

**STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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November 27, 2000

**California Register of Historical Resources  
State Historical Resources Commission Findings**

Tahoe Community Center  
Tahoe City, Placer County

On 3 November 2000, at a regular meeting of the State Historical Resources Commission in Los Angeles, California, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 11.5, Section 4856, the Commission voted unanimously to list the Tahoe Community Center in the California Register of Historical Resource. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 11.5, Section 4855, published herewith are the findings of the Commission.

**FINDINGS**

The State historical resources Commission finds the resource significant under criteria 1 and 3, for its importance to and association with the development of Tahoe City, and for its locally distinctive architectural style. The period of historical significance is 1938 to 1950.

The Tahoe Community Center was nominated to the California Register by board members of the Sierra Artists' Network who are currently tenants of the building. The building is owned by the Tahoe City Public Utility District. This nomination was supported by numerous members of the Tahoe Community, the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society, and the Tahoe City Public Utility District.

The Tahoe Community Center is a two-story structure, built in a vernacular alpine style known as Tahoe Style. As expressed in the design of this building, the "Tahoe Style" of architecture features structural log supported porticos; steep

roofs, continuous roof (shed) dormers. Few other historic buildings in this style have survived on the North Shore, the most notable being the old Tahoe Inn.

The building is situated on the Commons Beach. The foundation is concrete footings with a crawl space. The front of the building faces north. The entrance of the building is an A-shaped portico supported by two large peeled-timber logs which provides a covered entryway for two doors. Rustic horizontal wood-slat siding covers the lower half; wood shingles the top half. Two dormer windows with shed roofs break the steeply pitched roof covered with wood shake shingles. Windows are double-hang sash windows. The three windows on the second floor have wooden shutters. Slender chimneys are centered in the gable ends. They are made of brick and are exposed both to the exterior and the interior. However the addition to the building covers most of the chimney on the west end but it is still a complete chimney and is visible on the inside.

In 1950, a single-story addition, 22 feet by 29 feet, was made to the building on the west end. It has a matching but smaller portico over the entrance to the addition. The addition is very compatible with the historic character of the original building because the materials and design are nearly identical to those used with the original building. The shake roof was replaced in the 1980s. When dry rot near the ground on the front of the building was addressed in the early 1990s, the lower front wood siding was plastered and river rocks installed. Last year, the wood logs which support the main portico were replaced in kind. The exterior was painted in 1997; apparently no record was made of the original paint colors, so after historical research the forest green with red trim scheme was chosen. Other than the addition and stairs which have been built on the back for a fire exit, no structural alterations have been made to the exterior of the building since its construction.

In 1937, after a fire destroyed the buildings on the Tahoe City waterfront which included the town's post office and the Cedar Log Saloon which had served for many years as the meeting house for the Women's Club, the citizens decided to rebuild up on the highway on a parcel of land known as the Commons Beach. This 4.3 acre parcel had been deeded to the citizens of Tahoe City in 1872 by President Ulysses S. Grant under the provisions of an act of Congress. The Tahoe Women's Club obtained permission from the presiding judge of the Superior Court of Placer County, acting as trustee for the citizens of Tahoe City, to build a multi-purpose community center on the Commons Beach for the public good. The Women's Club and other organizations sponsored potluck dinners and other fundraisers to help pay for the construction of the building. More than two hundred people came from all around the lake to join in celebrating the completion of the building on 26 June 1938.

The post office occupied one side of the first floor of the building; a small meeting hall the other. The second floor was a large hall with a kitchen area and bathrooms, used by the Women's Club for their regular meeting, for town

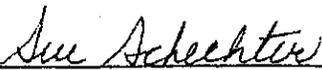
meetings, and rented out for other community activities. In 1950, following the death of Julia Bechdolt, her husband, Carl Bechdolt, Sr., funded the construction of an addition to the Community Center building in her memory, to house a new town library. Mr. Bechdolt had been involved in the planning and construction of the original building. He directed the construction of the addition to ensure that its appearance would not detract from that of the original building. The addition served as the library until 1976, when the collections had outgrown the space available and a new library was built nearby.

In recent years the building has housed the Tahoe Public Utility District offices and served as a continuation high school. Currently it is being used as the North Tahoe Art Center by the Sierra Artist's Network who maintains a gallery and a gift shop and provides art classes on a daily basis to learners of all ages. The Center is frequently used for public meetings and by other community groups. Because heavy snows make mail delivery impossible for much of the year, people must come into town to pick up their mail. Thus, throughout its history, the building has served as a focus and center for community activities and community development for people living on the North and West shores of Lake Tahoe even as far away as Truckee.

Let these findings show that the review and consideration of the nomination of the Tahoe Community Center building to the California Register of Historical Resources included the following:

Nomination and supplementary materials including documents pertaining to the ownership of the parcel and historic photographs, *Tahoe City Yesterdays*, a 1987 publication edited by Carol Van Etten, recent newspaper articles reporting on the public concern about the Community Center, and letters of support for the nomination from various members of the community.

With this signature, it is hereby certified that the State Historical Resources Commission adopted these findings pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 11.5, Sections 4855 and 4856 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of November 2000.



Sue Schechter, Chairperson

PRIMARY RECORD

Page 1 of 2

\*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) *Tahoe Community Center*  
(See attachment #1)

P1. Other Identifier: *North Tahoe Art Center occupied by the Sierra Artists' Network as tenant*

P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County *Placer*

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad *See attachment#2 and quit claim deed*

Date \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_; R \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_ 1/4 of \_\_\_\_ 1/4 of

Sec \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ B.M.

c. Address *380 North Lake Boulevard*

City *Tahoe City* Zip *96145*

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone \_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ mE/ \_\_\_\_\_ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

Located in block # *6* parcel # *094 - 070 - 013 - 000* (What is now called *Commons Beach*).

P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

*The Tahoe Community Center is a two-story structure built in what is known as the "Tahoe Style". The entrance is an A shaped portico supported by two large logs typical of this style. It has a steeply angled roof of wood shake shingles and two continuous roof (shed) dormer windows on the north side. The siding of the upper half of the building is also wood shingles and the lower half, wood slats. There are two chimneys, one at each end of the original building that give the building its unique appearance. The foundation is concrete footings with a crawl space for the forced air furnace. It has plumbing and electricity. There are four toilet rooms and a kitchen. The interior walls are painted wood panels. There are two offices downstairs as well as two large rooms now used as galleries. Upstairs is basically one large room off of the kitchen that is used as a classroom and a gallery. The structure is on the aforementioned parcel located in the NW corner next to the fire station. The parcel itself (Commons Beach) comprises some 4.3 acres. An addition was constructed to the building in 1950 that presently is being used as a shop to exhibit works of local artists. Windows are typical double hung sash. The three windows on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor facing the street have wooden shutters. There are two main doors for the original building. One was for the Post Office and the other for the Women's Club meeting hall. There is a separate entrance door for the addition. The building is approximately 3220 SF and is bounded by the fire station on the West End, state hwy 28 on the north and the rest of Commons Beach on the east and south. The front of the building faces north.*

*Continuation at separate sheet*

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) *HP 13, HP 14, HP 38*

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)

*Front, 1938 w/o addition*

*Front 1997 w/addition*

*Slides 07/2000*

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

Historic  Prehistoric  Both

*1938 & 1950 (addition)*

*Factual dates from "Tahoe City Yesterdays"*

\*P7. Owner and Address:

*See attachment #3 Judge of the Superior Court, Placer County as trustee.*

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation and address)

*Betty Corison*

*PO Box 5397*

*Tahoe City, CA 96145*

\*P9. Date Recorded: *07/31/00*

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)

\*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none") *none*

\* Attachments:  Location map  Sketch map  Continuation sheet  Building, Structure and Object Record

Other *Book entitled "Tahoe City Yesterdays" gathered and edited by Carol Van Eten*

California Office of Historic Preservation  
PO Box 942896  
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001  
Attn: Marie Nelson

1-Aug-00

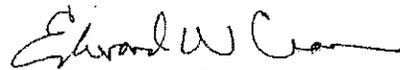
Dear Ms. Nelson:

1. Enclosed are the necessary documents for nominating the Tahoe Community Center now known as the North Tahoe Art Center to be on the California Register of Historical Resources.
2. According to the nominating procedures the following information is provided:
  - a. Applicants: Edward Crane, PO Box 6406, Tahoe City, CA 96145, Betty Corison, PO Box 5397, Tahoe City, CA 96145.
  - b. Resource Owner: The Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, Placer County, Auburn, CA 95603, as trustee for the citizens of Tahoe City.
  - c. Local Government: N/A In an unincorporated area of Placer County.
  - d. Land use authority over the parcel of land on which this resource is located, is vested in the aforementioned judge in accordance with his duties as trustee.

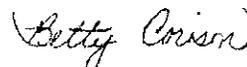
3. Statement of significance:

The Tahoe Community Center was approved for construction on the Commons by the then presiding judge of the Superior Court of California, Placer County, in 1938. The approval was based on its use being for the public good. The building, built in the "Tahoe Style", represents the 1930's era on Lake Tahoe at its high point. The use of the facility has touched everyone in Tahoe City and vicinity being a combined post office, library, and community center. This usage lasted up until 1962 when it was then occupied by the Tahoe City Public Utilities District. It later was utilized as a school and now is a community art center.

4. There are very few remaining buildings of this style around the north shore. It is situated on the Commons Beach, a parcel of land which was deeded in trust for the citizens of Tahoe City in 1872 by President Ulysses S Grant.



Edward W. Crane  
Board Member  
Sierra Artists' Network



Betty Corison  
President  
Sierra Artists' Network