

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name The Hunt Club

other names/site number Fitzgeralds Nightclub, Club Ritz, Deer Lodge

Name of Multiple Property Listing \_\_\_\_\_

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

## 2. Location

street & number 6615 Roosevelt Road  not for publication

city or town Berwyn  vicinity

state Illinois county Cook zip code 60402

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: \_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date \_\_\_\_\_

Illinois Department of Natural Resources - SHPO  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1		<b>Total</b>

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

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

- COMMERCE/Restaurant
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/Dance Hall
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/Nightclub
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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

- RECREATION AND CULTURE/Nightclub
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

- NO STYLE
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: Stone
- walls: Wood clapboard
- roof: Asphalt shingles
- other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Narrative Description**

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

#### **Summary Paragraph**

Fitzgeralds Nightclub (historically known as the Hunt Club and other names) is a one story, wood frame/clapboard structure set back from Roosevelt Street at the north. The historic building is composed of two wings: a main wing and a smaller wing extending to the front. The smaller front wing is not as wide nor as tall as the main wing. It sits at the rear of a double lot; the rear wall abuts the alley along the south end of the property. There is an open space to the west on yet another lot. The front half of the site is also open. Currently these open areas are paved with asphalt and used as outdoor seating, dining, and entertaining areas; historically they were parking. The open site is framed by two brick masonry buildings. Although these buildings are now part of a larger entertainment complex, they were not historically part of the site or use and are not included in the nomination. Along the eastern edge of the historic building and jutting north into what was the open lot is a one-story frame addition to the historic building. This addition connects the historic building and the eastern masonry building and includes a retail shop for Fitzgeralds. The interior is an open hall with cypress plank walls, a wood floor and a circa 1942 bar. There is a stage at the north end of the main hall. The north wing hosts the performer's "Green Room". The exterior, site and interior are all in good condition with good historic integrity from the period of significance.

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### **Narrative Description**

The building sits on a triple lot along the south side of Roosevelt Road. The lots are 26 feet wide each and 125 feet deep. The historic building sits at the rear of the lots and consists of two wings. The main wing is approximately 50 feet square and has a smaller north wing that is approximately 22 feet wide and 26 feet deep. Although both wings are only one story, the main wing is taller than the front wing. Along the west side of the building is a tall, deep canopy covering an outdoor bar area. This canopy projects into the third lot that is otherwise open. A small, non-historic, wood pavilion is set at the north end of the site and acts as a covered entry to the site. A wood fence runs along the western part of the front of the site. The rest of the street frontage is open and has a curb cut off Roosevelt Road from when the site was used as parking. A non-historic brick wall runs along the rear lot line west of the historic building.

On the adjacent lots to the east and west are older brick masonry commercial buildings. Although now part of the Fitzgeralds Nightclub complex, these were built and owned by separate entities historically, both dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The eastern building at 6613 Roosevelt Road is a two-story brick structure built lot line to lot line. The western building at 6619 Roosevelt Road is also a two-story brick structure built lot line to lot line and sits on a corner lot. These buildings frame the open site of the historic property between them, and although now part of the nightclub complex, visually read as separate structures.

The historic building and eastern brick building are now connected; originally there was a narrow open gangway between them. That open gangway has been enclosed by a couple of additions to the historic building. The first addition is a small service area and enclosed stairway that leads to the basement and is at the northeast corner of the historic building. The date of this stairway addition is not known but likely dates after 1980. About 2001, another one-story addition was added to serve as a hallway leading to restrooms in the east building, to the restaurant in the east building and to the new retail shop addition. The retail shop is a one-story wing, with a clerestory, at the northeast corner of the historic building. This addition sits apart from the historic building and only physically connects to the basement stair addition and new hallway. It also has doorways into the east building. The historic building remains structurally independent of the infills and east masonry building, with just the doorways connecting them. The basement stair addition and retail shop/corridor addition are considered non-contributing additions.

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The exterior is clad in horizontal wood clapboard with a narrow exposure. The front wing has a hipped roof of asphalt shingles with a wide fascia board under the slightly projecting eaves. The main wing has a sloped roof hidden by a parapet. The parapet has a curved arc at the center and is flanked by two pedimented ends. The west side is clad with wide plank siding that is unpainted. The rear (south) alley side is vertical-grained plywood.

The front wing has a foundation wall rising several feet that is parged with smooth stucco. The main wing foundation is at grade and the siding extends to just above grade. Along the west side of the front wing is a raised wood bench that is not historic. A small brick chimney extends above the hipped roof of the front wing. Another small shed canopy projects from the front of the front wing and covers an outdoor cooking area.

The main entry is on the north side of the main wing at the west end and has a small portico. It is a paneled wood door with multiple lights in the upper half. Next to it is a multi-pane window. The entrance portico was added after 1980 and is built of wood with posts and a shingle roof. In winter this portico is enclosed to provide a weather vestibule.

There are several double hung wood windows on the west and north facades of the front wing. The windows are a six-over-one light configuration. There are two windows on the west elevation and three on the north. Along the west elevation of the main wing are two more multi-light wood windows. A double door of paneled wood with glass lights is at south end of the west elevation of the main wing. These doors lead to/from the west courtyard area.

In plan, the historic building is fairly simple. The main wing is one large open space, just under 50 feet square. The front wing houses the performer's "Green Room" and the stage. A small hallway connects the main space with the stage and Green Room. The front wing floor level is about two and a half feet higher than the main floor, thus elevating the stage. A platform extends the stage out into the main area. Along the west side of the main space is the bar. The bar is set in a U shape with a curved arc along the east side. Along the wall behind the bar is a built-in breakfront cabinet. There is a column where the bar arcs and another column set in the center of the main space. Near the south end of the east side is a wide doorway leading to the former gangway. The former gangway is now an enclosed hallway that serves the restrooms and leads to a restaurant in the east building. At the southwest corner of the main space is a service area that is partially enclosed by walls and a curtain.

The stage dominates the front part of the main space (north end). As noted, it is elevated and has a platform projecting into the space. Flanking the stage are doorways on each side. The eastern doorway leads to a service area an enclosed stairway that leads to the basement and was added after 1980. The original clapboard exterior walls are visible within this space. The western doorway leads to a short flight of stairs up to the front wing. A door off that hallway accesses the stage. A door at the end of that hallway leads to the Green Room. The Green Room is a single large room. A small bathroom has been added at the northwest corner with partitions that are not full height. Along the south wall of the office is a brick chimney with an iron stove.

Below the front wing is a basement. The basement is accessed from the enclosed stairway at the east end of the wing. The basement is not finished and is used for storage. The kitchen may have originally been in the basement.

Most of the main space has a maple wood floor. At the western third of the space, around the bar and entry area, is vinyl tile. Sheet vinyl flooring covers the floor behind the bar. Walls of the main space are almost all vertical cypress planks. In many areas, the walls are divided into three vertical sections: a wainscot of cypress planks, a middle section of cypress planks, and an upper area of burlap over plaster. The burlap is framed

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with plain dimensional lumber. The main ceiling is flat plaster. Along the south and west ends are soffits and those have wood plank ceilings. There are two skylights in the main space.

The stage has maple wood flooring. Walls are flat plaster. The stage opening is framed with wood trim and there is a wood baseboard and cove molding. The ceiling is flat plaster. The stage extension into the main space is plywood. A mural (non-historic) has been painted on the back stage wall.

The Green Room has wood flooring. There is a vertical pine plank wainscot with flat plaster walls above. The ceiling is flat plaster. There is a simple wood cove trim and the windows have wood casing.

The bar is wood veneered, possibly of walnut or mahogany. The veneer is bookmatched with a vertical grain. The bar top is of the same wood and projects about five inches from the face. Corners and the bar top edge are rounded. The breakfront behind the bar is wood, likely of the same species. The breakfront has cabinets below and drawers along the top. The cabinet top is not historic. Along the wall behind the bar are modern shelves.

On the west wall of the entry area is a built-in shelving unit. The wood is cypress and it has a plain casing. It is only a few inches deep and has multiple shelves. Both columns in the main space are wrapped in a vertical beadboard paneling.

Lighting throughout is a mixture. There are brass sconces with glass shades on the walls in the main space. Brass pendants with green glass shades hang down over the bar. There are also a few brass pendants with schoolhouse style globes in the main space. There is a lot of stage lighting of spot lights. String lighting has been hung throughout the main space as well. In the Green Room is a single brass candelabra chandelier and a few of the same brass sconces as in the main space.

The main space has decorations that emphasize its role as a live music venue, including some that are historic. The walls are decorated with drumheads signed by performers from the Fitzgeralds era, post 1980. Several historic photos from the Hunt Club era show performers, like the Salty Dogs. Two deer heads are mounted and hung from the walls, which likely date from the Hunt Club era. Various musical instruments are also on display. On the back wall of the stage is a full sized painted mural. The mural was added in 1992 when the club served as a filming location for the movie *A League of Their Own*.

### **Statement of Integrity**

Fitzgeralds Nightclub has excellent integrity on both the exterior and interiors as well as its historic site. On the exterior, the main façade appears much as it did when the building was constructed circa 1911 and throughout the eras of the Club Ritz, Hunt Club and Deer Lodge. The interior main hall remains largely intact from the Hunt Club era of the late 1940s and '50s. The overall form has also remained virtually intact, with only relatively minor changes to the east side when the basement stair and retail shop additions were added. The historic building has been connected to the commercial building on the lot to the east by infilling what had been an open gangway. Despite the retail shop addition, the site and the building's setting on the site and visibility from Roosevelt Road also retains good integrity.

Although there is scant documentation of the original construction, the existing building form and materials appear to be from its construction circa 1911. The 1919 and 1929 Sanborn maps show the same layout of the existing building: a large square hall with a projecting wing on the front side (north). The hall was indicated as being taller than the front wing. The Sanborn maps also indicate that the building was of wood frame construction. The existing building is wood frame.

The building sat near the rear of an open double lot (a third open lot sits to the west). Two-story, brick masonry buildings were already built on the lots directly to the east and west and occupied the entire lot areas.

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A narrow open gangway separated the historic building with the building to the east. Because there was a third open lot, there was more space on the west side of the building between it and the western masonry building.

Sometime after 1980, a small addition was added to the east side of the front wing. This addition provided an enclosed stairway to the basement. It has an exterior door at the north end and connects to a doorway in the main hall. The front of this addition is set back from the front elevation by almost three feet and the historic wood clapboard siding remains on the exterior walls surrounding the addition. Remnants of the clapboard siding remain inside the basement stairway. As such, this addition does not detract from the exterior integrity of the historic building.

Starting in the 1990s, the buildings to the east and west were purchased and incorporated into a large entertainment complex. This property arrangement continues to the present day. In the early 2000s, the east masonry building was purchased and the gangway at the east was filled in to serve as a service hall between the two buildings. The east building serves as the complex's restaurant. A one-story addition was added along the west side of the masonry building and serves as a retail shop. It sits just northeast of the historic building and connects to the service hall and through doorways into east masonry building. There are entry doors from the site into the retail shop and a service door next to the basement stair door. Because the gangway was so narrow historically, this infill does not negatively affect the historic appearance of the nightclub and its eastern neighbor. The retail shop wing sits northeast of the historic building and only slightly encroaches into the historic open site. On the interior, the main hall is physically distinct along its east side other than a door opening leading from the main hall into the service corridor. The western masonry building, added to the complex in 1994, remains as a stand-alone structure in the complex with an open space between them. It serves as the Fitzgerald's "Sidebar" where additional musical acts perform and has a full bar for patrons.

The rest of the historic site remains open at the front and west sides. When viewed from Roosevelt Road, the original hall remains visible as a distinct structure on its site and framed between the east and west masonry buildings of the complex. The site is paved, which is consistent with its historic use as parking. There is a small open pavilion near the entry point of the complex, added after 2000, but this does not detract from the overall visibility and view of the site. The retail shop addition is visible from Roosevelt Road but does not block the view of the historic façade.

Two minor shed canopies have been added to the historic structure: a small one at the front projecting wing and a larger one along the west elevation. Both of these canopies are open on all sides and attached to the walls only at the roof line. They provide coverings for patrons of the nightclub enjoying the outdoor patios and entertainment spaces. The west canopy also protects an outdoor bar. The exterior walls of the building are visible behind the canopies. At the main entry, there is a wood portico built in the 1980s in a manner compatible with the historic architecture. This entry portico provides weather protection to patrons as they come and go and can be weatherized in winter.

According to a 1960s photo of the Deer Lodge, the windows and main entry had fabric awnings. There is no way to know if awnings were original to the building design or if they were added in the '60s. The awnings are no longer extant.

The exterior, narrow exposure, wood clapboard siding and trim of the front wing and the front façade (north) appear to be historic. It is possible that the siding is the original, though there is no definitive way to determine that. The same siding exists on the east elevation of the front wing. At the basement stair addition, remnants of the same wood siding can be found on what are now interior walls. These fragments also suggest that the exposed siding on the front dates well into the period of significance and may be original to the building.

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The false front parapet on the main hall façade also is historic and may possibly be original. A 1960s era photo of the Deer Lodge clearly shows the same false front design. Unfortunately there is no other documentation of the false front prior to the 1960s.

The windows in the front wing and along the west side of the main hall appear to be historic and may be original to the building. These wood windows are of historic construction and detailing and match the appearance of the windows in the 1960s Deer Lodge photo.

The west elevation siding is not original. The wide exposure cedar siding does not match the narrow exposure wood clapboard of the front façade. In the 1960s photo of the Deer Lodge, the west elevation siding is also a wider exposure like the existing; however, the siding material appears to be different. The wider siding seen in the photo may have been added after the 1956 fire, which would make the wide exposure historic. The existing cedar siding material may have been added after 1980, which would make it non-historic. Either way, this elevation is not the primary façade and the wider exposure is a historic condition.

The rear elevation siding is not historic. The siding is vertically oriented plywood. This elevation is only visible along the public alley and not a primary façade.

The interior of the main hall likely dates from 1948 when the Hunt Club opened. The cypress wall paneling is in character with the "Northwoods" atmosphere that the Hunt Club advertised. Earlier descriptions suggest the interior was more traditional plaster. While it is likely that interior alterations occurred after 1948, the overall material integrity appears to be from the 1948 remodeling. Photos of the Salty Dogs performing in 1954 show the cypress walls. The 1956 fire reportedly did significant damage to the club, including its interior, however there is no reason to believe that the entire interior was overhauled. Most likely, the fire damaged-areas were repaired with materials and designs consistent with the 1948 design. From the news reports of the time, the damage appears to have been largely at the rear of the structure. However, even if the entire main hall space was rebuilt in 1956, that would still fall within the period of significance and during the Hunt Club era.

There is no documentation for the layout and plan of the building over the years. Historical indications are that the kitchen for the clubs was in the basement under the front wing. However, the current basement shows no physical evidence of having been a kitchen. At some point, the kitchen might have been moved to the rear of the building, but there is also no physical evidence of that or what its layout might have been. There is also no documentation of where restrooms might have historically been (they are now in the east building and accessed through the service hall).

The front wing is a single room now used as the "Green Room" space for the musical acts. The space currently has traditional plaster walls with a wood wainscot. There is traditional wood trim and window casings, suggesting that the space retains much of its historic integrity. A contemporary restroom has been added at the northwest corner of the space.

The Green Room and main hall are connected by a short hallway up a flight of steps. This hallway also has traditional plaster and wood wainscot. The door into the Green Room is a paneled wood door consistent with a historic door.

The main stage appears to be in its historic location and configuration. It has plaster walls and a historic wood floor. The mural at the back of the stage is not historic; it was added for the filming of the 1992 movie "A League of Their Own." Framing the stage opening is wood trim that is historic. The current stage configuration is different than it was during the 1950s Hunt Club era. During that era, the stage was not as deep and had a partitioned room behind it. Historic photos show that the walls were cypress panels and that the extension of the stage into the main space was curved and had cypress panels along the bottom. The current configuration

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was done in the early 1980s as part of the conversion into Fitzgerald's Nightclub. The original stage depth was restored by removing the partitioned room and an extension added into the main space.<sup>1</sup>

The exact date of the bar is not documented. There are two likely possibilities: 1942 or 1948. The 1942 date seems most likely. This date is based on two key pieces of documentation. An advertisement for the sale of Lou's Villa describes the facility and notes that the "bar" dates from 1942.<sup>2</sup> This evidence is supported by an article about the opening of Lou's Villa in 1942, and how "it looks nice now," which suggests significant remodeling.<sup>3</sup> The other possible date is from the Hunt Club remodeling in 1948, which was only six years later. It seems fairly unlikely that the bar would have needed to be replaced at that time and more likely that Kubik would have kept the existing bar. The bar's design and materials are of a streamlined Art Moderne design, which was popular in the 1930s and '40s. It is possible that the bar even dates from the Club Ritz era in the 1930s, but the more likely date is 1942 based on the available evidence. Interestingly, an article in the Riverside-Brookfield Landmark about Joe's Saloon, shows a bar that is nearly identical to that of the Fitzgeralds' bar. According to the article, the original tavern was opened in 1939 by George Butkovich. This comparison reinforces the suggested 1942 date, although it does not discount an earlier 1930s date or the later 1948 date.<sup>4</sup> The bar front has excellent integrity. The back bar cabinet also has excellent integrity but the upper portion may have been altered from its original design.

Flooring throughout the main space is a combination of historic wood and non-historic vinyl tile. Lighting has a vintage look but likely dates from after 1980. Exposed sprinkler pipes were added after 1980. Some of the décor, such as the deer heads, are thought to date from at least the Deer Lodge era of the 1960s. Mounted deer heads would fit with the theme of the Deer Lodge and the Kubiks were known hunters.<sup>5</sup> The trophies may also date from the early Hunt Club era as the Kubiks were often reported as going on hunting trips. Advertisements in the 1970s indicate that Lou Kubik was selling off game trophies. The other décor, such as musical instruments and signed drum heads are from after 1980.

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<sup>1</sup> Carney, Don. "Fitzgerald's: The Place to Play." *The Life*. May 21, 1993. 7

<sup>2</sup> *Chicago Tribune*. July 18, 1943. 50

<sup>3</sup> "Shop Talk." *Berwyn Life*. October 23, 1942. 19

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, Jeffery C. "Blood, Sweat and Beer: The History (and Future) of Joe's Saloon." *Riverside-Brookfield Landmark*. September 25, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> "Down Deer with Bow and Arrow." *Berwyn Life*. November 19, 1950. 9



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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

Circa 1911 - 1968

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1948

1933

1962

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation** (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Fitzgeralds Nightclub is a music venue in Berwyn, Illinois, that showcases American roots music. The building has continuously operated as a dancehall, restaurant, cocktail lounge, nightclub and music venue since at least 1933. It may have served a similar purpose since its construction in the 1910s. As such, the Fitzgeralds Nightclub building meets criterion A for the National Register of Historic Places for its important contributions to the social history of Berwyn and the surrounding near-west Chicago suburbs. The dance halls, restaurants and nightclubs that have occupied the building since the Great Depression reveal a significant story of the importance of social gathering places for music, food, and social drinking in Berwyn and its neighboring suburbs and the evolution of this phenomenon over the decades. During its time as the Club Ritz (1933-40), the building was a significant part of the emergence of nightclubs in the post-Prohibition era. During its time as the Hunt Club (1948-62), the building was a significant part of the Dixieland jazz revival movement of that era. The period of significance for the building runs from its approximate construction date of 1911 until 1968, the year the Deer Lodge stopped regularly featuring live music.

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

## **Berwyn**

The City of Berwyn is a near-west Chicago suburb located about eight miles from the Loop. Before European settlers arrived, this region had been a soggy swampland used by the Pottawattamie as a hunting grounds and was part of the portage route between the Chicago and Des Plaines Rivers. After construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in the 1830s and '40s, the southern area of Berwyn began to be developed by European settlers, including Irish canal workers that created farmsteads.<sup>6</sup> In 1846, Theodore Doty bought land from the canal commission and built a plank road along the portage trail, which is now Ogden Avenue.<sup>7</sup> This plank road, which was part of a network connecting Chicago and Ottawa, Illinois, combined with the completion of the canal in 1848, attracted more settlers.

One of the earliest settlers to this area was Thomas Baldwin in 1856. Baldwin bought a large tract of land and subdivided it, naming his settlement LaVergne.<sup>8</sup> In 1864, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad (CB&Q) was built through the area, but not until the 1870s was a flag stop created and there was no depot.<sup>9</sup> But in those decades of the 1870s and '80s, the swamp land was drained for farms and a depot was finally built at Ridgeland Avenue in 1886.<sup>10</sup>

The establishment of Berwyn can be traced to two individuals in the 1890s: Charles E. Piper and Wilbur J. Andrews. Piper and Andrews were land speculators and subdivided their 106 acres for sale and built a depot along the CB&Q at their own expense.<sup>11</sup> They named their settlement Berwyn, supposedly after the Pennsylvania town and chosen randomly from the Pennsylvania Railway timetables.<sup>12</sup> The depot was located further west of LaVergne, near Harlem Avenue and the fledging community saw steady growth in the 1890s.

Another area of growth was also occurring in the 1890s north of what is now 16<sup>th</sup> Street. This area located between 12<sup>th</sup> Street (Roosevelt Road) and 16<sup>th</sup> Street was commonly known as South Oak Park. Although

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<sup>6</sup> Deuchler, Douglas. *Images of America: Berwyn*. Great Britain: Arcadia Publishing, 2005. 9

<sup>7</sup> Berwyn Historical Society. *Stories of an Earlier Berwyn Revisited*. 2008. 3

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 3

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 4

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 5

<sup>11</sup> Deuchler. P 8

<sup>12</sup> Berwyn Historical Society. 8

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technically not part of Oak Park proper, this area was physically separated from Berwyn and used Oak Park services and schools.<sup>13</sup>

In 1902, Berwyn voters chose to split from Cicero Township and establish an independent village. In 1908, the village of Berwyn was incorporated as a city and included the areas south along Ogden Avenue and stretching north to 12<sup>th</sup> Street (Roosevelt Road). The southern boundary was present-day Pershing Road. The eastern boundary was Lombard; the western boundary Harlem Avenue.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, north Berwyn was still physically separated from the main part of town in the south, and continued to identify with Oak Park. This area became known informally as "Oakwyn", a combination of Oak Park and Berwyn. Several businesses and organizations used Oakwyn in their names, such as the Oakwyn Theater.<sup>14</sup> In 1926, Roosevelt Road had three businesses with Oakwyn in the name: Oakwyn Beauty Parlor, Oakwyn Millinery Shop, and the Oakwyn State Bank.<sup>15</sup> This trend continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Following World War I and through the 1920s, Berwyn developed rapidly. The 1910 population was just 5,841, but by 1920 it had grown to 14,150.<sup>16</sup> By 1930, the population had tripled from a decade earlier to 47,027 and most of the city's land area had been developed.<sup>17</sup> It is during this rapid population growth that the building at 6615 Roosevelt Road was constructed.

### **Construction & Early Use of 6615 Roosevelt Road**

The exact date of construction for the building at 6615 Roosevelt Road cannot be verified, but it is estimated that it was built in 1911-12. The original developer of the land in north Berwyn, Gustav Pudewa, sold lots 7 and 8 of his subdivision to the North Berwyn Improvement Company in April 1911.<sup>18</sup> Pudewa had platted the subdivision in 1907 but there is no evidence to suggest he built improvements to these lots. In fact, a 1909 photograph of the building immediately to the west (lot 10) does not show the building yet constructed. The North Berwyn Improvement Company was established in 1908 by Otto G. Knecht, Edwin C. Crawford, and William R. Burleigh.<sup>19</sup> All three were lawyers working in Chicago, and city directories suggest that all three had offices in the same Loop building in the 1900s at 145 La Salle. There are no apparent ties of the men to Berwyn; they seem to be investors in real estate. Most likely, the company was incorporated solely for real estate transactions in the neighborhood.

The next real estate transaction occurs in November 1919 when the North Berwyn Improvement Company sold the property to David F. Winkler and his wife Hilda.<sup>20</sup> The 1920 census indicates that Winkler was a retired railroad laborer living nearby in Berwyn.<sup>21</sup> It is a reasonable speculation that Winkler bought the property as a retirement investment, as there is no other indication that he was running a business there in the early 1920s.

The first solid evidence of the building's construction is the 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. (Figure 1) The map shows the building extant at the address 6612-14 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>22</sup> The building is labeled as "Hall" and shown in the historic configuration and as a frame building. The front wing is shorter than the main wing and has a basement. It is labeled as having a furnace for heating and both electric and gas lighting. Both brick

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 9

<sup>14</sup> Dyball, Michelle. "Tapping an 8-Decade Old Keg of Memories." *Wednesday Journal*. May 1, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Illinois Bell Telephone Co. *Berwyn Telephone Directory*. June 1926.

<sup>16</sup> Cohn, Peter. "Berwyn: 1910-30, A Case Study of Suburbanization During the Inter-War Years." Thesis for Bachelor of Arts Degree, Department of American History, University of Chicago, May 1978. 15

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 16

<sup>18</sup> Chain of Title. Cook County Recorder of Deeds.

<sup>19</sup> *The National Corporation Reporter*. 1908. 619

<sup>20</sup> Chain of Title. Cook County Recorder of Deeds.

<sup>21</sup> 1920 United States Census. Berwyn, Ward 5, District 0008. 2-A

<sup>22</sup> The current address today is 6615 West Roosevelt Road. The street name and addresses changed in the 1920s.

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masonry buildings that are on lots to the east and west have also been built by this date. Since the Sanborn map was published in 1919 and documentation for it would have had to have been conducted prior to that year, it can be definitively determined that the building was built by the North Berwyn Improvement Company no later than 1918. There are reasons to conclude it was built soon after they bought the property in 1911.

Although there is no specific evidence of how the building was used in the 1910s, the Sanborn map label of "Hall" suggests that it was possibly a beer hall or dance hall (or both). Dance halls were a rage in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, providing a place for young singles to meet and mix and as entertainment for adults to enjoy. Many dance halls included the sale of alcohol, and it could be difficult to distinguish between the two uses.<sup>23</sup> According to reports at the time, "liquor was being sold to boys and girls fourteen to eighteen years old, who danced 'tough dances' that often shocked their immigrant parents."<sup>24</sup> In 1910, dances halls were more popular in Chicago than movie theaters and there were "hundreds of obscure halls."<sup>25</sup> *Variety* magazine referred to dance halls as "the great American playground.. for the great American peasantry... a melting pot... a caldron of emotions."<sup>26</sup>

Dance halls were common prior to Prohibition, which took effect with ratification of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in January 1919 and of the Volstead Act in October of that year. Even prior to the ratification of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, it was obvious to most observers that the country was heading towards either a full-scale prohibition on alcohol or something near to it. Under these circumstances, it does not seem likely that the North Berwyn Improvement Company would build a building designed for use as a beer or dance hall in 1918, knowing that the likelihood of prohibition would devalue their investment. The U.S. involvement in World War I from April 1917 through November 1918 may have also limited construction in that timeframe.

Other evidence suggesting a 1911 construction date is that the building lighting was a combination of both electric and gas. Electric lighting was in its infancy in the Chicago region in the 1890s and many buildings in that era used both electric and gas lighting. Sears Roebuck & Company was still selling gas fixtures in its 1908 catalog, so it is reasonable to consider a building built in 1911 as having gas lighting as well as electric. According to Kenney, the dance halls of the 1910s often used gaslighting.<sup>27</sup> However, a building built in an urban neighborhood by 1918 is highly unlikely to have utilized gas lighting.

The November 1919 sale of the building does make sense when considering that Prohibition was about to take effect. If built and operated as a beer or dance hall throughout the 1910s, Prohibition would have greatly devalued the property and been an inducement to sell. Winkler may have been able to buy the building at a bargain price.

There is scant evidence of how the building was used in the 1920s. The 1929 Sanborn map labels it as the "Oakwyn Althetic Club." (Figure 2) The building is listed as having a furnace for heating and electric for lighting (no longer any gas fixtures). The only reference to the Oakwyn Athletic Club was a notice in the October 25, 1928 *Suburban Leader* that the Seventh Ward Democratic Club of Berwyn would hold a card and bunco party at the "Oakwyn Clubhouse." There are references in the 1920s and '30s to a baseball team called the Oakwyns. It is not known if there was any association of the Oakwyn baseball club and the Oakwyn Athletic Club. During Prohibition, "clubs" were often a pseudonym for the speakeasy, a private venue where "illicit alcoholic beverages were consumed" along with cabaret-style entertainment.<sup>28</sup> Or a club could be a respectable establishment for consuming soft drinks and enjoying music and dancing. The difference was hotly debated by moral crusaders opposed to vice. In a 1927 speech to the International Association of Policewomen, Paddy Harmon noted that "you can't keep fifteen-year olds out of the dance halls. If you do,

<sup>23</sup> De Koven Bowen, Louise. *The Public Dance Halls of Chicago*. Chicago: The Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago. 1917. 3

<sup>24</sup> Kenney, William Howland. *Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History 1904-1930*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 63

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 63

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 162

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 65

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 62

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they'll go to the cabarets [speakeasies], where they'll get liquor... a fifteen-year old girl is a problem when she is full of liquor."<sup>29</sup> Which definition the Oakwyn Athletic Club met, if either, has not been established. The absence of evidence for how the building was used in the 1910s and '20s should not be interpreted as a lack of use however, since there are no city directories for that time and very few extant newspapers. If it did serve as a speakeasy, such a use would not have been advertised and the only way to know typically is from news reports of raids.<sup>30</sup> Without more extant newspapers from the era, there is no way to know for sure.

The Winkler's sold the property in January 1924 to Joseph Vistain and his wife Anna.<sup>31</sup> Vistain was a successful banker in the 1920s living nearby in Berwyn. Vistain also ran a successful real estate business and was a Berwyn philanthropist.<sup>32</sup> As a real estate investor, Vistain likely only leased the building and had no role in its operation.

The Vistains sold the property in September 1933 to Milton A. Hechler.<sup>33</sup> It is not clear from research who Hechler (possibly known as Heekler) was. The deed records do not show Hechler again; rather there was a series of legal cases involving the property in the late 1930s and early '40s. Those cases involve Frantiska (aka Frances) Skrivanek, the wife of Tom Skrivanek.<sup>34</sup> Census records from the time show both Skrivaneks as being from "Bohemia" and living in Cicero. Tom Skrivanek was a carpenter building houses in the 1920s. Frances Skrivanek was listed as delinquent on the property taxes for the property in October 1942. She sold the property to Joseph Cascio in August 1947.<sup>35</sup> None of these individuals appear to have had any direct association with the building's use during this time.

### **Club Ritz**

The sale of the property in September 1933 may be a significant event for another reason: the end of Prohibition. In March 1933, the Volstead Act was significantly amended to allow for the sale of beer and wine and the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment repealing Prohibition was ratified in December of that year. Without a doubt, the value of the building increased if it could once again be used for a beer and dance hall or a nightclub. In fact, on October 28, 1933, the Club Ritz had its grand opening. Club Ritz was advertised as a nightclub. Its initial proprietor was Rudy Maiwurm and the club featured dancing to Jack Lyon's Orchestra. The grand opening came after the club had been operating for a few weeks and was a Halloween-themed party.<sup>36</sup> (Figure 3)

There are reasons to doubt the initial success of the Club Ritz however, or if it was a successful operation, it drew the attention of the wrong type. In August 1934, Berwyn Mayor Maurice Shay had the Club Ritz shut down when reports of mobsters from Al Capone's former gang, which had a stronghold in adjoining Cicero, tried infiltrating Berwyn clubs. According to the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Shay worked with Berwyn Police Chief John Regan and Cook County State's Attorney Thomas Courtney to counter the reports of corruption and illegal gambling and drinking in city clubs. Mayor Shay noted, "It has been brought to my attention that certain political appointees and office holders are encouraging the migration of the gangsters. While I have nothing definitive on which to act, I have ordered Chief Regan to investigate the record of every tavern owner."<sup>37</sup> The Club Ritz was specifically mentioned as having been shut down for operating without a license and that Mayor Shay had reason to believe that "Machine Gun Jack" McGurn, one of Capone's most notorious associates, and

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 161

<sup>30</sup> An April 19, 1929 letter in the *Berwyn Life* makes reference to a vice raid at the Harlem Tavern in Stickney, which was likely the predecessor to the 1930s era Harlem Nut House, one of the Club Ritz's competitors.

<sup>31</sup> Chain of Title. Cook County Recorder of Deeds.

<sup>32</sup> "Obituary: Joseph W. Vistain, Jr." *Berwyn News*. July 9, 1943. 5

<sup>33</sup> Chain of Title.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> *Berwyn Life*. October 25, 1933.

<sup>37</sup> "Berwyn Mayor Aids to Block Old Capone Gang." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. August 16, 1934.

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Louis "Doc" Stacey were trying to gain control over the club.<sup>38</sup> According to the report, the club was soon reopened "under reputable management."

The Club Ritz was also featured in an expose by the *Chicago Herald and Examiner* in March 1934: "West Side Pupils Pack Dens; Children Revel in Darkness; Brag of Liquor as they Fall." The article reported on the downside of the end of Prohibition as young students from Chicago's western suburbs could be found drinking after school in clubs and taverns. The Club Ritz was highlighted as a notorious hangout for such youths.

The Club Ritz is in Berwyn, with its dark booths and the sensual temptations they offer draw girls and boys from Austin and west suburban high schools. Gin fizzes and beer steins littered the tables. The reporters returned, guided by two Austin students, 16 and 15. The interior of this saloon is so dark that the reporters at first could not find their way to tables. It was late afternoon, and there were no other students in the place. But the waiter recognized the two girls as steady patrons. He carelessly pushed their school books aside and served them with gin bucks. Drinking at tables were eight unescorted young girls. This is how Chicago is heeding the solemn injunction to "safeguard our citizens everywhere from the return of the saloon and attendant abuses."<sup>39</sup>

This particular article was used in a Senate Congressional Record most likely in reference to the repeal of Prohibition. Not surprisingly, the negative attention and increase of eyes on Berwyn, and Club Ritz in particular, cast a negative light on the business.

By October 1934, the newly reopened Club Ritz was hosting performances by Jacquelyn Browne's Harlem Review. Browne and her troupe were African-American performers and they performed music and acts reflective of Black entertainment in Harlem. Nida Adams was specifically mentioned for her dance known as the "Shim-sham-shimmy."<sup>40</sup> The Shim-sham or shim-sham-shimmy was a Harlem-based tap dance made popular in the early 1930s and that is still popular today with lindy dancers. Also mentioned was Cleon Grice, performing a rhumba dance routine. Rhumba (or rumba) is an Afro-Cuban dance that became popular in the 1930s. The music was performed by Jack Hestor and his Rhythm Ramblers.

In February 1935, the club transformed again under new management. Win Morro of the Chicago-based *Movienews Weekly* featured the changes in his "Seeing Chicago After Dark" column. Morro made note of the new emcee, Joe Ford, who hailed from the Surf Club in Miami, the "five-act floor show," and even noted that "Club Ritz parks your car at the door."<sup>41</sup> A few days later, Morro noted that proprietor Mae Weldt and manager Pete Quintan "make weekly tours thruout [sp] the city auditioning new talent before it is even presented to Club Ritz's patrons."<sup>42</sup> In March 1935, the Club Ritz proprietor was Larry Brundage and the music was performed by Ruddy Carr and his Tik Toks. Acts included "Irish stroller" Jean Walsh and tap dancing by the Elliot Sisters. Brundage was a respected Oak Park-based radio personality from the '20s, and music and entertainment manager, having worked for over twenty years in the business at venues like the Avalon, Davis Hotel and Rainbow Gardens.<sup>43</sup> Morro once mentioned that "Brundage must stay [at Club Ritz], or no soap."<sup>44</sup> Brundage kept the name Club Ritz but advertised it as the "New Ritz" when he took over operations in March. He

<sup>38</sup> McGurn, whose real name was Vincenzo Antonio Gibaldi, was a Sicilian immigrant that worked as a professional boxer before joining the mob. He was a close associate of Al Capone and was implicated in several mob-related murders, including the St. Valentines Day massacre. He reportedly used a Tommy gun as his weapon of choice, earning him the nickname "Machine Gun." He was also part owner in the late 1920s of Chicago's famous Green Mill Club. Eventually cast out of the outfit, he was gunned down in February 1936.

<sup>39</sup> "West Side Pupils Pack Dens" *Chicago Herald and Examiner*. March 11, 1934.

<sup>40</sup> Graves, Jimmy. "Sez I." *Berwyn Life*. October 19, 1934.

<sup>41</sup> Morro, Win. "Seeing Chicago After Dark." *Movienews Weekly*. February 15, 1935. 27

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*. February 22, 1935. 36

<sup>43</sup> Kotnour, Kots. "Sez I." *Berwyn Life*. May 17, 1935.

<sup>44</sup> Morro, Win. "Seeing Chicago After Dark." May 10, 1935. 36

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emphasized dancing and a chorus of “beautiful American girls” with “charm, grace, and personality.”<sup>45</sup> Advertising and newspaper reviews included the Chicago newspapers, likely an attempt to draw a broader audience. (Figure 4)

How long the relative success and respectability of the “New Ritz” lasted is not clear, nor for how long Brundage operated the club. The last advertisement with Brundage as manager was in June 1935, in which the Japanese Taka sisters were featured.<sup>46</sup> By 1936, local newspapers were reporting on tavern brawls and arrests at the location. Advertising and mentions in local papers as a nightclub disappear. In November 1936, a change of ownership is mentioned. The Club Ritz continues to be listed as a restaurant and/or tavern in city directories though. In December 1938 “Ray’s Club Ritz” advertises a New Year’s celebration complete with an orchestra, floor show and turkey dinner.<sup>47</sup> By March 1938 the business is listed for sale, but it took two years to sell. A March 1939 *Chicago Tribune* sales ad noted that the restaurant had been in business for eight years, though that is likely wrong as the first mention for Club Ritz is in the fall of 1933.<sup>48</sup> It is possible that a restaurant had been in operation as early as 1931 in the building, though no evidence was found of it.

### Restaurants & Clubs

The Club Ritz was still listed in the April 1940 city directory, but by June 1940 it had been transformed into Lou’s Villa. Not much could be found about Lou’s Villa. The proprietor was twenty-seven-year-old Louis Miller, who lived on site with his wife Evelyn.<sup>49</sup> A June 1940 help-wanted ad noted that the proprietor was looking to hire musicians.<sup>50</sup> An October 1942 “Shop Talk” news story mentions that “Lou’s Villa looks nice now,” perhaps referring to some remodeling.<sup>51</sup> But in July 1943, the restaurant was once again up for sale. The *Chicago Tribune* ad mentions that the owner was drafted and needed to sell.<sup>52</sup> It noted that the restaurant/tavern had been in operation for five years, though that timing does not correspond with the documentation. According to the ad, business had been good and it was located near the “torpedo factory,” a reference to the torpedo munitions plant in Forest Park, and other defense plants. This suggests that the establishment had been operating more as a tavern for workers than as a nightclub. Per the ad, the bar dated from 1942 and the establishment seated 175 people. It had \$11,000 worth of equipment, all of which suggests that the owner had invested in the business and it was relatively successful.

Although no date of sale of Lou’s Villa could be established, by April 1944, the building was being operated as Ranucci’s Nite Spot.<sup>53</sup> The advertisements noted that it had formerly been Lou’s Villa, which suggests that the former establishment had a good reputation. Ranucci’s featured “the best steaks in town,” spaghetti and ravioli along with an orchestra (unnamed) and dancing. (Figure 5) However, Ranucci’s was short lived. By the end of 1944, it had become the Club El Monaco. There wasn’t much advertising until after September 1946, when the Romito Brothers and Di Carlo took over operations. They advertised good food like steaks and chicken dinners and dancing and entertainment on Fridays and Saturdays. (Figure 6) Music was provided by Frank’s Rhythm Aires. Off-street parking was available on the lot.<sup>54</sup> A November 1946 review noted that drinks, “concocted by fellows that know how are served in a delightful atmosphere.”<sup>55</sup> An October ’46 review noted that the “dance floor is one of the West Suburbs largest.”<sup>56</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Movienews Weekly*. April 5, 1935. 37

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* June 14, 1935. 28

<sup>47</sup> *The Life*. December 28, 1938. 9

<sup>48</sup> *Chicago Tribune*. March 9, 1938. 31

<sup>49</sup> 1940 U.S. Census. Berwyn, Ward 6.

<sup>50</sup> *The Life*. June 16, 1940. 6

<sup>51</sup> “Shop Talk.” *Berwyn Life*. October 23, 1942. 19

<sup>52</sup> *Chicago Tribune*. July 18, 1943. 50

<sup>53</sup> *The Life*. March 31, 1944. 8

<sup>54</sup> *Berwyn Life*. October 18, 1946. 9

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* November 29, 1946. 10

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* October 4, 1946.

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By August 1947 the Club El Monaco was owned by Richard Smith. He was arrested and charged that month with serving a fourteen-year old girl that had been on a drinking spree with a paroled rapist.<sup>57</sup> In September, Smith had transformed it into Richard Smith's Seafood Restaurant. A review that month noted that it was a "delightful eating spot for the entire family."<sup>58</sup> It was also advertised as a cocktail bar and available for banquets, meetings and weddings. (Figure 7) The menu featured fried perch, turtle soup, lobster tail, shrimp de jonghe (a Chicago specialty), and shrimp cocktail.

By 1948, the operation seems to have been on the decline again. In May, Richard Smith was reported to have shot himself in the hand while attempting to shoot a rat in his establishment.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps not coincidentally, a few days later Smith was fined by the Berwyn Health Department, reportedly for "maintaining a kitchen in its basement." A frustrated Health Department chair, John R. Cermak, expressed his intent that "we are going to arrest those who will not cooperate to keep Berwyn a clean, healthy city."<sup>60</sup> Things for Smith spiraled downhill from there. In June, he was fined for being open after hours.<sup>61</sup> In July, Smith's co-owner, James Cantaldo, was arrested and fined for being open after the 1:00 AM mandatory closing time. Making matters worse, Cantaldo was charged with "obstructing the front view of his tavern" and resisting arrest. As officers attempted to enter through the front door, several "mostly female" patrons snuck out the rear, crossed Roosevelt Road to neighboring Oak Park (out of Berwyn police jurisdiction) and proceeded to taunt the officers all while Cantaldo "hurled abusive language" at the officers." A frustrated Cantaldo announced during his court hearing "that he was selling the place."<sup>62</sup>

## Hunt Club

Smith and Cantaldo made good on their promise very quickly, and the sale would usher in the most significant historical era and a period of relative stability. In October 1948, the Hunt Club opened. (Figure 8) The Hunt Club was owned and operated by Otto J. Kubik. Kubik had been running the club down the street at 5639 Roosevelt in Cicero since February 1946. Although the grand opening was held the weekend of November 5-7, the Hunt Club was open throughout the month of October. Kubik had completely renovated it into a sportsman's club atmosphere and hired a "well-known chef, formerly associated with one of the finest eating spots in the Loop."<sup>63</sup> It is likely that much of the current interior décor largely dates from the opening of the Hunt Club in 1948.

Initially, the Hunt Club entertainment consisted of Horatio and his 88 key grand piano.<sup>64</sup> Within a few months, the club began to feature jazz music. Dixieland jazz was undergoing a revival in the late 1940s and Black music of the 1910s and '20s was being "discovered" by young white audiences.<sup>65</sup> In June 1949, Chet Roble and his Barefoot Bunch performed at the club. Their performance was billed as "Jazz Returns to the West Side."<sup>66</sup> (Figure 9) The jazz ensemble performed hits such as "Muskrat Ramble"<sup>67</sup> and "West End Blues."<sup>68</sup> Chet Roble was an accomplished jazz pianist, and would go on in the 1950s to perform in Chicago radio, television<sup>69</sup> and "intimate clubs," and was accompanied by other respected jazz musicians such as Floyd O'Brien (trombone), Bud Jacobson (clarinet), Jack Ivett (trumpet), and Sammy Aron (bass). Both Roble and

<sup>57</sup> "Rapist Seized After Getting Girl, 14, Drunk." *Chicago Tribune*. August 16, 1947. 2

<sup>58</sup> *Berwyn Life*. September 3, 1947. 2

<sup>59</sup> Dunne, Edward. "Smitty Gets Dirty Rat – Vice Versa." *Berwyn Life*. May 2, 1948.

<sup>60</sup> "Health Officers Arrest Four." *Berwyn Life*. May 9, 1948.

<sup>61</sup> "Three Pub Keepers Found Guilty." *Berwyn Life*. June 27, 1948.

<sup>62</sup> "Pub Owner Again Fined in Berwyn." *Berwyn Life*. July 11, 1948.

<sup>63</sup> *Berwyn Life*. October 1, 1948.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*. November 5, 1948.

<sup>65</sup> In this case, "Dixieland" refers to the revival of traditional African-American jazz music originating from New Orleans in the 1920s.

<sup>66</sup> *Berwyn Life*. June 17, 1949.

<sup>67</sup> "Muskrat Ramble" was a 1926 jazz hit written by Kid Ory and performed by Louis Armstrong. It was popular in the Dixieland jazz revival period in the 1940s and is considered a jazz standard.

<sup>68</sup> "West End Blues" was a 1928 hit by Joe "King" Oliver and later popularized by Louis Armstrong. Armstrong added scat vocals to the song, one of the first to feature that type of singing.

<sup>69</sup> Roble even played himself on a Chicago-based 1950 television show, "Studs Place" hosted by Studs Terkel.



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Ivett were regulars at Jazz, Ltd., the famous Dixieland jazz club in Chicago.<sup>70</sup> Jacobson, Aron, and O'Brien were all Chicagoans that had been regulars in jazz groups as far back as the 1920s; O'Brien most recently played with Bob Crosby's band (Crosby was the brother of Bing Crosby).<sup>71</sup> It appears that this was the first jazz band to play at the Hunt Club. The event was covered in the July 15 issue of *DownBeat* magazine, which noted that "Dixie on the westside" got a stimulus from the event.<sup>72</sup> It must have been a success, for the club would regularly feature jazz acts throughout the 1950s. *DownBeat* magazine highlighted the Sunday jazz concerts at the Hunt Club in its September 23, 1949 issue, mentioning specifically Chet Roble's band.<sup>73</sup>

The Hunt Club aimed to maintain a quality reputation for its food as well. Starting on October 7, 1949, the club featured food prepared by George de Manole. Manole had been a chef on the luxury liner *Normandie*. Menu items included seafood, BBQ ribs and "chicken in the basket."<sup>74</sup> Kubik was confident enough with his operations to buy the building, which he did in September 1950, and the open lot to the west.<sup>75</sup> Per Berwyn city directories, he lived on site with his family in the late '40s.

The success Kubik had with live music at the Hunt Club may have encouraged him to broaden his efforts. He listed the club for sale in September 1949, later offering a full sale or taking on a partner in the business.<sup>76</sup> He seems to have found a partner by mid-1950: Martin Hetzel. Kubik and Hetzel were partners for several months, jointly listing their names on ads.<sup>77</sup> The partnership may have been temporary, a way to transition ownership because by November, Hetzel was running the club with his wife Rose.<sup>78</sup> Kubik was operating the Red Arrow by the end of 1950 in nearby Stickney, where he continued to showcase jazz in the western suburbs (but he did continue to own the building).

The Hunt Club remained, under Hetzel's management, a nightclub offering various forms of music and entertainment. In February 1951, Bill Le Pine and his Orchestra played music on Friday and Saturday nights, along with a comedy group, the 5 Phoniacs.<sup>79</sup> (Figure 10) The club hosted an auction every Thursday night. But the Hunt Club continued to feature jazz music regularly, with Hank Magner as promoter. In February 1954, the club hosted the George Lewis Ragtime Jazz Band during one of their trips to Chicago.<sup>80</sup> Based in New Orleans, the band was nationally known and Lewis was one of the original Black musicians popular in the 1920s still performing for audiences all over the country. His band was a big enough draw that the club required reservations for that night.<sup>81</sup>

Throughout 1954, jazz was a regular feature at the Hunt Club. Floyd O'Brien, the trombonist that had been part of Chet Roble's Barefoot Bunch, played regularly on Friday and Saturday nights with what was billed as the Hunt Club All-Stars Dixie Band. Horatio continued to play piano on weeknights.<sup>82</sup> But in January 1954, the club began to feature performances by another regional Dixieland revival jazz band: the Salty Dogs.<sup>83</sup> The Salty Dogs began in 1947 as a student jazz ensemble at Purdue University. Quickly, the students began to play professionally at clubs in Indiana and Chicago on weekends. As the original members graduated, some of them formed a professional band playing regular shows in the region while a student version remained at

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<sup>70</sup> Roble was actually Bill Reinhardt's brother-in-law. Reinhardt was proprietor of Jazz, Ltd.

<sup>71</sup> Kenney. 93

<sup>72</sup> "Chicago Band Briefs." *DownBeat*. July 15, 1949. Volume 16, Issue 13. 4

<sup>73</sup> *DownBeat*. September 23, 1949. Volume 16, Issue 18. 11

<sup>74</sup> *Berwyn Life*. October 7, 1949. 12

<sup>75</sup> Chain of Title. Cook County Recorder of Deeds.

<sup>76</sup> *Berwyn Life*. April 14, 1950.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*. October 20, 1950. 13

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*. November 3, 1950. 13

<sup>79</sup> *Berwyn Life*. February 2, 1951.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*. February 26, 1954.

<sup>81</sup> Lewis and his Ragtime Jazz Band were undergoing a renaissance in the 1950s, playing at clubs and jazz festivals across the country, releasing records and appearing on television.

<sup>82</sup> *Berwyn Life*. October 8, 1954.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*. January 15, 1954.

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Purdue.<sup>84</sup> They hired Magner as their agent, who was also the promoter for the Hunt Club.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, the Hunt Club became a regular venue for the band on Sunday afternoons throughout the year. (Figures 11 & 12) Over the summer of '54 they played weekend nights too. Over Thanksgiving weekend that year, they were featured and were selling their new record, "The Salt Dogs Express".<sup>86</sup>

Jazz continued regularly through 1955 and into '56 as well. In October, Al Wynn's Bucktown Six jazz band played.<sup>87</sup> Albert Wynn was a Black trombonist from the original 1920s jazz scene who continued to play during the Dixieland revival in the 1950s.<sup>88</sup> His unnamed band members were noted as having played with jazz greats like Louis Armstrong and King Oliver. In November, the Hunt Club featured a weekend performance of "Turk" Murphy and his Frisco Jazz Band.<sup>89</sup> Murphy was significant Dixieland revival trombonist in the 1950s and '60s, playing at clubs and jazz festivals across the country. He was joined at the Hunt Club by trumpet player "Doc" Evans, another significant Dixieland revival musician that had been part of the band for Jazz, Ltd. in Chicago. George Lewis and his Ragtime Band made another special appearance for Easter in March 1956.<sup>90</sup> (Figure 13)

The Hunt Club did not just feature jazz. In October 1955 they featured Jack Simon and his Polka Toppers.<sup>91</sup> That session was broadcast live on WOPA, an Oak Park based station. Other music orchestras played during this time, sometimes as weekend headliners and other times during weeknights. Wednesdays were polka night.

In June 1956, a fire did significant damage to the Hunt Club.<sup>92</sup> It took an hour for firemen to bring the blaze under control. Over \$7,000 in damages were reported to both the interior and exterior. The fire's origin was electrical and it spread through a false ceiling over the dance hall before it could be extinguished. Hetzel reported that damage from smoke and water would require a complete remodeling of the interior. After several months of repairs, the Hunt Club had its grand reopening on September 21, 1956.<sup>93</sup> The headlining act was Franz Jackson and his New Orleans Dixielanders. The Dixielanders were billed as the only remaining Dixieland jazz band in Chicago. In addition to Jackson, the band featured Al Wynn.<sup>94</sup> Jackson and his band were well-known headliners in Chicago; they also played regularly at Jazz, Ltd. and the Red Arrow. Other musical groups, including a polka band, as well as a comedy act also performed that weekend.

Following its reopening, the Hunt Club continued to feature jazz on occasion. The Salty Dogs remained a popular booking for Sundays through 1958. George Lewis made a return appearance with his band in June 1958.<sup>95</sup> A year later, the Hunt Club "celebrated the tenth anniversary of the coming of jazz to the west suburbs" by bringing George Lewis and a number of jazz musicians, like Chet Robles, back for a performance.<sup>96</sup> Ads for the club indicate that most other nights were the regular local acts, but there were fewer special advertisements.

Advertisements indicate that by about 1960, the quality of shows and acts at the Hunt Club had declined. (Figure 14) Betty Turner, a psychic card reader became a regular. Edmund Andre, a hypnotist, was also a

<sup>84</sup> VanVorst, Paige. "The Salty Dogs." *JazzBeat Magazine*. Jazzology Press: December 21, 2006. Retrieved July 2, 2024.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> *Berwyn Life*. November 26, 1954.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. October 7, 1955.

<sup>88</sup> Wynn was from New Orleans but grew up and lived in Chicago. In the 1920s, he played with blues singer Ma Rainey before recording a few songs under his own band.

<sup>89</sup> *Berwyn Life*. November 4, 1955.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. March 30, 1956.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. October 7, 1955.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. June 15, 1956.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. September 21, 1956.

<sup>94</sup> *DownBeat*. October 3, 1956. Volume 23, Issue 20. P 45.

<sup>95</sup> "Leonard, Will. "On the Town." *Chicago Tribune*. June 8, 1958. 121

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. January 14, 1959. 130

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regular feature in late 1960 along with Turner. The club still had music, sometimes performed by Bob Marcy's Rhythm R's, a newer Chicagoland band at the time playing jazz and big band sounds.<sup>97</sup>

In mid 1962, Otto Kubik, who had been running the Red Arrow in Stickney but still owned the Hunt Club building, apparently decided to sell the Red Arrow and open a new nightclub on Roosevelt Road. On July 1, the Hetzels moved the Hunt Club to 2107 South Cicero Avenue in Cicero.<sup>98</sup> They advertised a larger space, more parking and it was close to the General Electric Hawthorn Works.

### Deer Lodge

In the second half of 1962, the building transformed again, this time into the Deer Lodge. (Figure 15) Kubik may have been looking to simplify his business life and plan for a retirement, or he may have been suffering health issues. A sales ad from January 1962 indicated that the owner (Kubik) needed to sell and that the offering price was well below market value.<sup>99</sup> He sold the Red Arrow by mid-year, which continued under new management through at least November 1964. In advertisements for the Deer Lodge just months after its opening, Otto's wife Lou is listed as hostess, not Otto. Like the Hetzels before them, and the Kubiks before starting the Red Arrow, they lived in the building. It does not appear that they made any significant interior alterations.

A grand opening for the Deer Lodge was held the weekend of September 9, 1962.<sup>100</sup> (Figure 16) A smorgasbord was offered to go with music from the John Monti Trio. Compared to the advertising and promotions when the Hunt Club opened, the opening of the Deer Lodge was rather restrained. The Kubiks did advertise the club regularly, but the big name acts that used to frequent the Hunt Club, and their own Red Arrow, do not appear. They hosted polka parties on Sundays and live music on the weekends. Food offerings remained simple, like pizza. (Figure 17) Even their one-year anniversary in June 1963 did not name the musical acts and promoted nothing fancier than sandwiches and pizza.<sup>101</sup> Later in the '60s, acts like Betty Turner, the psychic, were once again featured.

A clue to why the entertainment quality had declined might be found in the events of 1968. In May, Otto Kubik died after a long illness at age 74.<sup>102</sup> The obituary details are scant, but the sale of the Red Arrow, return to living and operating the club on Roosevelt, and having his wife Lou out front as the hostess, all suggest that Kubik's health had been failing. Nightlife entertainment was also changing, but ads for other clubs continued to highlight live music in a way the Deer Lodge did not.

Following her husband's death in 1968, Lou Kubik continued to operate the Deer Lodge but evidence suggests that it was no longer a music and entertainment attraction for the western suburbs, it had become an ordinary tavern. There are tax liens in the deed records and ads for sales of kitchen equipment from the late 1960s through the '70s. Berwyn cited the Deer Lodge in 1978 for health code violations.<sup>103</sup>

### Fitzgeralds

In December 1980, Deer Lodge was bought by the FitzGerald family. The name was then changed to what it is today, Fitzgeralds Nightclub.<sup>104</sup> With a goal of maintaining the traditional American music that had been appreciated and beloved by the community in its earlier iterations, the FitzGerald family kept

<sup>97</sup> Marcy, who's real name is Marciante, remains an active performer as of 2024.

<sup>98</sup> *Berwyn Life*. June 1, 1962.

<sup>99</sup> *Berwyn Life*. January 28, 1962. 18

<sup>100</sup> *Stickney Life and Forest View*. September 9, 1962.

<sup>101</sup> *Berwyn Life*. June 28, 1963.

<sup>102</sup> "Otto Kubik Dies Monday." *Berwyn Life*. May 8, 1968.

<sup>103</sup> Berry, Jim. "City to Install New Signals on Cermak." *The Life*. July 14, 1978. 3

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* Saccaro, Susan. "Fitzgerald's Has Rock, Blues, and 'All That Jazz'." March 11, 1981. 6

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that tradition by booking artists who performed Dixieland, big-band, jazz, and blues and started mixing in newer, and more current American music such as rock and roll, folk, country, bluegrass, zydeco, New Orleans Brass, Americana, and honky-tonk. Early artists that the FitzGerald brought in were somewhat known at the time, but would become staples of these genres as we know them today. Blues Legends such as KoKo Taylor, Buddy Guy, Lonnie Brooks, Irma Thomas, and Mavis Staples have graced the stage. Country-Folk heroes like John Prine, Steve Earle, Dave Alvin, and Lucinda Williams have performed at Fitzgeralds. New Orleans music royalty Clifton Chenier “the King of Zydeco” and his son, CJ Chenier, Dr. John, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, and Terrance Simien have all brought their culturally unique sound to Fitzgeralds.

Early on in their tenure, the FitzGerald family created, and maintained, one of America’s longest-running music festivals, the American Music Festival. In 1981, Stevie Ray Vaughn and three other bands played over the Fourth of July weekend; this is where the idea came to make it an annual festival. The following year, the American Music Festival was “born” with musical acts including Clifton Chenier & His Red Hot Louisiana Band, The Famous Potatoes, Jazz Members Big Band, and even the Salty Dogs (the same Salty Dogs from the Hunt Club days).

In March 2020, the FitzGerald family decided to retire and sold the business to Will Duncan, who currently owns and operates the venue with his wife, Jessica King. The purchase was finalized and ownership changed hands just two weeks prior to the COVID pandemic. During the early days of the pandemic, the King-Duncan family purchased a truck and provided live music to the neighboring suburbs by booking venue-favorite artists who played music on the back of the truck. WTTW Chicago, among other media outlets, covered the “pivot” of the venue in a series titled, “Firsthand: Coronavirus”. As national and local mandates retreated after the COVID vaccine came out, the nightclub (inside) was able to gradually see traveling artists and large groups of people again. Big Band night is still every Sunday night. For the past three years, Fitzgeralds has operated under “normal” circumstances and continues to maintain its integrity as a gathering place for people to see some of the best American roots artists in the country. Just as it was in the 1930s, ‘40s and ‘50s, the property at 6615 West Roosevelt continues to be a cultural entertainment hub for the city of Berwyn and those suburbs around it.

## Historical Context

Although Berwyn has historically had dozens, even hundreds of restaurants and taverns, the nightclub cocktail lounge, and music venue businesses that have occupied 6615 Roosevelt Road since the end of Prohibition are unique to Berwyn. The Club Ritz, and especially the Hunt Club, were significant nightclub venues for the near west Chicago suburbs and offered entertainment that was only slightly less than what could be found in Chicago. Both establishments compare favorably to the competing nightclubs, jazz clubs and supper clubs of the near-west suburbs of their eras.

Berwyn is located amongst several suburbs on Chicago’s western edge. To the east is Cicero, a densely populated urban community which, in the 1920s, ‘30s and ‘40s, had a large Czech immigrant population like Berwyn. The commercial thoroughfares of Cermak and Roosevelt Roads seamlessly connect both communities, which historically had strong social and commercial links. To the north, just across Roosevelt Road, is Oak Park. West of Berwyn is Riverside. Both Oak Park and Riverside remained dry communities after Prohibition, so residents of those communities wishing to visit nightclubs and taverns might venture into Berwyn. South of Berwyn is Stickney, which saw substantial residential growth only after WWII. Lyons is southwest of Berwyn along Ogden Avenue and was a fairly undeveloped community until after WWII. And North Riverside was another fairly undeveloped community in the pre-WWII era. Because those communities were not built up in the ‘30s, they could host roadhouses and nightclubs with parking lots and outdoor gardens.

During the late 1920s, as Chicago nightclubs were shut down by the authorities, roadhouses were described by one jazz musician as “a one or two-story, queerly-named frame structure containing an improvised old-

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fashioned bar and medium-sized, dimly-lit, ill-ventilated and smokey dining room filled with decrepit chairs and tables covered with soiled linen.”<sup>105</sup> Such a description could well fit that of the Oakwyn Athletic Club, if it served as a nightclub in the late 1920s.

After the end of Prohibition, taverns and nightclubs, offering drinking, music and entertainment, proliferated. Social drinking and entertainment for young people, couples and older adults became mainstream, compared to the speakeasy clubs of Prohibition. *Berwyn Life* night life reporter Kots Kotnour once remarked that “contrary to the beliefs of many that night-spots are only attended by the younger generation, I find that the old folks, as well, patronize these places.”<sup>106</sup> In 1934 and ‘35, the Berwyn city directories list approximately 200 restaurants and an equal amount of “beer taverns” in both Berwyn and Cicero. Many of those were located along Roosevelt Road. One of the most prominent restaurant listings in the directories was for the Klas Restaurant at 5735 Cermak Road in Cicero. The Klas advertised itself for catering to banquets, parties, and weddings.<sup>107</sup> Several restaurants and/or taverns included “club” in their name, suggesting a nightclub atmosphere similar to the Club Ritz. Examples included the Club Cinderella at 2105 South 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, the Club Aron at 5544 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street and the Miami Beach Club & Gardens at 6129 West Roosevelt. All of these were in Cicero though. The Club Ritz was listed only under restaurants, not under beer taverns.<sup>108</sup> This suggests that the owners were marketing the establishment as fine dining and entertainment rather than just as a tavern. In other words, it was a nightclub.

The nightclub concept arose during 1920s Prohibition as a private venue where “illicit liquor and lively music [were] often available all night.”<sup>109</sup> Such Jazz Age venues offered “urban behaviors that expressed the excitement, adventure, glamour, sensuality, and daring stimulated in young urban Americans.”<sup>110</sup> When Prohibition ended, nightclubs became mainstream and often featured popular music (jazz and after 1935, big band) and dancing as well as other entertainment acts. In the 1930s, nightclub entertainment ranged from vaudeville-style acts, big band, and comedy to more risqué and controversial acts like scantily-clad chorus girls and Black musicians performing for all-white audiences. The common theme for nightclubs was social drinking; the entertainment was what would draw patrons in, food kept them from leaving when hungry, but the money was made with alcohol sales. In this context, the Club Ritz fit all the characteristics.

This conclusion is confirmed by examining newspaper advertisements and reviews for that same era. In the mid-1930s, Club Ritz was regularly featured in the entertainment review section of the *Berwyn Life* newspaper. The reviewer would comment on food, special events and new acts in local nightclubs and restaurants. In the October 19, 1934 edition, the reviewer made specific mention of Club Ritz and its new act featuring Jaquelyn Browne’s Harlem Review, made up of Black performers. The only other club to get as extensive a review was for the Hy-Ho Club in Cicero for Bonny Hunt’s fan dancing routine. In the same column on May 17, 1935, the Club Ritz also got a long review for its “blue and gold setting” and being the scene of “perpetual gayety.” It mentions the various musical and entertainment acts and the new management under Larry Brundage. Other venues were mentioned for updates on new musical acts, such as Jack Mate and his Playmates at the Olympic Ballroom (in Cicero), but it was Club Ritz that got the longest review. The Hy-Ho Club location is now a modern strip mall.

There were only a few local competitors to Club Ritz in this era right after the end of Prohibition. The Hy-Ho Club, located at Cicero and Cermak Avenues in Cicero, was a regular advertiser and its ads made note of its floor shows, dancing, singing and more risqué acts like the Bonny Hunt fan dancing already mentioned. (Figure 18) The Olympic Ballroom in Cicero also regularly advertised its musical acts, but it was a larger ballroom dance venue and not a traditional nightclub (that building remains). The Palm Gardens, on Cermak Road in

<sup>105</sup> Kenney. 158

<sup>106</sup> Kotnour, Kots. “Sez I.” *Berwyn Life*. May 10, 1935. 8

<sup>107</sup> The Klas Restaurant would later move across the street and was demolished in 2022.

<sup>108</sup> Many establishments were listed under both categories.

<sup>109</sup> “Nightclubs.” Encyclopedia.com. Accessed August 2024

<sup>110</sup> Kenney. xiii

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Cicero, regularly featured musical and entertainment acts. The Harlem Nut House, on Harlem Avenue in Stickney, was also regularly featured in this era and had an open-air cafe.<sup>111</sup> In May 1935, the nightclub featured Black entertainers and musicians.<sup>112</sup> Neither building remains.

Club Ritz also regularly advertised not only locally in the *Berwyn Life*, but also in *Movienews Weekly*, a Chicago-based entertainment paper. The April 5, 1935 edition shows Club Ritz with the largest ad on the page, promoting itself as the “New Ritz” and showing elegant dancers along with a listing of the musical entertainment and Royal Revue chorus line. Other clubs advertising included The Bowery, at 4742 North Western in Chicago. The Bowery’s entertainment was Jack Joy and his band and a new girl chorus line; an image of the chorus line was also included. Other advertisements for Chicago clubs included the Club Oasis, the Marquette Club, and the Harlem Stables, for which each had a listing of their musical acts. The Club Rickford in Cicero was also advertised and mentioned dancing to the music of George Getto. Its tagline was “fun, girls, music.” If the popular entertainment at that time was live music and chorus girls, the Club Ritz was right in line. In the March 8, 1935 *Movienews Weekly* review column “Seeing Chicago After Dark,” reviewer Win Morro highlights the changes Larry Brundage was bringing to Club Ritz, including a new “girl line, prima donna, and specialty girl.” Morro also noted that “patrons are going to get the best in entertainment plus a beautiful environment.” In that same column, Morro mentions the Club Oasis and Marquette Club acts. There is also a photo of Virginia O’Brien’s Dancing Girls, in costume, who were performing at the Hotel Morrison’s Terrace Gardens. These reviews and ads, and others like them, show that the high point for the Club Ritz was from late 1934 through mid ’35, and that it was well known not just in the western suburbs but also held its own compared to Chicago clubs. (Figure 19) No other Berwyn clubs were mentioned, and Cicero’s Club Rickford was the only near-west suburban club getting attention from *Movienews Weekly*.<sup>113</sup>

Nightclub competition was intense, however, and the Club Ritz’s decline after 1935 may have been, in part, due to the proliferation of taverns and nightclubs, especially in more rural suburbs that could host larger venues and more on-site parking. The Berwyn city directories in the 1940s show how other nearby suburbs became one of the main competitors to Berwyn for nightclubs and dance halls. The 1940 directory, which continues to list between 150-200 taverns, includes the Club Ritz and others along Roosevelt. But Orrie’s Cocktail Lounge at 8309 Ogden in Lyons has a large ad that told patrons to “make it your habit to meet your friends at Orrie’s” and advertised dining and dancing. Another competitor was Rivermore Garden & Grill at 8405 Cermak Road in North Riverside. Per their ad, it served banquets, parties and weddings and featured steaks and chicken dinners, a “complete line of food and drink.”

The 1941 directory indicates just how the proliferation of cocktail lounges and nightclubs outside of Berwyn made competition fierce. The Club Ritz does not appear in the directory. But Frank’s Inn at 7924 26<sup>th</sup> Street in North Riverside (just across the street from dry Riverside) offered steaks, chicken, spaghetti, and ravioli and catered to parties and dancing. The Knotty Pine Inn at 3501 55<sup>th</sup> Street in Cicero had chicken dinners and entertainment on Saturday nights. Pershing Road Gardens at 6913 Pershing Road in Stickney (just across from Berwyn) advertised a “large hall to rent for all occasions” and featured dining and dancing. In this context, it is understandable how the Club Ritz may have struggled and eventually declined after its highpoint in 1935.

In the late 1940s and throughout the ‘50s, the Hunt Club made a name for itself as a nightclub and music venue featuring Dixieland revival jazz music. When still owned by Otto Kubik, the Hunt Club introduced jazz to the western suburbs in 1949. This seems to have set the Hunt Club apart from its competitors. In the 1948 directory, the Hunt Club is still located in Cicero (Richards Seafood Restaurant occupies 6615 Roosevelt). Many of the taverns listed in the directory advertise having televisions, a substitute for live entertainment. In nearby Lyons were entertainment venues, like the Lyons Ranch at 8039 Ogden and Mangam’s Chateau at 7850 Ogden, both of which featured nightly entertainment, dining and dancing.

<sup>111</sup> Kotnour. “Sez I.” *Berwyn Life*. April 26, 1935. 7

<sup>112</sup> Kotnour. “Sez I.” *Berwyn Life*. May 3, 1935. 4

<sup>113</sup> The Club Rickford location at 5017 Cermak in Cicero remains and is a commercial storefront now.

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Mangam's Chateau, in particular, represented a new type of entertainment establishment that became popular in the post-WWII era: the supper club. If the 1930s nightclubs suggested "cigarette smoke and gin fumes and a woman in a low-cut gown signing songs about illicit love," the supper club was "a nice place where decent people can eat good enough food with whomever they like."<sup>114</sup> According to Dave Hoekstra, the Midwest supper club offered fine dining, a family friendly atmosphere, cocktails, and wholesome, evening entertainment.<sup>115</sup> This atmosphere is in contrast to the urban cocktail lounge or nightclub of the era, like the Hunt Club, which focused on drinks and entertainment, with food secondary. In its ads and reviews, Mangam's Chateau highlighted its fine food and facilities for banquets and weddings, in addition to its entertainment lineup. A comparison of ads in October 1950 shows the contrast: Mangam's Chateau tells patrons to "dine in luxury in the crystal room" while the Hunt Club advertises itself as a "cocktail lounge" offering "chicken-in-basket, Bar-B-Q ribs, and French fried shrimp."<sup>116</sup> (Figure 20) There are numerous articles in the *Berwyn Life* in the 1950s about weddings, anniversary parties and social groups meeting at Mangam's.<sup>117</sup> Few such articles exist for the Hunt Club, which did not appear to strongly market itself in that way, or have the dining facilities suitable for such events. Although Mangam's Chateau did not specifically advertise itself as a supper club, it was referred that way at various times in news articles and reviews. Another local supper club was in Berwyn itself, at 3243 Harlem Avenue: The Supper Club (later known as Frank Bond's Supper Club). The Supper Club advertising rarely mentioned its entertainment, but did mention its banquets, fine food and kid's menu.<sup>118</sup> In an ad promoting its re-opening in January 1958, no entertainment is mentioned, but the extensive menu of beef tenderloin, Grecian chicken, and veal are provided in detail.<sup>119</sup> It notes that a relish tray comes with every meal, another staple of the supper club. Frank Bond's Supper Club closed in the late 1970s; the building has been substantially remodeled.

As a cocktail lounge or nightclub, perhaps the most direct competitor to the Hunt Club in the 1950s was the Red Arrow at 6929 Pershing Road in Stickney. The Red Arrow was owned by Kubik after he sold the Hunt Club to Martin Hetzel in mid-1950. Both venues featured jazz and Dixieland revival music, sometimes sharing acts. The Salty Dogs performed at both venues. Both venues advertised regularly in the *Berwyn Life*. (Figure 21) The August 27, 1954 edition features an ad for the Hunt Club hosting the Salty Dogs. At the Red Arrow was "the best Dixieland artists" led by George Brunis and his Tail Gate Ramblers. The only other comparable ad was for Mangam's Chateau, which highlighted its lobster dinners and a series of singers, comedians and an orchestra.

The November 4, 1955 *Berwyn Life* also shows a similar comparison. At the Hunt Club is Turk Murphy's Frisco Jazz Band. The ad noted that the band was just coming off a gig at the Blue Note in Chicago's Loop. The Blue Note Nightclub was one of Chicago's premier jazz clubs, which confirms the caliber of jazz acts featured at the Hunt Club.<sup>120</sup> Some of the musicians that played at the Blue Note include Louis Armstrong, Count Bassie, Duke Ellington, and Benny Goodman. At the Red Arrow was Johnny Lane and his Dixieland Allstars (a photo of the band was included in the ad). The ad claims that the Red Arrow is the "only tailgate Dixieland jazz band in the entire Midwest." This seems to represent either a marketing ploy or that part of the atmosphere was a large parking lot and/or outdoor garden where patrons could listen to the music from their cars or sitting outdoors. Other ads included Mangam's Chateau and its current lineup, and Keyman's Ballroom at 4711 West Madison in Chicago, which noted its "Over 21" dances on Friday and Sunday nights. Buddy Moreno was playing at the Keyman and his band played a variety of jazz and Dixieland. Also advertising was The Cabin at 6431 West Cermak Road in Berwyn. Of note is their décor, "In the atmosphere of the North Woods," which is similar to that of the Hunt Club. Unlike the Hunt Club however, The Cabin appeared to be

<sup>114</sup> Hoekstra, Dave. *The Supper Club Book: A Celebration of a Midwest Tradition*. Chicago: Chicago Press Review, 2013. ix

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. xiii - xiv

<sup>116</sup> *Berwyn Life*. October 20, 1950. 13

<sup>117</sup> Mangam's Chateau operated between 1937-79 and regularly featured musical and entertainment acts. It was damaged by fire and torn down after it closed.

<sup>118</sup> *Berwyn Life*. April 12, 1957. 8

<sup>119</sup> *Berwyn Life*. January 15. 5

<sup>120</sup> In addition to being a leader in the Chicago jazz revival, the Blue Note was also famous for being the first Loop club to integrate and accept patrons of all races.

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more of a restaurant and did not advertise any live music or performances. Other nightclubs mentioned and/or advertising that date were in Cicero.

The 1950s was a significant decade for live jazz in the Chicago region, which had been an epicenter for the origins of jazz in the 1920s. According to a *Chicago Reader* article about the Blue Note Nightclub, which operated from 1947-60:

The 50s were indeed Chicago's second jazz age, a quarter century removed from the glory years of King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, and Bix Beiderbecke. Mayor Martin H. Kennelly and the young Richard J. Daley presided over the tail end of the Loop era of Henrici's and Fritzel's restaurants, the Morrison Hotel ("the world's tallest fun house" at Clark and Madison, right across from the Note), the Chez Paree across the river, and a host of jazz joints ranging from gin mills to fancy supper clubs. Chicago feted the creme de la creme of jazz at the Hotel Sherman's College Inn, the Hilton's Boulevard Room, the Blue Angel, the Empire Room at the Palmer House, the Gate of Horn, the London House, the Black Orchid, Mr. Kelly's, and Frank Holzfeind's Blue Note.<sup>121</sup>

In addition to the Blue Note Nightclub, in Chicago the other premier jazz club was Jazz, Ltd. Jazz, Ltd. was founded in 1947 at 11 East Grand Avenue by Bill and Ruth Reinhardt. One of the unique features of the club is that it acted as both a venue for Dixieland jazz bands, but also had a house band of accomplished musicians (Bill Reinhardt was the band leader), was a recording studio and produced jazz records. The club famously only focused on Dixieland jazz, but was able to get some of the top name acts, both original Black artists and revival bands.<sup>122</sup> Some of the musicians that played at Jazz, Ltd. also appeared at the Hunt Club, including Chet Roble, Doc Evans, and Jack Ivett. Jazz, Ltd. closed in 1972. The two buildings that housed the club over the years have been demolished.

Another indication that the Hunt Club was a significant jazz club are notices in *DownBeat* magazine from the 1940s and '50s. *DownBeat* was, and continues to be, the premiere magazine devoted to jazz music. It was founded in 1936 in Chicago and featured news, acts and profiles of jazz musicians from across the country. The Hunt Club was mentioned twice in late 1949 for bringing jazz to the western suburbs, with Chet Roble's band being specifically mentioned.<sup>123</sup> The August 10, 1955 issue noted that "Dixieland jazz is being served up at the Hunt Club in Berwyn by Johnny Lucas and his Blueblowers."<sup>124</sup> The October 3, 1956 issue mentioned Franz Jackson's New Orleans jazz band playing at the Hunt Club, which was the headliner for its reopening after the fire.<sup>125</sup> In the December 12, 1956 issue (and many others), the Dixieland All-Stars were listed as playing at the Hunt Club in Berwyn, Illinois. In the same list was mentioned Louis Armstrong's Midwest tour, and acts in clubs all over the country. A short profile noted that Bud Freeman was playing at the Blue Note with his quartet. The Hunt Club was noted as a restaurant/cocktail-lounge in its listing.<sup>126</sup> The November 13, 1958 issue noted that "George Lewis' New Orleans group was recorded by Verve during its recent Chicago engagement at Berwyn's Hunt Club."<sup>127</sup>

The Red Arrow was also often featured in *DownBeat*, evidence that the two west-suburban clubs were strong competitors for that market area. While *DownBeat* routinely listed the Hunt Club as featuring the Dixieland All-Stars in 1955, the same band was routinely listed at the Red Arrow in 1956 and '57. The Red Arrow seems to have been mentioned in *DownBeat* far more often than the Hunt Club, and all the way until the end of 1961, suggesting that it was more successful in getting top name acts later in the '50s.<sup>128</sup> By 1956, the Red Arrow

<sup>121</sup> Cain, Dan. "Blue Note Memories." *The Chicago Reader*. August 17, 1989.

<sup>122</sup> Campbell, Robert L. and Robert Pruter and Tom Kelly. "The Jazz Ltd. Label." July 1, 2022. Retrieved July 2, 2024.

<sup>123</sup> *DownBeat*. July 15, 1949. Volume 16, Issue 13. P 4 and September 23, 1949. Volume 16, Issue 18. P 11.

<sup>124</sup> *DownBeat*. August 10, 1955. Volume 22, Issue 16. P 30.

<sup>125</sup> *DownBeat*. October 3, 1956. Volume 23, Issue 20. P 45.

<sup>126</sup> *DownBeat*. December 12, 1956. Volume 23, Issue 25. P 64.

<sup>127</sup> *DownBeat*. November 13, 1958. Volume 25, Issue 23. P 54.

<sup>128</sup> Based on an internet archive search of *DownBeat*.



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had shifted from calling itself a cocktail lounge to a jazz club in its advertisements and focused solely on jazz music. In contrast, the Hunt Club always referred to itself as a cocktail lounge/restaurant and always had a mix of entertainment.

The Hunt Club was, however, a significant player in the Chicago jazz scene of the 1950s, especially for those living in the western suburbs. Together with the Red Arrow, the Hunt Club brought Dixieland jazz to the near west suburbs and featured many of the original Black artists from the 1920s, like George Lewis, and the revival bands like the Salty Dogs. But as the Dixieland jazz craze faded in the 1960s, so too did the Hunt Club and its successor the Deer Lodge. The Red Arrow closed in 1964, a few years after the Kubiks moved back to 6615 Roosevelt to open the Deer Lodge. The building was torn down and the site redeveloped as housing. The Deer Lodge was never mentioned in *DownBeat*.

### **Conclusion**

The building at 6615 Roosevelt remains with good integrity from its period of significance and is a physical testament to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century dance and beer halls prior to Prohibition, the significance of nightclubs after Prohibition, and the jazz revival in Chicago of the 1940s and '50s. Unlike almost any of the comparable venues of those eras, one can step inside Fitzgeralds Nightclub now and immerse oneself in the 1950s ambiance of Chicago's Dixieland jazz revival scene. And unlike the very few venues that physically remain from that era, Fitzgeralds Nightclub continues to act as a music venue and nightclub featuring the types of music that could be heard at the Club Ritz and the Hunt Club.

The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

### Books

Berwyn Historical Society. *Stories of an Earlier Berwyn Revisited*. 2008.

Coller, Derek & Bert Whyatt. *Chicago Jazz: The Second Line*. Edinburgh: Hardinge Simpole, 2018.

De Koven Bowen, Louise. *The Public Dance Halls of Chicago*. Chicago: The Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago, 1917.

Deuchler, Douglas. *Images of America: Berwyn*. Great Britain: Arcadia Publishing, 2005.

Hoekstra, Dave. *The Supper Club Book: A Celebration of a Midwest Tradition*. Chicago: Chicago Press Review, 2013.

Kenney, William Howland. *Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History 1904-1930*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

### Directories

Illinois Bell Telephone Co. *Berwyn Telephone Directory*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley Corporation. Various dates

### Documentation

Chain of Title for Gustav Pudewa's Subdivision, Block 5, Lots 7, 8 and 9. Cook County, Illinois, Recorder of Deeds.

*The National Corporation Reporter*. 1908.

United States Federal Census. 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950.

### Newspapers/Periodicals

*Berwyn Life*. Berwyn, Illinois. Various dates

*Chicago Daily Tribune*. Chicago, Illinois. Various dates

*Chicago Herald and Examiner*. Chicago, Illinois. Various dates

*Chicago Reader*. Chicago, Illinois. Various dates

*DownBeat Magazine*. Chicago, Illinois. Various dates

*JazzBeat Magazine*. Jazzology Press. Various dates

*The Life*. Cicero and Berwyn, Illinois. Various dates

*Movienews Weekly*. Chicago, Illinois. Various dates.

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*Stickney Life and Forest View.* Berwyn, Illinois. Various dates

*Wednesday Journal.* Oak Park, Illinois. Various dates

**Reports/Studies**

Cohn, Peter. "Berwyn: 1910-30, A Case Study of Suburbanization During the Inter-War Years." Thesis for Bachelor of Arts Degree, Department of American History, University of Chicago, May 1978.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one

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

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

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

1	<u>41.86491</u>	<u>-87.78964</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

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

Lots 7, 8, and 9 of Block 5 of Gustav A. Pudewa's Subdivision in Berwyn, Illinois.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These three lots are the historic site parameters during the period of significance and include the historic building and its open site that was used as parking. The buildings on Lots 6 and 10 were incorporated into the complex after the period of significance and are physically separate structures.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Douglas E. Gilbert date 8/8/2024  
organization Douglas Gilbert Architect, Inc. telephone 708-660-1749  
street & number 220 S. Maple Ave, Unit 41 email dgilbertarchitect@att.net  
city or town Oak Park state IL zip code 60302

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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**Photographs:**

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

**Photo Log**

**Name of Property:** The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
**City or Vicinity:** Berwyn  
**County:** Cook **State:** Illinois  
**Photographer:** Douglas E. Gilbert  
**Date Photographed:** May 2024

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

- Photo 1 of 10: Exterior view of site looking southwest
- Photo 2 of 10: Exterior view of site looking southeast
- Photo 3 of 10: Exterior view of building looking southeast
- Photo 4 of 10: Interior view of stage, entry and bar looking northwest
- Photo 5 of 10: Interior view of main hall and stage looking north
- Photo 6 of 10: Interior view of bar looking southwest
- Photo 7 of 10: Interior view of main hall looking south from stage
- Photo 8 of 10: Interior view of main hall looking east
- Photo 9 of 10: Interior view of cypress walls and deer head on eastern wall
- Photo 10 of 10: Interior view of Green Room looking northeast

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Photo 1: Exterior view of site looking southwest



Photo 2: Exterior view of site looking southeast

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Photo 3: Exterior view of building looking southeast



Photo 4: Interior view of stage, entry and bar looking northwest

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Photo 5: Interior view of main hall and stage looking north



Photo 6: Interior view of bar looking southwest



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Photo 7: Interior view of main hall looking south from stage



Photo 8: Interior view of main hall looking east

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Photo 9: Interior view of cypress walls and deer head on eastern wall



Photo 10: Interior view of Green Room looking northeast

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### List of Figures

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

- Figure 1: 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. Volume 4, Sheet 5.  
Figure 2: 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. Volume 31.  
Figure 3: Advertisement for the grand opening of the Club Ritz in *Berwyn Life*. October 25, 1935.  
Figure 4: Advertisement for Club Ritz in *Movienews Weekly*. April 5, 1935. P 37.  
Figure 5: Advertisement for Ranucci's Night Spot in *The Life*. April 7, 1944. P 4.  
Figure 6: Advertisement for Club El Monaco in *The Life*. October 18, 1946. P 9.  
Figure 7: Advertisement for Richard Smith's Sea Food Restaurant in *The Life*. September 3, 1947. P 2.  
Figure 8: Advertisement for the grand opening of the Hunt Club in *Berwyn Life*. November 8, 1948.  
Figure 9: Advertisement for the Hunt Club in *Berwyn Life*. June 17, 1949.  
Figure 10: Advertisements for the Hunt Club and the Red Arrow in *Berwyn Life*. February 2, 1951.  
Figure 11: Advertisement for the Hunt Club in *Berwyn Life*. December 10, 1954.  
Figure 12: Photo of the Salty Dogs performing on stage at the Hunt Club, circa 1954-55. Courtesy of Fitzgeralds Nightclub.  
Figure 13: Advertisement for the Hunt Club in *Berwyn Life*. March 30, 1956.  
Figure 14: Advertisements for the Hunt Club and Red Arrow in *Berwyn Life*. September 15, 1961.  
Figure 15: Photo of the exterior of Deer Lodge, circa 1964. Courtesy of Fitzgeralds Nightclub.  
Figure 16: Advertisement for the grand opening of the Deer Lodge in *Berwyn Life*. September 9, 1962.  
Figure 17: Advertisements including for the Deer Lodge in *Berwyn Life*. October 5, 1962.  
Figure 18: Advertisement for the Hy-Ho Club in Cicero in *Berwyn Life*. June 14, 1935. P 28.  
Figure 19: Advertisements including the Club Ritz in *Movienews Weekly*. February 15, 1935. P 27.  
Figure 20: Advertisements for the Hunt Club and Mangam's Chateau in *Berwyn Life*. October 20, 1950. P 13.  
Figure 21: Advertisements for the Hunt Club and Red Arrow in *Berwyn Life*. February 26, 1954.

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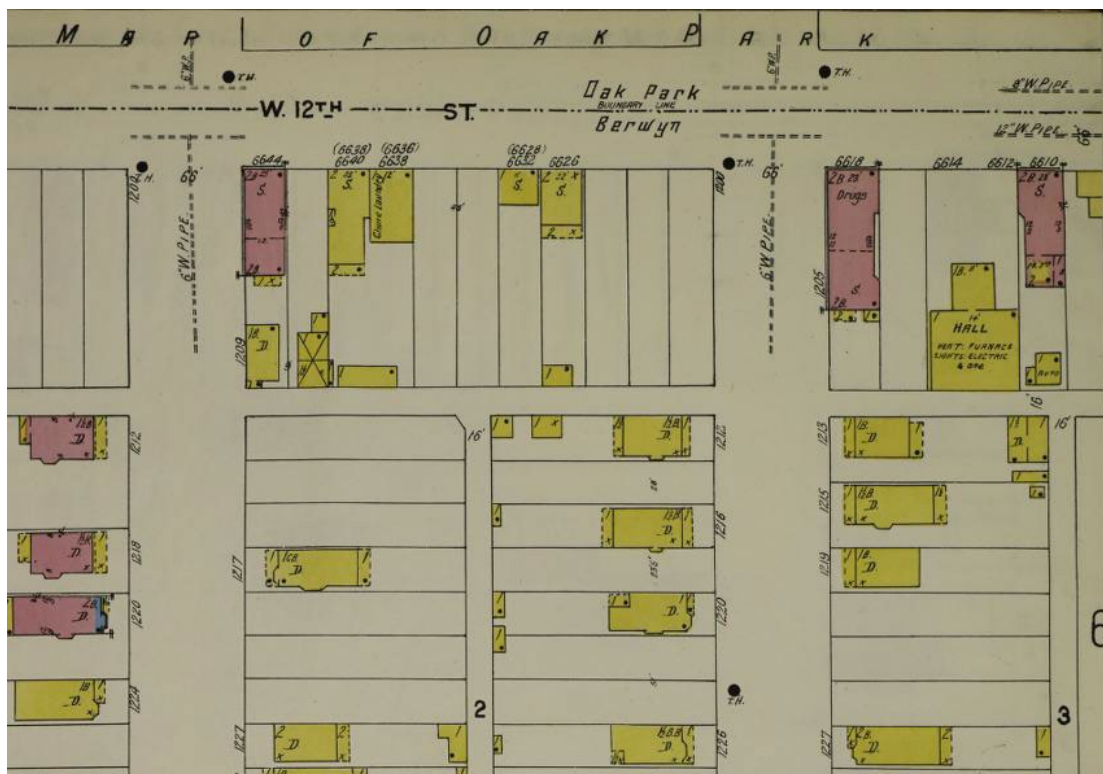


Figure 1: 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing "Hall" at 6612-14 West 12<sup>th</sup> St. Note that the address would later change to 6615 Roosevelt Rd. Both the masonry buildings on lots 6 and 10 have been constructed.

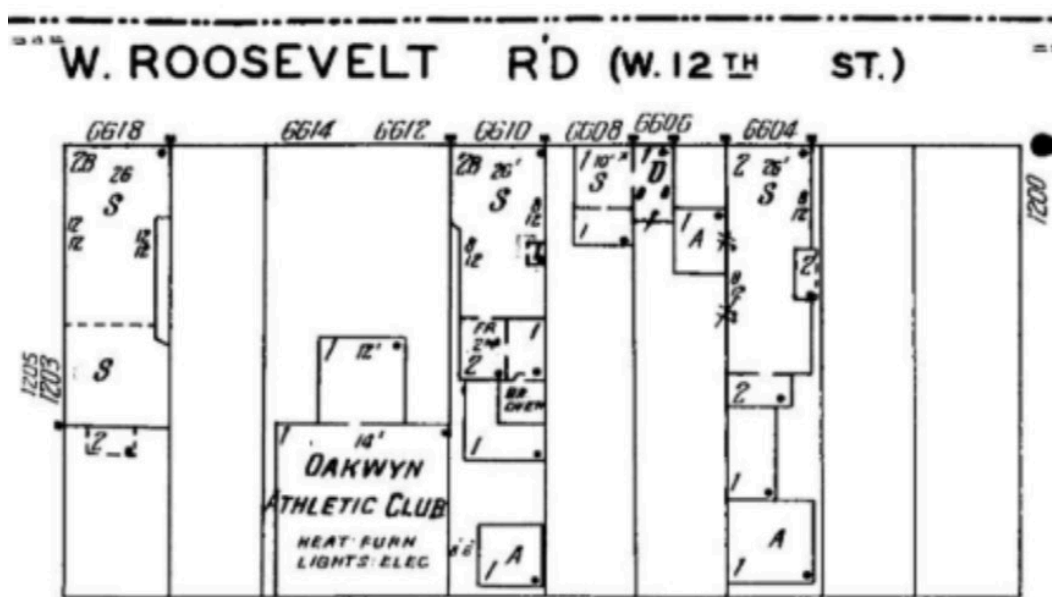


Figure 2: 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing "Oakwyn Athletic Club" at 6612-14 W. Roosevelt Rd. Note that the address now is 6615 Roosevelt Rd. The site and the east and west masonry buildings are fully developed as they would remain throughout the period of significance.

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Figure 3: Berwyn Life advertisement for the grand opening of Club Ritz in October 1933. Patrons could dance to the “gay tunes of Jack Lyon and his Club Ritz Orchestra” and stay until ??.



Figure 4: *MovieNews Weekly* advertisement for the “New Ritz” as the Club Ritz was advertising itself in March 1935. The ad featured a dancing couple and highlighted the “Royal Revue” with a “chorus of beautiful American girls.”

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**MAKE AN EARLY DATE!**  
FOR THIS WEEK END!

**FUN GALORE**  
★  
**NICE Surroundings**  
★  
**Delicious FOOD**  
★

**OUR SPECIALTY**  
**THE BEST STEAKS IN TOWN!**  
**SPAGHETTI — RAVIOLI**  
**ORCHESTRA — DANCING**  
You Can Have More Time for Fun By Coming Early!

**RANUCCI'S NIGHT SPOT**  
(FORMERLY LOU'S VILLA) — COMPLETELY REMODELED!  
NEW OWNER — NEW MANAGEMENT  
6615 ROOSEVELT RD. BERWYN 6772

Figure 5: *The Life* advertisement for the short-lived Ranucci's Night Spot in March 1944. The ad featured a glamorous girl on the phone making "an early date" and highlighted the menu, orchestra and dancing.

**CLUB EL MONACO**  
6615 ROOSEVELT RD.  
OPERATED BY ROMITO BROS.  
AND DI CARLO

CALL STANLEY 6772  
Dining Room Available Every Afternoon for  
● Weddings ● Club Gatherings  
● Banquets ● Anniversaries, Etc.

**GOOD FOOD**  
● Steaks ● Chicken Dinners  
● The Finest Mixed Drinks  
Free Convenient Parking in Our Lot!

**COCKTAIL HOUR** Every Afternoon  
From 4 P.M. to 6:30 P.M.

**Dancing! Entertainment!**  
Every Friday and Saturday Featuring  
Dancing With **FRANK'S RHYTHM AIRES**  
Also Fine Foods

Under New Ownership  
Since Sept. 26, 1946.

Figure 6: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the Club El-Monaco in October 1946. The ad featured dancing couples, good food and noted the new ownership.

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buzzing with activity.

**“Sea Food at It’s Best”**  
VISIT THE NEW  
**RICHARD SMITH’S  
SEA FOOD  
RESTAURANT**  
**6615 ROOSEVELT RD. — STANLEY 6903**



*Specializing  
In*

- GENUINE TURTLE SOUP
- FRIED PERCH DINNERS
- FRIED SMELT DINNERS
- BROILED LOBSTER TAILS
- FRENCH FRIED SHRIMP
- FRESH SHRIMP COCKTAIL
- SHRIMP DE JONGHE
- BROILED LOBSTER



*Bring the Entire Family  
for a delightful Dinner*

●

**OUR COCKTAIL BAR IS READY TO  
SERVE YOU YOUR FAVORITE  
DRINK**

We Cater to Banquets, Lodge Meetings, Sororities, Weddings, etc.  
**Call STANLEY 6903 for Reservations**

Figure 7: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for Richard Smith’s Sea Food Restaurant from September 1947. The ad featured an image of a fine lobster dinner and a table of happy customers eating. It lists all of the special foods offered.

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Figure 8: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the grand opening of the Hunt Club in November 1948.



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**JAZZ RETURNS  
TO THE WEST SIDE**

**CHET  
ROBLES  
BARE-  
FOOT  
BUNCH**

**JAZZ CONCERT**

- Chet Robles—Piano
- Floyd O'Brien—Trombone
- Bud Jacobson—Clarinet
- Sammy Aron—Bass
- Jack Ivett—Trumpet
- Johnnie Holmgren—Tenor Sax
- Eddie Musial—Drums

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON  
June 19 — 4 Till 7 P.M.**

**Admission \$1.25 Per Person**  
For Reservations Phone Gun. 9803  
or Hank at Est. 8-2012.

**THE HUNT CLUB**  
**6615 W. ROOSEVELT RD.**

Figure 9: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the Hunt Club in June 1949 touting the return of jazz to the west side. The ad features an image of jazz musicians and lists the performers in Chet Robles Barefoot Bunch.

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**GRAND OPENING**  
**FRI.-SAT.-SUN.-FEB. 2-3-4**

**BOB WEST AT THE ORGAN**  
MUSIC BY ART GIBSONS ORCHESTRA  
**VENISON LUNCH SERVED**  
DURING GRAND OPENING DAYS

WEST TOWN'S NEWEST & FINEST BRITE SPOT  
**STEAKS - CHOPS - CHICKEN**  
**ROCKY'S SPECIAL PIZZA**  
Restaurant is Personally Supervised by Rocky, Famed Chef

**RED ARROW LOUNGE & RESTAURANT**  
6927 PERSHING RD.-STICKNEY-GU. 4-9670  
OTTO J. AND NINA KUBIK, PROPS.

**SIDE SPLITTING - HILLARIOUS**  
**BILL LE PINE & HIS ORCHESTRA**  
Featuring  
**COMEDY OF THE 5 PHONIACS**  
Every Fri. & Sat. Night

**SOUTHERN FOOD**  
Prepared the way you like it by Paul, the chef with 20 years experience in the South.  
**CHICKEN IN THE BASKET-SOUTHERN BAR-B-Q**  
**RIBS-STEAKS-LOBSTER TAIL-SHRIMPS**  
FINE LIQUERS  
ORDERS TO TAKE OUT

The Original Crazy Auction  
Every Thursday Night

**HUNT CLUB**  
**COCKTAIL LOUNGE & RESTAURANT**  
6615 W. Roosevelt GU. 4-9670  
MARTIN (Marty) Hetzel, Prop.

Figure 10: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the Hunt Club and its competitor, the Red Arrow, in February 1951. Otto Kubik had recently sold the Hunt Club to Martin Hetzel but neither club had yet fully established itself in jazz music.

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Figure 11: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the Hunt Club in December 1954, featuring one of the regular appearances by The Salty Dogs.



Figure 12: The Salty Dogs performing on stage at the Hunt Club circa 1954 or '55. The Salty Dogs were a regional Dixieland Jazz revival band popular in the 1950s. The 1950s era stage is visible, covered in cypress paneling with hunting rifles and stuffed game providing a Northwoods atmosphere. Courtesy of FitzGerald's Nightclub.

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**IN PERSON**

the  
**GEORGE LEWIS  
RAGTIME BAND**  
DIRECT FROM  
NEW ORLEANS

**COMING!**  
One of New Orleans' All-Time  
Greats in the Dixie Jazz Field.  
**MARCH 30-31**  
**9 TILL CLOSING!**  
**EASTER SUNDAY**  
April 1 — 6 to 11:30  
**SPECIAL**  
Wed., April 4 and Thurs., April 5  
**MARDI GRAS  
PARTY**  
Hats, Leis, Balloons, Noisemakers.  
These last two nites will be some-  
thing to remember!  
**THE  
HUNT CLUB**  
COCKTAIL LOUNGE  
AND RESTAURANT  
**6615 ROOSEVELT ROAD**  
BERWYN, ILLINOIS  
Call for Reservations if You Like  
During the Day After 5 P.M.  
GU. 4-9413 GU. 4-9803

Figure 13: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the Hunt Club in March 1956, featuring the George Lewis Ragtime Band as the headliner for a Mardi Gras celebration. George Lewis was one of the original New Orleans Black jazz musicians from the 1920s and played gigs all across the nation.

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**HYNOTIST EXTRAORDINARY**  
**MICHAEL KAY**  
SEEING IS BELIEVING  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY — AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION  
**BETTY TURNER**  
Illinois' Famous Psychic Rendering Private Readings  
P.M. EVERY FRIDAY, SATURDAY, WEDNESDAY  
Bob Marcy's Rhythm R's FRI. & SAT. NITES  
**THE HUNT CLUB** COCKTAIL LOUNGE AND RESTAURANT  
SERVING GOOD FOOD 6:00 P.M. ON—CLOSED MONDAY  
6615 Roosevelt — Berwyn — GU 4-9803

**Friday Night**  
**"GOLD COAST BAND"**  
with  
Al Wynn Lill Armstrong  
Booker T Washington

**SATURDAY NIGHT**  
**Franz Jackson &**  
**The Jass All Stars**

— FREE PARKING —



**RED ARROW** JAZZ CLUB  
6929 W. PERSHING RD.  
3 Blocks East of Harlem on 39th St.  
Stickney, Ill. GUnderson 4-9670

Figure 14: *Berwyn Life* advertisements for the Hunt Club and its competitor the Red Arrow in September 1961. By this time, the acts featured at the Hunt Club had mostly devolved into hypnotists and psychic readings while the Red Arrow continued with quality jazz acts, including Black performers like Al Wynn, Lill Armstrong and Franz Jackson.

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Figure 15: Circa 1964 photo of the Deer Lodge, the oldest exterior view of the building. Courtesy of FitzGerald's Nightclub.



Figure 16: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the September 1962 grand opening of the Deer Lodge. It promoted a smorgasbord along with the music of the John Monti Trio, but was much more restrained than the ads for the opening of the Hunt Club had been.

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**BLANCHE & JACK'S 2333 CLUB**  
2333 S. Central Ave. Cicero, Ill.  
Now Beginning This Week - MUSIC  
EVERY SUNDAY 5 to 10 P.M.  
POLKA MUSIC  
FRIDAY: JOE KOVICH, JIM-TONY ON THE DRUMS  
SATURDAY: JOLLY, RAVENS

**Pub**  
Liquids And Solids  
For Beefeaters  
126 S. WELLS Ample Parking  
Phone 333-7407  
Open Daily 11 a.m. 'til—Closed Sundays  
Your Host Arthur Lieberman

**HILLSIDE COUNTRY CLUB**  
OPEN YEAR AROUND  
HILLSIDE, ILL.  
(Entrance 1/2 Mile West of Mannheim on Roosevelt)  
CHICKEN FRY EVERY SUNDAY FOR THE FAMILY SPECIAL FAMILY PRICES  
FISH FRY PLUS DANCING FRIDAYS ALL YOU CAN EAT \$1  
SPAGHETTI DINNER WEDNESDAY All you can eat \$1.50  
WE CATER TO WEDDINGS, BANQUETS, MEETINGS, GOLF OUTINGS, ETC.  
RESERVATIONS TAKEN  
LI 4-4318

**THE ALAMO**  
The Suburb's Newest Cocktail Lounge  
8030 Ogden, Lyons  
NOW NIGHTLY THE-PEP TONES  
Come in and Enjoy Yourself

**BROASTED CHICKEN** FAMILY SPECIAL  
10 Pieces only 2<sup>50</sup>  
LARGER SPECIALS ALSO AVAILABLE  
1/2 BROASTED CHICKEN DINNER ONLY 1.50  
**FOUNTAIN INN**  
5801 W. 16th St. Phone: TO 3-9116

**BRING YOUR DEAR**  
To The New **DEER LODGE**  
(Formerly Hunt Club)  
6613-15 W. Roosevelt Rd.  
AIR CONDITIONED  
FRI. & SAT.  
ENTERTAINMENT BY THE JESTERS  
SUPER-DUPER SANDWICHES!  
LOU KUBIK your hostess

Figure 17: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the Deer Lodge in October 1962. Unlike the Hunt Club before it, and the Red Arrow, which had been operated by the Kubiks, the Deer Lodge advertising and musical acts were fairly low key. Of note, the ad references the Hunt Club, a nod to its regard in the community, and that Lou Kubik is the hostess, not Otto.

**Cicero's Swankiest Night Club**  
**CLUB HY-HO**  
2242 S. CICERO AVE  
Phone: CICERO 4380.  
100-FT. BAR  
Popular Prices  
RALPH COLLINS  
Ceremonial Master of the Bar Revue  
A NEW BAND  
**JIMMIE MELODY**  
AND HIS BLUE MINORS  
MILDRED MORAN—Songs  
**5 ALL STAR 5**  
STAGE ACTS  
No Minimum—No Cover Charge

Figure 18: *Berwyn Life* advertisement for the Hy-Ho Club in Cicero. The Hy-Ho was one of the competitors to the Club Ritz and often had a more risqué atmosphere, as shown with the glamorous naked woman.

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**Bill Jourdan** And His Ambassadors  
 DANCING TO  
 Held Over by Demand!  
**NEW ALL STAR COLORED REVUE!**  
 WITH GIRL CHORUS  
 Featuring RUBY MASON  
 FASTEST—NEWEST—BIGGEST  
 Show on the South Side  
**3—Shows Nitely—3**  
 We Specialize in Delicious  
 Steak Dinners . . . . 65c  
 Chicken Dinners . . . 60c  
 JUST DIFFERENT

**The HARLEM STABLES**  
 4301 HARLEM AVE. DINE  
 2 Bl. No. Irving Pl. DANCE  
 4 Floor Shows Sat. & Sun. Night

**CASINO 913 East 63 RD.**  
**40¢ MODERNE**  
 PERSON  
**EDDIE NEIBAUR** and his ORCHESTRA  
 DANCING—TUES. THURS. SAT. SUN.

**VON THENEN'S LAKEVIEW 1156**  
 Roscoe and Western Avenues (3400 North)  
**2 FEATURE DANCERS 2**  
 COLLEEN AND BARBARA ALLEN  
 RAY WENCIL, M. C.—Any Many Others  
 Monday Nite—Celebrity Breakfast Show (4 a. m. Tues.)  
**BROMBERG'S ORCHESTRA**

THE WESTERN SUN. 4318  
**BOWERY**  
 4742 N. Western Ave.  
 BOB WYATT, M. C.  
 Presents  
 Dancing and 3 Floor Shows  
 Every Nite with Music of  
**Don PENFIELD Orch.**  
 —5th Big Week—  
**BOWERY DARLINGS  
 REVUE**  
 8—People—8  
**COMPLETE CHANGE**  
 Acts—Songs—Costumes

**CLUB RITZ**  
 6613 ROOSEVELT RD.  
 Now Open—Under New  
 Management  
**3--SHOWS NITELY--3**  
 WITH—  
**Rudy Garr** and His Tick Tock  
 Foursome  
**JOE FORD, M.C.**  
**JUMEZ & HELLER**  
 Dance Team  
**LADDY & DOLEROS**  
 Singing and Accordion  
**LORA LEE**, Versatile Dancer  
 Emily Faust, Kate Smith of Berwyn  
 MAE A. WELDT, Manager

**CLUB RICKFORD** NO COVER or MINIMUM  
 5017 W. Cermak (22nd Street)  
 FLOOR SHOWS  
**3 EVERY SAT. NIGHT 3**  
 Dancing to  
**George Getto  
 And His Music**  
 Good Food  
 and  
 Popular Priced  
 Mixed Drinks  
 Cicero 3967

**GAYETY** Albany 9582  
**VILLAGE**  
 4035 FULLERTON  
 Gay Spot of the Northwest Side  
**3 SHOWS NITELY 3**  
 Featuring  
**JOE HARMON**  
 Master of Ceremonies  
**SALLY KEITH**  
 World's Fair Star  
**TEDDY BARR**  
 Oriental Dancer  
**AND OTHER ACTS**  
 Dancing to  
**CURLY COLLINS  
 ORCHESTRA**  
 Chas. J. Rederer, Mgr.

Figure 19: *Movienews Weekly* advertisements for Chicago-area nightclubs from February 1935. The Club Rickford was the only other near-west suburban club to be regularly featured. Most feature dining and dancing and various types of music and floor shows.



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**ORDERS TO TAKE HOME**  
THE FINEST IN THE LAND  
**CHICKEN-IN-BASKET—BAR-B-Q RIBS**  
**FRENCH FRIED SHRIMP**

Reservations for Parties, Weddings, Banquets, Etc.

**HUNT CLUB COCKTAIL LOUNGE**  
6613-15 Roosevelt Road Phone GU. 4-9803  
Kubik & Hetzel

**Mangam's Chateau**

**NEW SHOW**

- **JACKIE LeMAIR**  
Master of Ceremonies
- **DICK DUANE**  
Direct from Hollywood
- **ROGERS & SCOTT**  
Dance Team
- **JOAN MEHAFFEY**  
Song Sensation
- **THE BEAUTIFUL LINDSAY DANCERS**  
Direct From Beverly Hills Country Club  
With 4 New Dance Numbers
- **GEORGE SANDERS**  
And His Orchestra

DINE IN LUXURY  
in the  
**NEW CRYSTAL ROOM**  
**CHAT ROOM**  
No 20% Entertainment Tax  
in These Two Rooms

**7850 W. Ogden Ave. Lyons 3-4900**

Figure 20: *Berwyn Life* advertisements in October 1950 for the Hunt Club cocktail lounge and Mangam's Chateau supper club. Although both initially advertised for banquets and weddings, it was Mangam's that had the space for such large events. Mangam's highlighted its luxurious dining in the Crystal Room while the Hunt Club offered fare like chicken-in-basket. This ad is prior to the Hunt Club focusing its entertainment on jazz.

The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
Name of Property

Cook, Illinois  
County and State

**THE FAMOUS  
GEO. LEWIS JAZZ BAND**  
Direct from New Orleans, La.  
Appearing Once, Sunday Afternoon.  
February 28, 1954, 4 to 9 P.M.  
AT THE  
**HUNT CLUB COCKTAIL LOUNGE**  
6613-15 Roosevelt Rd., Berwyn  
Entree By Reservation Only  
Hunt Club - GUnderson 4-9803  
Hank Mogner - EStebrook 8-2012

Band has appeared at:  
HANG OVER CLUB—San Francisco  
JAZZ FESTIVAL—Los Angeles, Calif.  
1111 JAZZ CLUB—Chicago  
STYVESANT CASINO—New York  
TOWN HALL—New York  
JAZZ FOUNDATION—New Orleans  
CLUB MOROCCO—New Orleans

Tune in on Radio Station WTAQ (1300)  
SAT. 4 to 5 P.M.  
Good Food—Fine Liquors—Entertainment Every Night  
MARTIN & ROSE HETZEL, Props.  
Closed on Monday

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**DIXIELAND  
JAZZ CONCERT**  
Back again by popular request  
**SID DAWSON and his  
RIVER BOAT RAMBLERS**  
NO MINIMUM • NO COVER • NO RESERVATIONS  
SPECIAL COCKTAILS 4 TO 7 EVERY AFTERNOON

The Hottest Dixieland Music  
In Cook County—Don't Miss It!  
**EVERY FRI. & SAT.**

**RED ARROW**  
6929 Pershing Rd. GU. 4-9670  
3 Blocks East of Harlem on 38th St.

Figure 21: *Berwyn Life* advertisement from February 1954 showing both the Hunt Club and the Red Arrow. At the Hunt Club is George Lewis from New Orleans, which requires a reservation but will be broadcast live on WTAQ. The Red Arrow has Sid Dawson and his River Boat Ramblers. No other west-suburban venue regularly featured jazz of this caliber, and bands would often appear at both clubs.

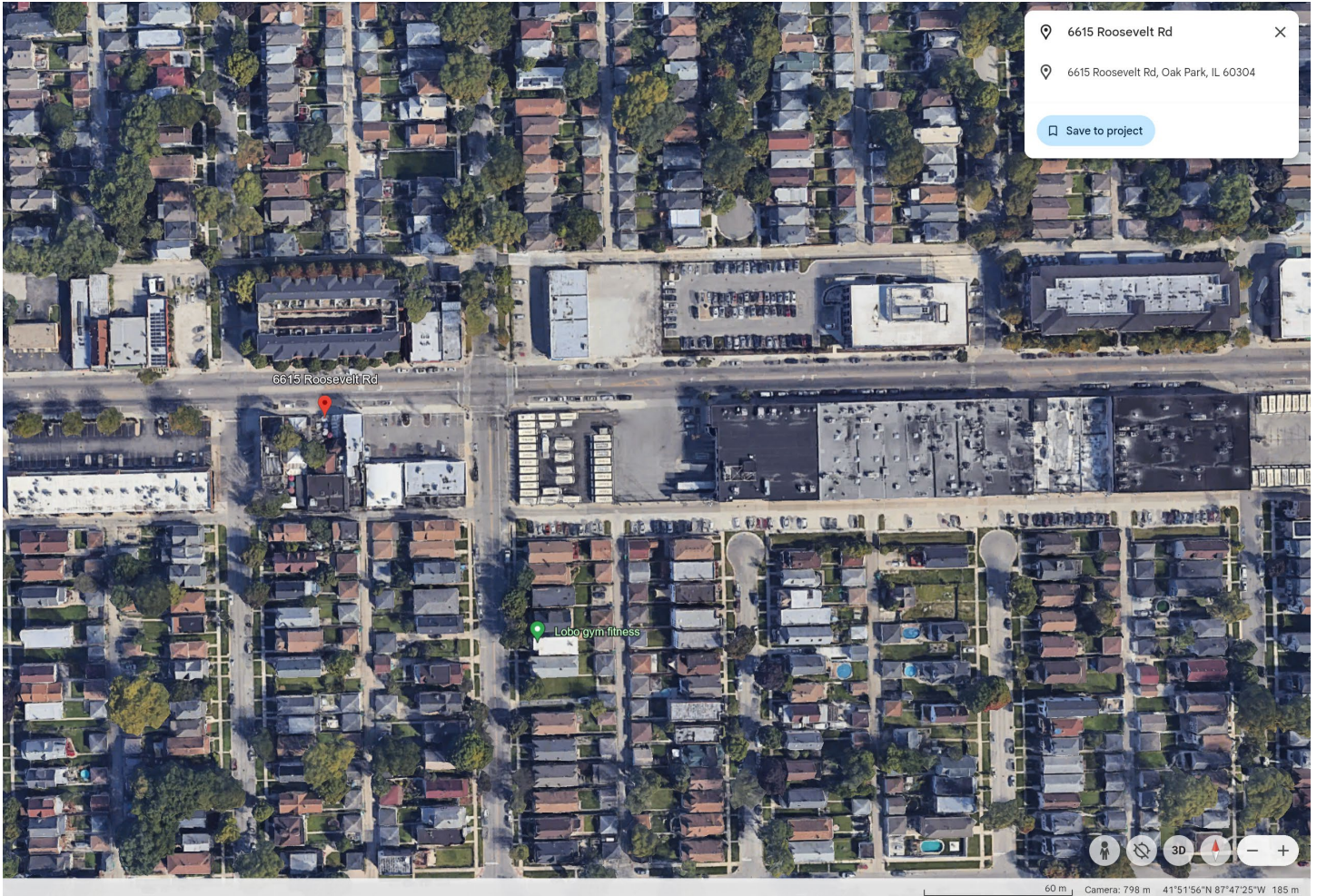
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
Name of Property

Cook, Illinois  
County and State

**GIS Location Map**



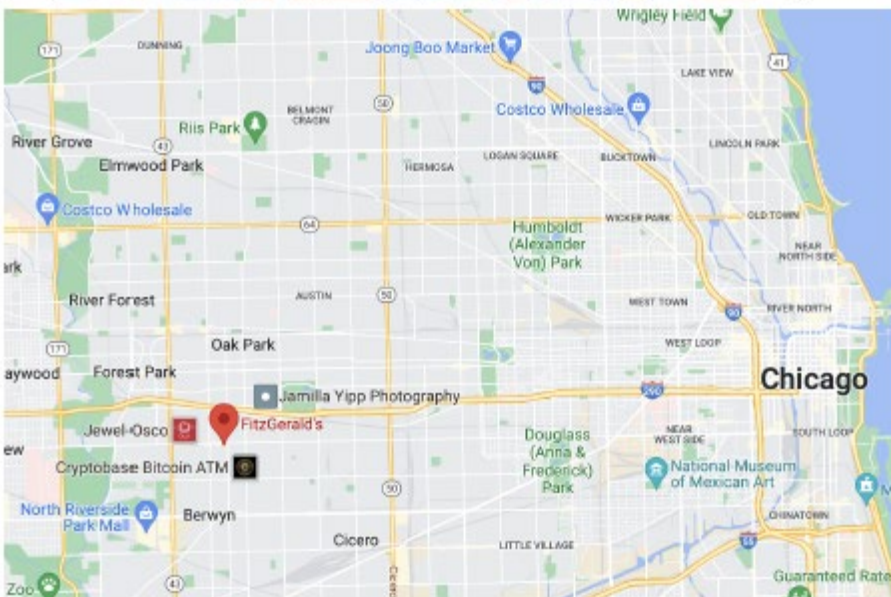
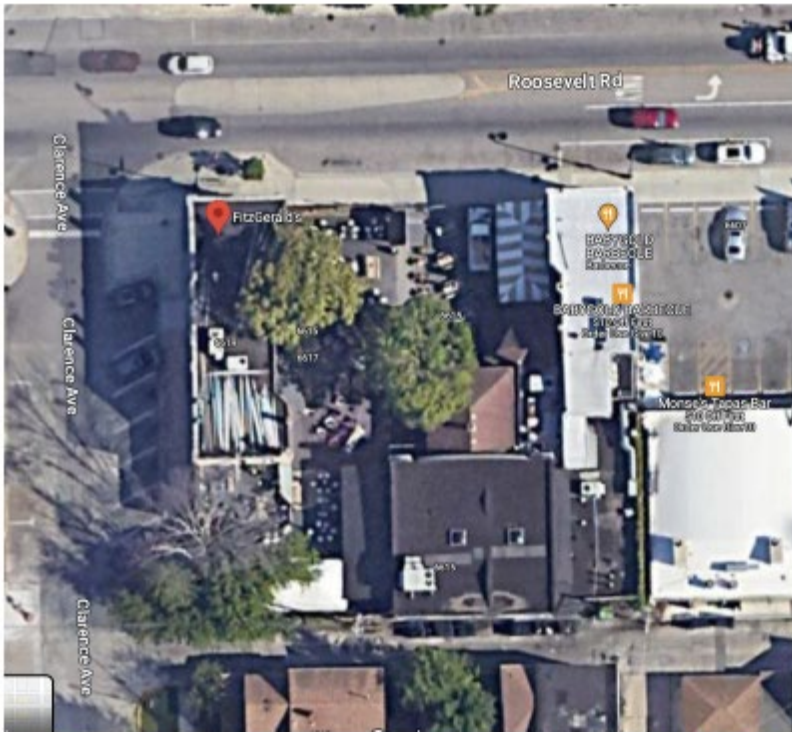
The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
Berwyn  
Cook County, Illinois

Latitude: 41.86491  
Longitude: -87.78964

The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
Name of Property

Cook, Illinois  
County and State

**Local Location Map**



The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
Name of Property

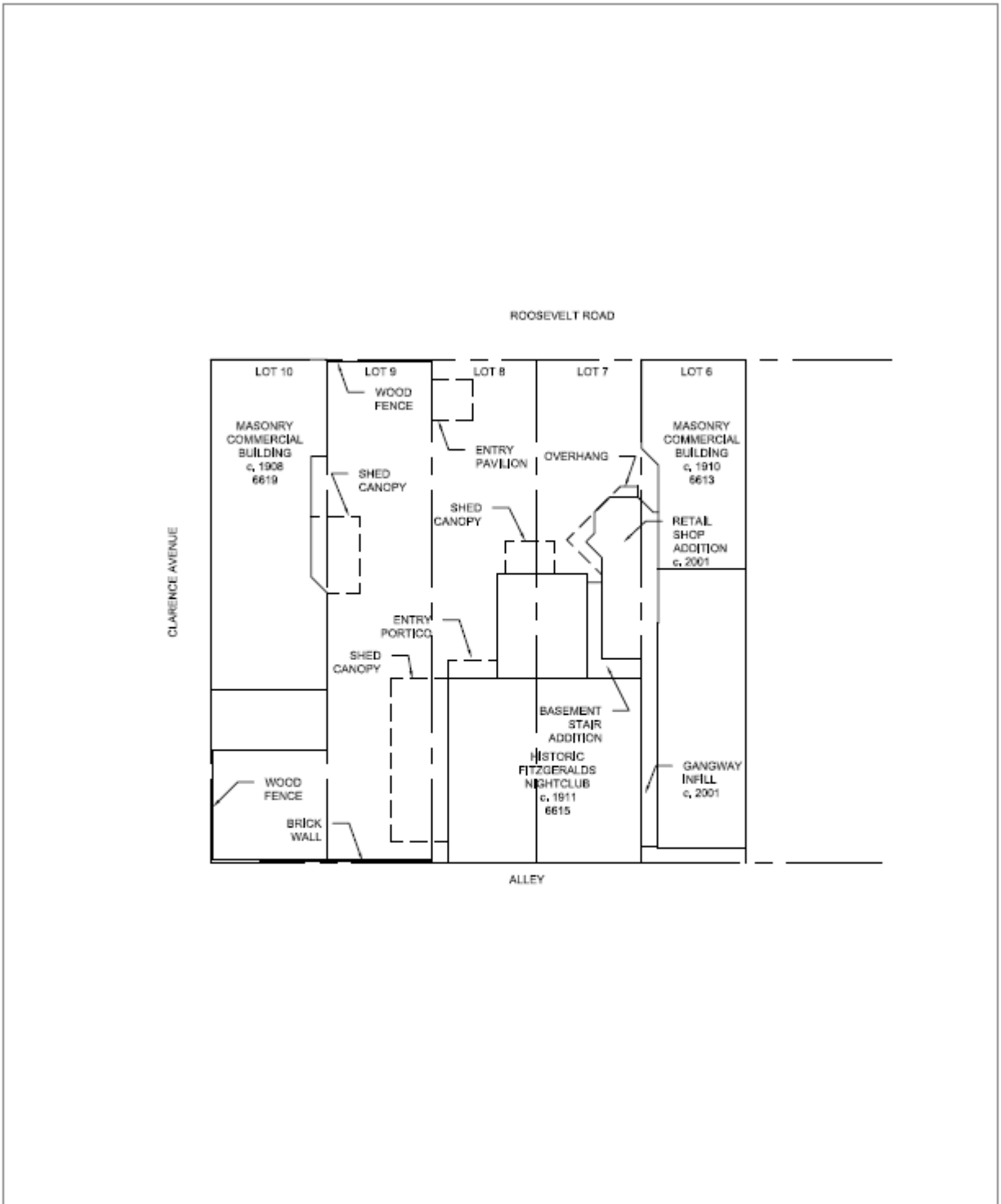
Cook, Illinois  
County and State



The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
Name of Property

Cook, Illinois  
County and State

**Site Plan**



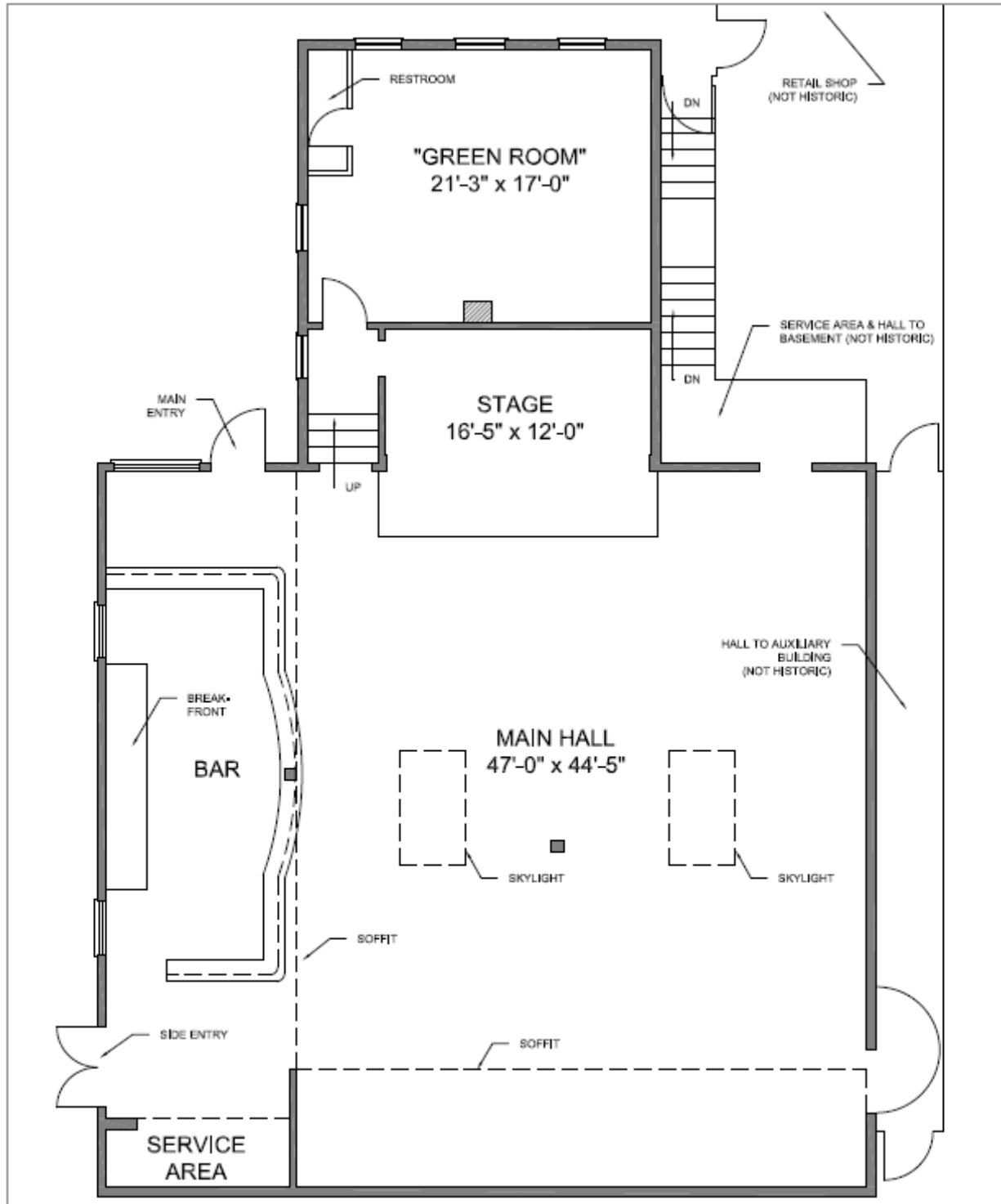
**FITZGERALDS NIGHTCLUB  
SITE PLAN**  
APPROX. 1/32" = 1'-0"



The Hunt Club (aka Fitzgeralds Nightclub)  
Name of Property

Cook, Illinois  
County and State

**Floor Plan**



**FITZGERALDS NIGHTCLUB  
FLOOR PLAN**

1/8" = 1'-0"

