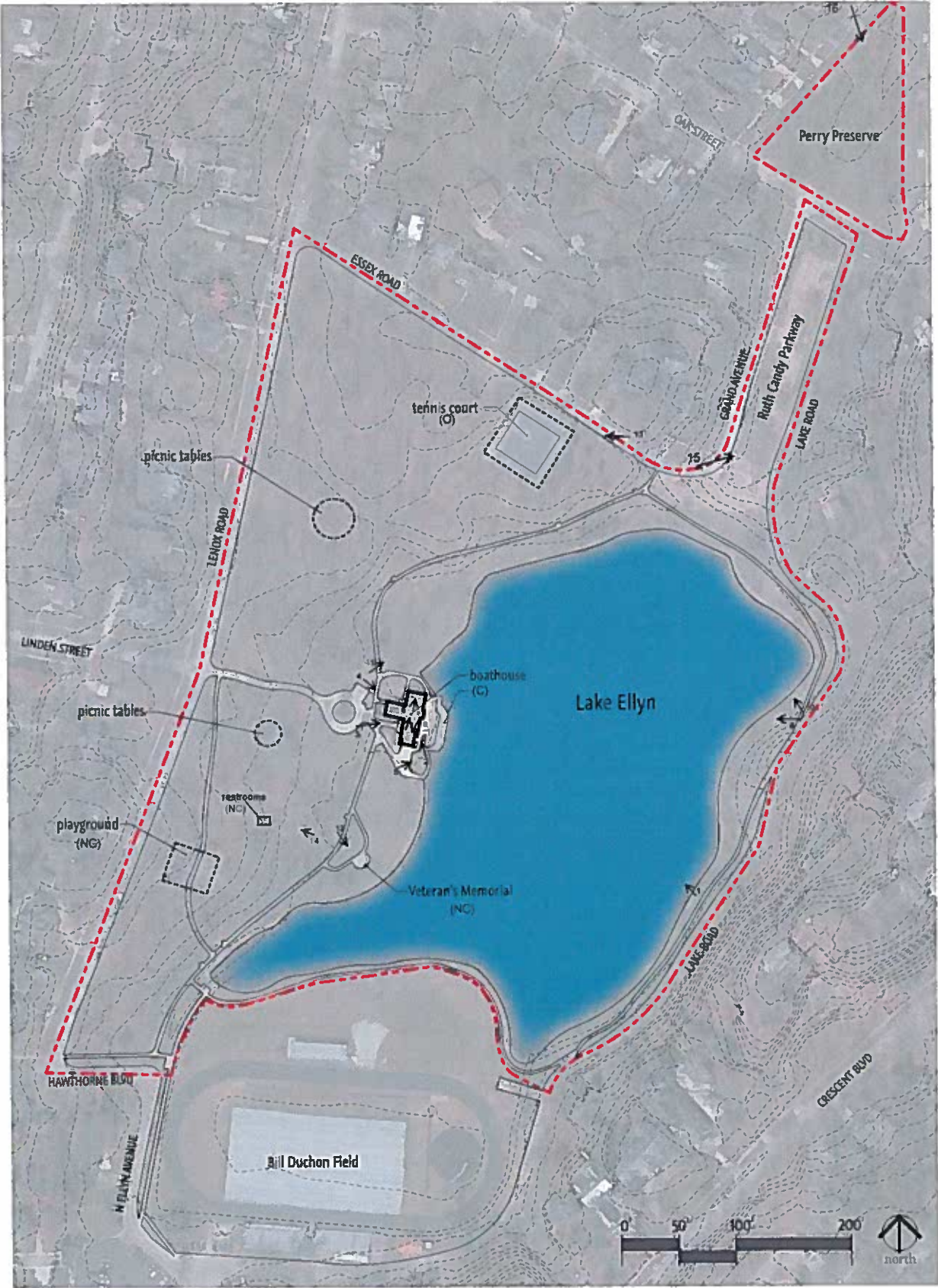
DuPage, IL



Google earth

miles
km





Map taken from 2014 Lake Ellyn Master Plan



Google earth

feet
meters

2000
700

