

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

The Sailors' Snug Harbor

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Richmond Terrace, New Brighton

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Borough of Richmond, New York

VICINITY OF

17th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New York

Richmond

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
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of New York

Honorable Abraham D. Beame

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

STATE

New York

VICINITY OF

New York 10007

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

New York County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

New York,

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

HABS

DATE

1968

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

The components of Sailors' Snug Harbor are recorded by HABS as follows:

Building "A" of Sailors' Snug Harbor is a dormitory building. It is two stories high with an attic and a high basement. This structure is a long rectangular building with a six columned (hexastyle) portico of stone. A handsome flight of steps leads up to the portico. An imposing classic pediment crowns the main facade and reflects the gabled form of the roof over the remainder of the structure. The proportions of the portico are exceptionally fine. Here the beautifully designed Ionic columns support the pedimented roof in a manner which closely reflects the design of a classic Greek temple.

The different fronts of the five buildings contribute significantly to the success of the group. Each one of the three designs related well to the others, while giving some variety to the overall picture. The five buildings are parallel and are joined in an interesting manner by enclosed galleries which link the buildings and form interior corridors from end to end of the group. The porticos of the central and end buildings are aligned with each other, while the two intermediate buildings which have only small porches seem to be set back. In reality the front walls of all five buildings are in approximately the same plane. This variation lends increased interest to the entire scheme.

Building "B" is the west wing, the above building "A" being the east wing added to the main block in 1839. The original structure is building "C" of 1833.

It is a dormitory building, two stories high with an attic and a high basement. This structure is a long rectangular building with a gabled roof and a small porch at its entrance. The front wall is of stone. Building "B" is simpler than the porticoed buildings which adjoin it. Part of its charm and great attraction comes from its residential appearance. The smooth front wall contrasts well with the small entrance porch while the gabled roof and columns of the porch relate it to its neighbors. This building demonstrates excellent proportions in its simple Greek Revival facade.

Building "C" the central building of the group, is the administration building. It is two stories high with an attic and a high basement. This structure is a long rectangular building with an eight columned (octastyle) portico of stone. A handsome flight of steps leads up to the portico. An imposing classic pediment crowns the main facade and reflects the gabled form of the roof over the remainder of the structure. The proportions of the portico are exceptionally fine. The beautifully designed Ionic columns support the pedimented roof.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1833, 1841, 1855, 1869, 1895 BUILDER/ARCHITECT 1833 building attributed to Martin E. Thompson/Minard Lafever

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A rare surviving example of urban planning, landscaping and buildings in the Greek Revival style, Sailors' Snug has no equal in scale, extent or quality in America. The United States Naval Home in Philadelphia (Strickland) is not so large and Girard College (T.V. Walter), except for Founder's Hall, is not so complex. A series of five buildings with great Greek porticos form the main block of dormitories and offices. The other structures, while detached are harmonious with the 1833 scheme.

There are extensive reports both in Historic American Buildings Survey (1968) compiled by Diana S. Waite and in the files of the New York Landmarks Commission excerpts follow:

"The Sailors' Snug Harbor, a home for aged seamen opened in 1833, occupies a spacious site on Staten Island overlooking the Kill Van Kull which leads into New York Harbor. Buildings on the property range from an outstanding group of five Greek Revival dormitory and administration buildings through to a twentieth-century theater and recreation hall. The various structures provide a particularly rich catalog of nineteenth-century architecture.

The history of the institution: The Sailors' Snug Harbor was established "for the purpose of maintaining and supporting aged, decrepit and worn-out sailors" under the will of Captain Robert Richard Randall, who died in June, 1801. The income of the property of Randall's estate, located in downtown Manhattan, has supported the institution from the time of its founding until recently when it was acquired by the City of New York. The home for Sailors' is to be relocated in the South and the complex now stands empty awaiting a re-use proposal.

Located on a beautiful plot bordering the Kill Van Kull overlooking New York harbor and Brooklyn on what was 130 acres of farmland, the site is spectacular. The trust fund established by Randall was based on lucrative real estate holdings on Lower Broadway, the will being drawn up by Alexander Hamilton and Daniel D. Tompkins. The elder Robert Richard Randall had left his bachelor son a fortune gained in Privateering during Revolutionary War, thus the son thought it appropriate

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about 85 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	5,7,6	0,8,0	4,4	9,9	5,8,0	B	1,8	5,7,6	1,3,0	4,4	9,9	0,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
C	1,8	5,7,5	6,9,0	4,4	9,8	8,8,0	D	1,8	5,7,5	5,7,0	4,4	9,9	5,3,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

As seen on the enclosed plot map, the boundary of Sailor's Snug Harbor National Historic Landmark is coterminous with that of Sailor's Snug Harbor Park, bounded on the north by Richmond Terrace, on the west by a line 200 feet east and parallel to Kissel Avenue, on the south by a line 200 feet north and parallel to Henderson Avenue on the east by Tysen Street and the park property line.

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

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service - Historic Sites Survey

DATE

8/3/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D.C.

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Building "D" of Sailors' Snug Harbor is a dormitory building. It is two stories high with an attic and a high basement. This structure is a long rectangular building with a gabled roof and a small porch at its entrance. The front wall is of stone. Building "D" is simpler than the porticoed buildings which adjoin it. The smooth front wall contrasts well with the small entrance porch while the gabled roof and columns of the porch relate it to its neighbors.

Building "E" of Sailors' Snug Harbor is a dormitory building. It is two stories high with an attic and a high basement. This structure is a long rectangular building with a six columned (heyastyle) portico of stone. An imposing classic pediment crowns the main facade and reflects the gabled form of the roof over the remainder of the structure.

This attractive little Chapel is representative of the romantic phase of American architecture of the mid-19th Century. Set in ample grounds, the structure forms a part of the group of buildings of Sailors' Snug Harbor and is located facing the East-West axial roadway and just behind the theatre. The Chapel is a brick building with round-arched windows and a handsome tower which rises considerably above the roof and has a belfry. In the Chapel is a fine set of stained glass windows of the period. (Circa 1855) Italianate in character, probably designed by James Salmon, builder at the Harbor, it is rectangular in shape, 92' by 45', constructed of brick painted gray, the rises tower on the north facade.

The Gatehouses: Different in concept, the gatehouses are vernacular designs of third quarter of the 19th century--a combination of Italianate, Second Empire and Romanesque. Intended as a pedestrian entrance, the East gate was constructed about 15 feet back of the much older iron fence, interrupted here by a narrow pair of gates, and directly on the central axis of the five great Greek Revival buildings behind it. Its high central archway frames a view of the obelisk erected in 1834 in memory of Robert Richard Randall (1750-1801), through whose bequest the Harbor was established, and of the octastyle portico of the main administration building. Except for a couple of small rooms for custodial use and equipment storage, the main function of this Gatehouse was to provide a formal approach to the row of monumental Sailors' Snug Harbor buildings.

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That the designer recognized the essentially formal role of the Gatehouse is revealed by unexpectedly subtle detail. What at first glance appears to be a simple rectangular building is actually slightly trapezoidal in plan. The long north wall of the Gatehouse is parallel to the fence and the line of Richmond Terrace, the south wall is parallel to the slightly different alignment of the five Greek Revival temples beyond it. Thus, whether viewed from either its north or south side (which, incidentally, are identical in design) the Gatehouse seems correctly related to its surroundings.

The elevations themselves, however, are what give the little building its unique character. The high central archways, which frame each end of the tunnel vault that runs through the building, are flanked by a pair of generously proportioned flat-headed windows that light the two flanking guard rooms through four-over-four sash. The archways themselves, the windows, the corners of the buildings, as well as the corners of two projecting wings are strongly emphasized by projecting quoins. These are cut from marble on the original buildings, and from sandstone on the wings. Their alternating long and short shapes and the sharp bevel of their rustication contrast vividly with the cream-colored painted brickwork of the building itself.

The Main entrance for carriages is larger and much more formal, rectangular in plan and constructed out of brick painted yellow. It is 40' by 20' wide crowned with a wooden cupola. There is a small West gate as well.

Houses for Secretary, Engineer, Gardener, Baker, and Farmer.

A series of small, very attractive houses made of red brick with slate mansard roofs and wood front porches.

There are several other buildings--a dining hall, infirmary and commandant's house all in excellent condition.

The iron fence is as old as the buildings and beautifully wrought. Recent research by I. Barnett Shepherd was corroborated a date in the early 1840s for the central portion of the fence opposite these buildings. It was fabricated and erected by William Alexander of Broome Street, Manhattan, from designs by the noted British-born architect, Frederick Diaper (1810-1906), a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and a founding member of the American Institute of Architects. Since William Alexander's sons continued the business of "smith and ornamental ironwork" after their father's death in 1860, it is more than likely that the same firm executed subsequent additions to the fence which match the original.

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to will the remainder as Hamilton stated: "a fortune made on the sea might well be devoted to caring for aged and disabled seamen."¹

Although constructed over a period of years the whole unit is rich in variety but carefully controlled to maintain a respect for the main Greek Revival block. The continuity and high level of design makes the Home a unique architectural complex and one of the great remaining statements of the Greek Revival style.

In the May 1976 issue of the SAH Journal Barnett Shepherd refutes the traditional attribution to Martin Thompson (1786-1877) and gives the design to Minard Lafever (1798-1854) noting that Sailors' Snug Harbor is his earliest known work and a unique monument in Lafever's career.

¹ report prepared by Diana Waite

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May 1976, pp. 108-123

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Photographs and Their Descriptions

Location: Sailor's Snug Harbor, Staten Island, New York

Photo credit: Historic American Buildings Survey

- Photos: 1. Facade
2. Theatre
3. Interior Administration Building
4. Interior Administration Building
5. Workers' Houses
6. Old Print
7. Bandstand