Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-7) UNITED STATES DE. ARTMI NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NA

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AND/OR COMMO	SAN DIEGO ROWING		nginally as ming Club")		or Rowing
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LOCATION	ON		1 7		
street & NUMBER 525 E. Harbor Drive			NOT FOR PUBLICATION		
CITY, TOWN	San Diego	VICINITY OF	CONG	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 42	
STATE	California	CODE O6	San Die	NTY	CODE 073
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OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTE X_YES: UNRESTRIC	-	_GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	NO		_INDUSTRIAL _MILITARY	TRANSPORTATION XOTHER: CTUD
OWNER	OF PROPERTY				
NAME S	San Diego Rowing	Club (Building	only . Lease	is on to	delands)
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REPRESI	ENTATION IN EX	CISTING SURVI	EYS	Callionin	.a
TITLE S	San Diego Histor:	ical Site No. 1	05, July 19	75	·
DATE	Site designation	n removed Janua	ry 1977)		
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DEPOSITORY FOR	s City Administra	ation Building,	Historical	Site Boa	rd
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CONDITION

__EXCELLENT

X_GOOD

__FAIR

__DETERIORATED

__UNEXPOSED

__RUINS

CHECK ONE

__UNALTERED

X_ALTERED

CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE

__MOVED

DATE_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

See page 3 (attached)
" Photos (")

:1- *

DEG K TO

NATIONAL REGISTER

The original structure of the Club House was built in 1899. This "Farly Shingle Style" Architecture was executed in heavy wood timber and concrete piles construction (see photo 1 and phase 1 as indicated in plan).

Description of the physical appearance in 1899 - San Diego Union dated January 1, 1900

The house rests on twenty-four 12x12 square pine timbers 24 feet long, which were driven about eight feet into the mud with a 2,300-pound pile-driver hammer. The caps, or girders, on which the joists of the house rests, are 2x18 (?) timbers let into the head of the piles on either side and bolted across through the head. The outside walls of the house are of boards and batten, and measure 45 feet in width and 82 feet in extreme length, with verandas 75 feet along and 6 and 3 feet in width, respectively on either side.

"The roof of the house projects over those verandas and rises at the ridgepoint twenty feet above the floor of the house, sloping to about eight feet at the walls. The house is approached from the steamship wharf by a short gangway. Fourteen feet from the wharf end of house a partition runs across the entire width. The space is subdivided into two ladies' club rooms, each about 14 feet square, that are divided by a sliding door, so that the two can be thrown into one large room. Beyond them are seven ladies' dressing rooms, each $4\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ feet, and a room fitted up with a cement floor for a ladies' shower bath. Next is an office, 10x12 feet and a ladies' dressing room, 6x10 feet. A stairway leads from the office to the roof, leading out by a door and outside stairway on the roof to an observation platform, with railing, and a flagpole in the center and one on either corner. It is intended that the club pennant shall float from the center flag pole and the ladies' club pennants from the cornerpoles".

"The main boat room of the club is 30x25 feet in size. The club at present owns nine single shells, one double, two four-oared shells, one eight-oared barge and one four-oared barge. It is proposed to purchase additional boats at an early date, and these, except the barges, will be stored in the main boat room".

"The men's dressing room adjoins the boat room, and is 16x45 feet containing four individual dressing-rooms and one general dressing-room with sixty lockers arranged in tiers across the width of the room. A man's shower-room, 8x12 feet, a sun room, 12x20 feet and a diving platform with springboard complete the accommodations of the house, which are not excelled by those of any other on the coast. Two barges are suspended from slings under a hood roof which rests on four piles adjoining the house. Between the piles is a divided float, approached from the house by a gangway, leading direct from the boat room and two stairways at either end of the house lead from the floor level to the water.

"The house is painted red, with roof and trimmings white, and presents a very handsome appearance. The lattice work in the windows, which cuts off much of the sun and air from the interior, will probably be removed. To a great extent the house depends upon skylights in the roof for its light."

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Description of the physical appearance in 1905 - (see photo 2 and phase 2\of the REGISTER Architectural plan).

Major addition was constructed in 1905, and adds approximately 5,000 sq. ft. to the existing Club House. The Reception room was completed for use of members and their guests. The small high windows were lowered and enlarged to become fine observation windows, affording a view of the bay in both directions. The roof of the House has been recovered over the Reception Room. The hand ball court has been moved from the north side to the south side of the boat room for the greater convenience of the players and those desiring to use boats. It also adds a new porch and two new steps for the swimmers and one new step for boats opposite the carpenter shop. The float piles were re-cemented and all piles cement washed and a new beacon light was put on the roof.

Description of the physical appearance in 1913.- (see photo 3 and phase 3 of Architectural plan).

During 1911 to 1913, the Club House had been greatly enlarged, making a larger sun room, boat house lunch room and gym room for wrestling and boxing with weight machines and rowing machines. Three new showers were added and a larger swimming porch with two spring boards. The roof was re-shingled, gravelled and tarred and a new sky-light was re-enforced with glass. The hand ball courts walls were extended making four walled courts.

From time to time there has been proper maintenance to the building.

The building is structurally sound and in an excellent location. We feel that it is important to preserve, as it reflects the early cultural development of San Diego.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AR	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK 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/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
X 1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
XX_1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	X_OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		Sports

SPECIFIC DATES
1899

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Architect unknown
J. H. Cassidy, Contractor

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Significance: The San Diego Rowing Club was organized on June 1. 1888 by Charter Members Emanuel J. Lewis. George Marston (early mercantilist, philanthropist) Dr. F. R. Burnham (early physician) Captain Paul Hemus, and W. W. Whitson (first San Diego County Coroner). For many years it was the most important men's club in San Diego as well as being San Diego's first rowing club. Early records show that there was great interest in rowing and swimming and the club, first known as the Excelsior Rowing and Swimming Club was organized to further these interests. The Club came to be known as the "Father of Aquatic Sports" in San Diego. Rowing still concerns the Club and approximately 300 hours are still rowed per month. The name was changed to the present title on September 2, 1891 as the Club wished to be geographically identified in competition. On September 14, 1895, it incorporated. Originally the Club was affiliated with the Pacific Association of Amateur Oarsmen, competing with California and Canadian teams and in national competition with Philadelphia and Chicago. Since the mid forties, the Club has been a member of the National Association of Amateur Oarsman; it competes today on a limited

Competition Sports: Rowing. In competition rowing teams took first place consistently. In 1964, Jim Storm took second place winning a silver medal at Olympics in Tokyo. In 1966, the Club placed second in the rowing championships at Bled, Yugoslavia. In 1974, Kearney Johnston, the Club's Chief Rowing Instructor since 1935, won a gold medal at the International Veteran's Rowing Regatta at Bern, Switzerland; he also competed in Mexico in 1977, placing fourth in the Veteran's Singles. Johnston epitomizes the philosophy of the club which is that all coaching is volunteer. He has guided rowers and estimates he has taught near 5000 men to row. At the turn of the century, the Club extended its facilities to the early women's clubs: the La Sienas, Oceanids, Nerids and the Columbias; Handball: Handball was begun in 1902 for the San Diego area as a conditioning adjunct for rowing. Competition today is in the Lefty Cowle Open Tournament which began in 1974. It is open to national competition. Swimming: Swimming was part of the earliest sport and early pictures show extensive sun bathing. The Club competed in swim metes. In 1902, Howard Brewer, nationally known, broke his own open water record at the SDRC. In 1920, Clarence Pinkston was a champion Olympic diver; he trained at the Beginning in the mid 1890's the Club sponsored the New Year Dip to advertise San Diego's "salubrious climate" and it continues today. Early Chamber of Commerce brochures used pictures from these events. Bowling: The SDRC League, consisting of 8 teams, was organized in 1920 and still meets today Service To The Community: In national competition, the Club has been the emissary of San Diego. The local universities of UCSD, SDSU, and USD as well as the local highschools have used the facilities of the Club. The Sea Scouts a branch of the Boy Scouts of America, have quartered here since 1922. Since

9 MAJOR BIBLIO	GRAPHICAL RE	FERENCES		
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Form No. 10-300a (Hev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 2

Owners of Property, cont.

All tidelands are the property of the ARSING AND STATE OF California. The San Diego ASAND AND Unified Port District is a non-profit corporation whose Board of Commissioners are appointed to administer the district in accordance with State Public Law 41 for the benefit of the people.

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

1937, they have used one end of the Brennan Island facility to store their gear and as their headquarters. Philosophy of the Club: In the words of early members, the Club was a "plain club, minus frills, offering fellowship and a stimulating life to its members". It "aspired to be an organization giving service to the young men of the community to compete in a clean decent place without any particular sectarian dedication". Early prominent members: Mayors James E. Wadham, Harley Knox, John Butler, Percy Benbough, Charles Dail; San Diego County Supervisor and SDRC Secretary for many years DeGraff Austin; Real estate Developer Charles F. O'Neall; Doctors H E. Andrews, Howard Bard, Clarence Reese; Banker Andy Borthwick; Fire Chiefs George Courser and Louis Almgren; Police Chief Elmer Jansen; Marshall McComb of the State Supreme Court; Judge William A. Sloane, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court; Judges Ben Hamrick and Earl Maas; Early merchantilists Melville Klauber and the three brothers Dick, George and Joe Jessop. These are only a few of the city's decision makers who enjoyed the Club's downtown location. At one time it boasted a membership of over 1000; today its membership is not as high but a new revitalization has taken place.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED. AUG 3 0 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE Addendum page 1

ADDENDUM

The San Diego Rowing Club is located on the northeastern shore of San Diego Bay near the foot of Fifth Street. The building originally stood on pilings over open water several hundred feet from shore, connected to land by a narrow wooden causeway. Recent land fill operations have enclosed the westerly and southerly sides of the building and have eradicated the open aspect of the building's original appearance. This area is to become parking space for a public park.

The original building was a board and batten single-wall wooden structure approximately 45 by 82 feet in size. It had open verandas on two sides, a medium gabled roof with a walkway and observation platform in the center of the roof. The original building contained two club rooms, dressing rooms, showers, office, sun room, and a large boat room. In 1905 the building was extended to the northeast and northwest with a 5000 square foot addition. As the club grew, it was necessary to expand again. Between 1911 and 1913, the building was enlarged on the southeast side, adding a larger sun-room, boat house lunch room and gym. New showers were added. Interior modifications were made throughout the building to accommodate the club's needs. The northeast exterior wall was resided to unify the 1905 and 1913 additions into a single surface. Later in 1932, an 8 foot extension leading to the boat dock was added to this wall to accommodate the first 8 oared shells bought by the club. With this final addition, the building archieved its present configuration. Other subsequent alterations have been minor and have been restricted primarily to window modifications, a small addition to the entrance, and the replacement of the window pane screen around the sundeck with a solid wooden fence. The historic barn red paint scheme has been replaced by white paint. porting pilings show advanced deterioration.

The San Diego Rowing Club building on San Diego Bay was recently reviewed by a Structural Engineering Firm to evaluate the fassibility of restoring its structural integrity. Briefly, themodifications necessary to restore its structural integrity consist of repair to the support piling and strengthening the building to resist contemporary design earthquake and wind loads. The piling repair would require cutting off the existing piles at the mud line, and splicing new pole tops to the existing lower portions. The building would be strengthened by adding either plywood or horizontal bracing to the existing roof, and adding selected wall sheathing as required. These strengthening operations are considered feasible and can be accomplished while preserving the historical architectural attributes.

A later facility, the Breman Island handball court was constructed in 1937, and was connected to the San Diego Rowing Club by a wooden causeway. This facility has now been surrounded by landfill and is no longer part of the Rowing Club. It is not included in this nomination.

At present the facility is in limited use. Major activities have been moved to Mission Bay, 10 miles to the northwest. The club is retaining some rowing activities

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

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at this site, and hopes to continue this use of the property, providing that the threat of demolition can be removed.

Piling repair has been halted until the Register application has been reviewed. The posture of the San Diego Harbor commissioners is one of antagonism toward restoration efforts. However, the club has not been boarded up and the building continues in daily use for rowing. No other uses can be made of the premises, since a fire inspector's declaration that the building is hazardous for occupancy. This ruling pertains mostly to restaurant operations, consequently rowing is permissible. Among current possibilities are the rejuvenation of the building and its rental to waterfront-oriented businesses. One engineering firm has declared its interest for thie purpose. Another propect is to use a portion of the building for rowing and use the remainder as a public museum. A third route--but remote--is a wholesale overhaul of the bulding by popular support. However, the atmosphere created by United Port District policy among the business community continues to mitigate against this didnavor.

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

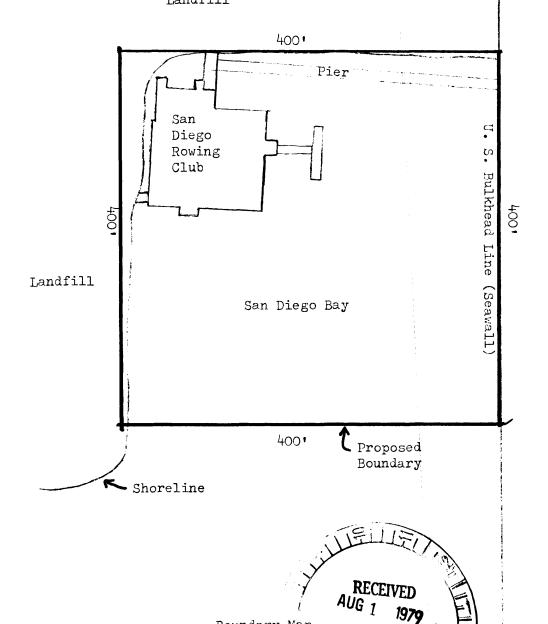
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PAGE Addendum page 1

ADDENDUM

The San Diego Rowing Club is one of the oldest such clubs in California. Organized in 1888 as the Excelsior Rowing and Swimming Club, the club has been a major acquatic athletic organization in San Diego since its founding. Its membership timeluded many civic leaders and important local persons. It was the major center of activity for acquatic sports in the City of San Diego throughout much of its history. It also was a leader in local social activities, sponsoring one of the earliest Sea Scout ship companies in California. Today it remains as the last surviving represtional boathouse in the city of San Diego, one of the last two on San Diego Bay, and the last to continue functioning in its original use.





Boundary Map

San Diego Rowing ClubATIONAL San Diego, Calif. REGISTER

