

PHO 352 241

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 3 1976

DATE ENTERED

JUL 30 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**

HOSTESS HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

Community House, now Veterans' Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

West of the University Avenue Underpass of El Camino Real 12th

CITY, TOWN

Palo Alto

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Southern Pacific Railroad Station

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Santa Clara

CODE

085

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

___STRUCTURE

___SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

___PRIVATE

___BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

___UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

___YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

___NO

PRESENT USE

___AGRICULTURE

___COMMERCIAL

___EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

___GOVERNMENT

___INDUSTRIAL

___MILITARY

___MUSEUM

___PARK

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___RELIGIOUS

___SCIENTIFIC

___TRANSPORTATION

___OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Palo Alto

STREET & NUMBER

250 Hamilton Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Palo Alto

STATE

VICINITY OF Stanford University California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Santa Clara County Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

191 North 1st

CITY, TOWN

San José

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Point of Historical Interest, SC1-013

DATE

1969

___FEDERAL ___STATE COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

California State Department of Parks & Recreation

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

STATE

California

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>1919</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original appearance of the Hostess House can be well documented from photographs. There are numerous ones in the files of the Palo Alto Historical Association, showing both the interiors and exteriors.

Built in an H-shape Hostess House was one-story, light frame, board and batten construction. It was no more extravagant in the use of lumber than a barrack, but it was far more attractive and pleasing. The bar of the H-shape was the roomy, public reception hall. Light from six dormer windows played upon the grace of the trusses exposed overhead. The focal points of interest were brick fireplaces at each end nestled cozily under overhanging balconies. The fireplaces, the building's only source of heat, were enclosed with the then-popular built-in benches. In good weather the window-doors opened onto inviting verandas stretching across both the front and back. On each side of the hall were wings divided into rooms. One was for the use of men and had a dining room and kitchen, etc. The other side was for women and children with a resident apartment for the director of the house.

Both the exterior and the inviting interior were painted a light gray enlivened with bright colors in furnishings and gay lanterns. The Hostess House and the library were the only buildings in Camp Fremont which were painted.

There is a striking similarity with Julia Morgan's 1910 design for the St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley. The structure of the building is everything, nevertheless it presents a harmonious appearance. Some believe that such designing was the result of Julia Morgan's traditional French training to use ordinary things in a way they were beautiful. There have been very few architects who attempt this kind of merger and there are few who attain anything of this order with subtle grace in a common "Army building."

To take one step further, the Hostess House meets the characteristic features of the Bay Region Traditional style: It does not hide its construction materials; its exposed rafters, trusses, etc. are ornamental. The fireplaces are most important. Balconies and built-in furniture were the vogue. Enclosures within a main room permitted numerous different functions to be carried on at one time. In other words, the same qualities for a residence were incorporated into the desired effect for the Hostess House.

The building was used at Camp Fremont from May to October 1918. The YWCA gave (for legality reasons \$1 was charged for the record) the Hostess House to the City of Palo Alto. In keeping with Julia Morgan's rigid control of any building which she designed, she met with the city's committee on 10 April 1919 and approved the moving to an oak-studded site near the Palo Alto railroad station. It was agreed at this time that the building would be raised four feet above the ground level to give room to install a heating system and to improve the elevation view of the structure. Brick terraces were to be provided, and the house was to be repainted gray.

In May 1919 the wings of the building were detached and the structure cut into sections. Nine pieces were put on rollers and were pulled by teams of horses to land leased from Stanford University.

The present appearance is disappointing, but basically the building is the same and it could be easily and inexpensively restored. Its appears drab and lifeless now, principally because of the way in which it has been painted. It is as though the whole structure had been dropped into a can of olive green paint. Much of the window glass has been painted over, which gives a dull, vacated, lifeless look. The

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few transparent windows are masked with battered Venetian blinds. Many of the windows, especially the bay windows, have been boarded over. The worst frustration is to enter the main hall expecting to see Julia Morgan's characteristic design features. The leasees of the building have removed the balconies and "boxed in" the room with ceiling board. They say it was done for economy in heating. It also cut off sight of the exposed beams and trusses and light from the dormers.

The right wing is almost intact. The front room of the left wing has been divided into several small "offices" by flimsy partitions.

In 1922 the resident's apartment at the rear left was extended.

During that decade the rear veranda was used as a stage for an outdoor theater. By excavating and mounding the earth beyond 500 people could watch the amateur performances. This back area is now neglected.

In 1974 the City Manager announced the intention to raze the building when the lease expired in October 1976. The City Council membership has changed and there seems to be sympathy toward the preservation and restoration of the Hostess House.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

May 1918

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Julia Morgan

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. The Hostess House is the only intact building remaining from the two Army training camps established in California during World War I.

At the closing of Camp Fremont in Menlo Park, south of San Francisco, the Army's buildings were dismantled and sold for lumber salvage. The exceptions were buildings still needed for hospital purposes, but eventually all of these were razed, also. The buildings built and equipped by organizations at the request of the War Department were sold or moved by the owners. All of the Y.M.C.A. buildings at Camp Fremont were moved and renovated; the Knights of Columbus building was moved to Belmont and has been demolished.

None of the World War I buildings remain at Camp Kearny.

2. The Hostess House is a distinguished example of a simple, functional but artistic design by Julia Morgan, California's early woman architect-engineer.

The War Department requested that the Y.W.C.A. build, equip, and maintain structures in forty continental Army training camps. Identified as Hostess Houses, they were a safe and dignified meeting places for women and children coming to military posts to visit friends, husbands, and relatives enlisted in the service.

In California responding to a rock-bottom budget Julia Morgan's design for the Y.W.C.A. is a good example of use of well defined lines, attractively and interestingly proportioned with her keynote "signature" of exposed, functional wood trusses in the main hall. Characteristically, she combined craftsman's artistic qualities with the utilitarian needs of a Hostess House.

3. Subsequently the structure provided the basic concept as well as the shelter for a community center. After moving the Hostess House to adjoining Palo Alto and dubbing it the Community House, it became the first community center in the United States established and supported by a municipality. (Similar programs were being supported simultaneously elsewhere by private organizations.)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Steilberg, Walter T., "Some Examples of the Work of Julia Morgan." Architect and Engineer of California, LV (November 1918), 102, 106, 107.

Wood, Dallas E. History of Palo Alto. Palo Alto, 1939. pp. 151-158.

City of Palo Alto Council Minutes, Planning Commission Minutes, and Annual Reports of the Community Center Commission.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ca. 10 acres *9 1/2 Acres*
 UTM REFERENCES *1 E 8 N 14 W 6 N 8 76*

A	10	57,38,8,0	4,144,140	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Hostess House was moved unto land which is leased from Stanford University. The building was placed at the eastern end of the narrow strip, which is bounded by the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, El Camino Real, and two railroad crossings -- Alma and University avenues. Community House recreational activities led to the designation, El Camino Park.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Dorothy F. Regnery, Exec. Board Member

ORGANIZATION
Palo Alto Historical Association

STREET & NUMBER
488 Westridge Drive

CITY OR TOWN
Portola Valley, California

DATE
13 October 1975

TELEPHONE
415-854-5074

STATE
California

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE XX 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.

Signature *Herbert Moxes* 2-5-76

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 7-30-76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Charles...* DATE 7-30-76

CLERK OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER