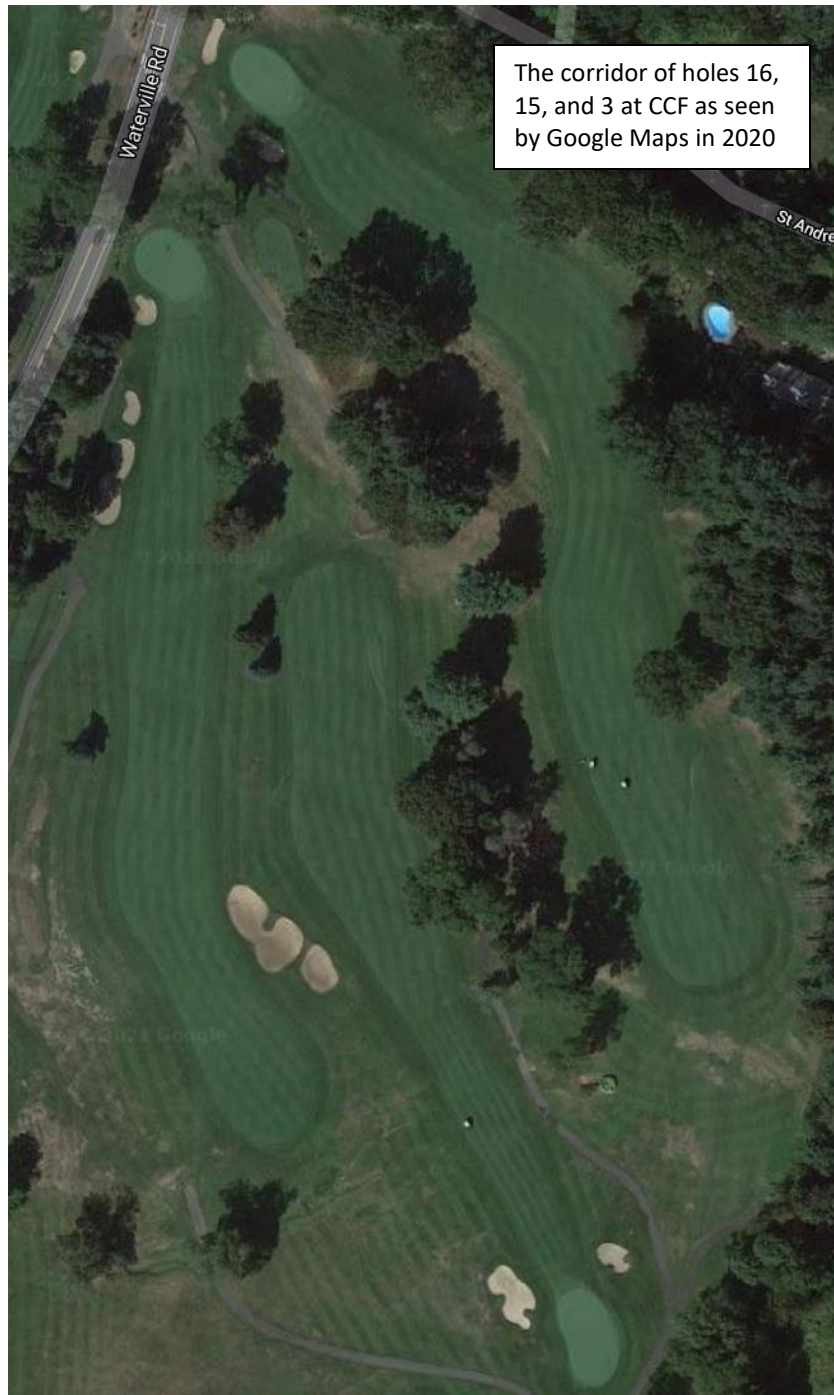


CCF Historical and Architectural Series Volume 14

By Geoffrey L. Manton

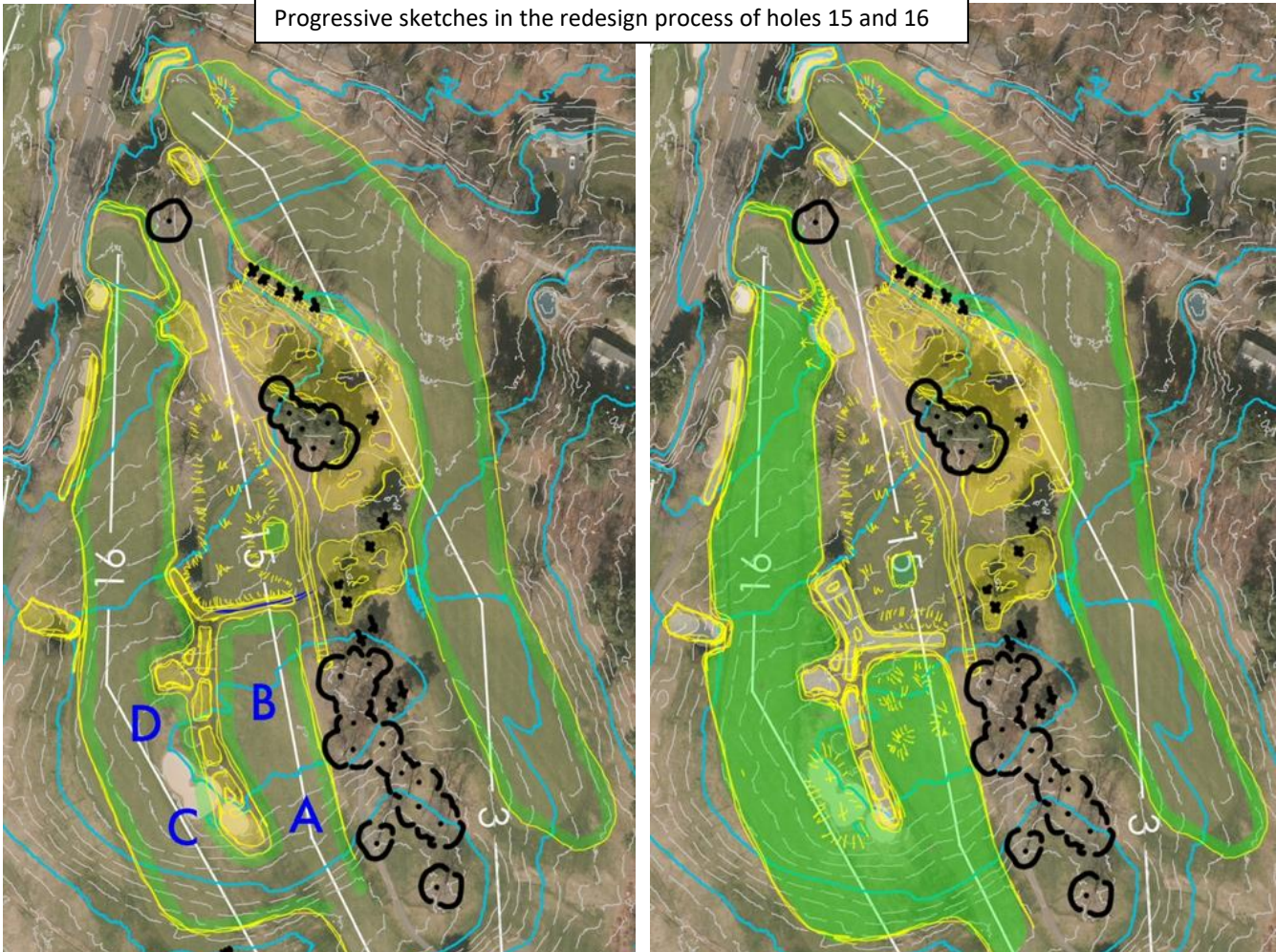
Farmington, we have a problem. It's old news that modern equipment has presented a challenge for golf courses, particularly those built in the classic era. Oversized drivers and an ever-improving golf ball have miniaturized golf holes and neutralized the intent of many of their architectural features. As a result, many of the golden age gems have become obsolete for the professional game and others are constantly challenged to modify their designs to maintain relevance - relocating bunkers and moving back tee boxes. Although we don't host the PGA Tour or major championships, the distance race has had an impact on the course at The Country Club of Farmington. The evidence of this is on greatest display through the corridor of our 3rd, 15th, and 16th holes.

While the impact of the wolf pit on the average length hitting golfer on our 3rd hole is similar to Devereux Emmet's intended design, the longer hitter rarely sees



this distinctive feature as a hazard that will alter their route of play; they simply sail their second shot over it without much thought. Contrastingly, the juxtaposition of the 15th hole inside the dogleg of the 16th hole in the modern era creates a safety situation that affects all players - a situation that has been magnified recently with Mother Nature's removal of trees between these two holes. With these concerns in mind, the Green Committee tasked Dusenberry Design with the challenge of exploring a solution. The resulting proposal is an eloquent answer to the question, solving the problems while adhering to strategic design principles that are reflective of Devereux Emmet's ethos.

Progressive sketches in the redesign process of holes 15 and 16



Conservative tee shots on #15 will find area [B] while the aggressive tee shot landing in area [A] will kick down the slope closer to the green. New teeing grounds on #15 would allow more players the opportunity to reach area [A].

The average player reaches landing area [C] off the tee on hole 16. Shifting and reshaping of bunkering in that region would create a wider fairway and a more inviting target making the 16th hole more playable. Long ball hitters on #16 will have to contend with a restored near side bunker in landing area [D] as well as a restored far side bunker that will greet tee shots kicking off the downslope. Bunkering and native areas between 15/16 and a restored right greenside bunker and kicker slope will all help deter intentional play down the 15th fairway from the 16th tee.

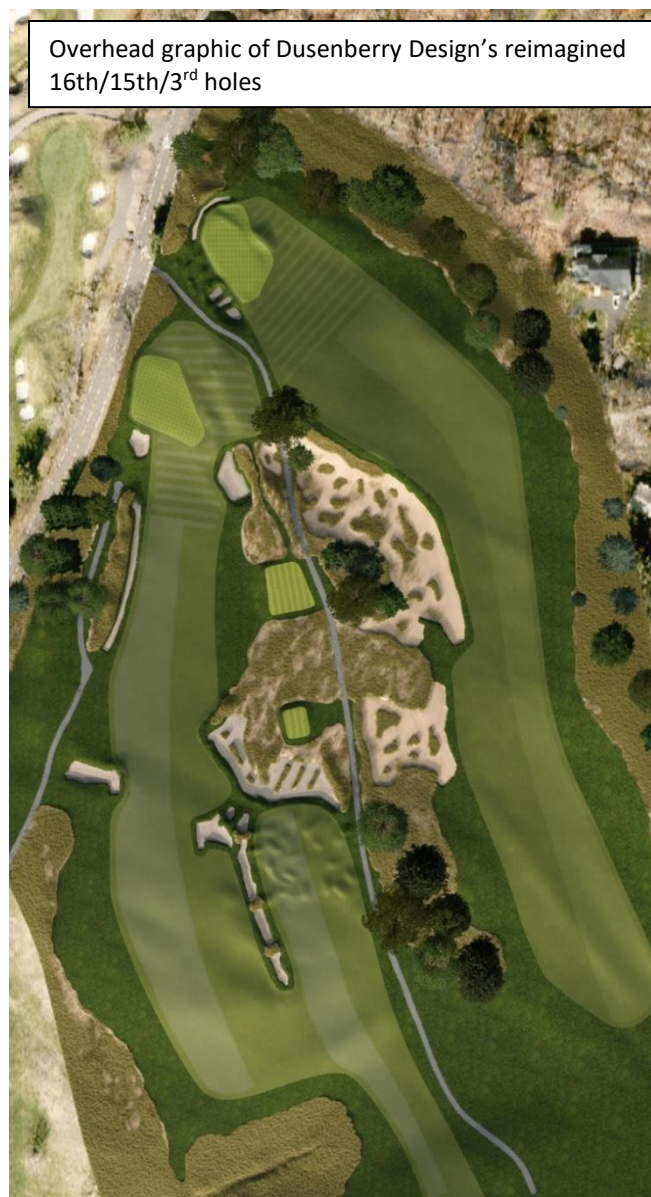
When the massive sentinel oak developed a large crack at the base of its split trunk over the winter of 2016/2017, liability issues necessitated its removal. The



Fateful crack through the 16th hole's sentinel oak

subsequent absence of this vertical deterrent to "cutting the corner" on 16 created a temptation for aggressive target lines and mighty lashes off

the tee. As often occurs for right-handed players, slicing golf balls encroaching on the 15th fairway have become commonplace. As the other aging trees between 15 and 16 are meeting their demise, golfers who have missed their 16th tee shot right have discovered shorter, unimpeded approaches to the green. This alternative approach is so inviting that some of our younger, longer players have taken to unabashedly aiming down the east side of the 15th fairway from the 16th tee box on a routine basis. To combat this player safety issue and strategic shortcut, Dusenberry's plan calls for the creation of a large sandy/native area at what's now the north end of the 15th fairway. This hazard is positioned such that it will gobble up rightward flying long hitting 16th tee shots yet be located near enough to the 15th tee that players on that hole do not encounter too much of a forced carry. To help ensure this new waste area does not punish the shorter hitter off 15 tee, this plan



Overhead graphic of Dusenberry Design's reimagined 16th/15th/3rd holes



Rightward tees shots from 16 would kick down the slope into a new hazard

calls for new forward and middle tee boxes. These new tees would also make #15 a hole that plays more equitably for golfers of all abilities.



Concept image of new middle and forward tee boxes on #15 to make the hole playable for all abilities

This newly created waste area would not be confined to the 15th hole. In order to enhance the strategy of the 3rd hole, this waste area would expand eastward to the left edge of the 3rd fairway. In essence, the extent of this feature would be an expansion of the wolf pit, moving its southern edge closer to the 3rd tee box. The presence of a sandy and native feature in the left rough on #3 would place more emphasis on a well-positioned tee shot for the longer player without unduly penalizing the shorter hitter. The result would recapture more of the risk/reward element of this par 5, for both the tee shot and the ensuing play.



Demonstration of the extent of the proposed expansion of a sandy/native area from #15 to #3



New view of the 3rd hole from the tee box



The Wolf Pit on the 3rd hole in 1934...a sandy hazard

The 1934 aerial proves that the wolf pit was once an enormous sandy bunker; an intimidating feature that commanded attention. An absence of trees at the back ridge of the wolf pit invited players to take an aggressive line to the green. A combination of tree management and enhancing green side features would strengthen the strategic design of this hole - rewarding those who execute the proper shot, and frustrating those after poorly executing an aggressive play.



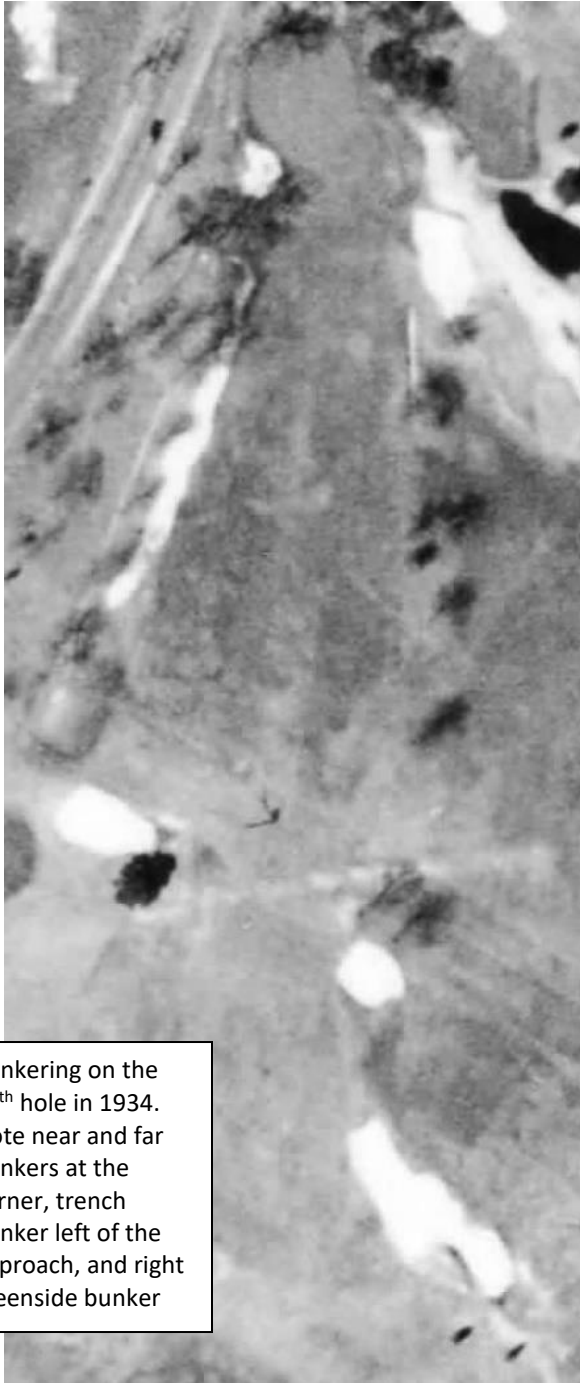
Demonstrations of restored views of The Wolf Pit



3rd greenside enhancements



The 1934 aerial photograph of the golf course demonstrates a bunker located just inside the corner of the dogleg on the 16th hole. This bunker was in the approximate position of the recently lost sentinel oak. Dusenberry's design calls for restoration of this bunker to help protect the intended line of play. Although blind from the tee box, this bunker would swallow poorly struck tee shots attempting to carry the corner. Likewise, this old photograph, and the grassy depression that exists next to the lone cedar tree today, demonstrate there once was a bunker on far end of the fairway at the corner of the dogleg.



Bunkering on the 16th hole in 1934. Note near and far bunkers at the corner, trench bunker left of the approach, and right greenside bunker



Proposed changes include restoration of several of the bunkers present in 1934. Also note fairway replacing much of the current bunkering in the landing area

Computer generated image of the wider landing area for #16 and the hazards that would deter shortcuts down #15



The restoration of this far bunker would greet well struck aggressive tee shots that are slightly offline. To further encourage 16th tee shots played on the intended line, the proposed plan illustrates a string of narrow bunkers replacing the cavernous bunker complex that currently dominates the landing area on #16. Narrowing these bunkers will widen the fairway at this location, not only rewarding the average player who takes the inside line but doing so creates a more inviting visual target of short grass when lining up one's tee shot instead of the intimidating bunkers that current exist.



Bird's eye view of the reimagined 15th and 16th hole corridor

The use of bunkers to separate closely approximated golf holes is exemplified no better than at St. George's G&CC on Long Island. Some of the holes here are so closely intertwined that a shared fairway sprinkler marker commonly displays yardages to more than one hole.

Often narrow and laid out in a string-like fashion, these bunkers frame the intended line of play, capture errant shots, and serve as judge and jury for the quality of an aggressive stroke. St. George's also employs expansive native areas to separate holes, create strategy, and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the long views across the wonderful landscape on which this course resides. Notably, these vistas were made possible by an aggressive tree management program that was recently undertaken to undo the decades of ill-conceived tree planting, thereby restoring original feel of this 104-year-old golf course. The spectacular ground features and design of St. George's shine in the limelight as a result.

Note the many connected fairways and interposed bunkers at St. George's Golf and Country Club, East Setauket, NY



The Green Committee, our golf course superintendent, and consulting architect all agree that The Country Club of Farmington has the potential to greatly enhance the features that make it unique. Embarking on a restoration/renovation project involving the 15th, 16th, & 3rd hole corridor would not only resolve some of problems brought on by modern golf equipment, but it would also create a golf experience unlike any other in the Farmington Valley; an aesthetic similar to some of the most talked about golf courses in the country.



Beautiful display of sandy/native areas on the 1st hole at Devereux Emmet's & Walter Travis's Garden City Golf Club (Garden City, NY) *photo credit: LinksGems*

We hope you enjoy gazing upon these computer-generated images of what could be as much as we do. With the right resources put into action, daydreams can become reality.

*(Up next: First Impressions
Followed by: Elimination of Emmet at CCF.)*



View of #15 and #16 from the area of the 3rd green.

All volumes of the Historical and Architectural Series are posted on CCF's website.

https://farmingtoncountryclub.com/ClubHistory/CCF_Historical_Series



Cross view of the 16th green and approach



Please consider investing in our golf course by making a monthly pledge to the 1892 Fund. The Green Committee recommends a \$50 monthly contribution, but any amount (greater or lesser) would be appreciated.