

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 Manheim Club

and or common Germantown Cricket Club

2. Location

street & number 5140 Morris Street (401-57 W. Manheim Street) not for publication

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of

state Pennsylvania 19144 code county Philadelphia code

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Dr. Thomas E. Bressi, President, Board of Governors, Germantown Cricket Club

street & number 411 Manheim Street

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of state Pennsylvania 19144

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry Unit

street & number Room 153, City Hall

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania 19106

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1973  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state DC

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## 7. Description

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Condition  
 excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

Check one  
 unaltered  
 altered

Check one  
 original site  
 moved    date \_\_\_\_\_

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### Summary

Execution of Charles McKim's plan for the Germantown Cricket Club was completed in October 1891. His plan included the central block of the present clubhouse, the cricket lawn and drives, a large grandstand at the south end of the lawn, an elaborate wrought-iron fence, and remodeling of certain existing structures on the site. With the exceptions of the grandstand and the pre-existing McKean House, which have been demolished, these features remain. With some modifications early in the 20th century, they are intact.<sup>1</sup>

#### Main Clubhouse

The main block of the clubhouse (215 feet by 60 feet deep) is a Flemish-bond brick building of 2-1/2 stories with a massive gable roof. The lawn front is screened by a 2-story colonnade carrying the eave, in a manner recalling Williamsburg and Southern Colonial. Cross-gable-ended wings terminate the principal building. McKim, Mead, and White added them in 1902 and 1907. They also constructed the 3-story Athletic Building in 1901.

The clubhouse sits on a southeast-northwest axis at the northern edge of the club's grounds. The great gable roof runs on this axis. A central widow's walk tops the structure. A molded cornice runs around the roof edge. A roof balustrade above it was removed after 1953.

The entrance facade facing east is the most formal. The main block contains a central projection of 3 bays approached by a balustraded terrace with flanking projecting pavilions. The two later wings project beyond the original block. These three pavilions give this face a "W" shape. The left and right pavilions are two bays in width, each containing 8/8 double-hung sash with marble trim. The left central and right central parts of the building are 3 bays in width. The left and right openings have 4/4 double-hung sash and the center ones contain 6/6 double-hung sash. The central pavilion has this same arrangement on its second floor. The ground floor of the central pavilion has the main door, which serves as its focal point. The left and right openings contain 2/4 sash. The main doorway has a basket arch with a fanlight and columns on both sides of the door. The lower portion of the doorway has been covered at a later date by an enclosed passageway. The passage opens into a broad central entry hall.

The rear, or west, facade fronting the playing field is dominated by a 2-story colonnade, set just in front of the facade. The colonnade fronts on a 2-story recessed porch. The lower Doric story contains a terrace serving the principal ground-floor public rooms; the second-floor Tuscan balcony, now enclosed, runs the length of the ballroom behind it on that level.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	architecture	education	military	social
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation
		invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Recreation
<b>Specific dates</b>	1890-91 1902, 1907	<b>Builder Architect</b>	Charles F. McKim (McKim, Mead, & White)	(cricket, tennis)

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

### Summary

The Germantown Cricket Club is the second oldest surviving cricket club in the United States today; its part in the sport during the 19th century was of international rank. In the 20th century the club has played an important role in the history of tennis, its most noted member/player being Philadelphian William T. ("Big Bill") Tilden, II. Germantown's clubhouse is also significant as an excellent example of the Georgian Revival style; it was designed by Charles F. McKim of the noted firm of McKim, Mead & White.<sup>1</sup>

### History

The Germantown Cricket Club became active in August 1854 and was formally organized in June 1855. (Only the Philadelphia Cricket Club, organized in February 1854, is older, and it now occupies a more recent building than the Germantown. Philadelphia's building is also much modified.)

In the next 6 years, just before the Civil War, cricket became so popular in the Philadelphia area that no less than 30 clubs were founded. Matches between them attracted large audiences and became important social as well as sporting events. The clubs tended to be local in membership, and drew from Philadelphia's large population of English immigrants working in the textile factories, as well as the old family gentry.

Germantown's membership was composed at first of boys aged 12 to 16 from families who owned estates in the vicinity. At first the club met and played on various estate grounds, but in 1856 acquired ground on Wister Street in Germantown. The club remained there until the Civil War broke out.

Interest in the game continued strong until 1861 when many of the players enlisted for service with the Union Army. After the war, a meeting was held in July 1866 to restore the club. Although baseball was replacing cricket as the most popular sport in America by this time, Germantown Cricket Club boasted more members in 1866 than in 1861.

Germantown remained an active and strong club in the postwar years. Then, in 1889 the Germantown and the Young America Cricket Clubs merged. The Young America, another distinguished Philadelphia club, dated its founding to 1855. The merger gave the club a membership of 2,000, including 100 active cricketers, the largest number in the country at the time.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 10

Quadrangle name Germantown

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

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

B 

1	8	4	8	5	3	1	0	4	4	2	9	9	3	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

1	8	4	8	5	0	1	0	4	4	2	9	9	3	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

1	8	4	8	5	0	1	0	4	4	3	0	2	4	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

The northeast half of the rectangular block bounded by Morris Street to the northeast, Manheim Street to the southeast, Wissahickon Avenue to the southwest, and Raspberry Street to the northwest.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name: James H. Charleton, Historian

organization: History Division, National Park Service date: June 26, 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

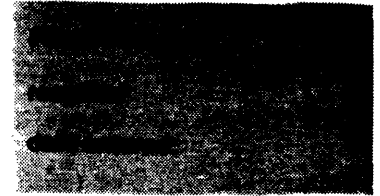
Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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The two bays to either side of the 2-story porch have openings on the first and second floors that contain 8/8 double-hung sash with marble sills and lintels with projecting keystones. There are 5 dormers on the main house on this face. The center and right dormers are pedimented. The left center and right center dormers are archhead.

The placement of wings alongside the main building required the conversion of the original side rooms into passageways. These wings followed the original Georgian Revival design concept. The northwest wing is 2 bays wide with 6/6 double-hung sash on both floors. A half-circle window sits within the gable end. The southeast wing is 3 bays wide by 4 bays in length. Not quite matching the west wing, the openings consist of 8/8 double-hung sash with marble trim and a half-circle light in the gable end. A central paneled door with columns, entablature, and pediment sits in the right center bay of this addition.

The Athletic Building

Designed by McKim, Mead & White in 1901, this 40 by 60 foot building, northwest of the main clubhouse, housed separate locker facilities, a "ladies" lounge, squash courts, a bowling alley, and a 2-story indoor swimming pool lit with modified Diocletian windows on three sides, with a spectators' gallery on the fourth. The pool area was floored over in the winters for use as a cricket practice hall. In 1929, two squash singles courts and bowling alleys, designed by Drewer & Churchman, were added to the west. The later additions remained sympathetic to the original design, which is distinguished to the north by the great gabled block of the swimming pool and to the south by a pedimented 2-story Doric portico.

The Playing Field

The large lawn south of the main clubhouse has retained its original configuration since first laid out by McKim as a cricket field in 1890. The playing field itself is rich in historical associations, having been the site of the important outdoor sporting events at the club, including the renowned Davis Cup matches of the 1920s, for which temporary wooden stands were erected. It is now principally used for lawn tennis and is finely kept.

The "Juniors' Clubhouse"

The "Juniors' Clubhouse," a square masonry building near the southeast corner of the plot, was built before 1876 as an outbuilding for the Price estate. McKim renovated it when he erected the clubhouse. The first-floor interior was fitted with Georgian Revival panelling and the exterior was given a Colonial Revival fenestration, with a balcony supported by a plastered cove around the four sides of the building, providing a gallery for promenading and viewing the playing fields. A high peaked roof surmounts the building. The structure presents a whimsical and picturesque counterpart to the formality of the main building. It is presently used for storage.

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The Stable

This eclectic late Queen Anne-styled building was built about 1890 to serve as a stable for a private residence at the corner of Manheim and Morris Streets, the intersection near which it still stands. This property was annexed by the Club about 1900, and the stable has since served the Club as a service building. It is a typical asymmetrical eclectic picturesque design combining several materials: stone, brick, and frame construction with ornamental shingles made of wood and hung tile. The building remains virtually unaltered.

The Entrance Gates and Front Fence

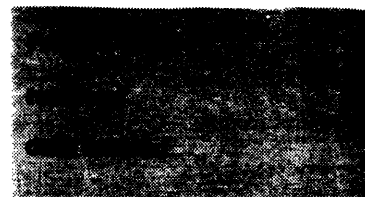
The entrance gates and fence on Manheim Street were erected at the same time as the original clubhouse and were designed by McKim. The brick piers with richly detailed molded brick panels, capped with carved limestone urns; the elaborate fences and entrance gates; and their semicircular flanking walls and wrought-iron arches are based on high-style English Georgian designs. They resemble designs by McKim, Mead & White for other gateways and fences, notably those at Harvard and Columbia Universities.

Footnote

<sup>1</sup>This description merges a draft description prepared by the Philadelphia Historical Commission, that by George Thomas, of Clio Group, Inc., for the State Historic Preservation Office, and a description appearing in a draft National Register of Historic Places nomination form by Mark and Joan Bower of the Club. None of these three documents have ever been submitted for local, State, or National Register listing.

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Shortly after the merger, the board of directors engaged Charles F. McKim, of McKim, Mead, and White, to plan a new clubhouse on land recently acquired by the club. McKim, a native of Germantown, was a member of the Club. The clubhouse was to be named "Manheim" in recognition of the street which connected the site with Germantown Avenue. Construction of the main clubhouse took place in 1890-91.

Tennis

Tennis gained ascendancy over cricket at Germantown early in the 20th century. The first 4 dirt courts were built in 1904 and 16 were added in 1911. Eventually, tennis courts covered the cricket field. The apogee of the club's tennis fame came during the career of "Big Bill" Tilden, who played for Germantown and whose family homes were less than two blocks from the club.

Tilden dominated world tennis in 1920-25. He won the United States national clay-court and doubles titles in 1918. He was the first American man to win the Wimbledon title, in 1920, and repeated that success the next year. With William M. Johnston, he won the Davis Cup back from Australia in 1920. In 1920-25, he won six United States singles championships in succession, those in 1921-23 on "home court" at Germantown, and came back for a swan song in 1929. In between, in annual Davis Cup matches in 1924-27, all also held at Germantown, Tilden starred in 1925, leading a 5-0 United States win over France; performed more poorly in 1926, although the United States topped France 4 sets to 1; and lost decisively in 1927 to René Lacoste ("The Alligator") as the United States lost to France 2-3.<sup>2</sup>

The role of women in tennis also received a perceptible impetus at Germantown. A tournament held in 1887 and 1888 became the first official U.S. championship for women in 1889. (Bertha Townsend won in the latter year.)<sup>3</sup>

Architecture

It has been noted that:

the Germantown Cricket Club is one of a number of commissions by McKim, Mead, and White which mark the shift by the firm away from their earlier more picturesque Shingle Style toward more academic Classical and Georgian Revival styles. The firm, indeed, was a leader in the Georgian Revival movement, which enjoyed great popularity from the 1890s through the 1920s. The use of Georgian-derived ornament and forms was deemed especially appropriate by the firm for commissions in which such styles were historically part of the local scene, with demonstrations of this design philosophy to be found in their academic work for Harvard and Princeton, the Commodore William Edgar House in Newport, Rhode Island, and the Germantown Cricket Club, all built in areas with strong ties to the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

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In addition, after Germantown's construction, the novelty of the style proved to be a prototype in the Philadelphia area. Local architects went on to popularize the Colonial and Georgian Revivals, influencing Philadelphians' taste as the preferred styles in the decades between 1890 and 1940.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The basic source for this history of the club is a draft National Register of Historic Places nomination form by Mark and Jean Bower, which has not been submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office. It draws generously on the Club's archives and minutes.

<sup>2</sup>Tilden's career here has been summarized as it appears in the article "Tennis," Encyclopedia Britannica (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1967), 21, 845-846; Frank Deford, Big Bill Tilden, The Triumphs and the Tragedy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), pp. 18-19, 35, 110-111, 144-148, 154-155, and 185-197; and Parke Cummings, American Tennis, The Story of a Game and Its People (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1957), p. 117, and Appendix.

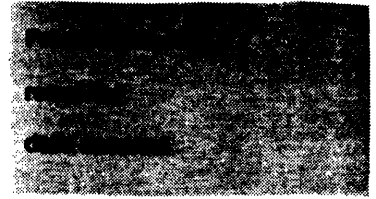
<sup>3</sup>"Tennis," Encyclopedia Britannica, 21, 848.

<sup>4</sup>Damie Stillman, ed., Architecture and Ornament in Late 19th-Century America (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware, 1981), pp. 38-39.



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