

NHL

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Boat House Row

and or common

2. Location

street & number 1-15 East River Drive not for publication

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code county Philadelphia code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public (land)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private (buildings)	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Recreation

4. Owner of Property

(rowing, skating,
and social clubs)

name See continuation sheet

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City of Philadelphia, Office of Recorder of Deeds

street & number City Hall

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

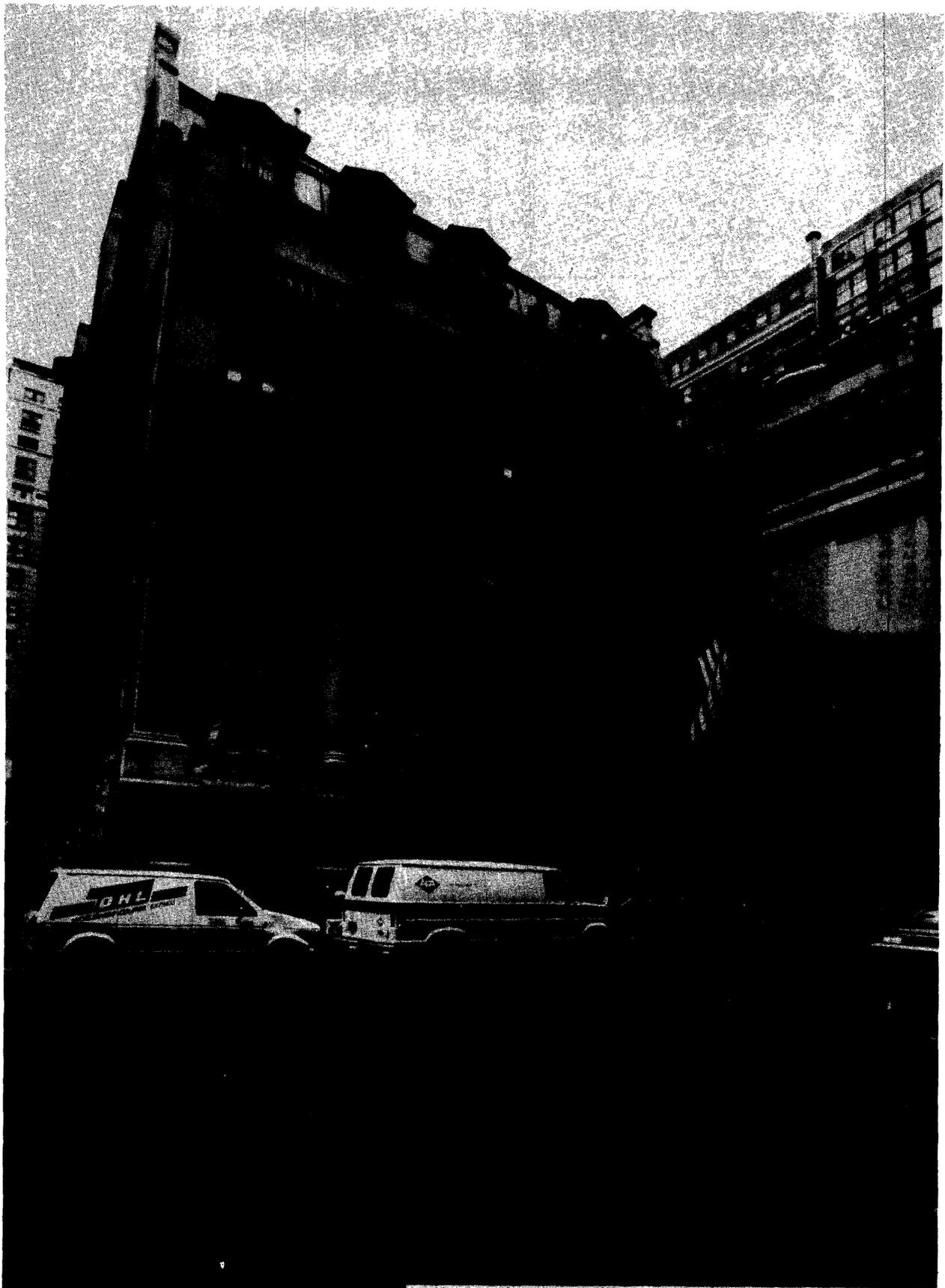
6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Philadelphia Register
title of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date November 27, 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Philadelphia Historical Commission, 1313 City Hall Annex

city, town Philadelphia 654 state Pennsylvania



New York Yacht Club, from south.
(James H. Charleton, National Park Service,
1985)

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Summary

The fifteen boathouses of Boat House Row stand along the east bank of the Schuylkill River north of the Fairmount Water Works.¹ They exhibit the wide variety of styles employed during the second (1860-70), third (1870-85), and fourth (1885-1905) generations of boathouse construction on the site.

Boat House Row contains examples of architectural styles prevalent during the late 19th century. Its appearance, however, has not completely retained its Victorian character. The construction of two new boathouses early in the 20th century and changes and additions to many of the others have altered its overall appearance. The Row had its beginnings in the 1850s but none of the first generation (before 1860) boathouses have survived. They were small frame and brick boat shelters, simple, unpretentious, and utilitarian. The City ordered their demolition in the late 1850s.

The City allowed the erection of three stone boathouses and the stone Skating Club Building in 1860. The three houses occupied the present sites of #2-3, 6, and 14. Two boathouses (at #3 and #6) were Gothic Revival in style; the Skating Club (#14) was Italianate. By 1868, three brick houses also existed (on the sites of the present #4 and 5, 7 and 8, and 9 and 10). After the creation of the Fairmount Park Commission in 1867, the Commissioners required the replacement of the brick structures by ornamented stone buildings.

By 1873, all of the brick houses had been replaced and, within the following 10 years, the stone houses at #1, 11, 12, and 13 had been built, extending the Row eastward toward the Water Works and filling the gap between the Philadelphia Barge Club (#10) and the Skating Club (#14). Most of the houses erected in the 1870s and early 1880s exhibited an ornamental Victorian Gothic associated primarily with the Philadelphia Centennial buildings elsewhere in Fairmount Park and then considered the proper style for park buildings. (The University and Philadelphia Barge Clubs used a Second Empire style for their boathouse at #7 and 8) [1870-71]).

Frank Furness' design for the Undine Barge Club (#13) in 1882 started a movement away from ornamental Victorian Gothic and into more eclectic styles. In the 1890s and early 1900s, the boat clubs either replaced or altered their old boathouses. The architects used a variety of styles, including modified Eastlake (#4 and additions to #10), Shingle (#7 and 8), and Mediterranean-influenced styles (#6).

After 1900, two clubs used variations on the Colonial and Georgian Revival styles. The Sedgeley Club hired Arthur H. Brockie to design a house using elements of both Colonial Revival and Shingle styles. The Fairmount Rowing Association's house, an excellent example of Georgian Revival, replaced the earlier stone house at #2 in 1904.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

Tudor and half-timbered styles were also used. Plaisted Hall (#1, 1881), the Pennsylvania Barge Club (#4, 1912), and the Malta Barge Club (#9, 1901) contain sections of their buildings in this style.

No new boathouse has been built since 1904. Alterations and additions have accounted for the work occurring on them during the 20th century. Especially during the last decade, the growth of women's racing has prompted new additions to several boathouses to provide separate locker and shower facilities.

Condition of Boat House Row

Most, if not all, the houses have preservation problems: e.g., Boat House #5 (Crescent) suffers from deteriorating stonework; #6 (Bachelors) has a large crack running through its brickwork that appears to be the result of a settling foundation; and #1 (Plaisted Hall) has been poorly painted and is very heavily used. (A full evaluation of the preservation problems of the component boathouses is beyond the scope of this nomination.)

DESCRIPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL BOATHOUSES

Boat House # 1 -- Plaisted Hall

Plaisted Hall (the former Public Boat House) is of half-timbered, shingle, and stucco construction. The eastern wing of the building stands 1-1/2 stories high in approximately an octagonal shape with gables on each exposed elevation. Each of the gables contains two large window openings on the second floor. The ground floor contains many windows, each framed by half-timbering. According to oral history, this section originally housed a carousel at another location and was brought here and converted first for boat purposes and later into a basketball court with locker facilities for the members of the Schuylkill Navy.

The western section of the building stands 2 stories high in a cross shape with the long arm of the cross extending toward the Schuylkill River and standing only 1-1/2 stories high. The north elevation contains a tripart opening on the ground floor and paired sash within a second floor opening. The front door sits on the western side of this arm of the building. The eastern and western cross-gabled sections contain four-part openings on both the ground and second floors. The side elevations of these cross-gabled sections each contain paired openings. The long 1-1/2-story rear section has two cross-gables and several door openings to the boat storage space. The 2-story front section presently houses food and bicycle rental concessions.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	architecture	education	military	social/
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
X 1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater
X 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation
		invention		X other (specify) Recreation
Specific dates	1860-date	Builder/Architect	Various (See below)	(rowing)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary

Boathouse Row's boat and barge clubs and skating club came into existence to serve the recreational needs of Philadelphians. The clubs and their parent organization, the Schuylkill Navy, have spread Philadelphia's name throughout the rowing world. The Schuylkill Navy's role is of particular importance. Formed in 1858, it is the oldest amateur governing body in sports in the United States. Indeed, the Navy's restriction of its contests to amateurs, beginning in 1872, contributed directly to clarifying the distinction between amateur and professional sports.¹

Many of the Navy's premier oarsmen have become national and international champions. The Olympics have served as the setting of some of the most significant of these victories. A Vesper Boat Club eight won the gold medal in 1900. John B. Kelly, Sr., was the first American to win the singles, in 1920. American representation in 1920, 1924, 1928, and 1932 consisted solely, with the exception of the eights, of oarsmen from the Schuylkill Navy.

The growth of the sport over the years has brought Philadelphia fame as a major center for rowing, recognized not only for the Schuylkill Navy but also for the emergence and location of other governing bodies (the Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing, Middle States Regatta, and Dad Vail Rowing Associations) in Philadelphia. In addition, the Navy shares its quarters in Boat House #4 with the United States Rowing Association, the national governing body for rowing in this country (founded in 1873 as the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen).

The individual rowing clubs are of interest. They include both the oldest continuously existing club in the United States and the oldest women's club.

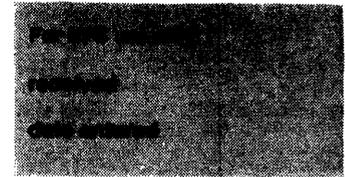
The architectural variety of the boathouses and the prominent individuals and firms associated with their design make them of considerably more interest than typical late 19th- and early 20th-century utilitarian buildings.

History

At an early stage in Philadelphia's history, residents of the area used the river to swim and fish.² Inns and hotels sprang up beside the riverbanks to cater to those who wished to frequent the area for hunting, fishing, sleighing, skating, or just to enjoy the inns' hospitality in a picturesque rural setting. As the city grew to the Schuylkill's banks, the river became increasingly used for recreation.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 11

The lighthouse has two arched openings at different levels and on different elevations providing light to the stairway inside, and an eight-sided walkway surrounding the six-sided light.

The Sedgeley Club today operates as a social club rather than a rowing club. When the house was erected, it had boat storage facilities. The deterioration of the slip, and the need for space to service the social functions of the club, led the members to arrange for storage of their boats in the Public Canoe House and remove the slip. The Colonial Dames of America, Chapter II, share the clubhouse with the Sedgeley Club.

Footnote

¹This description is a condensed and edited version of Jefferson Moak's 1983 nomination form of Boat House Row for designation as a Philadelphia City Landmark.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 12.

Quadrangle name Philadelphia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	8	3	5	8	0	4	4	2	4	4	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

1	8	4	8	3	8	5	0	4	4	2	4	4	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

1	8	4	8	4	4	2	0	4	4	2	4	1	2	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

1	8	4	8	4	2	0	0	4	4	2	4	1	2	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James H. Charleton, Historian

organization History Division, National Park Service date June 1985

street & number 1100 L Street, NW telephone (202) 343-8165

city or town Washington state DC 20013-7127

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

575

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

4

Page 1

4. Owners

The land on which the structures of Boat House Row rest is owned by the Fairmount Park Commission, a municipal agency. The individual boathouses are under the following ownership. (All structures are situated in Philadelphia, Pa. 19130.)

Boat House # 1	Fairmount Park Commission Memorial Hall
Boat House # 2 and 3	Fairmount Rowing Association 2 East River Drive
Boat House # 4	The Schuylkill Navy 4 East River Drive Pennsylvania Barge Club 4 East River Drive Pennsylvania Boathouse Association 4 East River Drive
Boat House # 5	Crescent Boat Club 5 East River Drive
Boat House # 6	Bachelors Boat Club 6 East River Drive
Boat House # 7 and 8	University Barge Club 7-8 East River Drive
Boat House # 9	Malta Boat Club 9 East River Drive
Boat House # 10	Vesper Boat Club 10 East River Drive
Boat House # 11	College Boat Club of the University of Pennsylvania 11 East River Drive
Boat House # 12	Philadelphia Athletic Club Rowing Association 12 East River Drive
Boat House # 13	Undine Barge Club 13 Boat House Row

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3

The Public Boat House was built in 1881 after the commodore of the Schuylkill Navy complained of the disreputable practices of the boat rental men on the Row and the ill-kept condition of their houses, and suggested that the Park Commission replace the three existing houses with one new public one. Russell Thayer, Chief Engineer of Fairmount Park, prepared the design. Completed in 1881, the structure was renamed in honor of Fred Plaisted, a habitue of the Row, after his death in 1946. Alterations had been completed the previous year.

Boat House # 2 -- Fairmount Rowing Association, or Fairmount Boat Club

The Fairmount Rowing Association, which has occupied this structure, designed by Walter Smedley, since its construction in 1904, originally shared a double stone boat house dating to 1860 with the Quaker City Barge Club. The Pacific Barge Club had erected the earlier structure. Eventually, around 1880, the Pacific turned the house over to the Fairmount Rowing Association, which used it for 20 years before needing the larger present structure.

Boat House # 2 is a Flemish-bonded brick structure standing 2-1/2 stories high with a hipped roof. Designed in Georgian Revival style, the building faces east so that an observer from the Schuylkill River or East River Drive actually sees the side of the building, not the front or rear.

On the river side, the structure measures three bays wide with arched openings on the ground floor. These formerly flanked a semicircular portico which has been recently removed. The portico covered a slightly arched door flanked by two small openings, each with flat brick arches. On both sides of the ground floor recessed 1-bay extensions support open second-floor porches. The second floor contains three large openings, each with 6/9 double-hung sash flanked by 2/3 double-hung sash. Three gabled dormers pierce the roof. The wall finish on the first floor has brick beltcourses on both the main building and wings. Quoining appears on all corners of the principal building.

The East River Drive elevation contains three rounded arched openings on the ground floor, three large openings similar to the river front with one small opening in the far right bay on the second floor, and one third-level dormer. A 1-bay stuccoed back section contains a door opening on the ground floor and two 6/6 double-hung sash in a single opening above. The porch above the ground floor on the main wing continues over the stuccoed addition.

Boat House # 3 -- former Quaker City Barge Club

The Quaker City Barge Club occupied the western half of this clubhouse until it became inactive in 1932. The building was erected by the Pacific Boat Club in 1860. The 1-bay, 1-story stone structure displays a very low profile, especially in relation to its immediate neighbors. It was designed by an unknown architect in the Gothic Revival style.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Item number	7	Page	4
--------------------	-------------	---	------	---

A set of steps leads to its East River Drive door, filling the 1 bay of the north elevation. A steeply pitched roof is pierced by a cross-gable over the door opening. The river side originally duplicated the Drive elevation but a 1-story extension erected in 1874 to provide additional storage space still fronts this elevation. The gable on the river side contains a rounded arched opening with two casement sash. Two narrow openings appear within the gable on the western elevation.

Boat House #3 is one of the two second-generation boathouses erected along Boat House Row. After 1932, the Fairmount Rowing Association incorporated this house into its building at #2.

Boat House # 4 -- Hollenback House, or Schuylkill Navy Headquarters (former Pennsylvania Barge Club

In 1868, the Pennsylvania Barge Club received permission to erect a boathouse to replace its earlier brick house. By the time construction started, the Crescent Boat Club had joined forces to build a double stone house at #4 and 5, respectively. After the Crescent Boat Club, in 1892, authorized alterations to their half of the building which destroyed its symmetry, the Pennsylvania Barge Club decided to replace their building with one more architecturally current.

The resulting design by Louis Hickman produced a boathouse containing much of the eclecticism found in period residences. Eastlake in appearance, the building had a stone ground floor and basement with many deviations from the main plane of the building line, including two side bays and a corner tower. Porches ran the width of the building on both the front and rear elevations. A large hipped roof, penetrated by pedimented eyebrow dormers, hipped dormers and a cross-gable, topped the entire structure.

In 1912, the need for space led the club to hire C. E. Schermerhorn to design a second-floor addition. He removed the original roof of the main building and tower and replaced them with a half-timbered and stucco addition that changed the overall appearance of the building. The extension of the three-sided bay around the chimney into the second floor, the use of leaded glass on the addition, and the placement of a cross-gable in the same location as in the original helped the addition to blend with the ground floor. The structure now appears as a 2-1/2-story building with a gabled roof, two cross-gables, a ground-floor porch on the north elevation, and a 2-story open porch on the river elevation.

The Pennsylvania Barge Club ceased active operations in 1955 and offered the use of its house to the various governing organizations of rowing. It now houses the Schuylkill Navy, the United States Rowing Society (formerly the Schuylkill Navy Association), the Philadelphia Scholastic Rowing Association, the Middle States Regatta Association, the Dad Vail Rowing Association, the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen, and the United States Rowing Association. In 1974, the United States Rowing Society honored one of its former presidents, William M. Hollenback, Jr., by renaming the building the "Hollenback House."

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received _____
date entered _____

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 5

Boat House #4 has undergone some alterations since the governing organizations occupied it. These alterations have included the replacement of some sash on the ground floor. In addition, all wooden parts, including the timbering, have been covered with aluminum siding.

Boat House # 5 -- Crescent Boat Club (LaSalle Rowing Association)

The Crescent Boat Club erected their original house in 1869-71 in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Barge Club. In 1890-91, Charles Balderston enlarged the house for the club by adding two stories.

The street front of the building has three defined sections: a central section containing the doorway, flanked by a recessed left section and a protruding right pavilion. The ground floor is constructed of stone and the upper floors of brick, timber, and stucco.

The left section has one ground-floor door opening with a brick arch above and a narrow horizontal opening containing two sash, also with a brick arch, at the second-floor level. The original gable has been enlarged with a stuccoed addition to its right containing a window opening.

The center section contains the door with a brick arched opening. A large brick course runs at the top of the door level. Smaller brick courses separate the stone ground floor from the stuccoed and timbered second and third floors. Four casement sash fill the second-floor opening. The third floor contains three openings, each filled with two casement sash.

The right section contains a large window opening on the ground floor with a brick arch above; the opening is filled by two 1/1 double-hung sash and three transoms reading "1867 Crescent 1891." The second floor contains two openings, each having two multi-light casement sash. An eyebrow dormer pierces the hipped roof. On the western elevation a cross-gable covers a protruding bay.

The Crescent Boat Club turned the house over to the LaSalle Rowing Association in 1951, when it resigned from the Schuylkill Navy and ceased active operations. By 1974, the house was vacant. Subsequently, the revived Crescent Boat Club reoccupied the house. The club rents space in it to the LaSalle College High School, the North Catholic High School, and the St. Joseph's University Women's rowing teams.

Boat House # 6 -- Bachelors Barge Club

The Bachelors Barge Club, the oldest active boat club along the Schuylkill River, has occupied several boathouses in succession: two in sequence during the period before 1860, when it erected a stone house. In 1893, the Fairmount Park Commission granted the club the authority to replace that structure with the present edifice. This boathouse has remained essentially unaltered.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 6

This free-standing house, completed in 1894, exhibits a Mediterranean appearance with Pompeian brick composing the ground floor and pebble-dashed stucco covering the second story. Two square openings with 9-light casement sash pierce the ground floor on either side of the center door opening. The latter contains a frontispiece reminiscent of work executed by the firm of Hazlehurst & Huckel, the architects, on Philadelphia townhouses. The second floor is highlighted by an open arcade on the front elevation with six arches facing north and two each facing east and west. A hipped roof with flared pedimented dormers sits on the top of the building.

On the east elevation there is an octagonal bay on the second floor and a story brick pavilion covering the rear half of the elevation. The second floor openings on the bay and to the left of the bay on the east elevation and the right center and right openings on the west elevation are arched. The openings closer to East River Drive on both elevations are square or rectangular in shape and contain multilight sash.

Today's tenants include the Baldwin School Girls Team and the Lower Merion High School teams, as well as the Bachelors Barge Club.

Boat Houses # 7 and # 8 -- University Barge Club (#8 -- formerly Philadelphia Barge Club)

One of the largest boathouses, this twin boathouse by an unknown architect, built in 1870-71, stands two stories high and exhibits a late 19th-century appearance. Now an example of the Shingle style, the house has lost its original Second Empire appearance. Work performed in 1893 gave the building a rectangular outline. By 1901, octagonal bays had been placed on the left center and right center openings flanking the center door openings. In addition, a 1-story pavilion, 3 bays wide, had extended the left and right bays toward River Drive.

The second floor has paired three light casement sash surmounted by three openings, each containing 9 light sash. These left and right second-floor bays are crowned by pyramidal roofs and connected by a central shingled section containing a single opening with double-hung sash. The left and right pavilions each contain 2/2 double hung sash within the left and right arched openings and a central arched door opening leading to the boat bays. The steeply pitched hipped roof covers the second floor and extends to the top of the ground floor. Hipped dormers pierce the roof over both projecting pavilions. Large gables highlight the east, west, and river elevations. The windows formerly located on these gables have, for the most part, been removed. The east and west elevations have four arched openings each with 2/2 double-hung sash on the ground floor. The gables contain two 12-light sash flanking carved medallions on the second floor.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 7

The University and Philadelphia Barge Clubs were partners in constructing these houses, teamed together to perform the alterations in 1893 and 1901 to maintain their symmetrical appearance and continued to act in concert. In 1900, they conceived the idea of an annual Inter-Club Regatta, which continued until the outbreak of World War I. When the Philadelphia Barge Club folded in 1932, most of its members joined the University Barge Club in what was in effect a merger between the two organizations. Today, several teams operate from this double boathouse, including that of Chestnut Hill Academy.

Boat Houses #9 and #10 -- Malta and Vesper Boat Clubs

The Malta and Vesper Boat Clubs joined forces in 1873 to erect an ornamental 1-1/2-story stone boathouse reminiscent of many Centennial buildings.

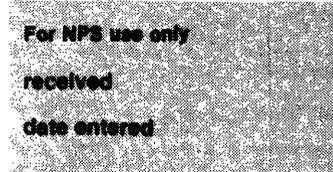
The stone house is still visible buried under the additions applied by later architects and contractors. Along the Drive elevation, the original building measured two bays wide with arched openings appearing on both floors. The front section has a low gable toward the Drive and a slightly larger and steeper pitched gable to the rear. A moderately pitched cross-gabled bay containing two second-floor openings appears at each side. A large, steeply pitched cross-gable with shingle siding exhibits two large and two small openings on the second floor and two openings on the third floor of the side elevations, two pyramidal-roofed bays on the Drive elevation, and two large gabled wall dormers facing the river.

Alterations to the Malta Boat House have included the replacement of the single opening on the ground floor with two openings, the addition of a bay window on the side in 1880, and a large shingled, stuccoed and timbered second- and third-story addition, creating the tallest house on the Row. The architects of the 1901 additions, George W. and William D. Hewitt, also changed the appearance of the bargeboards on the original gable to match that of the addition. The new 2-story addition exceeds the height of the rear cross-gable and covers the original gable roof and rear wall dormer. The side 2-1/2-story, half-timbered and stuccoed bay contains two openings on the second and third levels and three openings on the top level facing east. The center section of the present building has a large gabled roof with a tripart opening on the shingled-sided second floor facing north, two openings on the same level facing east, and two openings on the half-timbered and stuccoed third story. The right, and tallest, section contains a paired opening on the third level and a single opening on the fourth level.

The original design of the Vesper Boat House also underwent change, in 1898, when Howard Hagar added a second-floor turret between the front gable and the first side cross-gable, altered the ground floor front openings, and erected a 2-story brick and shingle addition that masks both the front cross-gable and the large rear bay and extends along the side toward the river. The rear bay's pyramidal roof is still visible. Other additions were planned and approved in 1981 but have not occurred.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 8

Boat House #11 -- College Boat Club of the University of Pennsylvania

This structure was erected in 1874-75 shortly after the University of Pennsylvania moved from the center city to its present West Philadelphia campus. The unknown architect used a Victorian Gothic style similar to that used for College Hall and other period University buildings. Over the years, additions and alterations have hidden the original building from view.

The original College Boat House forms the core of the present complex. Constructed of stone and measuring 2 stories high, this boathouse had a hipped roof, punctuated by large wall gables on the north and south ends and one large wall gable, flanked by two smaller gables, on the east and west elevations. The openings on the side mimicked the gables with a small arched opening on both floors under the small gables and a tripart, almost Palladian, opening on the first floor, and a tripart arched opening on the second floor under the large gable. The wall finish of all the gables was frame rather than stone, a treatment used on several of the additions.

A 1-1/2-story stucco and frame addition was placed (probably in 1920) on the Drive elevation, extending the original front wall gable. This addition has two square openings flanking the center opening on the ground floor and a tripart arched opening similar to that found on the original sides of the building on the second floor. Another addition extended the left wall gable of the east elevation in order to provide more boat storage space. A modern fire escape leads from the second floor of this gable end. Other 1-story stuccoed additions (ca. 1938 and ca. 1969) form the remainder of the eastern third of the complex, the front addition having two openings containing multilight double doors.

In 1980-81, the University of Pennsylvania hired the firm of Francis Cauffman Wilkinson & Pepper to design a 2-story stuccoed side addition along the western facade of the building, for women's locker facilities, effectively hiding the western elevation. The addition has two square openings flanking a center door on the ground-floor front elevation and a gabled dormer above. The side has two gabled sections forming the left and right bays and a recessed center section. Three openings appear within the ground floor of the left pavilion, four on the right pavilion, and four in the center. A band of windows is on the second floor between the gables. Small circular windows appear on the gables.

Boat House #12 -- West Philadelphia Rowing Club (Penn Athletic Association Rowing Club)

Erected in 1878 for the West Philadelphia Rowing Club by an unknown architect, this stone boathouse measures 1-1/2 stories high, three bays wide, and approximately four bays deep. The River Drive elevation has three openings on the ground floor: a central door opening flanked by two window openings, each with stone lintels and sills. On the second floor, within the gable, sits a bay window with two 3-light jalousie sash facing the Drive and one 3-light jalousie sash to either side.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

9

The eastern elevation has remained generally intact with a wall gable containing a three-sided bay window facing the first section: four openings with stone lintels and sills containing 2/2 double-hung sash on the first floor, two small openings with stone lintels and sills containing 2/2 double-hung sash on the second floor, and two small dormers, one shed and one gabled, piercing the roof forming the second section. The third section contains a small wall gable with paired 1/1 double-hung sash on the second floor. The fourth section is composed of a large cross-gable which protrudes from the main building. The river side of this cross-gable contains a large open second-story porch.

The western elevation has been effectively covered with unsympathetic 1968 and 1981 stucco-covered additions containing locker room facilities. The addition contains three rectangular openings on the ground and second floors of the north (Drive) elevation and five openings along the ground floor of the west elevation. The second floor of the 1981 addition extends back only three bays and an open porch covers the remainder of the structure. Door openings are located within the left bays on both floors; a fire escape leads from the second floor. A cross-gable tops the front of this addition.

Boat House #13 -- Undine Barge Club

The Undine Barge Club stands 2-1/2 stories high and measures three bays along the front (Drive) elevation. The arched center door opening is flanked by two smaller arched window openings on the first floor. The second floor contains a single opening framed by ornamental woodwork within the gable. Another second-floor opening exists on the right side under the eaves of the gable.

The western elevation contains two arched openings on the ground floor and a series of openings under the eaves of the roof. A door opening about two-thirds of the way along the facade toward the river leads to a small open porch. Four gabled dormers pierce the roof.

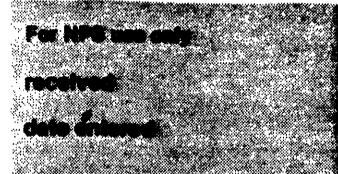
The eastern elevation is highlighted by a large covered porch running the length of the second floor to the cross-gable. The porch is joined by a large bay window at the northeast corner of the building with a massive stone support containing the coat-of-arms of the club below and a pyramidal roof above. Three dormers pierce the roof on this side.

The rear cross-gable culminates in a 2-1/2-story stone pavilion with curved walls and a hipped roof, a gabled dormer window, two openings on the second floor facing east, and a door opening on the ground floor facing north.

Unlike many of the other buildings on Boat House Row, the Undine Barge Club, erected in 1882-83 by the firm of Furness and Evans, has experienced few exterior changes. The Club continues to use the house and also permits Haverford School to use it.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

2

In the early 19th century, the erection of the Fairmount Water Works and Fairmount Dam altered the river from a tidal stream to a very long freshwater lake that eventually drowned the cataract known as the Falls of Schuylkill. This change provided a relatively calm surface which, when frozen, was ideal for skaters and, when not frozen, became one of the finest courses available in the United States for a sport then in its infancy: rowing.

Indeed, the Schuylkill River and rowing became inextricably linked for much of the history of the sport. The first recorded regatta on the Schuylkill occurred in 1835 between the Blue Devils and the Imps Barge Clubs.³ Earlier contests had probably taken place: the University of Pennsylvania claims that it first raced in 1801 against the Atalanta Boat Club of New York City. The excitement generated by the 1835 race sparked the formation of many rowing clubs, most of them short-lived. The surviving clubs, however, eventually recognized the need for an organization to control the sport and to prevent it from becoming a victim of shady practices and fixed races.

During much of the 19th century, professional rowers dominated the sport much as professional athletes dominate many sports today. The formation of the Schuylkill Navy in 1858 resulted from the clubs' intent to promote amateurism on the river. The rules of the Navy expressly prohibited the acceptance of any wagered money. Non-adherence led to expulsion. The success of the Navy and similar organizations throughout the country contributed heavily to the extinction of the professional rower.

In 1855, the City of Philadelphia declared the Lemon Hill Estate, purchased by the city in 1844, a public park to be known as "Fairmount Park." A leaseholder, who was using the Lemon Hill Estate as a beer garden, had allowed several boat clubs to erect houses along the river. The ramshackle nature of these structures prompted the city to condemn them in 1859. Pressure brought to bear upon the City by the various boat clubs and the Schuylkill Navy resulted in the passage of ordinances in 1860 that permitted the construction of three boathouses by the Pacific Boat Club and the clubs comprising the Schuylkill Navy, and allowed the Philadelphia Skating Club to erect a house.

Skating had become so popular a sport that in 1849 the Philadelphia Skating Club was formed to promote the sport and rescue skaters in danger. The lifesaving record of the club soon eclipsed that of the older Philadelphia Humane Society and the two organizations merged, in 1861, as the Philadelphia Skating Club and Humane Society.

Some clubs soon erected boathouses in much the former way although brick and stone structures replaced the earlier frame buildings. The city government exercised little or no control over their construction and design. After the enlargement of Fairmount Park in 1867, however, the Park Commission, in 1868, received the authority to review and approve plans for structures in the park. With this authority, the Commission ordered the removal of all but the Skating Club building and those that housed the Pacific and Bachelors Barge Clubs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

The clubs then began to erect more aesthetic, rather than strictly utilitarian, buildings. By 1872, they had erected a number of stone boathouses, primarily in a Victorian Gothic style favored by park architects in the period. Again, in accordance with the accepted thought of the day, the Commission dictated the use of stone for all new construction.

Eventually, sentiment shifted. People came to feel that styles other than Victorian Gothic fitted well into park settings; the boat clubs were allowed to erect houses in a variety of styles, including Mediterranean, Picturesque Victorian (Eastlake), Shingle, and Colonial Revival. The Commission also let the clubs build with materials other than stone, including brick, shingle, and stucco. The clubs proved themselves responsible tenants, which the Commission informally recognized by allowing the construction of new buildings and enlargements that gave the clubs plenty of room to carry on social events as well as provide space for housing boats.

The Schuylkill Navy

The Schuylkill Navy began in 1858 with nine clubs and approximately 300 members. In 1983, its 125th year, it boasted a membership of ten clubs and more than 1200 participating rowers. The ten clubs (with dates of joining) are the University (1858), Undine (1858), Bachelors (1859-70, 1882-date), Malta (1865), Crescent (1868), Vesper (1870-71, 1879-date), College (1875), Fairmount (1916), Penn Athletic (1925), and Philadelphia Girls (1967). At least 23 other clubs have belonged to the Navy at various times.

The Schuylkill Navy and its member clubs still host many races. In 1953, the Navy convinced the Dad Vail Rowing Association to move its regatta to Philadelphia. It has remained since. The Dad Vail is probably the largest collegiate regatta held and usually signifies the end of the spring rowing season for most collegiate teams. The 45th Annual Dad Vail Regatta (1983) had participating teams from 67 colleges. Other major regattas held each year include the Thomas Eakins Head of the Schuylkill Regatta (sponsored by the University Barge Club) and the Frostbite Regatta. The Navy also sponsors other athletic endeavors including a basketball league and an annual cross-country race. The latter has been held since 1899, with a few interruptions during World War II.

Other Boat Clubs

In addition to the clubs in the Navy, other clubs associated with the boathouses over the years have included Sedgely, LaSalle, West Philadelphia, and Ione. Many of the clubs allow scholastic and collegiate clubs to share their facilities.

SPECIFIC BOAT CLUBS

Bachelors Barge Club: Organized in 1853, the Bachelors Barge Club claims to be the oldest boat club in existence today. It presently occupies Boat House #6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

4

College Boat Club of the University of Pennsylvania: Originally the University of Pennsylvania was represented in rowing by the University Barge Club, which began as a university student club, but soon severed its ties. In 1872, students founded the "College Boat Club" to represent the University in rowing events. They erected their own house (#11) in 1874-75.

Crescent Boat Club: Members of two clubs, the Pickwick Barge Club and the (first) Ione Barge Club, formed the Crescent in 1867. Although not very active today, they rent their boathouse (#5) to several collegiate and scholastic teams.

Fairmount Rowing Association: Shortly after formation in 1877, the Fairmount Rowing Association procured the boathouse and equipment of the Pacific Barge Club. In addition to their own boathouse (#2), they acquired the Quaker City Club house (#3) after the latter's demise.

Malta Boat Club: The Malta Boat Club, founded in 1860, is the only club which traces its existence to rowing on the Delaware River, where they owned a boat and boathouse at Smith's Island. They moved to the Schuylkill in 1863. The club occupies Boat House #9.

Penn Athletic Club Rowing Association: The association traces its roots to 1871 when the West Philadelphia Boat Club was formed. The club erected Boat House #12, which it still occupies, in 1878. In 1924, the club became associated with the downtown Penn Athletic Club and changed its name. John B. Kelly, Sr., helped bring prominence to the club in the 1920s and 1930s.

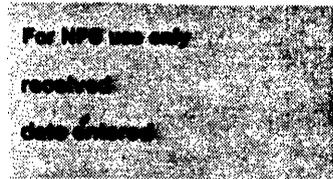
Pennsylvania Barge Club: The Pennsylvania Barge Club existed from 1861 to late 1955 when they turned over their boathouse (#4) to the Schuylkill Navy.

Philadelphia Barge Club: First known as the Panola Barge Club, the Philadelphia Barge Club was organized in 1862. It first occupied a small brick house along with the old Washington Barge Club and replaced it in 1870 in conjunction with the University Barge Club, erecting present Boat Houses #7 and 8. A number of prominent Philadelphia architects belonged to the Philadelphia Barge Club, including Louis C. Baker, Jr., Arthur H. Brockie (who designed Boat House #15), James P. Sims, Emlen L. Stewardson, and John Stewardson. The club ceased operation at the end of 1932 and merged with the University Barge Club.

Philadelphia Girls Rowing Club: Composed primarily of wives of oarsmen who wished to participate in this mostly all-male sport, the Philadelphia Girls Rowing Club was organized in 1938. It is the oldest active such club in existence. They first rented the Philadelphia Skating Club and Humane Society building (Boathouse #14) and around 1965 obtained full title to it.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

5

Quaker City Barge Club: Organized in 1858, the club entered many races during its 74-year existence, and held the honor of competing in the first Four-Oared Shell with Coxswain race in 1870. It ceased active operations at the end of 1932.

Sedgeley Club: Formed in 1897 as the Bicycle, Barge and Canoe Club, this group's name was soon changed to the Sedgeley Club. They first occupied quarters in Boat House #14 and applied for permission from the Fairmount Park Commission to erect a new building in 1902. With the support of the University Barge Club, they obtained permission to build #15 Boat House Row. By World War II, the club had become largely a social organization.

Undine Barge Club: Undine Barge Club started operations in 1856, occupying a small frame house along the Schuylkill which the City condemned in 1859. Quartered in #14 Boat House Row from 1860 to 1882, the club commissioned Furness and Evans to design Boat House #13, which they still occupy, and to which they moved in 1883.

University Barge Club: The University Barge Club dates to 1854. It originally limited membership to students and graduates of the University of Pennsylvania. The club shared the Philadelphia Skating Club and Humane Society house (#14) with Undine before constructing Boat Houses #7 and 8 with the Philadelphia Barge Club. In 1932-33, University absorbed the latter and took over the entire double house. Like the Philadelphia, the University Club had a number of prominent architect members, including Charles L. Borie, Jr., Clarke Wharton Churchman, James S. Hatfield, George Howe, Sydney E. Martin, George B. Page, and John P. B. Sinkler.

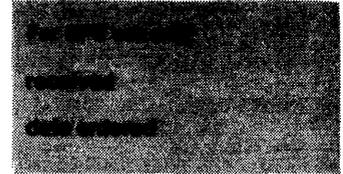
Vesper Boat Club: Founded in 1865, this club operated under the name Washington Barge Club until 1870. In 1872, they joined the Malta Boat Club to erect present Boat Houses #9 and 10. John B. Kelly, Jr., is generally credited with leading the Vesper Club to its greatest successes during the middle of the twentieth century.

ARCHITECTS OF THE BOAT HOUSES

The architects of several of the boathouses were well-known figures in the profession. Others are of lesser significance, or were noted for other accomplishments. All were active in the Philadelphia area.

Frank Furness

Furness' works dominated Philadelphia's landscape during the late 19th and early 20th centuries; few still exist. He executed two commissions for the Undine Barge Club, the up-river Castle Ringstetten (1876) and Boat House #13 (1882-83).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 6

George W. and William D. Hewitt

These two brothers joined professional forces in 1878. George had been Furness' partner until 1876. The Hewitts proved their versatility by designing industrial, commercial, ecclesiastical, and residential structures. The Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, the Bourse Building, and the Wissahickon Inn are their most notable surviving buildings. The work they performed on the Malta Boat Club house came at the end of their firm's prolific existence.

Edward Hazlehurst and Samuel Huckel, Jr.

Hazlehurst and Huckel teamed in 1881, forming a 20-year partnership that specialized in ecclesiastical and residential architecture. Their ecclesiastical work includes Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church (a National Historic Landmark) and Union Methodist Church. Examples of their residential commissions are found throughout Germantown and Chestnut Hill. They designed two clubhouses for the Bachelors Barge Club: the "Bachelor's Button" in the East Falls neighborhood in 1882-83 and Boat House #6 in 1893-94. Huckel became a member of the club shortly after the boathouse was completed.

Louis Hickman

Hickman never attained the recognition accorded to many of his peers. His work within the T-Square Club and the renovation of the Merchants Exchange Building have come down as some of his most notable accomplishments. He designed the Pennsylvania Barge Club at the beginning of his career in a Picturesque Victorian style. The addition of a second story in 1912 modified his original design.

Clarence Schermerhorn

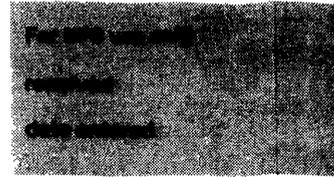
Schermerhorn does not have many major architectural works to his credit. On the other hand, he contributed heavily to architectural literature with Architectural Studies (1902), House Hints for Those Who Buy, Rent, or Sell (1902), "How to Go About Planning Your House" (1916), and Home Building Hints (1924), among others. He also became one of the first architects in the country to broadcast on the radio, with his brochure "Services of an Architect" being read over the air on thirty stations. His specialty lay in the field of domestic architecture. The Pennsylvania Barge Club hired him in 1912 to add the second story to their Hickman-designed building.

James C. Sidney

James C. Sidney, a cartographer, surveyor, and architect, designed the Philadelphia Skating Club building in 1860. He also wrote five parts of a proposed ten-part series entitled American Cottage and Village Architecture. In 1859, working with a partner, Andrew Adams, he produced an early landscape plan for Fairmount Park. During the late 1860s, he designed numerous school buildings in the city, few of which stand. Sidney has been overshadowed by his contemporaries Thomas U. Walter and John Notman.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 7

Walter D. Smedley

Smedley specialized in residential architecture, principally in the Colonial Revival styles. He also executed some notable designs for Philadelphia-area banks (principally the Northern National Bank and the West Philadelphia Title and Trust Company) and other commercial buildings. The Fairmount Boat Club house is only one of several structures Smedley contributed to Fairmount Park.

Arthur H. Brockie

The Sedgeley Club building (1902-03) represents one of Brockie's earliest commissions. His reputation is based chiefly upon his residential designs, many of which still exist in Germantown and Chestnut Hill. His interest in Boat House Row was not limited to his role as one of its architects: his bosses, John and Emlen Stewardson, belonged to the Philadelphia Barge Club and he joined the University Barge Club in 1902.

Charles Balderston

Balderston's work consisted chiefly of alterations and additions to existing buildings. His work on the Crescent Boat Club, in 1890-91, came during his first years as an independent architect.

Howard Hagar

The alterations and additions to the Vesper Boat Club in 1898 were his major work within the central portions of the city.

Footnotes

¹"Amateur Athlete," in Frank G. Menke, The Encyclopedia of Sports, 5th rev. ed. (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1975), pp. 11-12.

²The bulk of the data contained in this statement is edited and condensed from Jefferson Moak's 1983 nomination of Boat House Row for designation as a Philadelphia City Landmark.

³J.T. Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: 1884), II, 1870-1871.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

2

The Schuylkill Navy of Philadelphia: Her History and Records. Philadelphia:
n.d. [ca. 1897-98].

Sweeney, Joseph A. "Penn Athletic Club Rowing Association." 1982. (Typescript.)

Thayer, Jean S., and Margarette A. J. Daly. Light on Turtle Rock: A Diary of
the Sedgeley Club. Philadelphia: 1978.

The Undine Barge Club of Philadelphia: Charter, By-Laws and Membership, 1884.

The Undine Barge Club of Philadelphia: Supplement 1925-1955. Philadelphia:
1956.

The University Barge Club of Philadelphia. Philadelphia. Various years.
(Handbook.)

Webster, Richard J. Philadelphia Preserved. Philadelphia: Temple University
Press, 1976, 1981.

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide. V, 114 (March 5, 1890); VI,
145 (March 11, 1891); VII, 103 (March 9, 1892); VIII, 413 (July 5, 1893); VIII,
593 (September 20, 1893); XVII, 629 (September 24, 1902); XVII, 709 (October
29, 1902); XVIII, 603 (September 16, 1903); XIX, 179 (March 23, 1904); XIX, 227
(April 13, 1904); and XXVII, 511 (August 7, 1912).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

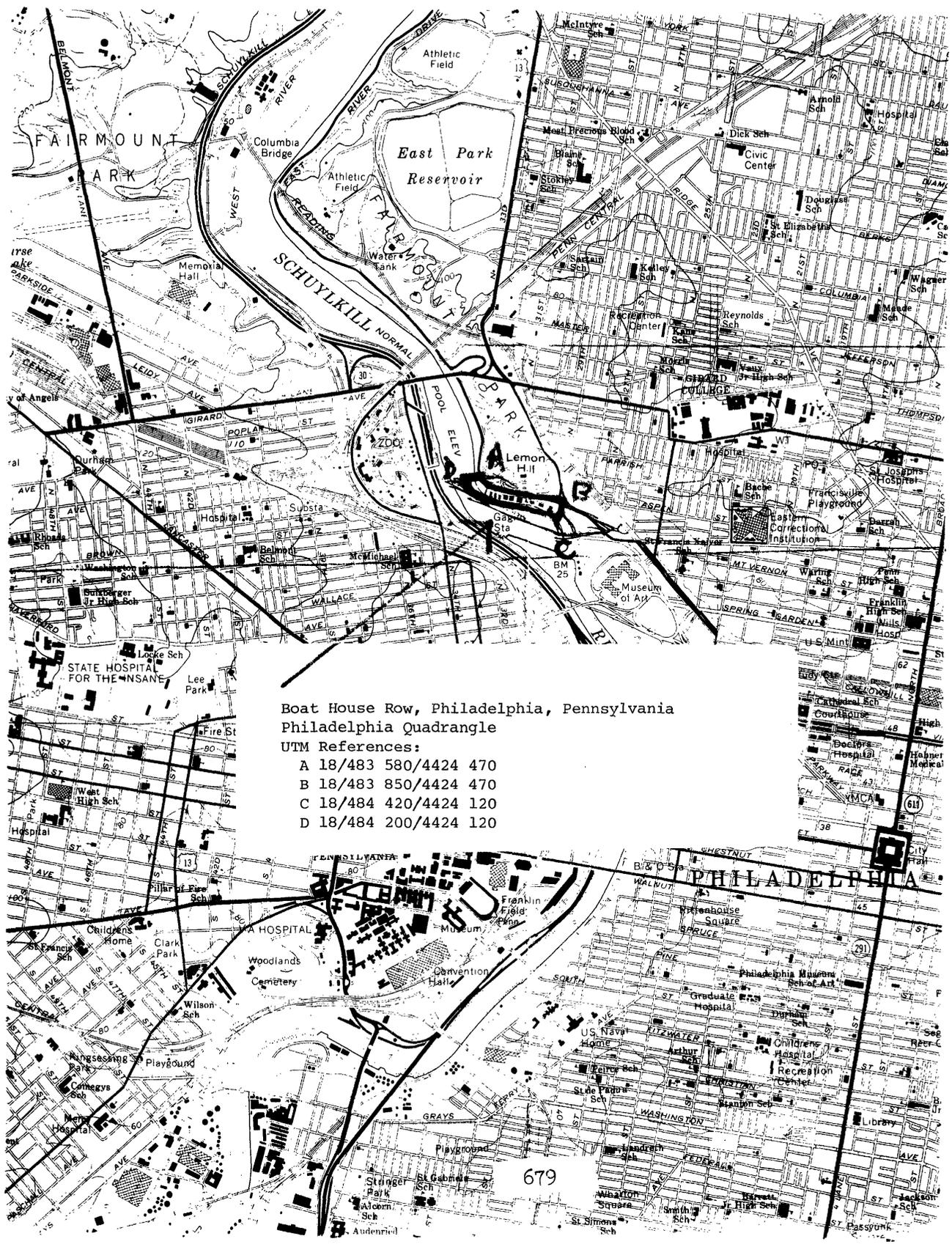
Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

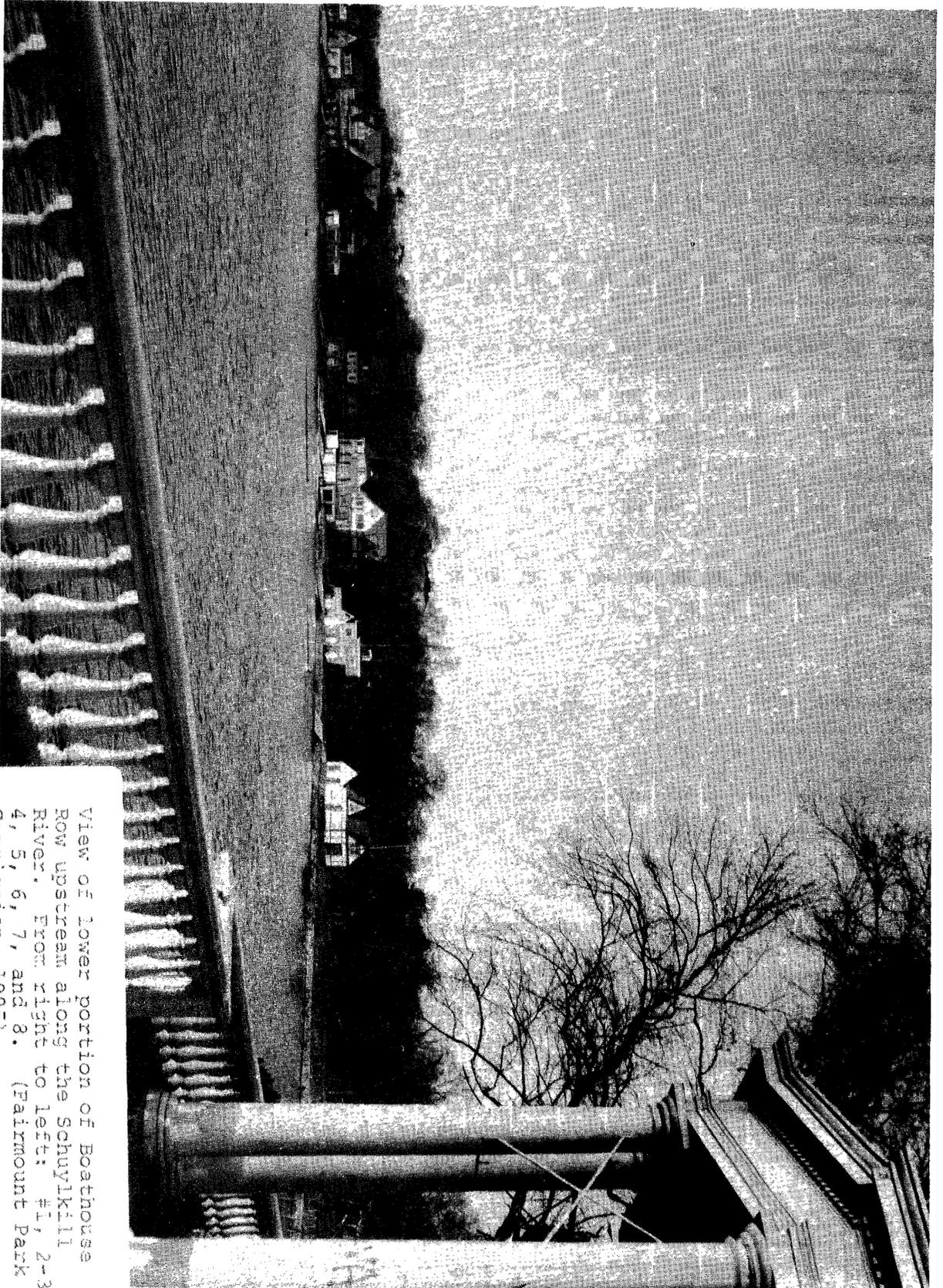
Verbal Boundary Description

Boat House Row is enclosed by a line beginning at the apex of the curved west curbline of the intersection of Aquarium and East River Drives, proceeding south-east along that curbline of Aquarium Drive to the north edge of the traffic circle enclosing the Fountain of the Sea Horses, then due west to the edge of the Schuylkill River, then upriver along the shoreline to the south edge of the statue of Karlsefni at the river's edge, then due east from that point to the west curbline of East River Drive, and then generally east along that curbline to the point of beginning.

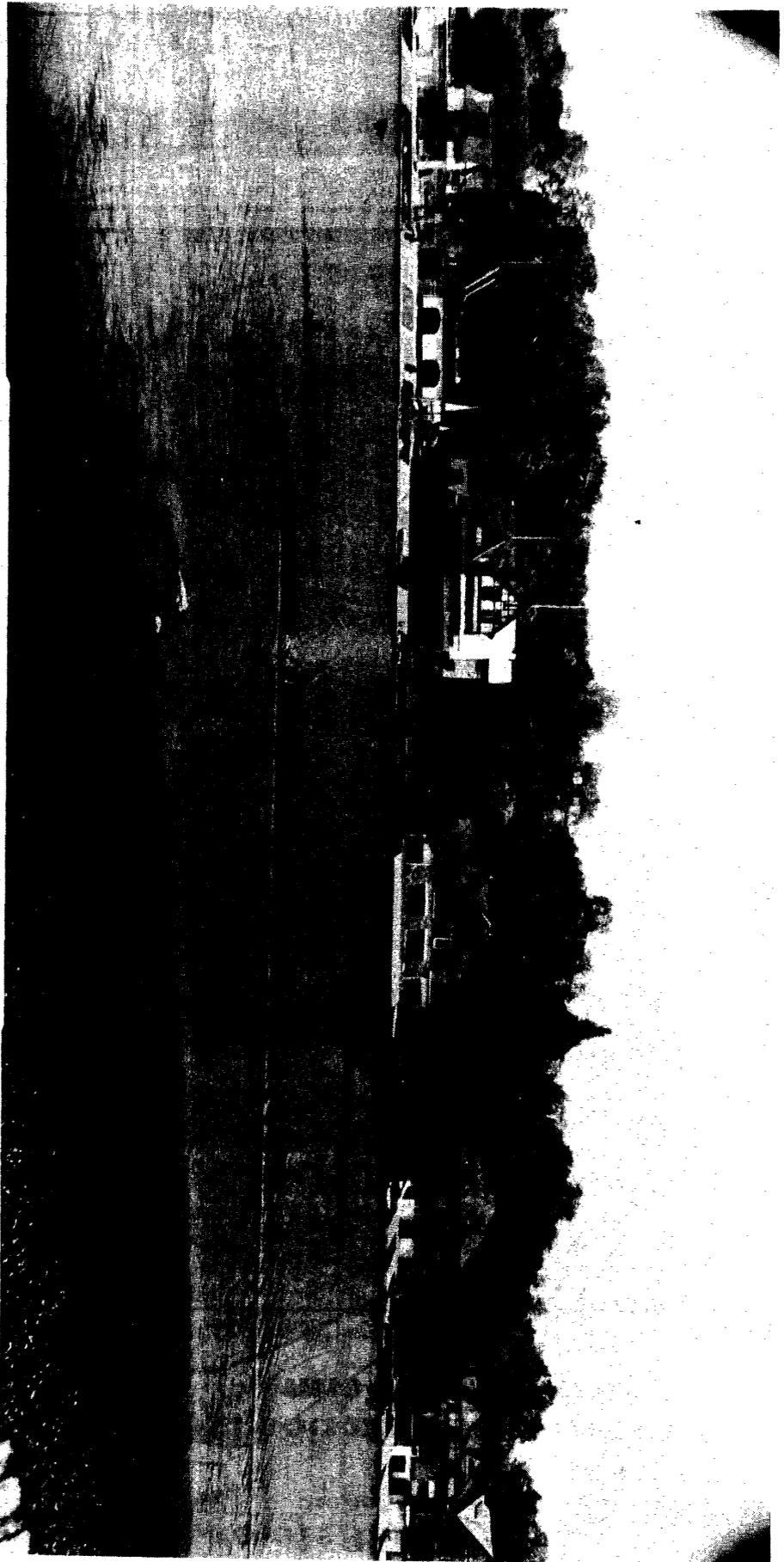


Boat House Row, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Quadrangle

- UTM References:
- A 18/483 580/4424 470
 - B 18/483 850/4424 470
 - C 18/484 420/4424 120
 - D 18/484 200/4424 120



View of lower portion of Boathouse Row upstream along the Schuylkill River. From right to left: #1, 2-3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. (Fairmount Park Commission, 1985)



Mid-portion of Boathouse Row. From
right to left: #5, 6, 7-8, 9, 10,
and 11. (Fairmount Park Commission,
1985)



View of lower portion of Boathouse
Row upstream along the Schuylkill
River. From right to left: #1, 2-3
4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. (Fairmount Park
Commission, 1985)