

Description:

The Highlander Inn is a substantial motel complex that is located at the intersection of State Highway #1 with Interstate 80, just northeast of Iowa City proper. The building is centered on a nine-acre level site in the northeast corner of that intersection and consists of a mix of one and two-story steel and concrete construction. The original supper club component with a half-basement, occupies the west one-third of the plan, while the more substantial motel addition, consisting of lower-profile ball room, meeting rooms, hallways and support areas with an east end pair of two-story motel rooms is to the east. The wings frame an open-plan enclosed pool area on the west end. The building exterior is brick veneered. The supper club component has a mansard cornice and a stone-faced west entry with remnant portico columns. The current south entrance features an oversized square-cut portico entrance. Paved parking surrounds the building to the north west and south. The courtyard and the property to the east of it are grassed.

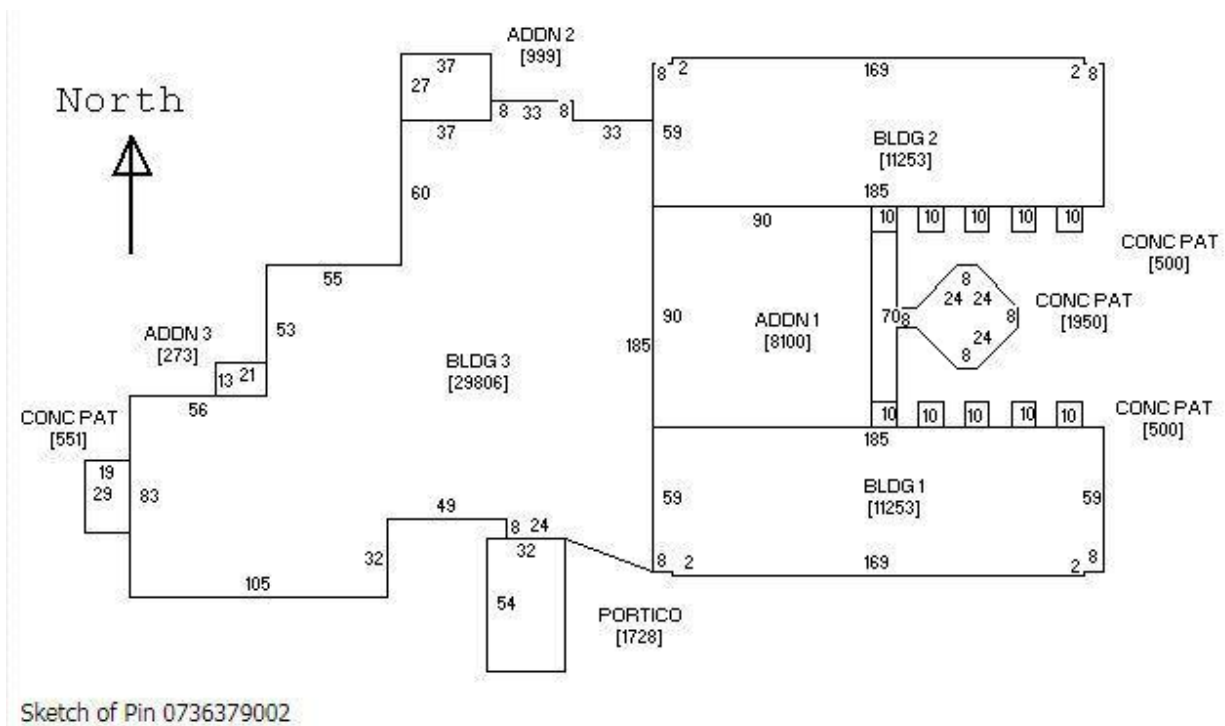


Figure 7-1: Johnson County Assessor’s property sketch, 2020

Figure 1 depicts the building layout and scale. The extreme western section (83 feet by 105 feet) is the original supper club and its southern plan half is the only basement area (housing one large meeting room, mechanicals and a kitchen area that links upstairs via a dumb waiter). The rest of the building comprises the motel addition. The easternmost portions (BLDG 1 and 2 and ADDN 1) are two stories in height. ADDN 1 contains the pool/court and a two-story west end office area, now a kitchen on the first floor. All of the motel rooms are contained within the twin east wings. The inner rooms of west portions of each of these wings are contained within the pool/courtyard.

The exterior building profile is both elongated and low-level in appearance despite the two-story wings. Much of the west half of the building exterior is un-fenestrated and this is particularly the case along the northwest back of the building where kitchens and other support spaces are set opposite the exterior walls. This exterior is wood surfaced. The motel expanses have the expected unbroken cadence of window bands on both

floor levels. The only interruption is corner and mid-point exit/entrances. There are two architectural entrance points. The current south entrance consists of a rather blocky portico with substantial-appearing square-cut brick column supports. Here the building exterior is fully glassed on both sides of the entry. The west end entrance, no longer in use has lost its portico but retains its four support columns and its patio surface and what was the original entrance, which is stone-veneered. The east motel end walls are un-fenestrated save for hall windows on each level that are centered on the plan. Within the courtyard, the interior walls of the two wings are banded with window openings on the upper floor, and have paired doors and side windows below. Each room bay front is recessed slightly behind pilasters and an overhanging roof. The east pool/court wall is mostly glass, consisting of operable end overhead doors and two mid-wall inoperable overhead door sections. The building roof profile is rather complex apart from the differing floor levels. Most notably the south entrance, a central hall and the main ball room area have an elevated roof level as does the core of the former west-end supper club. The pool/court roof level is higher than the motel wings.



Figure 7-2: Rooftop view of the building looking north (Johnson County Assessor, 2020)
(note that the west canopy beams are still in place, pergola-like)

Inside, the building layout is both rather straight forward but in some support areas it is a virtual labyrinth of support areas. Figure 7-3 is a largely current summation of the major room arrangement. All of the kitchen areas are located in the north part of the west end of the plan and this includes space in the basement. The ballroom is the very large area that is north of the south entrance. There is a central hall that is flanked by offices and restrooms (to the east). There is an elongated open plan area in the southeast corner of the west end of the plan. Offices to the east of the south entrance now consist of a small lobby and one office on the east end (the west wall is inscribed with notable guests and entertainers there since 1974). The pool/court is the large rectangle to the right of plan center. The courtyard is to the east of it.

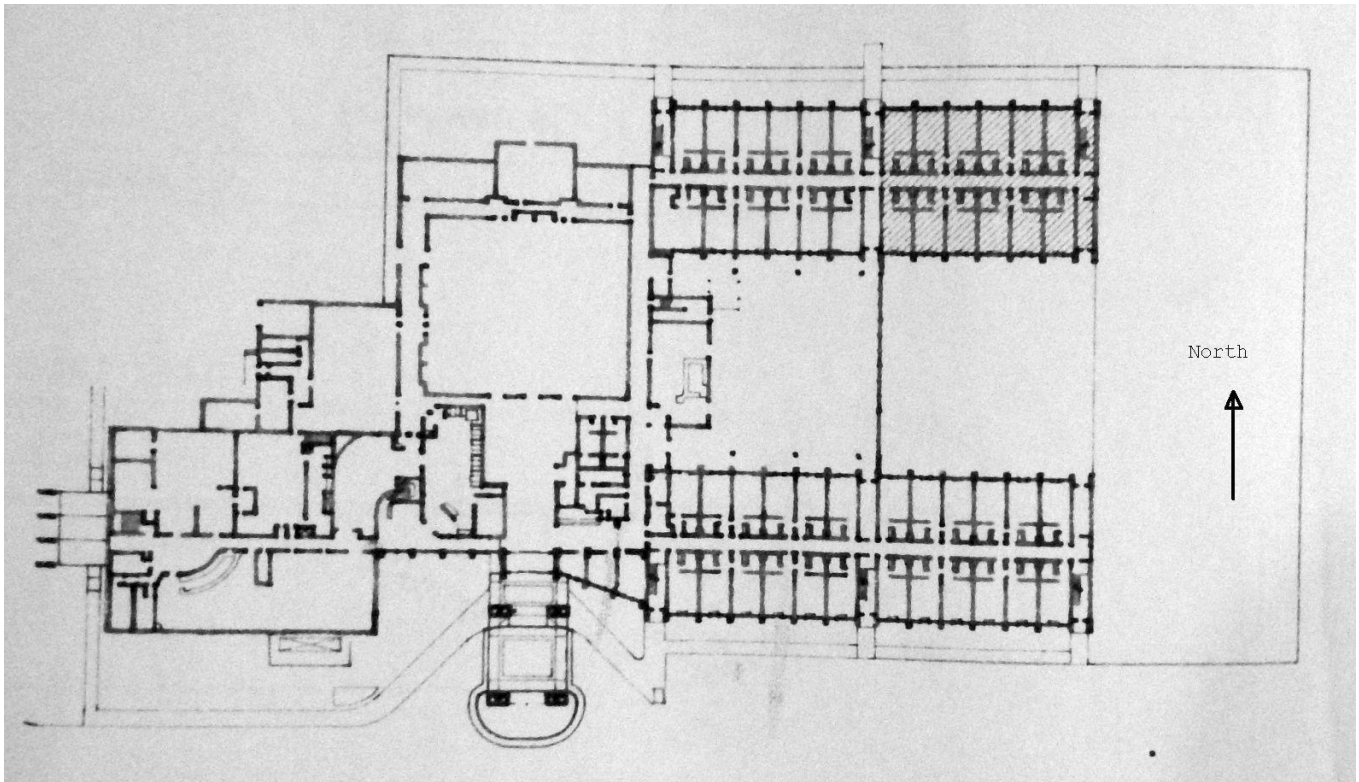
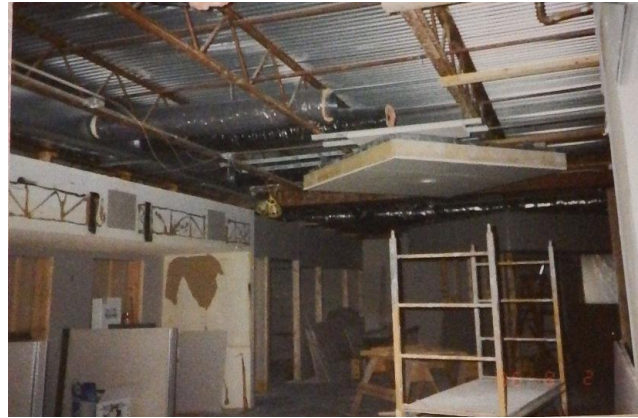


Figure 7-3: Building thumbprint plan (Building plans)

The structural system is that of thin (four-inch thick) concrete block walls and webbed steel trusses with galvanized steel roofing. The motel wings are roofed using pre-cast concrete slabs (see construction photos, Section 8) All interior ceilings are steel joist framed and perimeter walls are of concrete block construction with exterior brick veneer.



Figures 7-4, 7-5: Images showing the ceiling truss system and roofing, 1990 images (Owner scrapbook)

The motel rooms are all identical in plan with corner bathrooms set against the halls and paired as shown in Figure 7-3. Some rooms have connective interior doors. Pool/court units have side doors on the ground floor while upper level rooms have doors that lead out to a balcony.

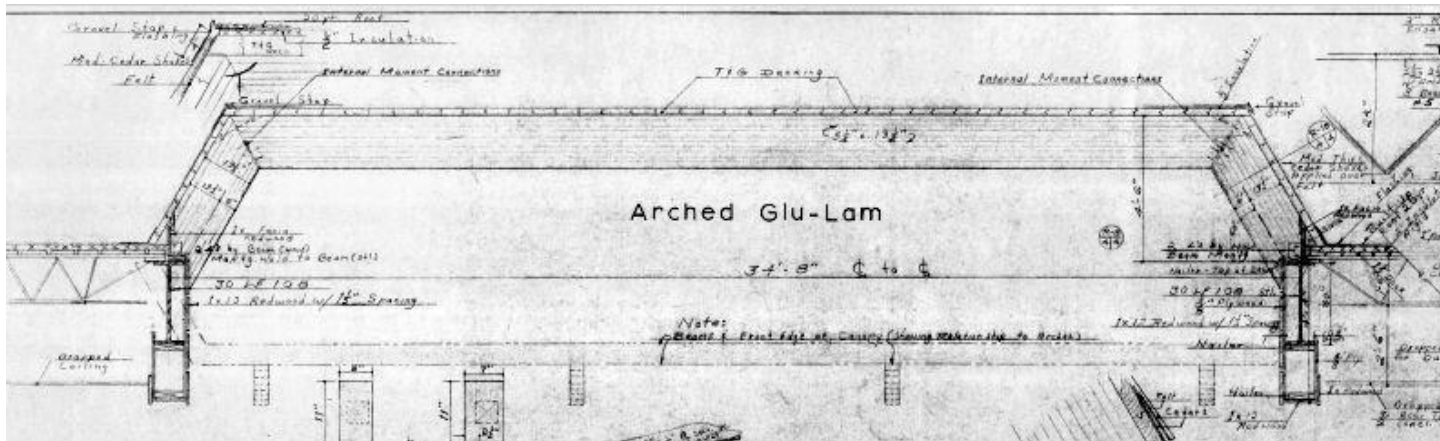


Figure 7-8: Profile of Glu-Lam beams, looking north (original plans)

The motel addition used Travertine stone to cover the sides of the lobby vestibule and the same stone was observed used as a cladding for the south portico. The current portico might retain this material beneath its existing EFIS covering.

Alterations:

The alteration history of this building is a complex one given its enlargement and repurposing over time. At the same time, a multi-use building of this type is particularly prone to continual cosmetic make-overs necessary to curry public favor. For this building, the successive re-branding by three national motel chains translated into substantial make-overs. The latter changes have occurred at such a scale as to substantially reduce the chances of retained original finishes and in some instances original room layouts. The integrity section will treat this matter but the bottom line is that integrity will reside largely in the building exterior, massing, exterior and structural materials and systems and in the more monumental interior spaces.

The original supper club had three uniquely designed dining rooms and a Banquet Room, Party Room and a cocktail lounge. The convention center added a dining room, the ballroom, a poolside lounge and contained meeting rooms that could suit parties of five to two hundred. The ballroom could serve 750 to 900 in banquet or theater style.

Table I: Alterations Summary

Date	Description	Source
October 1964	Complete complex conceptual design	Site plan, Hansen Lind and Associates
Undated	Motel and restaurant plans	Plan, Hansen, Lind and Meyer Associates
July 1966	Original design and construction,	Plans, David C. Moore, architect, Black Watch Supper Club
July 15, 1966	Plan for Iowa Steel and Iron Works, Cedar Rapids, Thompson Construction Company	
Jan. 28, 1971	Cocktail lounge addition, not built	Plans, Drew McNamara & Associates
Nov. 15, 1971	Initial plans, motel addition	Plans, Drew McNamara & Associates
Dec. 1973	Kitchen enlargement plans	ME Engineering & Associates, Bouse, Bradley & Hynes, Cedar Rapids
1973	Plan for a pool house at east end of the courtyard with a triangle-shaped lounge at the west end of the open court	Plans, Drew McNamara & Associates
Feb. 9, 1975	Outside pool plan (not used)	Plans, FPC Equipment Planner, Inc. Memphis

Date	Description	Source
Oct. 30, 1979	Remodel dining hall	Plans, H. R. Lubben Company
May 1980	Main lobby remodel	Plans, H. R. Lubben Company
June 2, 1981	Supper club south wall bump-out and skylight for lounge, not built	Plans
Aug. 24, 1982	Hot tub pool addition	Plans, Selzer Construction Co., Iowa City
Oct. 28, 1982	Remodel supper club, bar area, vaulted ceiling, bar area apparently constructed	
April 14, 1983, May 18, 1984	Amana display area and poolside "band stand"	Plans, J. Pink
Oct. 10, 1983	Lobby hallway remodel, construct stained glass interior dome (non-extant)	Plans, Selzer Construction Co., Iowa City
May 1986	Remodel lobby, bar	
Dec. 10, 1987	Remodel south pool and bar entrance	Plans, Selzer Construction Co., Iowa City
1994	Motel room renovation to a contemporary style with valences, wallpaper, carpet, in-room coffee makers	"Main Course", March 1995
1996	Need for more convention space, eateries reduced to new Prime Grille, new "west ballroom" in former supper club, no more formal dining, chairs on casters, use of more natural light, "casually elegant" dining	"Main Course", Fall 1996
Nov. 14, 1997	Radisson transformation of south entry and interior	Plans, Cowetta Seward Asso. Inc.
1998	Automatic door south entry, enlarged lobby, new Italian tile foyer, new mahogany service desk and remodeled lobby, remodeled guest rooms with electronic room locks, larger desks, irons and ironing boards, data ports, voice mail, ballroom given new look with wall coverings, adjustable lighting, room divider to split space, exercise room adjacent to the pool, garden courtyard landscaped with native plants, McGurk's Pub to east of pool	"Main Course", Fall 1998; Iowa City <i>Press Citizen</i> , October 14, 1998
1999	Just two eateries, McGurk's Pub and the Prime Grille, return of "old menu."	"Main Course", Spring 1999
Jan. 3, 2000	\$10,000 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor
July 31, 2000	\$,60000 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor
Feb. 12, 2003	\$3,000 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor
May 24, 2006	\$82,676 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor
Oct. 13, 2008	Quality Inn & Suites remodel, replace pool court east windows	Plans, Wilkerson Construction
Nov. 26, 2008	\$12,000 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor
April 30, 2009	\$7,417 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor
Jan. 15, 2011	Promised Clarion Motels \$250,000 renovation	Clarion motel chain, Cedar Rapids <i>Gazette</i>
Aug. 31, 2011	\$6,000 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor
Oct. 20, 2011	\$25,000 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor
Oct. 24, 2013	\$25,000 expenditure	Johnson County Assessor

Date	Description	Source
Dec. 2019	Current remodeling, replace pool court east windows, remove bandstand/pergola, eliminate service desk, remodel bar area	
August 10, 2020	Derecho wind damage removes supper club roof and causes extensive interior water damage	

Integrity Evaluation:

The historical integrity of this building is predominantly expressed by the building massing and exterior brickwork and its entrances. Given the ever-evolving nature of its interior main room remodeling's, the same is true of its key surviving components, the pool area and motel wings, the ballroom, the original supper club space, the basement Garden Room, the main hallway, south main hall, and the kitchen areas.

Its integrity of location is strong given not been moved and it retains the commercial aspects of its site.

Integrity of design is good, the original exterior design remaining intact and visually accessible. The original supper club exterior is very much intact, having lost only its wood shingle mansard cladding and the roof portion of its original portico (the four columns curiously survive). The south portico survives though altered in its lower massing but the overall building lines and massing survive. Exterior brickwork and the fenestration patterns on the motel wings survive although the windows have been replaced with inappropriate multi-paned lights.

Integrity of setting is strong with the retention of oversized paved parking in three directions and the retention of a mixed retail/office commercial mix of buildings to the east, north and west. The physical proximity of the interstate highway and state highway is retained although tree growth now substantially obscures what was an open exposure.

Integrity of materials is good, with the exterior brickwork and mortar being very well preserved, as are the structural components of the whole complex. The original concrete pool survives as does much of the 1973 pool area wall treatment. The more substantial losses are the motel wing windows and the original reception desk.

Integrity of workmanship is good, the most visible examples being the brickwork, the supper club ceiling beams, pool, and the building's structural system.

Integrity of feeling is strong given the retention of the building massing, roof lines, points of entry, and key interior spaces (kitchens, pool area, ballroom, halls, motel wings, supper club interior, basement Garden Room).

Integrity of association is good to moderate. A former guest or employee could readily find the building, see it as recognizable in its current appearance and find the same feel relative to adjacent properties, and open ground.

Historical Significance Evaluation and Recommendation:

The Highlander Supper Club and its later iterations is individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places on the local level. It is architecturally significant (Criterion C) as a well-preserved example of its type, the post-World War II supper club. The original building represented the architectural zenith of the building type inasmuch as this was a purpose-built club having a unified theme throughout its history. Its design employed state-of-the-art building materials to realize the vision of its developers. Haydite block was used as a thinner and lighter wall block. Glu-lam beams were used to form the supper club raised roof and Behlen steel was used to achieve the necessary clear spans across the plan. The motel expansion employed one of the earliest enclosed pools. It is historically significant for its long-term successful operation as an interstate highway-based supper club that combined substantial local community support (including sustained associations with the University of Iowa sports programs) with serving as an area entertainment venue. The period of significance is 1967-1973 with the key dates of 1968 and 1973.

The supper club and its expanded convention center and motel facilities represented the completion of the original vision of its founders. The added capacity allowed the supper club to survive for decades and made possible a scale of operations that similarly made the business a success as well as a local and regional destination point. The post-expansion history lies outside of the period of significance but it is a testament to the public memory of the Highlander. The convention center-motel-supper club became “one of the most popular venues in the state for meetings, conferences, weddings and just dining out.” For 30 years it hosted the University of Iowa I-Club pre-football home game breakfast events and it was an entertainment venue for a broad range of notable singers. It developed a cooperative working relationship with the nearby Herbert Hoover National Historic Site at West Branch. A three-day series of seminars were held there in early August 1974 as “the Presidency of Herbert Hoover” involving 14 sponsoring colleges and universities. Former president, Gerald Ford participated in a reception in October 1989 as part of another seminar “The Public Life of Former Presidents: Personal Reflections” held at the historic site. An office wall in the motel office was dedicated to serving as a signatory space for notable entertainers, sports figures (primarily golfers) and other luminaries.¹

Figure 8-1 summarizes the reaction of locating a supper club a good distance from anywhere, out in the boonies so to speak. Even proximity to the interstate highway was yet to be seen as a locational advantage. Most early supper clubs were rurally located, some distance from yet in proximity to an urban center. Robert McGurk obviously saw what others, even his banker did not, that the finished club/convention center would become a draw in its own right. It would also drive commercial development at the highway intersection in the long term, and that development would provide additional customers to his business. As will be seen, the final pool design was long in coming and a number of alternatives were explored, both inside and outside. Finally, it was decided to build the existing pool complex, doubling what became the pool lounge single-story building and incorporating it into the pool structural system.

¹ Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, August 10, 1974 and National Archives and Records Administration, *News from The Archives*, Summer 1989, p. 6

Boondocks No Problem If There's a Pool

IOWA CITY, Iowa — The second greatest move Bob McGurk ever made was the installation of a 48' x 30' enclosed pool in his motel complex located just outside this city. It is, he says, the major attraction of the motel-supper club-bar he and his partners built nearly eight years ago. People come from miles away, he adds, just to swim and spend a weekend there.

But what's the greatest move McGurk ever made? Well, he'll readily tell anyone that in spite of admonitions against the motel's location — one in particular coming from a local banker — he and his partners, Dean Jones and John Stevens, decided to build their 96-room motel complex practically in the middle of nowhere. The banker said they had all lost their marbles building it "out in the boon-docks."

But eight years later, the Highlander Inn and Supper Club draws business and people from as far away as 50 to 60 miles regularly, and occasionally even farther, from neighboring states. There are no major industries in the area, but McGurk claims the nearby university is, for them, one of the biggest and best industries around because of its one and two-day seminars which attract 30,000 people annually. And too, he says, the Veterans Hospital also brings in regular visitors to his part of the Iowa countryside.

The motel, supper club and bar, of course, have all the amenities and trappings, but it's the indoor pool between the two parallel complexes of back-to-back rooms that he and his partners are so proud of.

Originally, the pool complex was to be fairly small and located at the far end of the courtyard between the motel wings. But in

consulting with pool contractor Max Selzer, McGurk felt that guest access and comfort were uppermost, so he decided on a larger indoor complex.

Because of its light weight and ability to handle high humidity, a Behlen Dubl-Panl roof system was used to house the pool. This 90' x 90' enclosure, McGurk says, has few environmental problems it can't handle. "Even heating it has been absolutely no problem."

Inside the facility is the 48' x 30' pool surrounded by patio furniture resting on Astroturf alongside the pool. In addition, the complex houses a whirlpool, sauna, exercise room and poolside cocktail lounge.

The easy passage from the bar to the pool to the outdoors, McGurk says, is the primary reason a local celebrity golf tournament committee chose his motel for their recent event.

Another weekend in December of last year, he recalls, the motel was filled with people who had come to spend the weekend because of the enclosed pool. "So our occupancy rate this past winter, as far as weekends go, was 100%, whereas I'd have been dead — totally dead — without that pool."

McGurk feels that his success may indicate a trend toward his type of motel complex located on interstate highways in countryside areas. "You're going to find more and more of it," he says, citing general ease of access and parking facilities as reasons.

Of his own motel, he observes families coming in as late as Sunday, staying the day and night, then returning to work and school the next day. Others, like salesmen, return to the Highlander with their families for weekends.

"That pool enclosure is going to be our bread and butter," McGurk says.

Figure 8-1: An all-season enclosed pool is the saving factor
(*Pool News*, January 20, 1975)

Figure 8-2 explains how the contractor solved the problem of designing an enclosed pool complex that didn't chlorinate the adjacent motel rooms or melt hairdos with a constant high humidity. The pool structural system, consisting of two steel deck levels separated by four feet, allowed for the installation of HVAC equipment between the roof levels to solve those problems. That same structural system, absent the dual-level component, allowed for the creation of the immense clear span ballroom and other major open areas within the convention center plan. With the exception of the ballroom, these spaces could be readily altered with demising walls and ornamental features as the spatial needs changed.²

² The Behlen Construction Company, Columbus, Nebraska, first used its double-panel roofing system in October 1959 and trademarked it on July 11, 1961, renewing the registration in 1981. The "dubl panl" trademark continues in use today and can safely

"This roof is going to pay for itself faster than anything else we have here"

"We opened the motel last September," says Robert "Bob" McGurk, President of the Highlander Supper Club and Motel. "The second Saturday and Sunday in December we were totally full. Guests were from Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Tipton, Davenport—all here because of the enclosed pool.

"Our occupancy rate on weekends last winter was about 100 percent, where we'd have been dead without the pool. It's going to be our bread and butter."

McGurk started the supper club with Dean Jones and John R. Stephens, in 1967. Six years later the motel was added, with a Behlen Dubl-Panl roof 90-odd ft. square over the courtyard between two motel wings. Here in 12-months summer is a lawn of Astro turf with a pool 30' x 48'.

"We were in a motor motel in Chicago, and my wife walked by the pool and her hairdo fell down. So I said, 'How can we build something that won't have all this humidity and chlorine smell?'"

"Max Selzer here of Selzer Constr. Co. said, 'Let's give it a steel roof, come down 4 feet and put in a steel deck or ceiling.' So with plenty of air handling units in the roof system, we have no problem.

"We have tremendous insulation, too, sprayed-on under the deck and loose-blown above it. Then we have motel on 3 sides, so the heating problem is negligible."

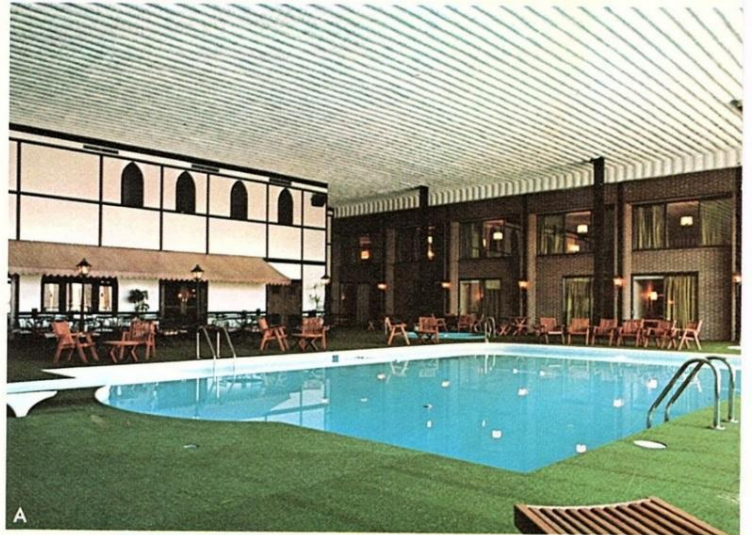
A \$400,000 Supper Club out on the Interstate?

"When we first started up, everyone thought we had lost our marbles. But we drew 25 percent of our business from Linn County on the north, and a lot from nearby cities. We built a reputation without national advertising or chain affiliation.

"Now that we've added the motel, we're going to have a new car showing by one of the Big Three companies, in the pool area and the courtyard just outside it. We can run a buffer for 1,000 people, and we have seated 900 for a meeting. We do need more meeting rooms for 15-25 people. The four we have are poolside and very popular.

"We're better off here than in Des Moines on a freeway. On conventions, everyone is looking for the easiest way to get there, and they try to split the distance. On the motel, we have whole families coming out from town."

Is Highlander setting a trend? "Well, I had a call from a realtor who has property near Davenport. He wanted to know if I'd be interested in running the same thing down there. They would put it up as an investment and lease it back to me."



(A) "As the man from *Sports Illustrated* said, 'Who wants to swim in the sun? Here you can swim and walk a few feet and you're in the sun, in summer.'" Wrought iron "sidewalk cafe" tables can be used to seat bar patrons.

(B) Highlander is located on Interstate 80 near Iowa City, Iowa.

(C) Since the Supper Club doesn't open till 5 pm it can be used by conventions during the day.

Figure 8-2: Behlen Double-Panel ("Dubl-Panl") steel roof system makes the pool area possible (Behlen Manufacturing Company *Spaces* Newsletter, page 3, ca.1974)

create clear-spans of 288 feet. The two layers of corrugated steel roofing are braced using light-weight bracing (<https://uspto.report/TM/72084507>).

Supper Club Planning and Construction:

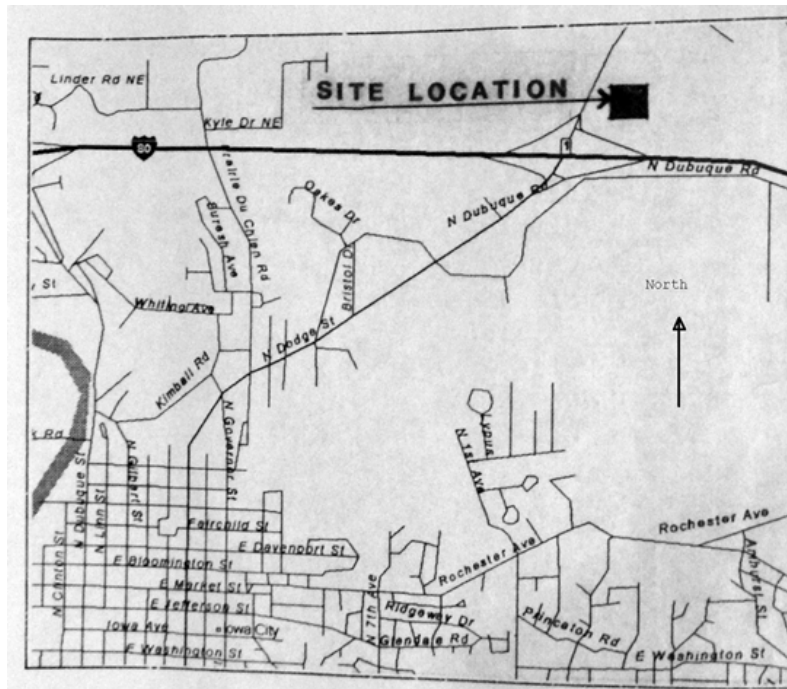


Figure 8-3: Highland Supper Club location (Building plans)

M. Dean Jones (1909-2004) was a landowner whose holdings included much of a developing interstate highway interchange (21.8 acres) that was located just outside of the built-up northeast portion of Iowa City, the county seat of Johnson County. The site was outside of the city when the supper club was built, and it was zoned as residential land when the city annexed it. The inn was grandfathered as a pre-existing “non-conforming use.” A commercial rezoning request wasn’t apparently needed until the operation was expanded to include a motel in 1972. John M. Stevens and Jones partnered in the idea of building a restaurant-supper club and they needed a partner-manager so they recruited John J. “Bob” McGurk (1932-1984). McGurk was involved with operating the Lark Supper Club at Tiffin, in Cedar County, located west of Iowa City, also on Interstate 80. His expertise was actually in bar management and he had co-owned Ted’s Happitime bar in the early 1950’s in Cedar Rapids prior to his moving to the Tiffin club.³

Supper clubs were the domain of the successful middle class. Akin to private clubs it is noteworthy that the design for the new supper club allowed for no exterior windows. It was a closeted sanctuary. The Highlander also combined prominence with locational privacy. While placed on a visible plateau from the highway and interstate perspective, it was reached by means of a fairly long winding private road. So, it very much resembled a private club siting and architecture. The club entrance did orient west (slightly northwest) towards its highway access and it was positioned on the west end of a slightly raised plateau (Figure 8-3).

The initial branding also bespoke both tradition and respectability. The original name was the Black Watch Supper Club., a name that honored the military legacy of a noted Scottish infantry regiment. This name was never publicly promulgated beyond the design table of the first architectural drawings and it was finally replaced with the Highlander name. Sheila Ann McGurk Boyd recalled:

³ Iowa City Press Citizen, January 10, 1972; Email, Sheila Boyd to James Jacobsen, September 8, 2020. Ellen Dean played a key role in the interior design and designed a waitress uniform that included a tartan sash with brooch and a special hat.

I don't believe either Jones or Stevens had any Scottish roots, but the agreement for dad to come to be a part of the plan was struck on the golf course. All three had a love for golf, so I believe that's where the Scottish theme started. The Black Watch was a tartan plaid I think what something they liked so there came the name. However, the 60's unrest it was decided that that name might be offensive to some, so it changed. The story goes that the land where the supper club was being built was on "high land" and that too was a tartan plaid, so the name was changed.

The Black Watch is a basic tartan mix of grouped squares and intersecting lines (akin to a downtown streetscape) that comes in a range of color combinations but greens and blues are the most common.⁴



Figure 8-4: An example of the Black Watch tartan pattern

The developing concept dated back to as early as October 1964 when Iowa City architects Hansen & Lind designed a series of conceptual schemes for a complex that closely envisioned the completed supper club and motel-convention center. Figure 8-5 was labeled "Scheme #6." It is curious that this plan was the only survivor. It envisioned a north-fronting facility with a series of individual buildings, one of which was labeled administration. The pool(s) were outside, in a courtyard having motel wings on three sides.

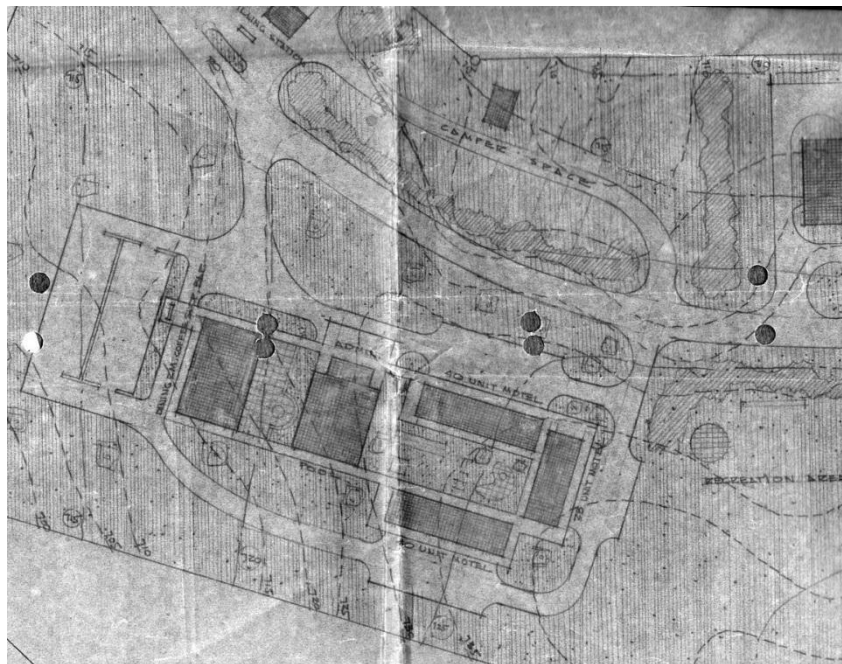


Figure 5: Site plan for "Motel Development for Iowa City," October 2, 1964 (Hansen and Lind, Architects, courtesy of Sheila Ann Boyd)

⁴ Email, Sheila Boyd to James Jacobsen, September 8, 2020

Hansen, Lind and Meyer designed a restaurant and motel for the Central Development Corporation, presumably the original corporate entity for the Iowa City partners. The undated plans envisioned most of the fundamental core concepts of what was finally built. At the same time the plan differed considerably, lacking a supper club, having a northwest corner canopy entry, and minimal basement space and a layout with varied floor levels based on the site. What was clearly retained in the final plan were the basic supper club exterior and massing, the west canopy, the basic courtyard with flanking motel room wings and even an enclosed pool. Overall, the first design was a very contemporary one, complete with a bar fireplace and chimney. The partners were Richard Fred Hansen (1932-?), John Howard Lind (1932-?) and Carl Donald Meyer (1932-2004). Meyer joined the partnership in 1963 and his name gets included on the actual plans.⁵

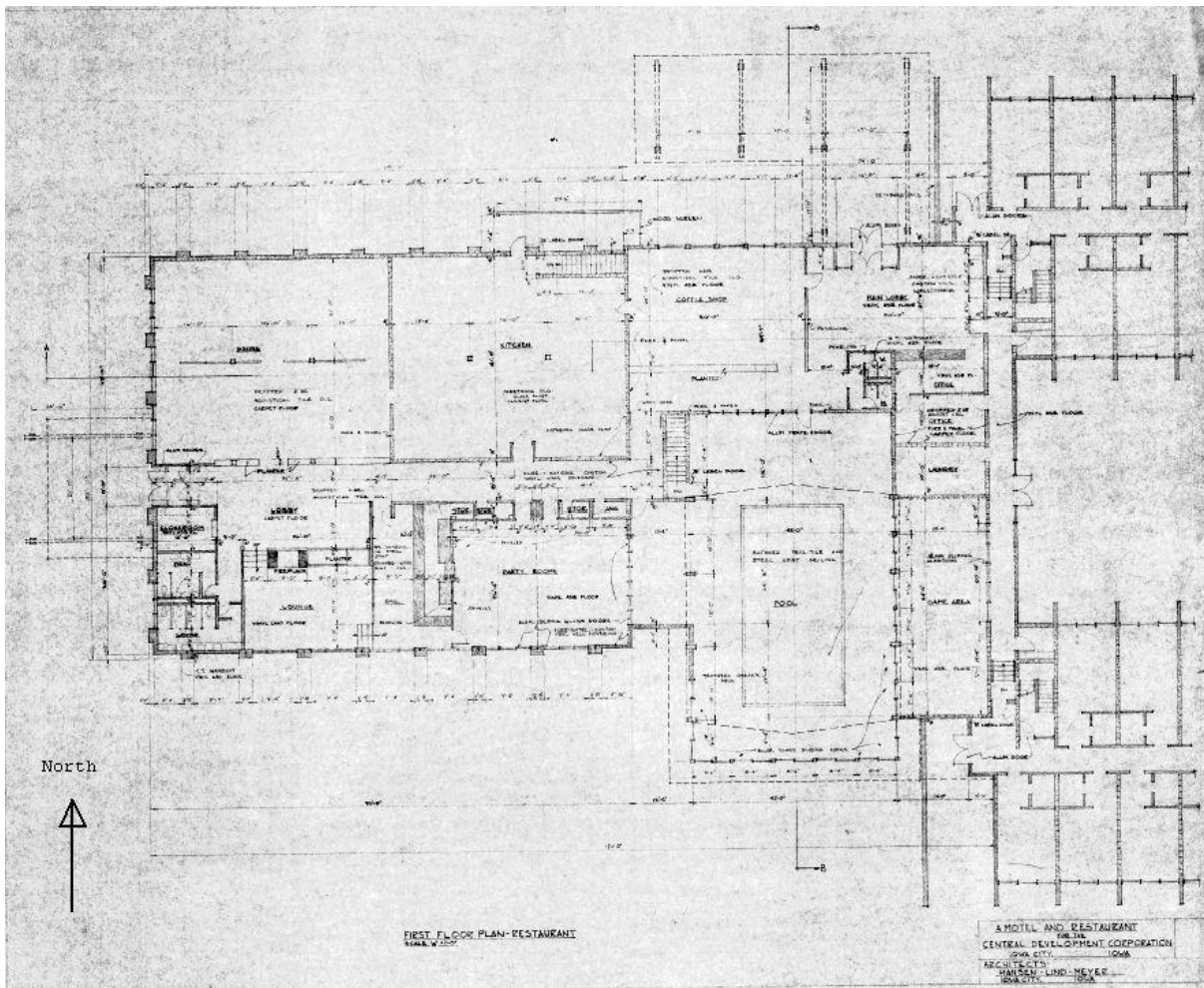


Figure 8-6: Restaurant (west end) plan for “Motel and Restaurant” (Hansen, Lind and Meyer, Architects)

Retained features in the as-builts were the west canopy, the basic supper club (restaurant) layout and the east courtyard and twin motel wings.

⁵ AIA Historical Directory, New Providence: R. R. Bowker, L.L.C., 1970, pp. 374, 545, 617. Moore does not appear in the AIA directories of the period. His 1971 mention credited him with architectural design and the remodel design work entailed a number of themed dining rooms and an entrance lobby (*Iowa City Press Citizen*, October 19, 1971).

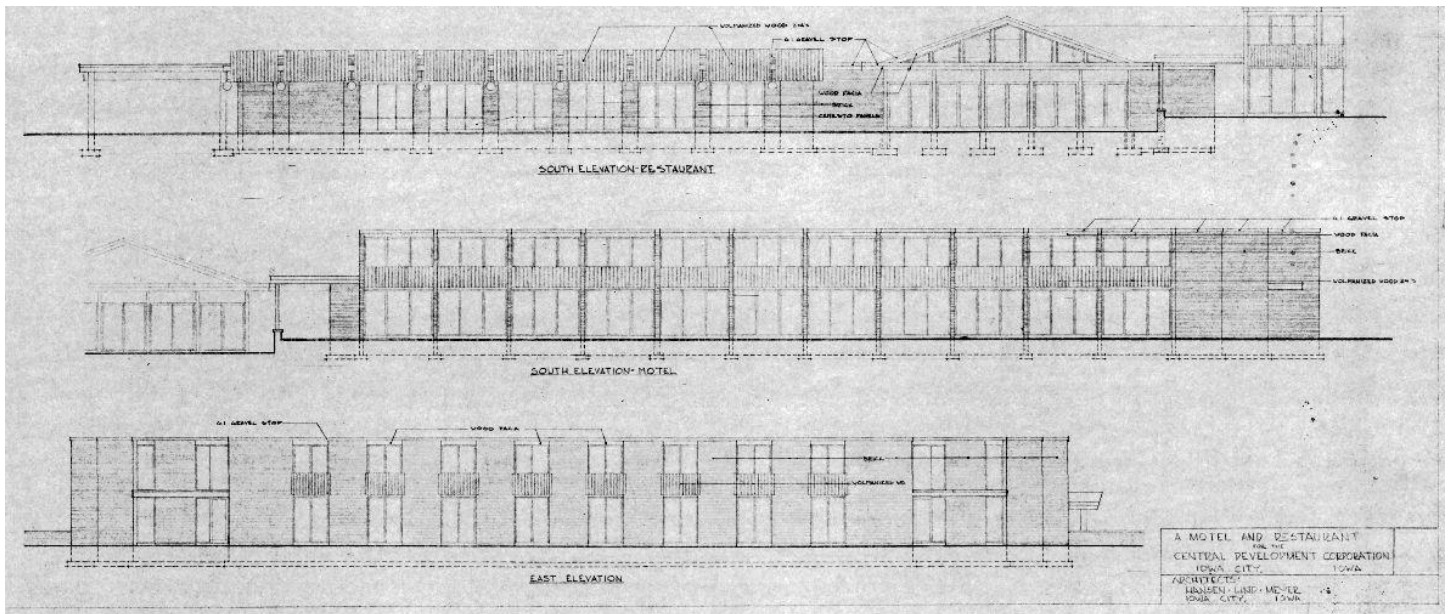


Figure 8-7: Three elevation views for “Motel and Restaurant” (Hansen, Lind and Meyer, Architects)

The south elevation at the top in Figure 8-7 shows the supper club (west half of the perspective) with its mansard cornice treatment and west canopy and entry. The original plan, also veneered in brick, used pilasters to break up the exterior wall plane and used some sort of vertical interruption (open gutters?) across the mansard cornice. The south wall was much more glassed. Note the changes in floor elevation going west to east. The motel wing fenestration differed with full-length ground level windows and broad spandrels.

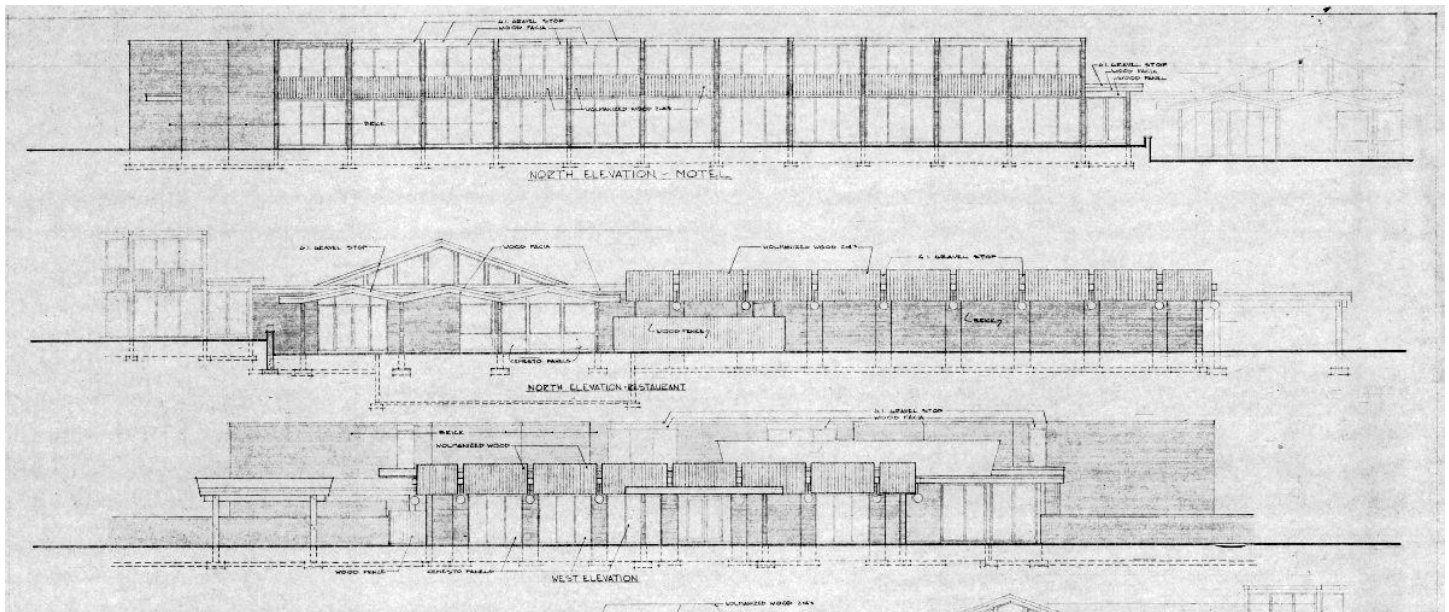


Figure 8-8: Three elevation views for “Motel and Restaurant” (Hansen, Lind and Meyer, Architects)

The middle elevation shown in Figure 8-8 shows the north side of the supper club/restaurant. The lower elevation shows an L-shaped north portico.

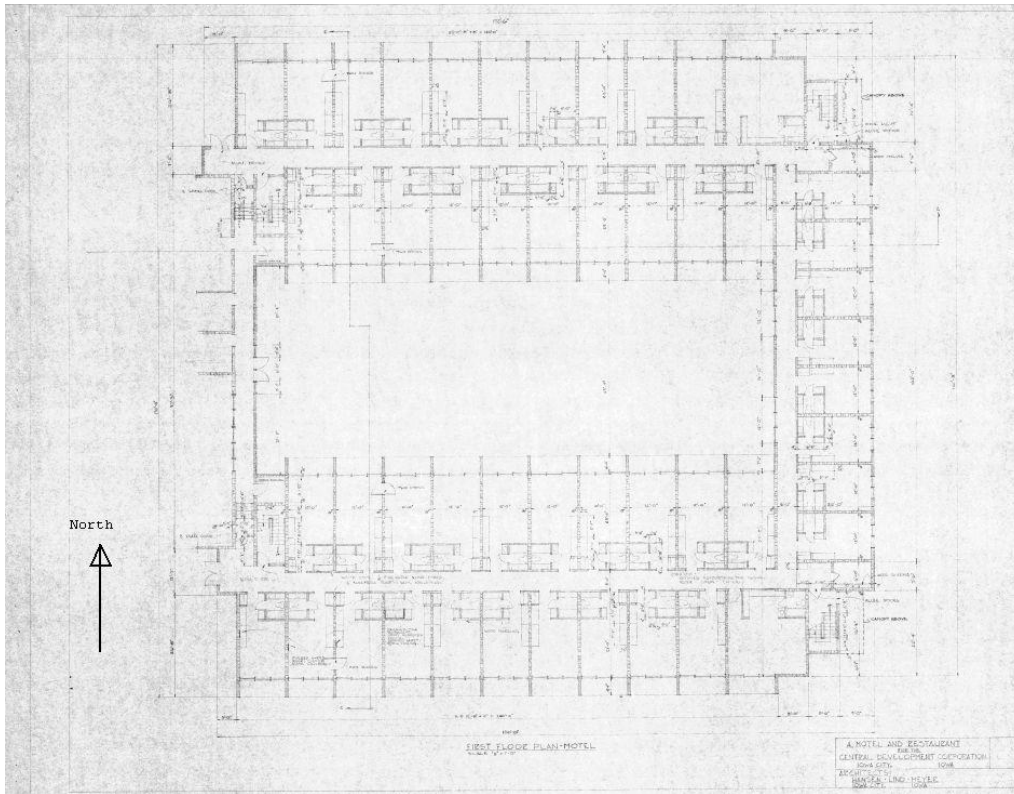


Figure 8-9: First floor, motel wings and courtyard for “Motel and Restaurant” (Hansen, Lind, and Meyer, Architects)

Figure 8-9 shows the elongated courtyard and its enclosure on three sides with motel wings. This element was built and a variety of designs were developed relative to what form the east end of the courtyard would assume. This was never resolved. The original plan made no place for a banquet hall and when the broader convention center was adopted, the pool location was deflected elsewhere as will be seen.

The original plan can be said to have broadly defined what the actual supper club and finally the rest of the facility would look like. In some manner, the original architects dropped out of the project and a very obscure local designer took over.



Figure 8-10: David C. Moore is named as architect/designer on the 1966 plans (Highlander Archives)

David C. Moore is not identified as an architect per se. He does not appear in the American Institute of Architects directories and is not otherwise documented for any other original work. The sole found reference to him dates to late 1971 when he redesigned the interior of the Ming Garden Chinese Restaurant in Coralville as the David C. Moore Design Center (aka “Waterfall Construction”). Moore also documented his role in his sketch for the new supper club, a framed copy of which is on display at the Highlander.



Figure 8-11: Architect's sketch, David C. Moore, 1966, looking northeast (Owner's framed image)

As Figure 8-11 shows, the blank brick walls of the club were festooned with angled gas-lights, as was the approach lane from the west. This feature was lost in the summer of 1980 (or some of the lamps were electrified) when a federal law forbade gas-powered outdoor lighting due to a gas shortage.⁶

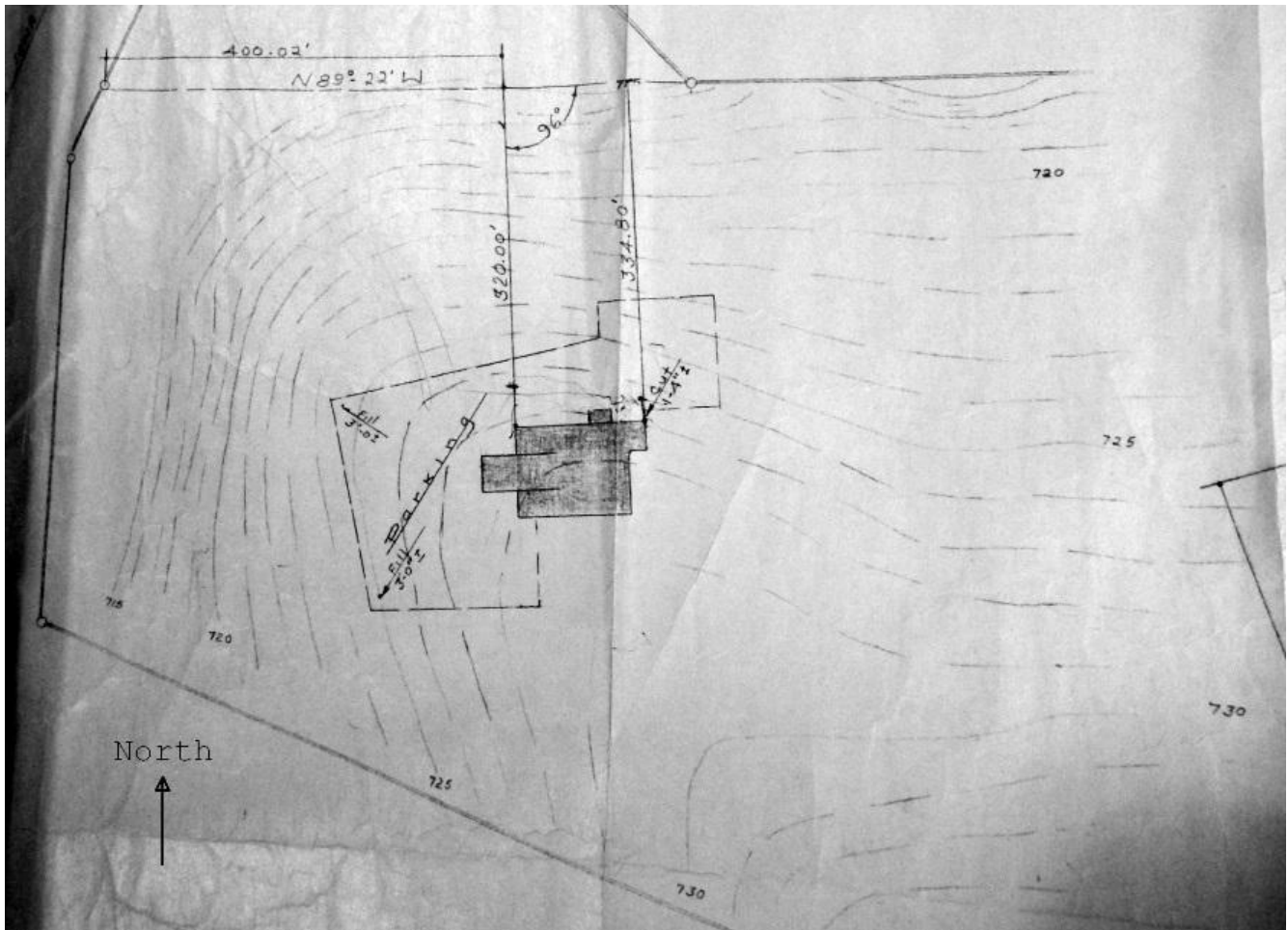


Figure 8-12: The original building footprint and siting (Building plans)

In July 1966 David C. Moore as noted, drew the elevation sketches of the planned supper club building but he is not identified as being an architect. Thompson Construction of Iowa City and Davenport was the general contractor.

⁶ Iowa City Press Citizen, December 4, 1979

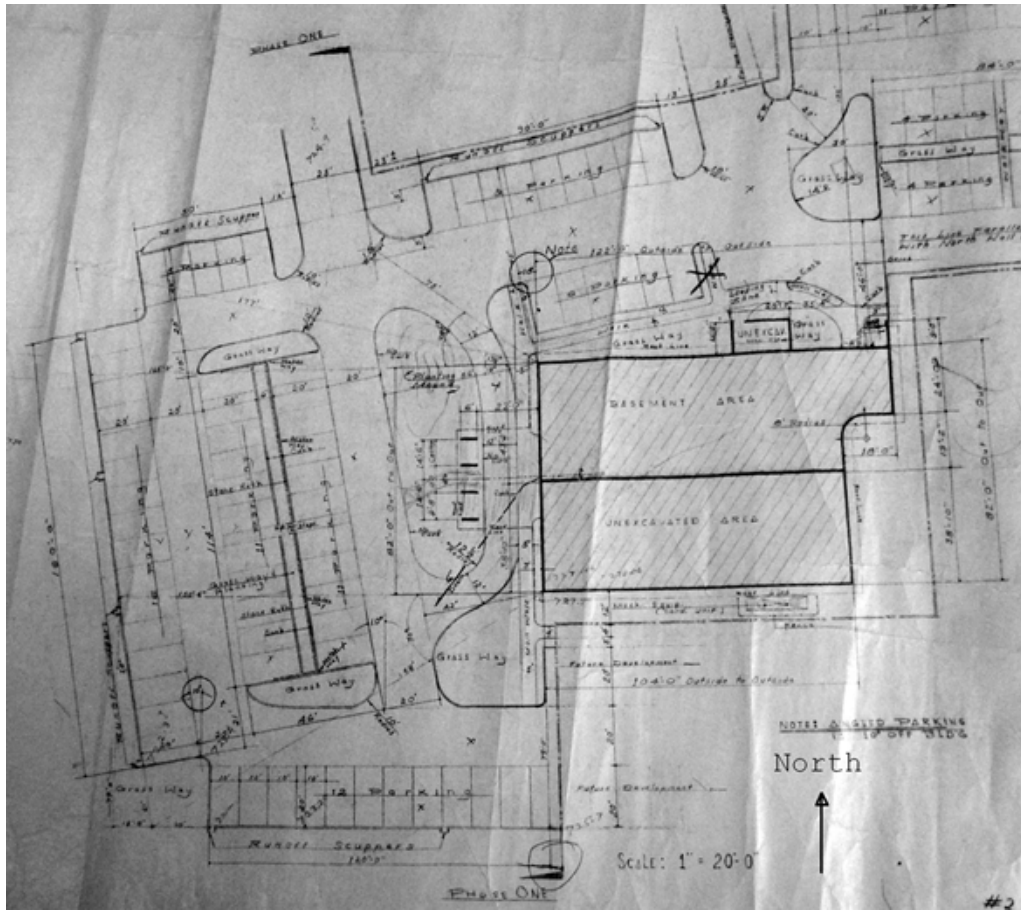


Figure 8-13: Original supper club and parking plan, 1966 (Building plans)

Figure 8-13 shows the supper club portion with its westward orientation relative to its approach and parking areas. The curious curved east wall survives today and locates the east stairway that was added just north of it with the 1973 expansion.

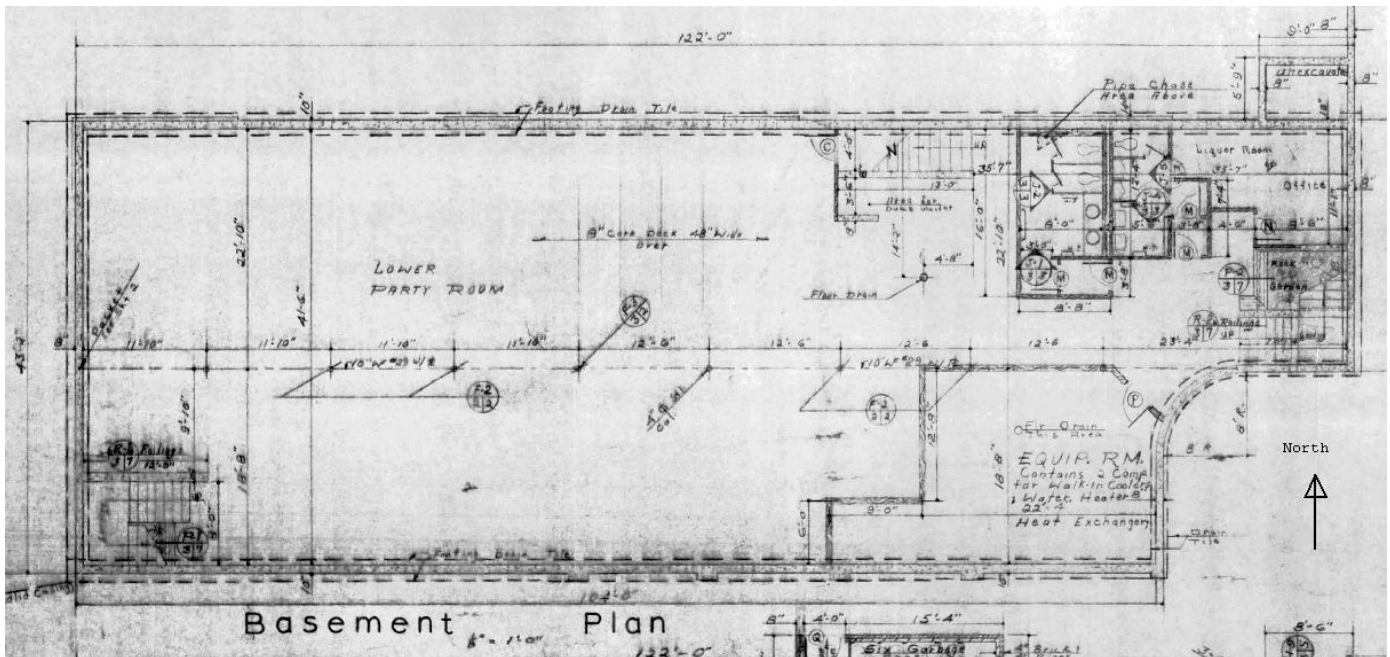


Figure 8-14: Original supper club basement plan, 1966 (Building plans)

The feature of interest in the original basement was an interior rock garden at the base of the east steps.

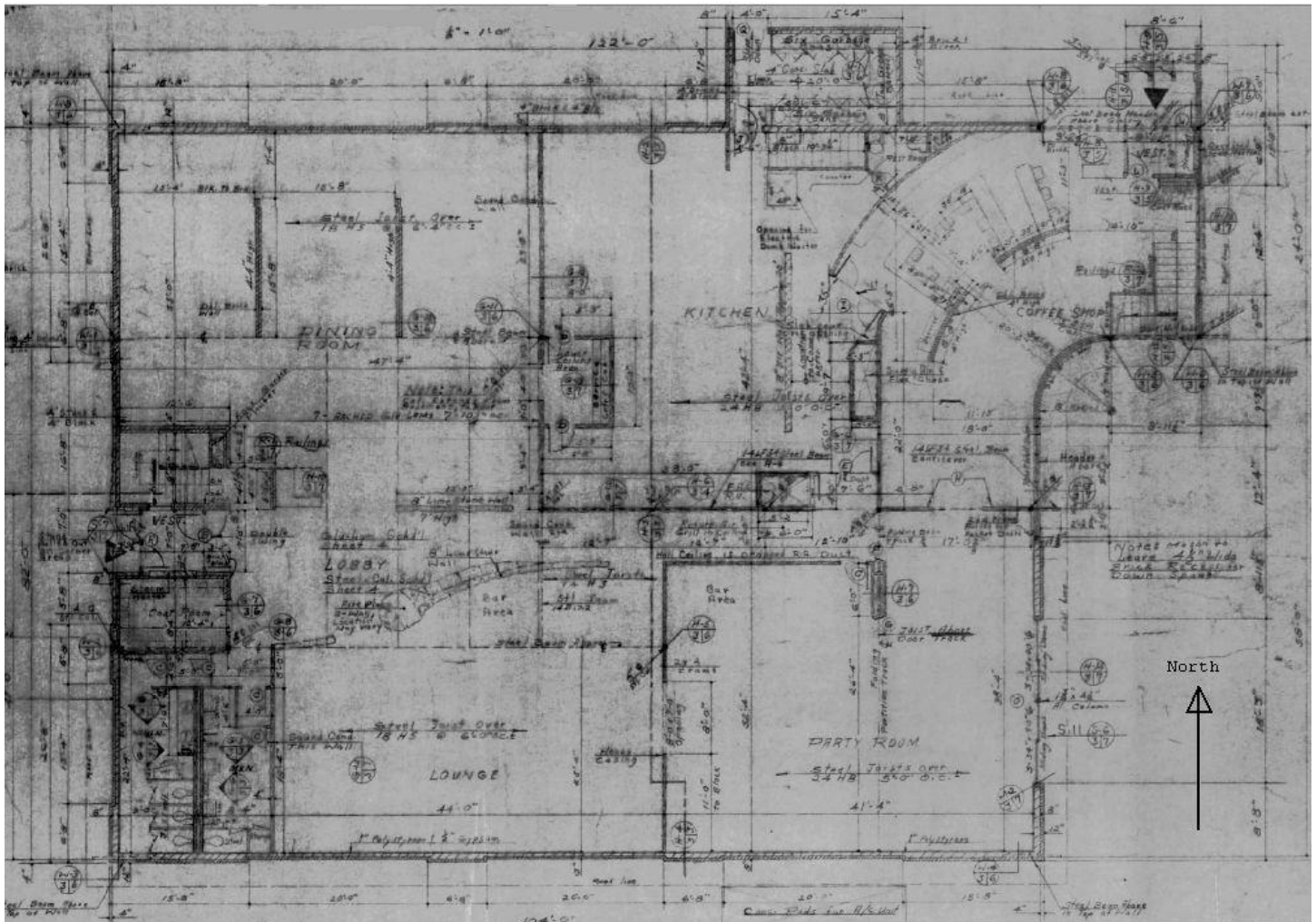


Figure 8-15: Original supper club first floor plan, 1966 (Building plans)

The seven Glu-Lam girders were placed west to east across the west center section of the supper club. The lounge was centered along the south wall and a “party room” in the southeast corner. A rounded coffee shop was in the northeast corner and its arched wing explains why the east side of the original supper club had this curved wall (still extant).

The role of the supper club as a national entertainment venue and a preferred event venue for University of Iowa sports and other related events post-dated the original building. McGurk daughter Sheila Boyd recalls:

I think it was primarily after the motel with banquet space was built... The I-Club breakfasts and many large functions put on by the university came to the Highlander because we had one of the largest banquet spaces in town, with the exception of the Iowa Memorial Union and parking was always an issue there. Seriously, bragging a bit, we were very good at hosting large groups, both in service and quality of food.

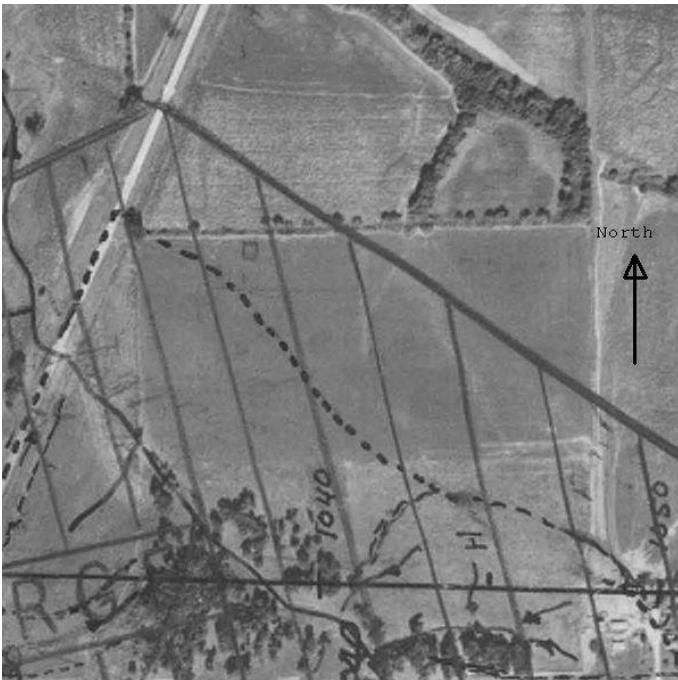
This also explains why the developers didn’t simply acquire and expand an existing area supper club. That option, lacking room for expansion, fell short of the long-term scale that was envisioned.⁷

⁷ Email, Sheila Boyd to James Jacobsen, September 8, 2020



Figure 8-16: The supper club and filling station looking south (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)⁸

Sheila Boyd also recalled at what point the “super club” function ceased. She stated “I believe that the type of supper club dining was losing favor with the public in the mid 80’s. In the early 80’s we still had small trio play on the lounge and people would eat as late 10 pm. We kept the menu, and as much of the ambiance until the late 90’s.”⁹



Figures 8-17, 8-18: Left, aerial photo, late 1950s showing site as farmland; Right, 1963-64

⁸ The filling station parcel was sold to Sunray DX Oil Company July 31, 1966 and was operated by them and then the Kron family until it returned to the ownership of the subject property owners (as B J Partnership) at the end of 1986 (Property Abstract).

⁹ Ibid.

S grading of interstate and new Highway #1 approaches (Iowa Geographic Map Server)¹⁰



Figures 8-19: Ca.1970's completed supper club and filling station to the north
(Iowa Geographic Map Server)

We're happy to be a part of
the success story of the
Highlander Supper Club



Let us become part of your success story. Call Steve Bobek
for a free survey, 338-6944.

FIRST CAPITOL SIGN ADVERTISING
Division of Nesper Sign Advertising, Inc. Phone 338-6944

¹⁰ It is surprisingly difficult to place completion dates on this highway work but the right of way land condemnation was only recorded in the property abstract on August 8, 1963.

Figure 8-20: The remodeled supper club sign, 1969 (courtesy of the owner)¹¹

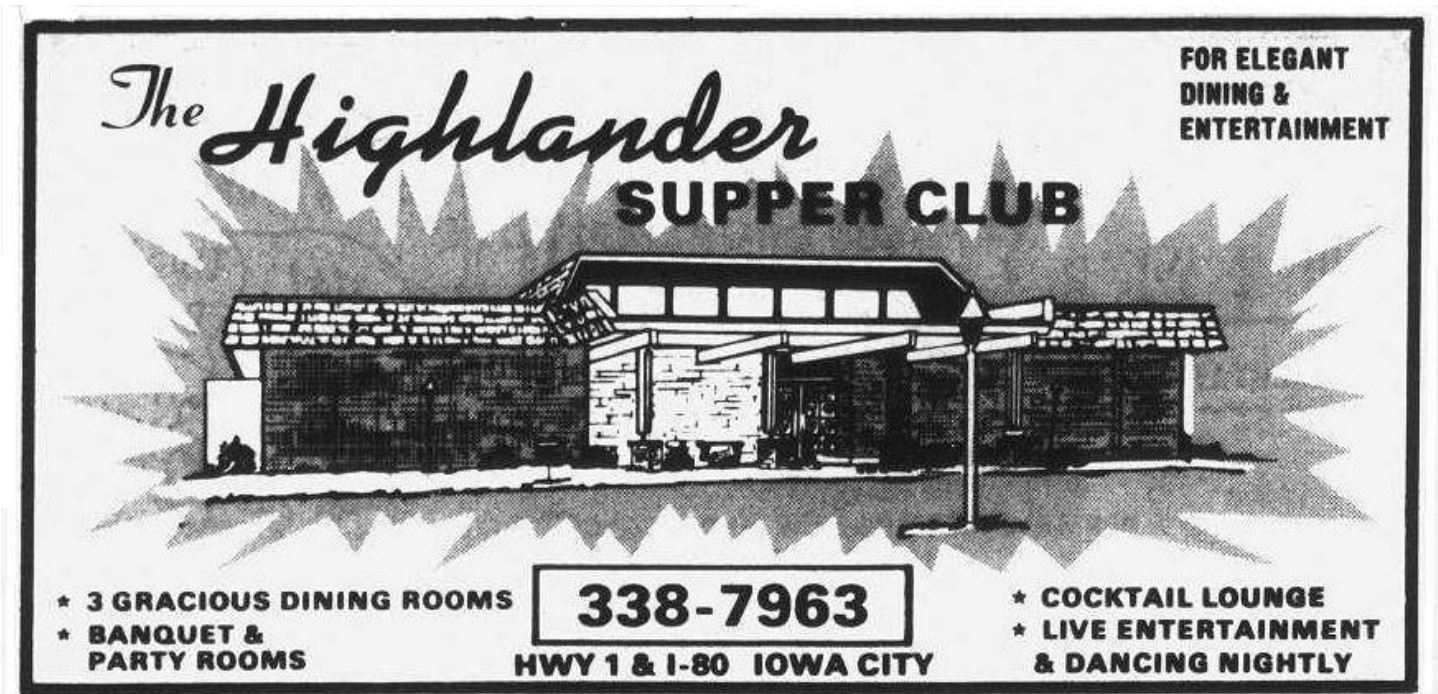


Figure 8-21: West supper club frontage, 1974 (March 1974 Cedar Rapids telephone book advertisement)

Figure 8-21 offers the most detailed view of what the club façade, roofline and portico looked like. Of special interest is the row of presumed transom windows that would have lit the club interior with evening light. The other key feature is the relatively light structure of the portico. Its reversed mansard sidewalls would have captured snow and rain.

Highlander Partnership leased the motel from Highlander, Inc., paying \$40,000 in rent and half of the pre-tax supper club income. The tenants paid taxes, insurance and maintenance costs. The initial ten-year lease expired on May 15, 1977 and had renewal options (ten years, two five-year terms). Highlander Partnership was relatively debt-free but Highlander, Inc. owed \$260,000, with the supper club as collateral for \$160,000 of that amount. The 1970 Highland Partnership financial report contained a few references of interest. Hail damage in 1969 cost \$769. Operating costs included those of a private well and sign rental.¹²

Table 1: Supper Club operational costs, 1968-1970

	1968	1969	1970
Operating expenses	253,761	301,866	310,236
Entertainment costs	19,170	41,866	36,452
Gross profit	663,342	775,317	786,220
Income from dinners	461,905	527,425	533,509
Building value (pre-depreciation)	320,104	321,079	321,079
Furniture, equipment, etc. (pre-depreciation)	83,025	85,531	89,394
Affiliate revenue (rent, profits percentage)	75,016	84,730	91,128

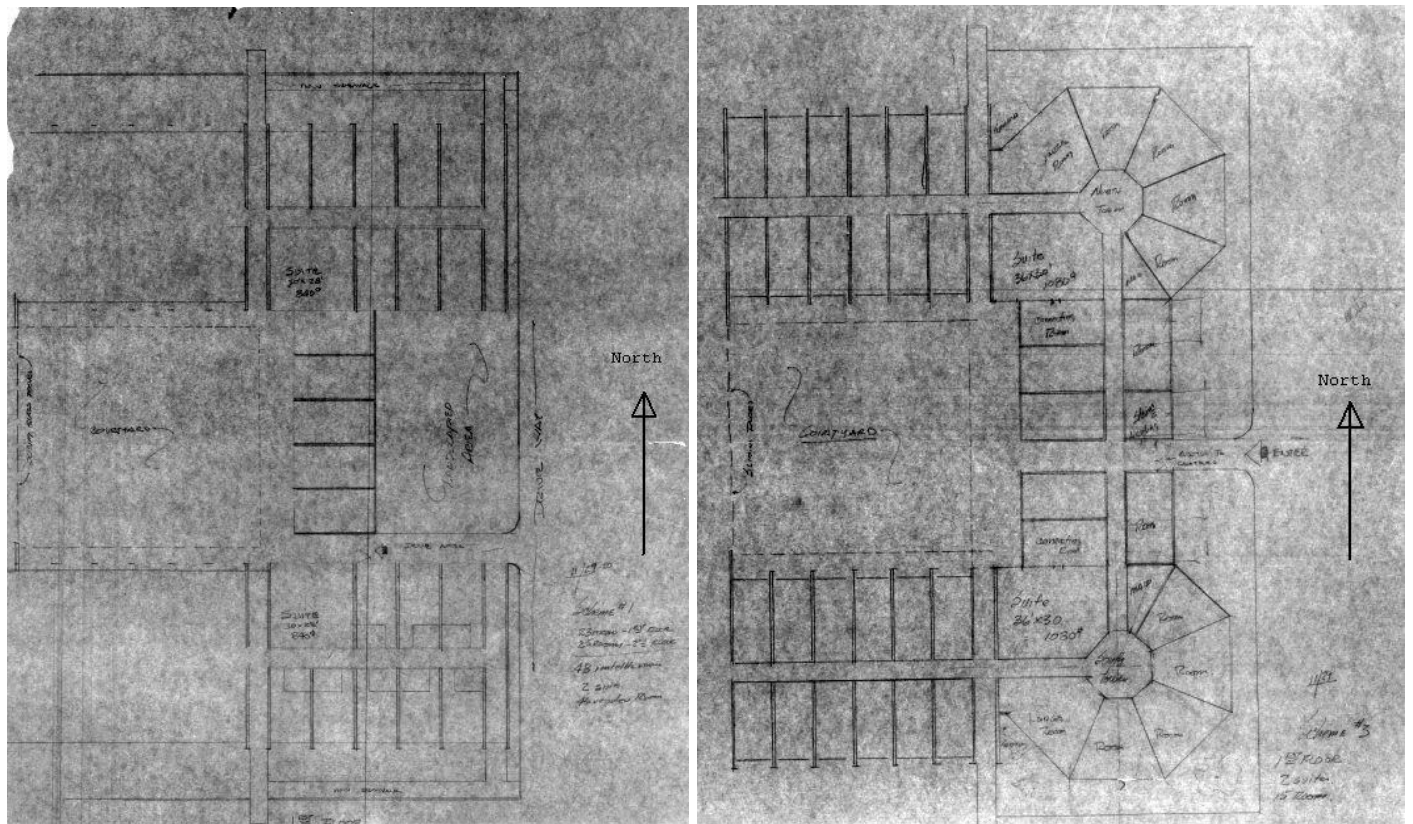
The Motel Expansion:

¹¹ Nesper Sign Advertising did a remodeling plan for the original sign, dated July 3, 1969 (Highlander Construction Documents)

¹² "Highland, Inc. Highland Partnership. Financial Reports, December 31, 1970."

The larger facility was as noted, conceptualized as early as late 1964. Detailed planning began to expand the supper club business in 1971 and by the fall of 1972 it was announced that a motel and convention center would be constructed to the east of the inn. The accommodations were to be “above average” to meet the standards of “both businessmen and vacationers, and for residents of Iowa City and the surrounding area.” The 100-unit motel would feature color television, twin queen-sized beds and in-room heating and cooling units. Meeting rooms, banquet and ball rooms would have an upper capacity of 590 attendees. Additional kitchen space, a courtyard cocktail lounge, piano bar and a coffee shop were planned. What turned out to be the “dynamic” aspect of the plan was the pool location and the motel wing design itself. The early concepts envisioned a combination of an enclosed pool, a wading pool, a hydrotherapy pool and a sauna room. Figure 8-7 depicts one early design, with a U-shaped motel section on the east end and the pool components being housed inside the east end of the open court area. Other plan variations omitted the easternmost two-story section and connected the two wings with a pagoda-like pool enclosure. In the end, the existing building was erected with the pool “court” being located across the west half of the court, and the court itself left open to the east, in anticipation of future additions. The promised 100-room count finally did transpire, reduced by just four units.¹³

The business expansion mandated a new corporate structure having the three original partners as its directors. Titled Highlander Inn, Inc. the new corporation dated from September 29, 1972 and offered 10,000 \$100.00 shares to investors.¹⁴



Figures 8-22, 8-23: Two east end motel designs, fall 1970

¹³ Iowa City Press Citizen, January 10, 1972

¹⁴ Iowa City Press Citizen, October 27, 1972. The 1970 financial report however noted that 20,000 shares at \$100 per share were authorized, but just 60 shares had been issued. The new corporation presumably planned to improve on that.

A remarkable range of convention center/motel designs were devised, in at least three serious alternative concepts. That reflected in Figure 8-24 was certainly the most unconventional with its twin east “towers” with pie-shaped rooms (somewhat reflective of the then-popular open-plan classrooms).

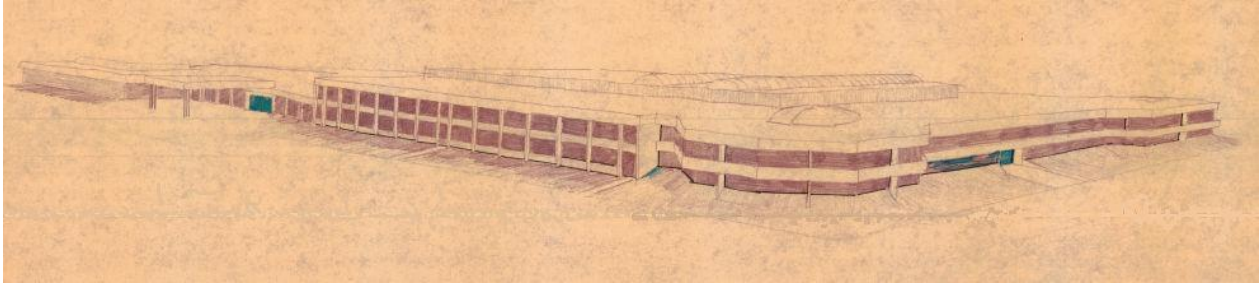


Figure 8-24: A sketch of the Figure 8-23 plan, looking northwest

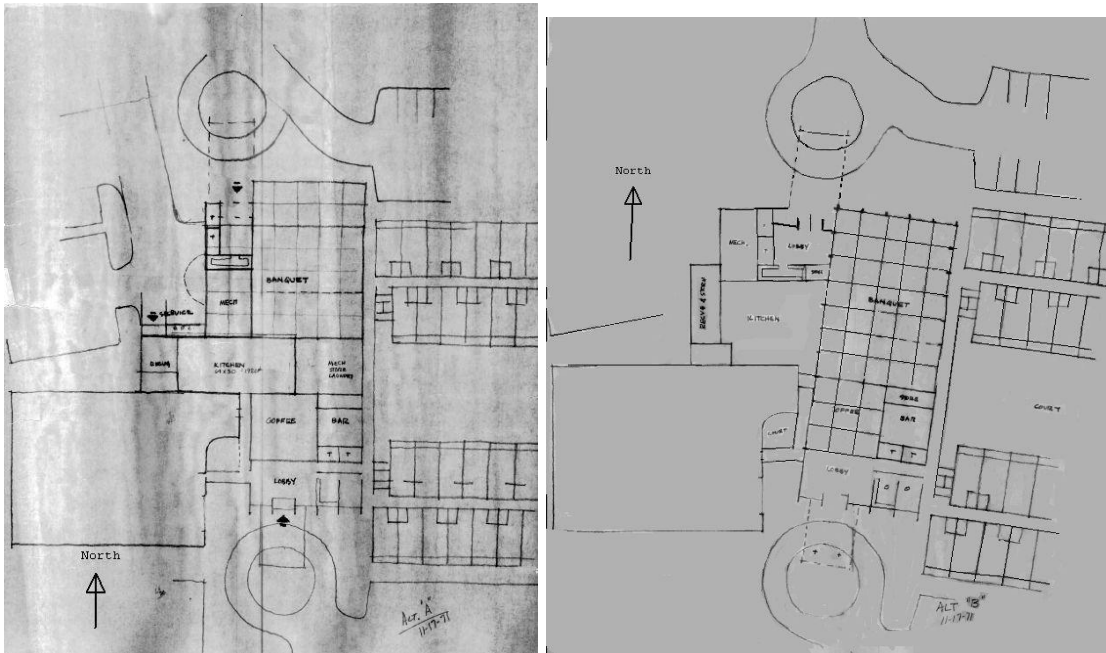


Figure 8-25, 8-26: Variations on twin opposing canopied entries, dated November 11 and 21, 1971

These two plans replaced the west supper club entrance and focus with dual monumental entrances. Figure 8-26 angled off of the original supper club and in both plans, the club was simply appended to in awkward fashion. Note that both plans alternated the motel room entrances as did Figure 8-27.



Figure 8-27: Architect's sketch, 1972, looking northeast
(note the elevated motel sign left of center)¹⁵

The angled plan (Figure 8-26) must have been seriously considered since the architects also did the sketch (Figure 8-27).

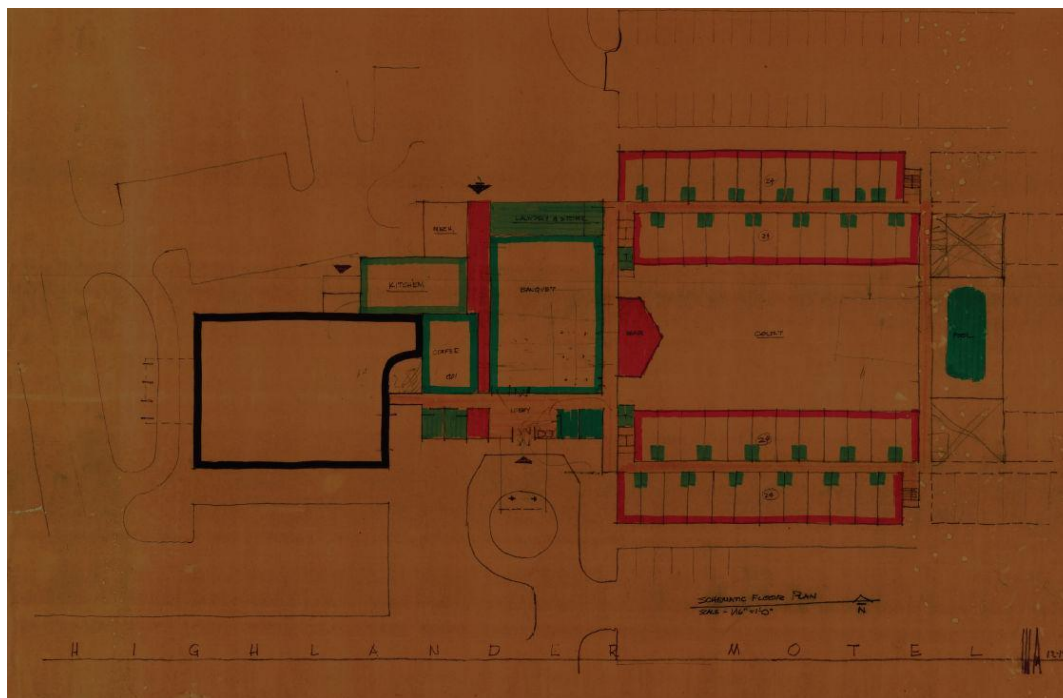


Figure 8-28: Another alternative plan

The Figure 8-28 alternative dropped the north entry, shortened the courtyard, added a triangular bar and centered the ball room on the plan.

¹⁵ Iowa City *Press Citizen*, January 10, 1972

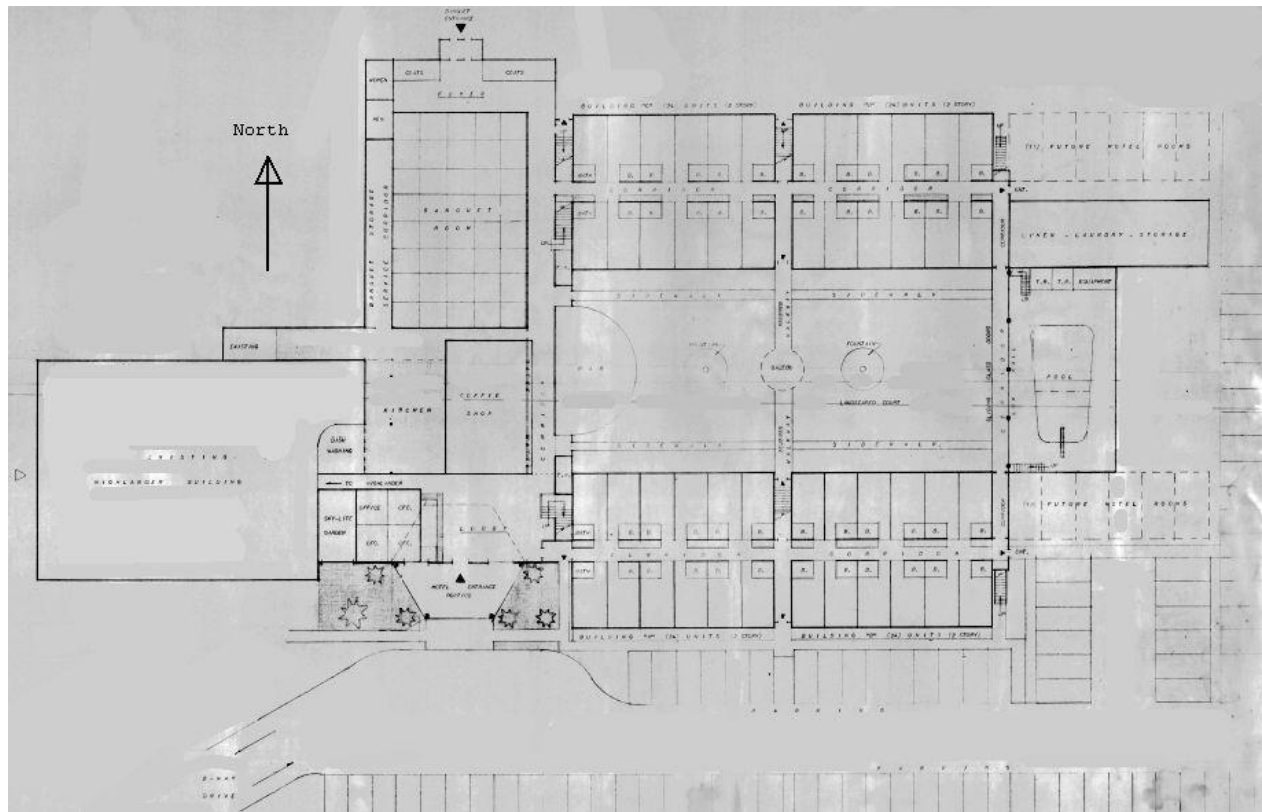


Figure 8-29: The first plan with a pool (Building plans)

The plan envisioned in Figure 8-29 closely approximated the one that was finally built. The pool was in the plan. Mid-point halls and stairs were in the motel wings. The ballroom gravitated north (although there was a minor north-side entry) and overall, the addition was better integrated with the supper club. The south canopy was not a porte cochere and notice how the south motel wing projected south so as to extend beyond it.

Noted for their complete interior decorating, McNamara's planned the decorative color schemes and executed the painting and flooring in the new Iowa Mutual Liabilities home office building in Cedar Rapids. McNamara's and their complement of 35 craftsmen planned and decorated the Bishop Restaurants located in Des Moines, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids and Davenport, Iowa and also in Peoria, Illinois. The Bishop Restaurant Chain has chosen McNamara's as their interior designers and decorators for whenever a new building may be planned.

Figure 8-31: Drew McNamara's professional profile, 1950
(Des Moines *Tribune*, November 22, 1950)

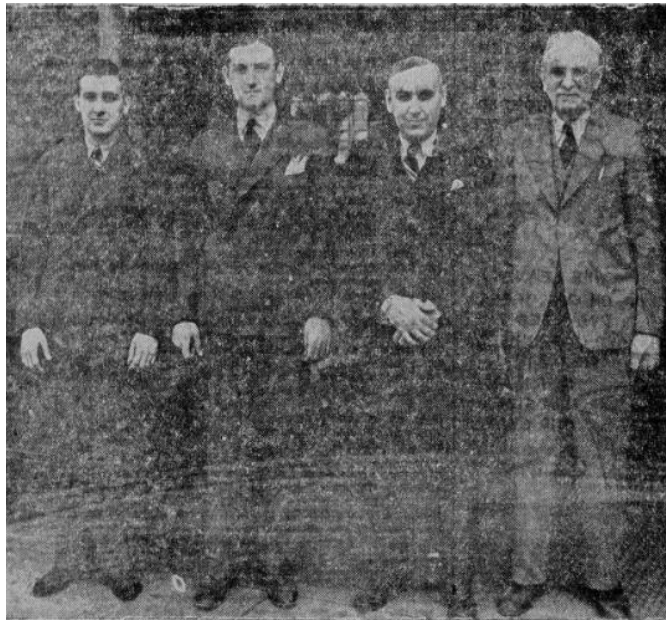


Figure 8-32: Drew (second from the left) with his brothers and father (all Jay's)
(Iowa City *Press Citizen*, October 1, 1935)

McNamara relocated from Cedar Rapids to Iowa City in 1950 and then moved to Des Moines in 1974. The Des Moines newspapers of the 1950's though clearly show him as moving in the higher social circles and enjoying a dominant reputation as an interior designer. He was designing interiors for dance studios, residences, restaurants, theaters (the *Capital* in Iowa City) business buildings and motels. His most prestigious interior work was his role as a consultant to the architect of the new Des Moines airport terminal in 1951, where he also secured the contracts for most of the interior design work. By 1953 McNamara was edging into exterior design and whole-building design work. He transformed a former tourist camp in East Des Moines into a

modern motel and it received a “motel of the month” award from *United Courts Magazine*. McNamara designed an entire hotel for John Compiano in Des Moines in 1962 and a “Mount Vernon-like” addition for the J and K Motel there in 1964. Parkway Inns of Des Moines had him design the interior (including a pool room and banquet hall) for their new Beaumont Motor Inn in Green Bay, Wisconsin, in 1965. McNamara designed the interior and exterior for Babe’s Restaurant in Des Moines in 1966. His known whole building design work dates from 1956 with a 24-building Lake Okoboji resort in Dickinson County. The University Athletic Club (1958) was loosely evocative of his Highlander design, moreso in its complex interior. It was a split-level layout that combined private club rooms, basement locker rooms, three dining rooms and a large banquet room with an outside pool.¹⁷

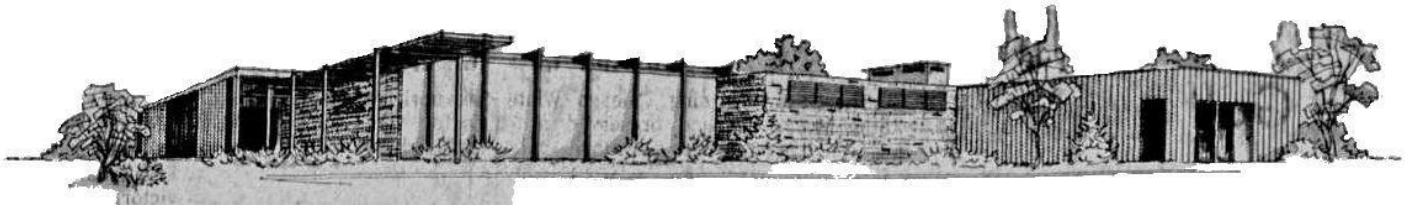


Figure 8-33: University of Iowa Athletic Club, Finkbine Golf Course
(*Iowa City Daily Iowan*, July 1, 1958)

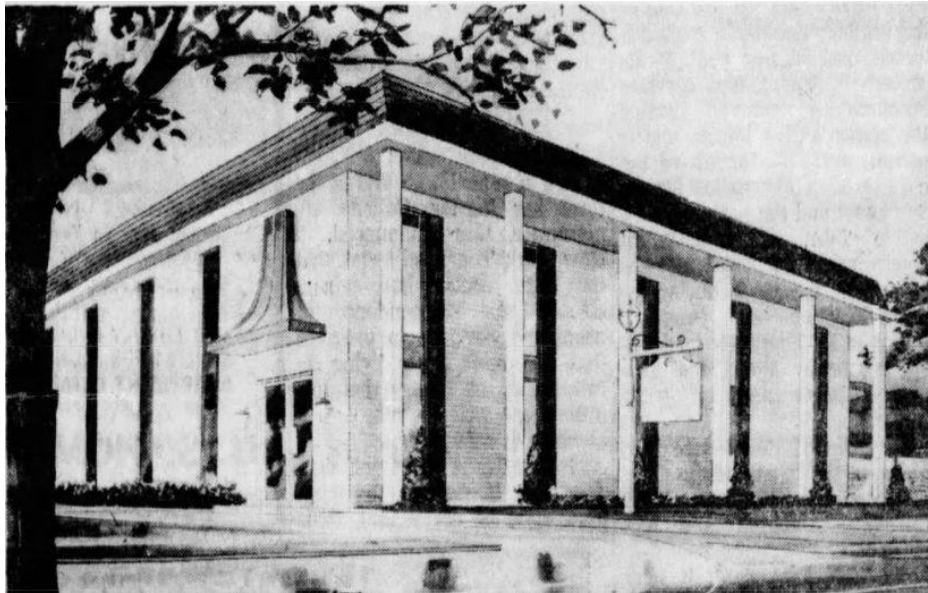


Figure 8-34: Williams, McWilliams and Hart law offices, 2130 Grand Avenue, Des Moines (looking southwest)
(*Des Moines Register*, January 4, 1970)

What appears to be the zenith of his whole building design work is the office building at 2130 Grand Avenue in Des Moines (Figure 8-35). He was the architect working with structural engineers [Carlyle W.] Peterson and [Donald W.] Appel. The 12,000 square foot plan cost \$222,000 and had a white-painted brick exterior.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 29, 1954; June 27, July 8, 1958; July 17, 1963; *Iowa City Press Citizen*, February 3, 1947; *Iowa City Daily Iowan*, July 1, 1958 and the *Des Moines Register*, May 22, 1968; <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/GW6W-3TH>; *Des Moines Register*, December 3, 1950; July 12, 1951; April 12, 1953; May 7, 1962; November 4, 1964; August 22, 1965

¹⁸ *Des Moines Tribune*, July 22, 1969; *Des Moines Register*, January 4, 1970. The McNamara family suffered numerous major setbacks. The family furniture store was sold for payment of debts in 1964 and Drew’s companies were closely intertwined with it. The family lost a daughter at the age of 37 in 1974 and Catherine McNamara’s obituary makes no reference to her husband (*Cedar Rapids Gazette*, February 20, 1964; *Des Moines Register*, December 4, 1974; January 25, 1982).

The Selzer Construction Company had the general construction contract. The original estimated new construction cost was \$1 million and the building permit was reported as undefined “new commercial with that amount of value at the end of October 1972. Selzer was affiliated with both the Behlen and Chief metal building companies and had a well-established reputation for designing and building custom metal buildings. For the supper expansion the need was that of extensive clear span interior spaces that could remain open in plan (the ballroom) or which could be subdivided without concern for intrusive columns or load-bearing walls. As the building’s final design was formalized, Behlen came to the rescue by making the pool enclosure structurally possible and successful. Equipment Planners, Moline, Illinois coordinated the design and the subcontracts with a nationally distributed range of fabricators.¹⁹

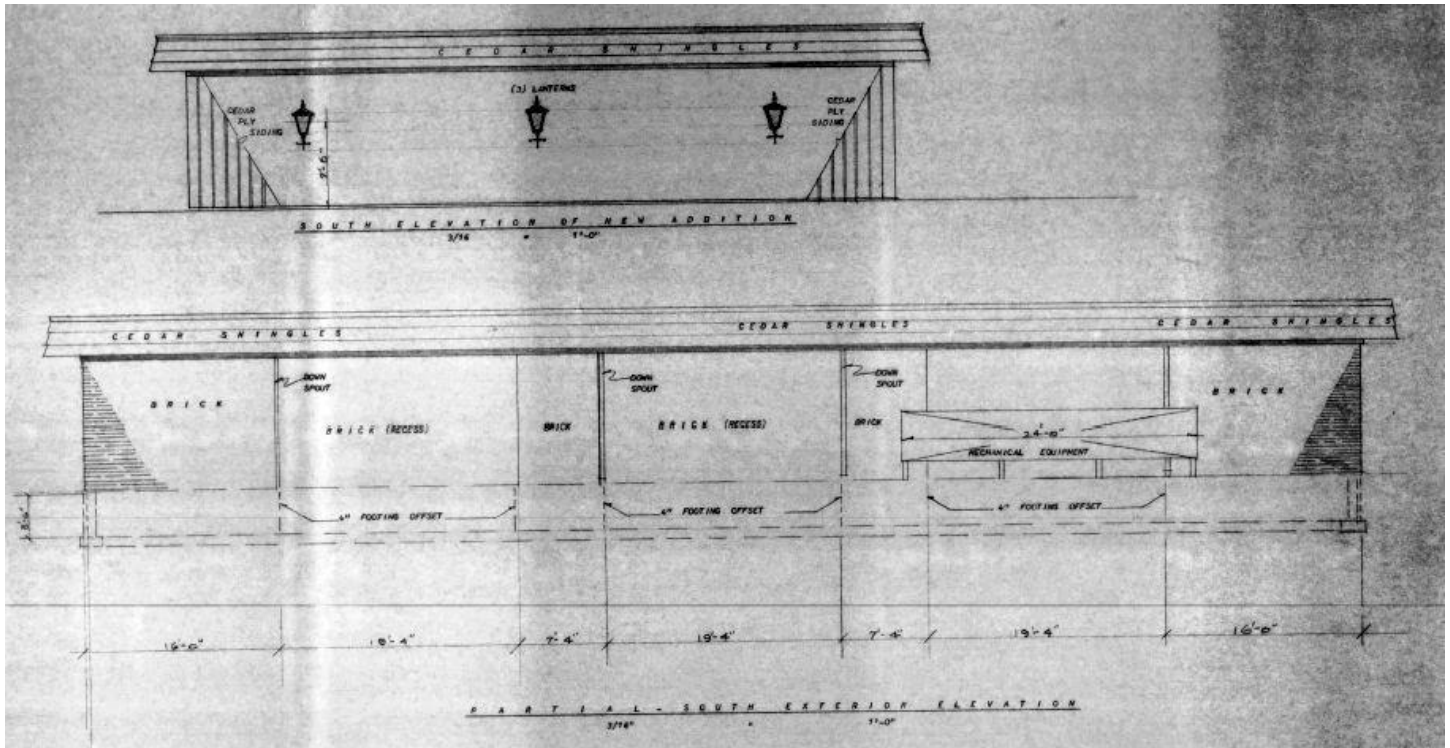


Figure 8-35: North end and south end elevation sketches, 1971 (Drew McNamara and Associates)

One presumed supper club alteration was the addition of a lounge along its south wall. The architect termed it an addition and included new south elevations showing a presumably elongated frontage. However, the volume of the original supper club does not appear to have been enlarged (see Figure 8-37) and the south façade as shown exactly mirrors that which is present today. No construction photos show any southward extension. There was related interest in doing a centered bump-out with a skylight as a part of the lounge plan but this was not done. Most likely, the lounge was constructed within the confines of the supper club footprint.

¹⁹ Iowa City *Press Citizen*, October 31, 1972; <https://chiefbuildings.com/>; <http://behlenbuildingsystems.com/>. Both companies continue in business today. Behlen Building Systems is located at Columbus, Nebraska and Chief Metal Buildings is at Grand Island, Nebraska. Drew McNamara was also a partner of the Red Carpet Ranch nightclub, located next to the Ranch Supper Club at Cou Falls, outside of Iowa City, as of 1962-1964 (*Cedar Rapids Gazette*, March 24, 1964).

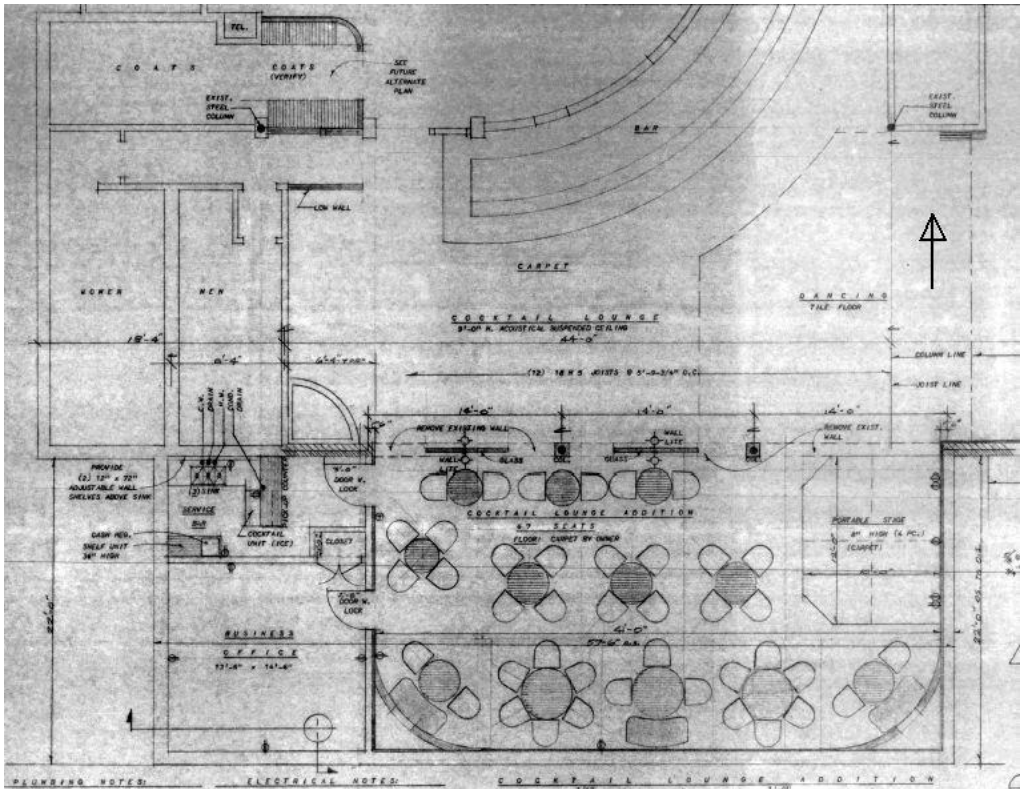


Figure 8-36: Lounge addition, 1971 (Drew McNamara and Associates)

Custom designed



METAL BUILDINGS
by **CHIEF**

► ► Your Best Building Investment ◀ ◀

BEFORE YOU BUILD OR EXPAND — GET THE FACTS ABOUT CHIEF METAL BUILDINGS DESIGNED TO FIT YOUR NEED. LARGE OR SMALL — THE MOST BUILDING FOR YOUR MONEY — QUICK LOW-COST ERECTION — CHOICE OF COLOR COATED PANELS — MINIMUM OF MAINTENANCE.

Whatever and wherever your building requirements are, let us hear about them. Pro-engineered metal buildings are our business

FRANCHISED BUILDER

Selzer Construction Company, Inc.

1225 Highland Court Iowa City, Iowa
336-2098 333-7477

Figure 8-37: Selzer Construction Company advertisement

(Iowa City *Press Citizen*, October 17, 1979)

The complete financial records for the building addition survive and these provide important insights to the difficulties that the builders faced and the dynamic nature of the evolving building layout.

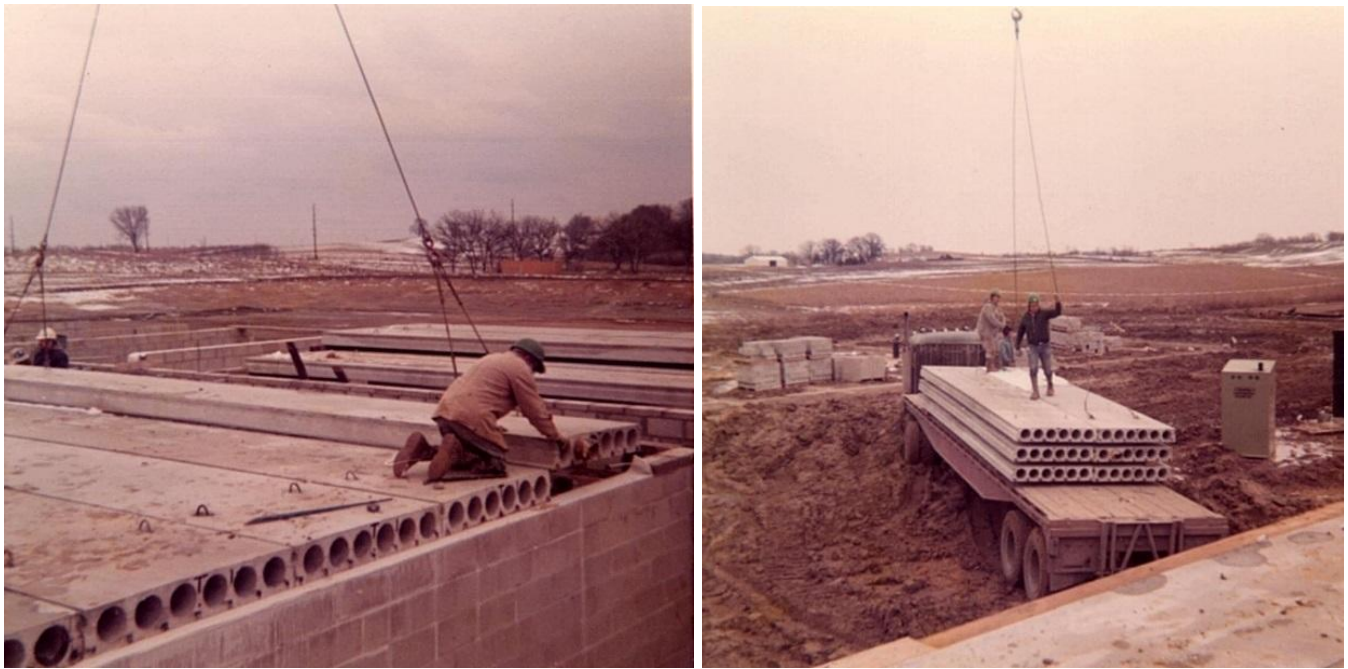


Figures 8-38, 8-39: Construction photos; Left, looking southwest, supper club and sign, right, south motel wing looking west, both November 1972 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

Figures 8-38 and 8-39 underscore the then completely unobstructed view between the interstate and the supper club. The original sign was just 36.6 feet high but sufficed to be seen from the traffic to the south.



Figures 8-40, 8-41: Construction photos; Left, looking west, supper club and sign, note footings and new south entry, right, supper club original north wall looking southwest, both December 1972 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figures 8-42, 8-43: Construction photos; Left, looking northeast, precast hollow floor panels, right, load of panels, looking northeast, both December 1972 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

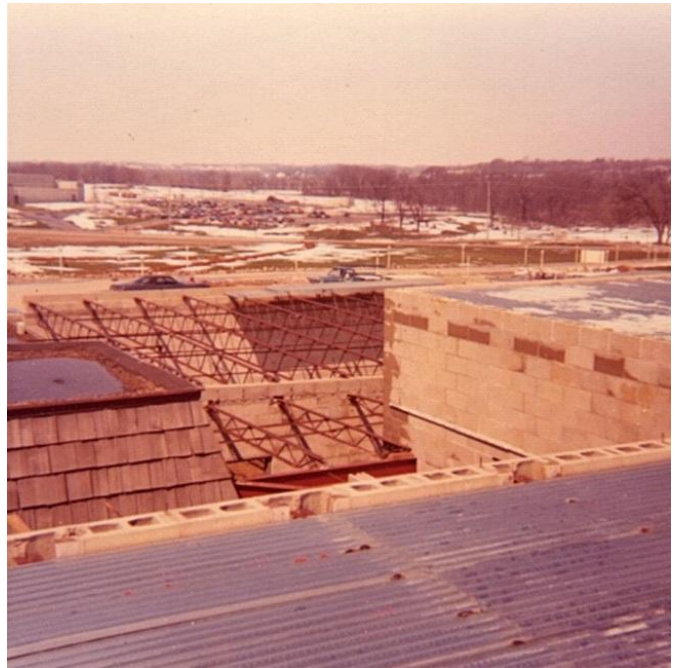
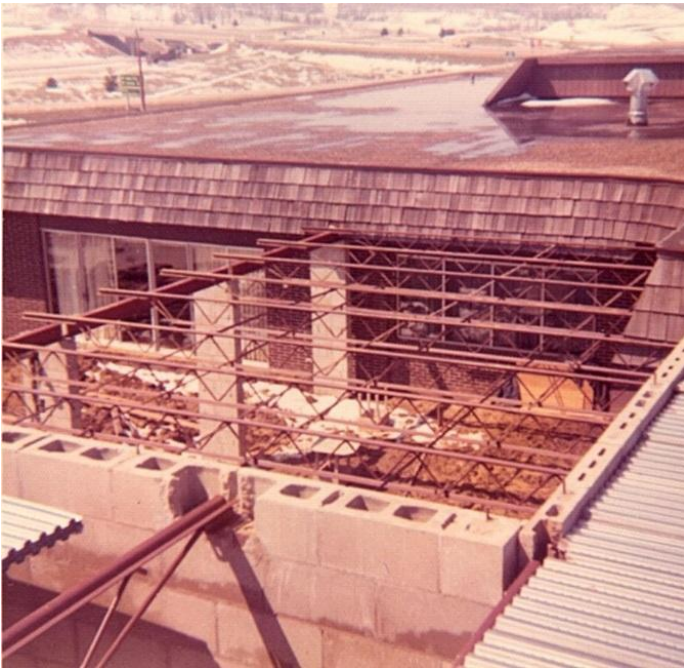


Figure 8-44: Construction photos, lower level of south motel wing decked, looking northeast, both December 1972 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

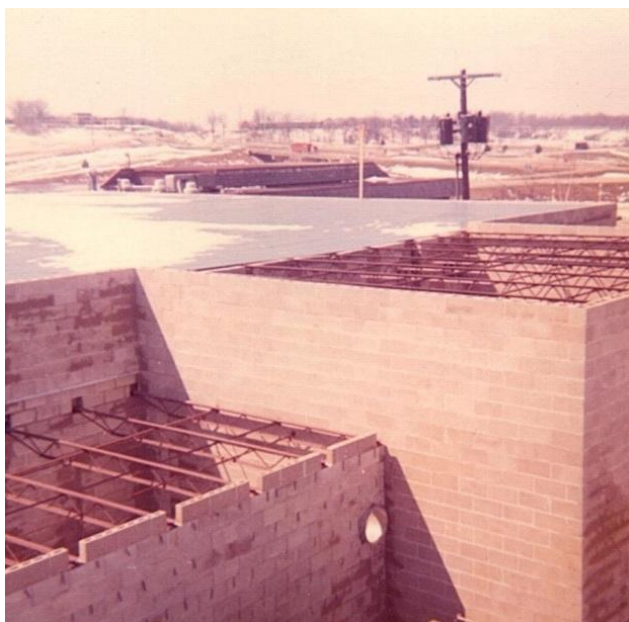
There were several references to “unforeseen weather” during the surveying and grading phase of work and no construction progress photos survive from January-April 1973. Snow removal cost an impressive \$1,723. Table 2 tabulates the project costs as of the end of October 1973. Change orders and new items are endemic to construction work. In this case, the percentage of change orders vis-à-vis the contract (Table 2) was 28 percent. The largest change order was the complete re-planning of the swimming pool and its enclosure, the substantial repaving (all of the original parking was asphalt paved) to the north of the motel when that grade was determined to be too high. Not included in Table 2 was the courtyard work (\$9,064) accomplished by late April 1974 which entailed substantial filling, grading and 623 square yards of four-inch thick asphalt paving covered with green astro turf.

Table 2: Construction costs to October 1973

Cost Area	Cost
Construction Loan	\$1,800,000
Original contract	\$699,887
Change Orders	\$196,300
The Highlander ²⁰	\$774,761
New items	\$66,060
Total	\$1,837,700

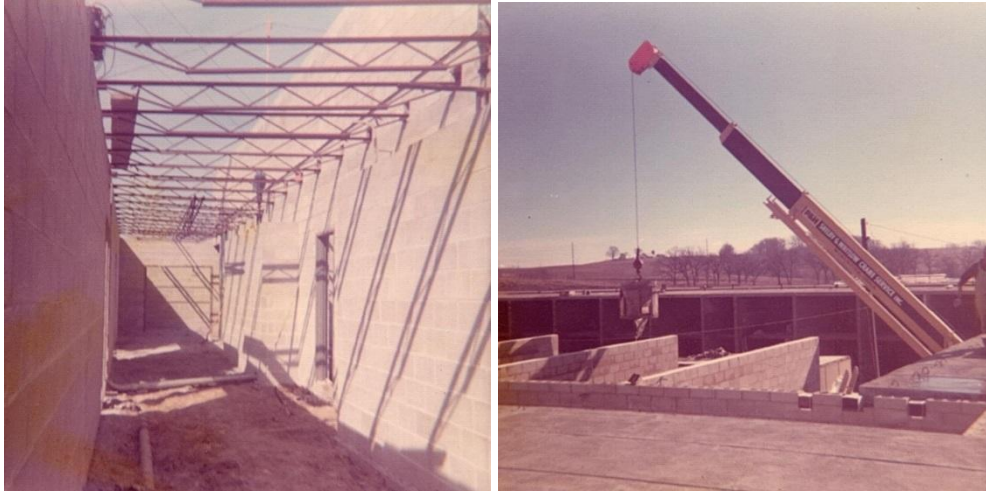


Figures 8-45, 8-46: Construction photos, left, infill to the east of the supper club, looking west, and right, same, looking northwest, both May 1973 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

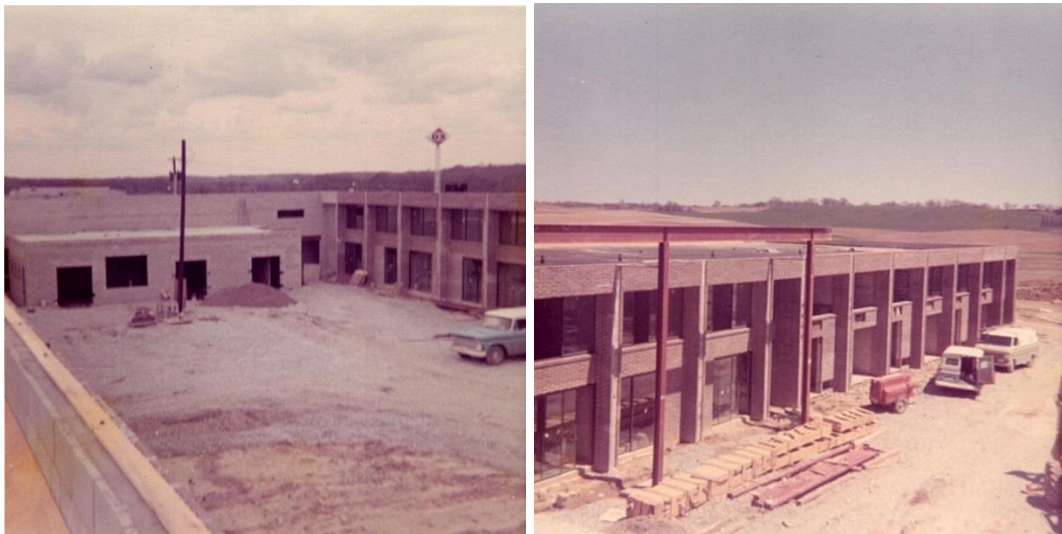


²⁰ This category presumably isolates expenses within the existing supper club and might include the north kitchen addition.

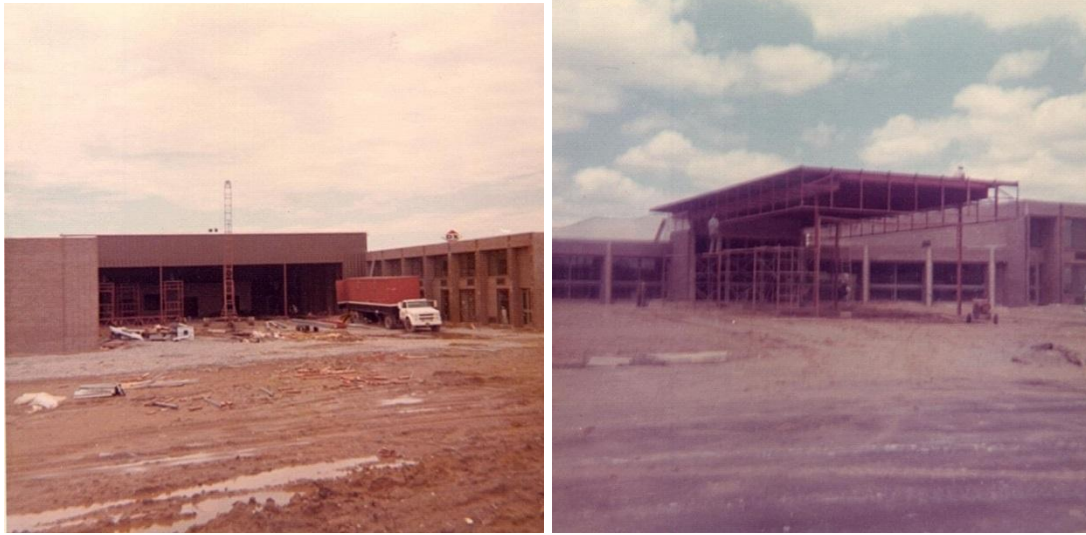
Figures 8-47, 8-48: Construction photos, left, roof framing and wall details, looking west, and right, veneer work on south motel wing, south facade, looking east, both May 1973 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



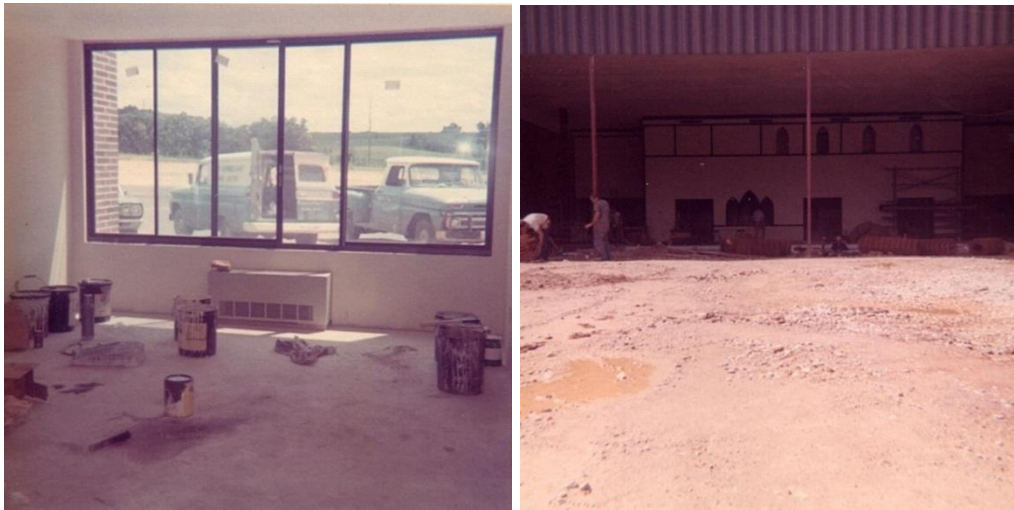
Figures 8-49, 8-50: Construction photos; left, hall roof framing and wall details, looking north, May 1973; and right, pouring concrete, upper level, south side of north motel wing, looking southeast, June 1973 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figures 8-51, 8-52: Construction photos, left, first floor of pool bar complete, looking northwest, and right, steel framing for pool roof, looking northeast, both June 1973 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figures 8-53, 8-54: Construction photos, left, finished pool housing, looking west, right, steel framing for south portico, looking north, both June 1973 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figures 8-55, 8-56: Construction photos, left, original windows, south motel wing, looking southeast, August 1973; and right, second floor on pool bar, completed steel pool housing, looking west, September 1973 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figures 8-57, 8-58, 8-59: Various symbolic motifs employed by the supper club (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

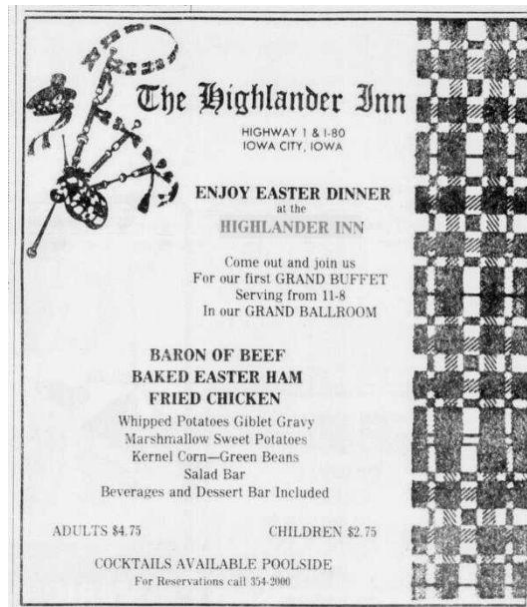


Figure 8-60: First “Grand Buffet” (not the first use) in the Grand Ballroom, August 1974²¹

Figure 8-38 depicts the original supper club sign located immediately south of the supper club. The expansion warranted a revised sign that highlighted the added lodging. Several competing advertising firms produced a broad range of new sign concepts between March and November 1973. In late June the original sign designer Nesper encouraged the owners to act quickly to place a taller sign alongside the interstate before a new sign ordinance limited these to 35 feet in height. Figure 8-40 depicts the renaming from supper club to inn and a proposed height increase from 36.5 feet to 49.33 feet. Figure 8-41 shows that the wording was changed but that the original sign was simply relocated closer to the interstate.

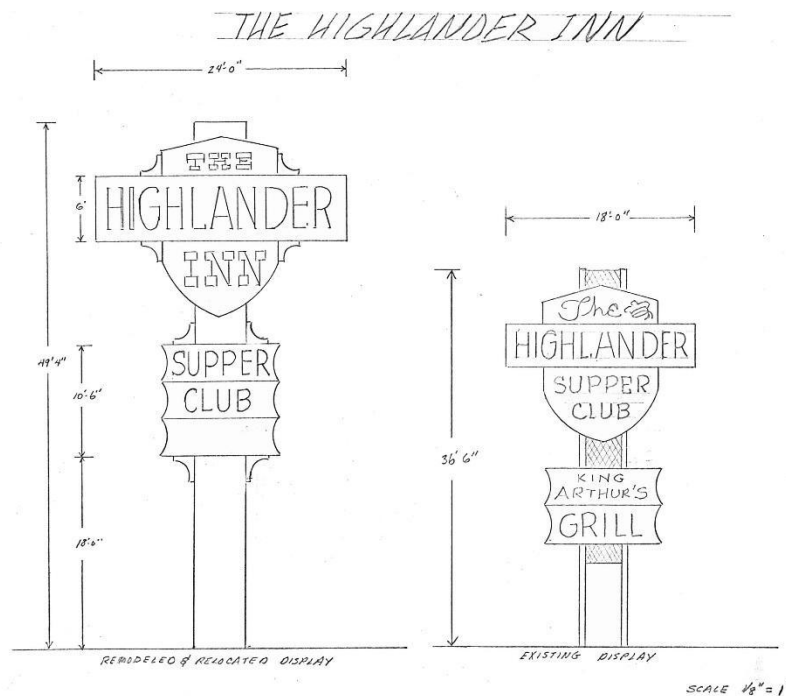


Figure 8-61: Inn sign redesign, ca.early 1974 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

²¹ Cedar Rapids Gazette, August 12, 1974



Figure 8-62: New ca.1975 interstate highway sign, looking northwest (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

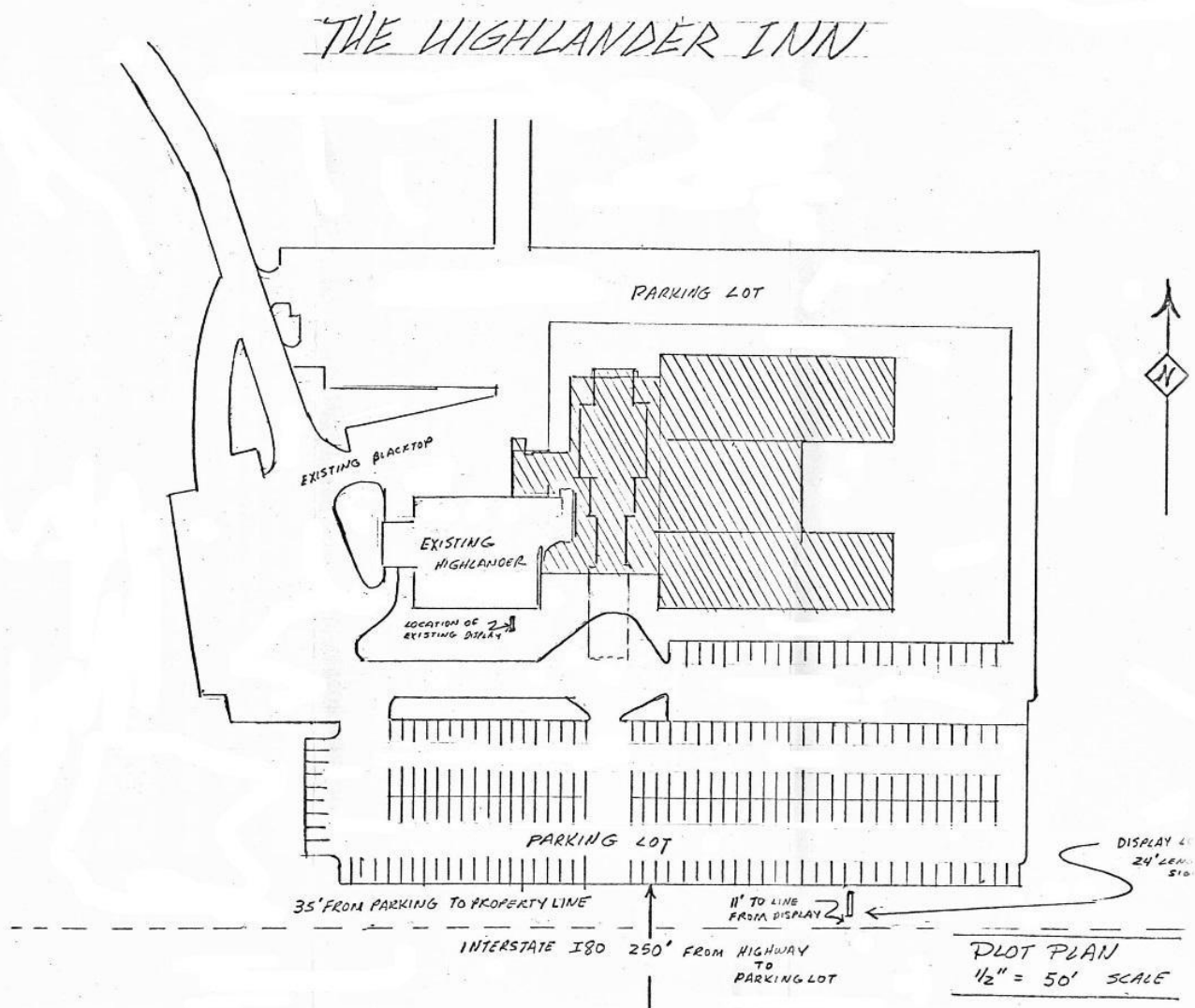


Figure 8-63: June 1973 site plan and proposed sign relocation (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

The Highlander was directly associated with the Amana VIP Golf Tournament from 1974 until 1990 when it ended. Amana Refrigeration Company president George Forestner conceived of this event as a means of company promotion. The first event was held in 1974 at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, but the hard to reach site was switched to the Finkbine Golf Course in Iowa City the next year. The Iowa City Holiday Inn housed the tournament through 1973 by which time it was inadequate. The timing of the Highlander expansion was perfect and it and the adjacent Howard Johnson motel, just south across the interstate, would be completely sold out for the event beginning in 1974. The Amana company dominated the occasion, provided gifts and at one point constructed a temporary appliance display in the convention center. Amana sales managers were paired with the elite golfers. The tournament was the leading funder for the University of Iowa athletic scholarship and the largest funding source of women's collegiate sports at the university.²²

²² Cedar Rapids Gazette, November 20, 1973; May 6, 1976; June 30, 1982.

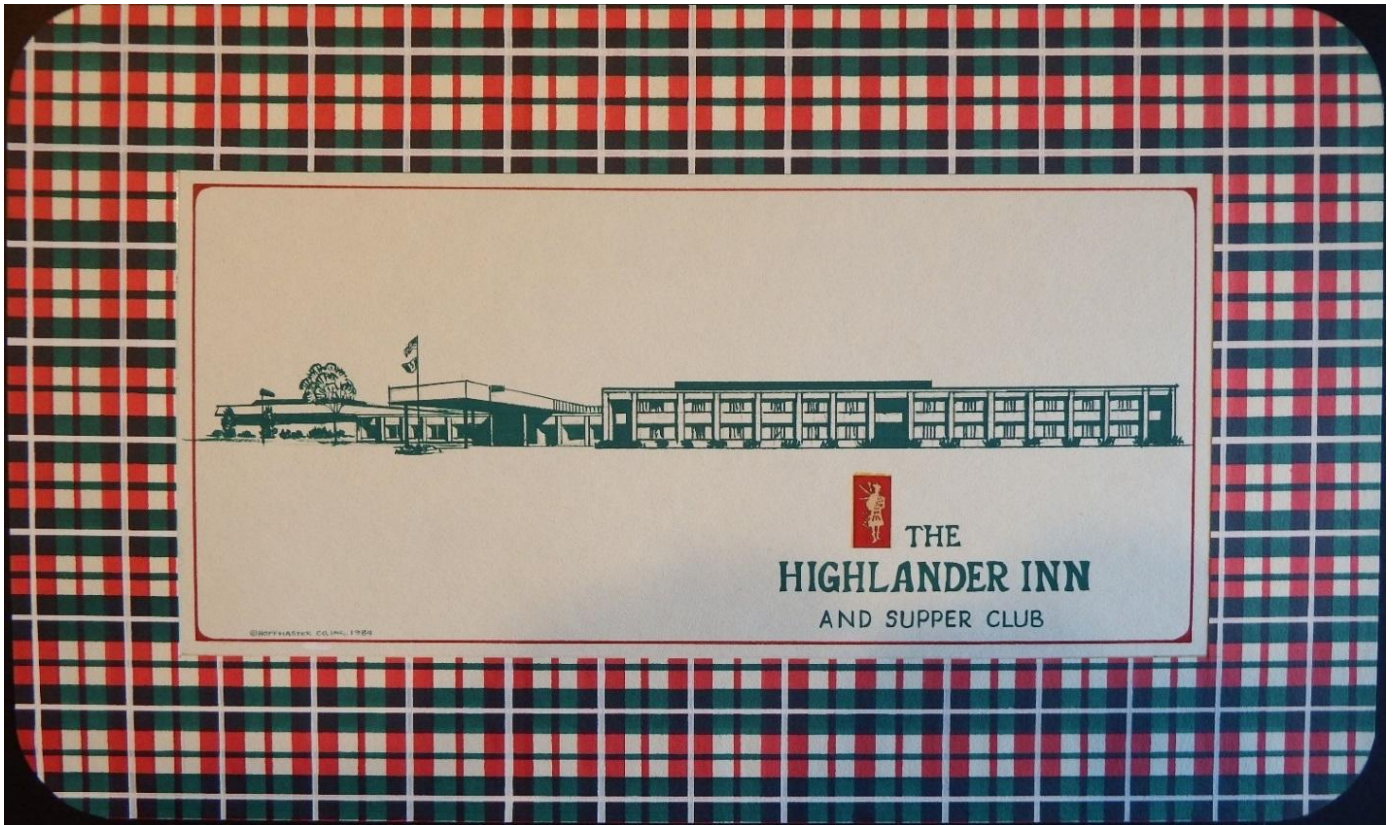


Figure 8-64: Drawing by K. E. Gilbert, Hoffmaster Design Studio, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 1984 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

The Highlander
*Enjoy Dining,
 Dine With Us!*

Dine nightly in the Highlander Supper Club — a popular local night spot with a reputation of one of Iowa's finest restaurants. Enjoy breakfast, lunch or on Sunday an elegant Buffet. Excellent banquet meeting and convention facilities too!

The Highlander Inn
 1-801 & Hwy 1
 Exit 246 • Iowa City

**For Reservations Call
 351-3150**

Highlander is something special

By RON MALY
 Register Staff Writer

IOWA CITY, IA. — A year ago at this time, a couple of the pleasures of being in Iowa City included watching the University of Iowa football team play, and dining at the Highlander Supper Club.

The situation has changed just a bit this fall. The football team isn't so hot these days, but the food at the Highlander is still something special.

Dining at the Highlander, which is located at exit 246 on Interstate 80 and Highway 1, is a treat that

RESTAURANTS IN IOWA

folks from this city — and visitors, too — have had for 13 years.

The supper club is part of a complex that also includes a motel, a coffee shop, banquet facilities and a lounge.

Whether it's the surf and turf (sirloin steak and lobster) at \$13.95, beef tenderloin at \$10.75 or the \$5.95 chopped sirloin, it's all but impossible to leave the supper club still feeling hungry.

And, with restaurant prices skyrocketing all across the country, the Highlander has held the line pretty well over the years.

On my most recent visit to the Highlander, I was in a quandary. I was torn between ordering the

This series is designed to inform Register readers of interesting restaurants around the state. No attempt at comparative ratings is made, but any restaurant featured can be expected to meet general standards of acceptability.

steak and lobster, the beef tenderloin or the \$9.55 roast prime rib of beef.

I finally chose beef tenderloin, with baked potato (complete with sour cream and chives) and a tossed salad with bleu cheese dressing.

I wasn't disappointed. Neither was Maxine, my wife, who decided on the steak and lobster, hash brown potatoes and Epicurean salad.

The steak and lobster is included in a list of meals on the menu with the heading "Highlander Special Combinations." Other items in that category are a seafood platter at \$9.95, steak and shrimp at \$9.95, shrimp and scallops at \$8.75 and steak and crab at \$12.75.

Such things as chicken Kiev at \$6.95 and beef stroganoff at \$7.75 are included in the items under the heading "A Different Taste Treat."

African lobster tail, shrimp, scallops, catfish and pike are available. Steaks include T-bone (the highest-priced at \$11.45), top sirloin and filet mignon (both at \$8.95).

On the list of "Kitchen Specialties" along with the prime rib and chopped sirloin are items including chicken livers (\$5.55), ham steak (\$5.95),

barbecued pork ribs (\$6.75) and Iowa chop (\$6.95).

Kids under 12 get a break at the Highlander. A dollar is knocked off the price of their "children's portions."

There is a sizable list of appetizers. Maxine chose the breaded cauliflower at \$2. I picked the crabmeat cocktail at \$3.25. Also available are shrimp cocktail, herring in sour cream, breaded fried mushrooms, onion rings, tomato juice and French onion baked soup.

Sandwiches are available, too. There's a steak sandwich at \$7.25, prime rib on toast at \$6.95, deluxe hamburger at \$3.75 and cheeseburger at \$3.95.

On the a la carte menu are such things as chef's salad at \$4.35 and shrimp salad at \$5.25.

Dessert? Oh, yes. How about creme de menthe parfait, creme de cocoa parfait or chocolate parfait at \$1.25 each? Or ice cream at \$1 or sherbet at 90 cents? It all sounded good, but both of us decided to pass on the sweet stuff.

Cocktails and beer are available. The wine list is lengthy, but a good buy is one of the Paul Masson house wines. A glass of burgundy, chablis or rose costs \$1.25, a small carafe \$3.75, a large carafe \$6.25.

To a chablis man like me, the small carafe was just fine.

Highlander Supper Club, Interstate 80 and Highway 1, Iowa City. Dress, casual. Dinner hours, 5 p.m. to 11 p.m., Monday through Saturday, 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sunday. Reservations accepted. Major credit cards accepted.

Figures 8-65, 8-66: Left, "One of Iowa's finest restaurants" (Cedar Rapids Gazette, December 21, 1984); and right, restaurant review (Des Moines Register, October 10, 1980)

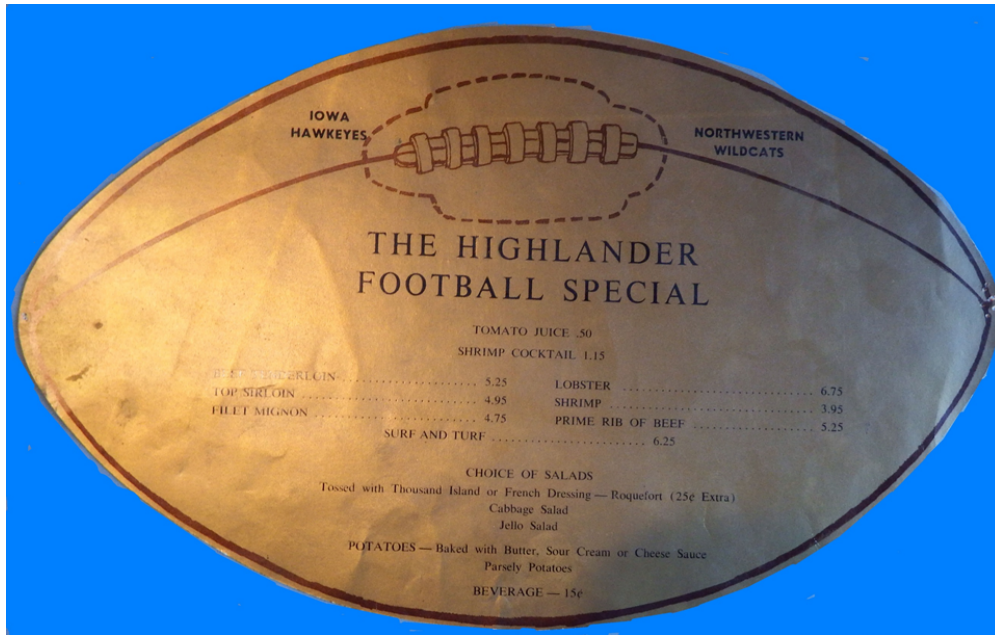
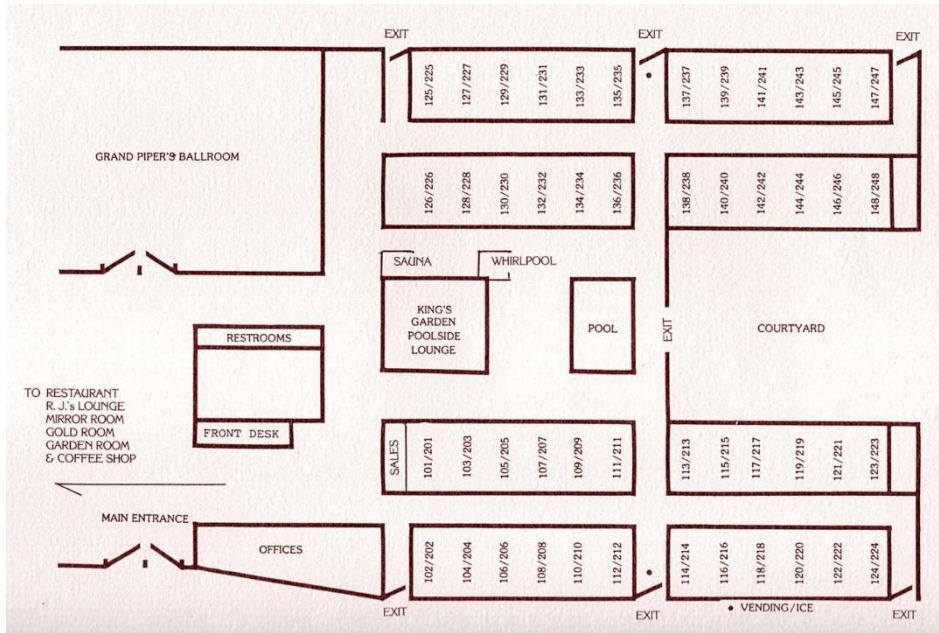


Figure 8-67: Promotional event item, undated (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Highlander Inn

RESTAURANT & CONVENTION CENTER

R.J.'s

The Entire Family Is Welcome!
 A Special Place To Dine
 Seven Nights A Week
 With Tempting Entrees
 Ranging From Prime Rib
 to Sandwiches & Salads

Relax in the soothing
 atmosphere of R.J.'s Lounge
 and enjoy piano entertainment
 for dancing and easy listening.

Figures 8-68, 8-69: Left, convention/motel layout, 1995, and right, R.J.'s Lounge (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

The 1995 floorplan shows a largely open plan around the ballroom. The King's Garden Lounge was the sole east-end amenity. To the west was the restaurant with its five subsections. A small sales office was at the west end of the south motel wing. The Garden Room was in the basement level of the original supper club.

Bob McGurk died both young and unexpectedly in 1984. By this time, he had presumably bought out his two partners and his family had increasingly become involved in running the inn-motel business. His widow Leona was the chief operating officer, aided by three daughters, Sheila, Debbie and Mary Frances and over time their husbands (Bill Boyd for Sheila, Mike Jensen for Fran). Formally organized as "Group Five Hospitality" and a division of the corporation, the group established T.G.I. Friday's restaurant franchises, the first in Rockford, Illinois in November 1992. At the same time, they acquired the Howard Johnson motel that was located on the southwest corner of the same highway-interstate and rebranded it as a Country Inn. Two

commercial operations were owned on the highway west of the inn, the Express Shop convenience service station and store and an adjacent Express Wash. In early 1993 the group determined that they could replace The Highlander Inn restaurant with one of their restaurants. Structural and mechanical obstacles developed and the concept was deferred finally to 1995, and was finally dropped. The inn portico was a casualty of this planned development, being removed while curiously retaining the four support columns.²³

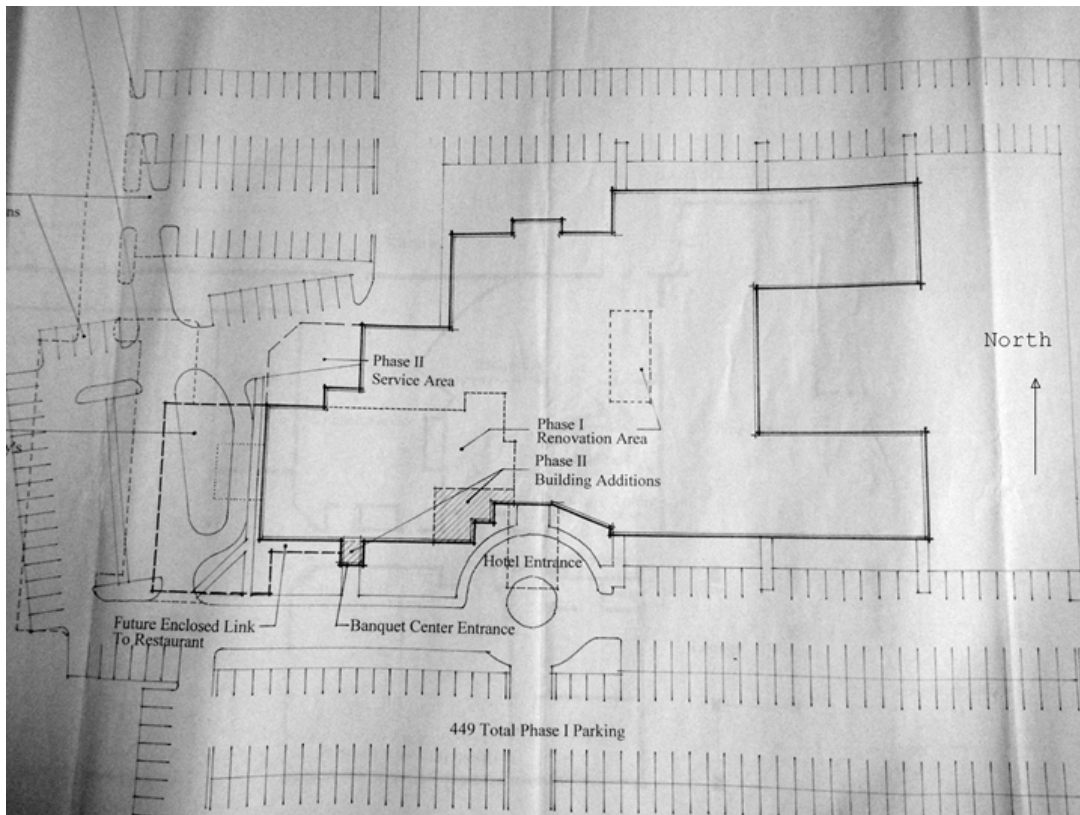


Figure 8-70: Planned T.G.I. Friday west end addition and other associated changes not built, August 25, 1994 (Building plans)

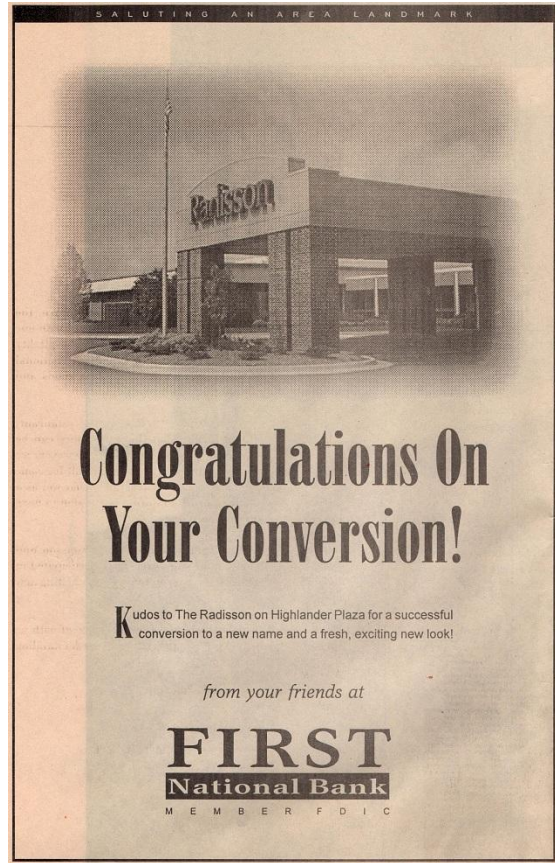
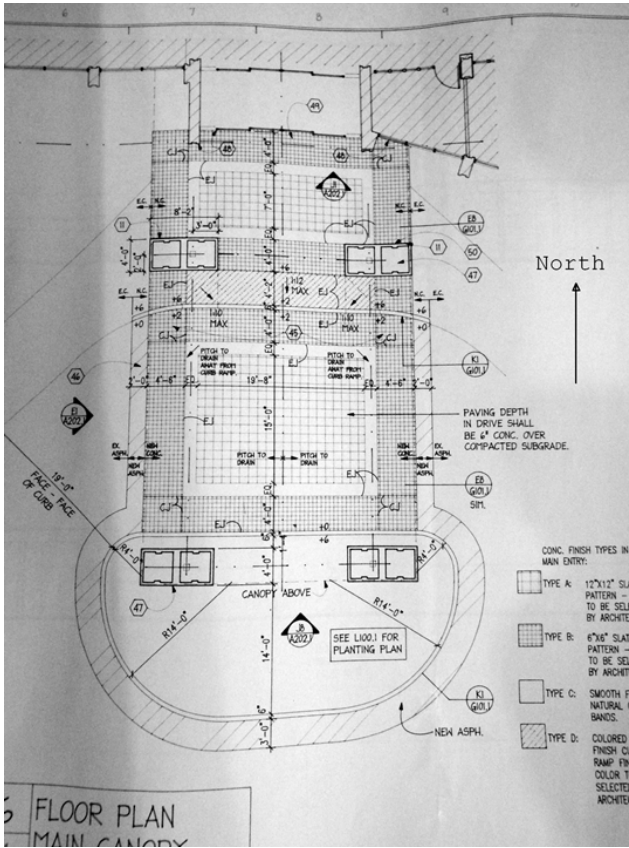
Figure 8-70 shows where the new restaurant was to have been built. A south banquet center entry was also planned along with two other corner bump-outs. The poolside lounge does appear to have been converted into a meeting room on the ground level.

The proposition provides a snapshot of the inn operation as of early 1993. The restaurant franchise was thought to be a cut above fast food at a time when diners “no longer have the time to linger over a protracted supper club dinner.” Still called the Highlander Inn and Supper Club, it employed 140 persons and it was promised that the T.G.Y. Friday restaurant deal would somehow add 40 to 100 additional workers. The restaurant would seat 240 persons a figure that matched the existing supper club capacity. Traditional inn menu favorites (“steaks, cinnamon rolls” etc.) would be retained. The other major functional change would be the closing of the coffee shop and its conversion into additional banquet space. In November 1992 the corporation had acquired a competing interchange and that operation had an attached Country Inn franchise (likely a model for the new Highlander arrangement). It became a Country Inn motel.²⁴

An inn newsletter, the “Main Course” was initiated in March 1995 to promote special events, and even shared recipes and inn staff news. The annual schedule was dominated by holiday-based buffets (Saint Patrick’s

²³ Iowa City *Press Citizen*, February 28, 1994

²⁴ Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, April 15, 1993



Figures 8-72, 8-73: Left, Radisson south portico remodeling plans, 1997, Right, newly configured south portico, looking northwest (Building plans; Iowa City Press Citizen, October 14, 1998)

Complex Photo Essay:



Figure 8-74: Original promotional brochure, 1975 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-75: 1982 Amana VIP golf tournament photo showing original south doors, looking northwest (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-76: The original motel main desk, looking northwest (Building scrap books)



Figure 8-77: The hallway outside of the ball room (double doors), ca.1975, looking northeast

(Building scrap books)



Figures 8-78, 8-79: Ca.1975 view of carpeted pool court (note no upper level balconies), Tudor motif, looking northwest (owner scrapbook)

This is the original appearance of the pool court. There were no poolside balconies and there were several ancillary pools north of the main pool. The centered component to the left housed the pool bar on the downstairs and featured Tudor arched windows and a faux half-timber stuccoed effect, much of which survives. A near full-length awning covered the lounge front. The deck was covered with a green astro turf. There was also a painted shuffleboard court.



Figure 8-80, 8-81: Knight's Poolside Lounge, two views (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

The Knight's Lounge had the Black Watch tartan pattern and the awning with its angled spear supports mirrored the exterior awning to the east in the pool area.



Figure 8-82: The Royal Scot, ca.1975, looking southeast (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

The Royal Scot was outside the original supper club (to the west of the main hall, it became the Prime Grille). Note the carpet pattern. A hallway ran along the south wall beyond the arched windows in this view.



Figures 8-83, 8-84: The King Arthur Grille (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)²⁷

²⁷ The King Arthur Grille started out as the supper club's coffee shop and was succeeded by the Mirror Room (Sheila Boyd). It has the distinctive rounded corner wall, an original feature of the supper club east wall.



Figures 8-85, 8-86: The Red Room (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)²⁸



Figure 8-87: The west supper club entrance, looking southwest (note the chain curtains) (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



²⁸ This is presumably the north part of the original supper club (see Figure 87 which shows the club's west entrance).

Figures 8-88, 8-89: The Supper Club Lounge (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)²⁹



Figure 8-90: Original Piper's Ballroom, looking southeast (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

²⁹ This is the south half of the original supper club area.



Figures 8-91;8-92: Decorative motifs in the motel rooms (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-93: 1975 Ford Granada afloat on the pool, looking northeast (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)

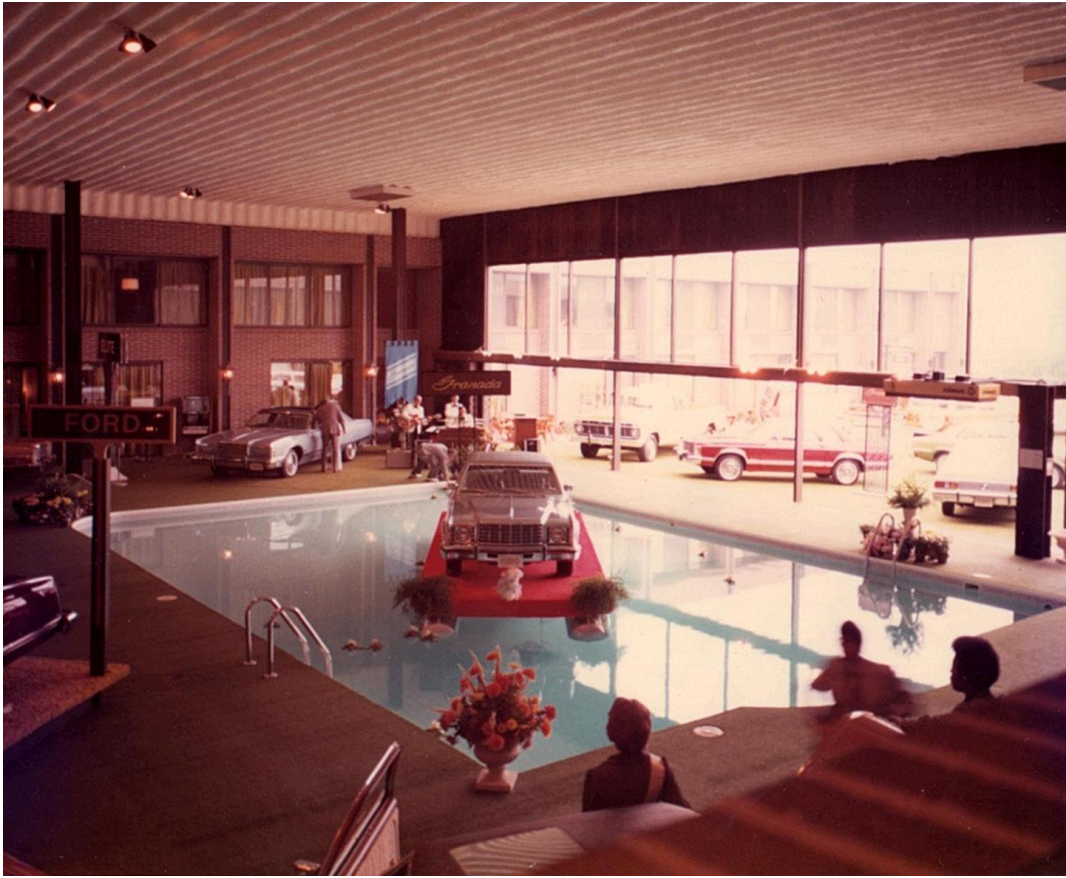


Figure 8-94: 1975 Ford Granada afloat on the pool, looking northeast (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-95: 1975 Ford Granada afloat on the pool, looking east (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-96: 1975 Ford exhibition in the pool area, looking north (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-97: Ford 1975 exhibition in the court area, looking north, looking northwest
(Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figures 8-98. 8-99: Ford 1975 exhibition in the court area, both views looking northwest

(Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-100: South portico, signage, looking east, ca.1975 (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-101: Overview, looking northwest (helicopter in Figure 8-77 visible far left), ca.1975

(Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Photo 8-102: Aerial view, looking east, ca.1975 (Highlander Archives)



Figure 8-103: Pool area, May 1981, looking north (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-104: Pool area, May 1981, looking northeast (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-105: Carpeted pool court, note additional awnings, bandstand, and the presence of added north side upper level balconies, 1984, looking north (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-106: Removal of carpet in pool court, note additional awnings, bandstand, and

presence of upper level balconies, 1984, looking southwest (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-107: Tiled floor installed in the pool court, 1984, looking east (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-108: Tiled floor installed in the pool court, 1984, looking southwest (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-109: Demolition of west inn entrance, 1996, looking east (owner scrapbook)³⁰



Figure 8-110: Former Royal Scot Dining room, note faux mansard, stained glass, wainscot, looking southeast, 1996 (owner scrapbook)

³⁰ The structural beams and columns were left in place and are visible in the current county assessor's aerial photo (Figure 2). This resulted in an open pergola effect, which explains why the columns survive today)



Figure 8-111: Former Royal Scot Dining room, note faux mansard, pointed arch windows with stone infill, stained glass, wainscot, 1996, looking south (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-112: Interior view, showing lamps and wood trim, 1996 (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-113: Constructing arches in main hallway, looking north (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-114: Ballroom dance, 1996 (owner scrapbook)



Figure 9-115: Interior view showing former supper club exterior window, looking southwest, 1996 (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-116: Original east pool/court windows, looking northwest

looking southwest, 1996 (owner scrapbook)

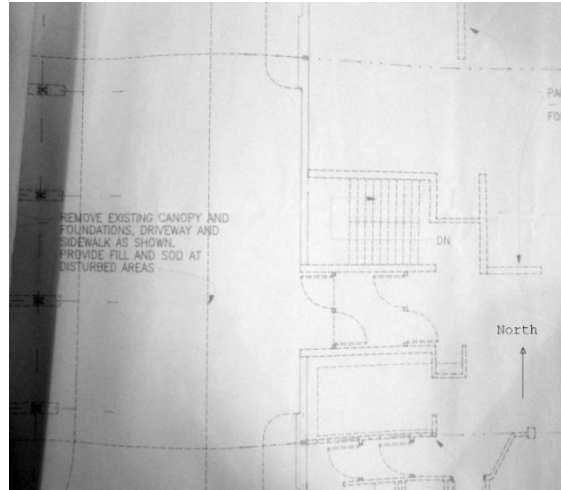


Figure 8-117: Removal plan for west portico, January 17, 1996 (Building plans)



Figure 8-118: Radisson remodeling of the south portico, 1997, looking northeast (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-119: Radisson remodeling of the south portico, 1997, looking northwest (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-120: Radisson remodeling, south wall of south wing, 1997, looking northeast (Courtesy of Sheila Boyd)



Figure 8-121: McGurk's Pub (former Knight's Lounge), looking northeast towards the pool
(Iowa City *Press Citizen*, October 14, 1998)



Figure 8-122: Highlander Prime Grille, looking northeast³¹
(Iowa City *Press Citizen*, October 14, 1998)

³¹ The Prime Grille replaced the Royal Scot and the location is east of the present bar area.



Figure 8-123: Highlander Prime Grille
(Iowa City *Press Citizen*, October 14, 1998)



Figure 8-124: Clarion motel era photo, pool, 2011, looking southwest (note additional ceiling lighting)
(<https://www.hotelplanner.com/Hotels/216010/Reservations-Clarion-Highlander-Hotel-Conference-Center-Iowa-City-2525-North-Dodge-St-52245#HotelName>)



Figure 8-125: Clarion motel era photo, pool, 2011, looking southwest
(<https://www.hotelplanner.com/Hotels/216010/Reservations-Clarion-Highlander-Hotel-Conference-Center-Iowa-City-2525-North-Dodge-St-52245#HotelName>)



Figure 8-126: Radisson/ Clarion motel era photo, front desk, 2011, looking northwest
(<https://www.hotelplanner.com/Hotels/216010/Reservations-Clarion-Highlander-Hotel-Conference-Center-Iowa-City-2525-North-Dodge-St-52245#HotelName>)



Figure 8-127: Radisson/Clarion motel era photo, main hall inside of south entrance, 2011, looking northwest
(<https://www.hotelplanner.com/Hotels/216010/Reservations-Clarion-Highlander-Hotel-Conference-Center-Iowa-City-2525-North-Dodge-St-52245#HotelName>)



Figure 8-128: Clarion motel era photo, meeting room (just outside of the northeast corner of the supper club), 2011, looking southwest



Figure 8-129: East pool/court windows, October 30, 2019, looking west (owner scrapbook)
(the trees are outside of the court)



Figure 8-130: Pool court, looking north (Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, January 10, 2020)



Figure 8-131: Radisson/Clarion ballroom, looking southwest (Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, January 10, 2020)



Figure 8-132: East court, looking east (Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, January 10, 2020)



Figure 8-133: East court, looking north (Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, January 10, 2020)



Figure 8-134: South wing, south entrance, October 30, 2019, looking north west (owner scrapbook)



Figure 8-135: South entrance, looking northwest (*Boutique News*, November 15, 2019)



Photo 8-136: Rehabilitation of the pool area, December 2020, looking southwest

Biography:

Bowker, R. R., AIA Historical Directory, New Providence: R. R. Bowker, L.L.C., 1970

Boyd, Shelia. Emailed communications, September-October 2020

Building Plans

Building scrapbooks (three photo albums, property of the Highlander)

Highland, Inc. Highland Partnership. Financial Reports, December 31, 1970

Highlander Archives, Sheila Boyd

Newspaper articles as cited in the text

Original Plans: This is a rather impressive array of original and subsequent plans, property of the Highlander

Property Abstract

Clarion Hotel:

<https://www.hotelpartner.com/Hotels/216010/Reservations-Clarion-Highlander-Hotel-Conference-Center-Iowa-City-2525-North-Dodge-St-52245#HotelName> (accessed October 15, 2020)

Family Search, Richard Drew McNamara: <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/GW6W-3TH> (accessed October 30, 2020)

Additional Information:



Figure 10-1: Scaled detailed site map with property line overlay, looking northwest (Iowa Geographic Map Server, 2020)



Figure 10-2: Scaled regional map with property line overlay, looking northwest

Figure 10-4: Parcel Map, Second Addition (Property Abstract)