

Roosevelt Base, Officers' Club

(Building No. 24)

Corner of Pennsylvania Street and Richardson Avenue

Long Beach  
Los Angeles  
California

HABS No. CA-2663-0

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
ROOSEVELT BASE, OFFICERS' CLUB (Building No. 24)

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HABS No. CA-2663-O

**Location:** Corner of Pennsylvania Street and Richardson Avenue, Naval Station  
Long Beach,  
Long Beach, Los Angeles, California

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator

Coordinates: 11.384680.3735700

**Significance:** The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, five structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, architectural style, and its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally, the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

Building 24, the original Officers' Club called the Allen Center, was once a dominant building in the recreation complex, but has been so remodeled that its original International Style attributes have been overwhelmed. The dramatic port cochere, now hidden by landscaping, the entry door and the pool side door, set within window walls, are the only original elements remaining with architectural integrity.

**Description:** Exterior. This irregular shaped building, measuring 251' x 267'4", has a foundation of reinforced concrete piles, and reinforced concrete walls, 9" thick with a 4' x 8' plywood form-board exposed finish. It has hip and gable roofs with red shingle tiles over reinforced concrete slabs with overhanging eaves 4 feet wide in the original sections. The building's location affords dining views on the south side towards the harbor. The main entrance on the west side, with a curved entry drive, has a port cochere with thrusting concrete pylons supporting a flat concrete roof. Two dressing room wings to the north enclose a grassy area leading to the tennis courts. The kitchen and service court with a loading dock are on the east side.

The front entrance has an original wood-paneled double door with brass pulls, recessed behind a projecting concrete frame and surrounded by a window wall of 18 square panes in broad metal frames. The pool side entrance on the north side is also original. It consists of a double glass door in a metal frame with brass push plates, surrounded by ten square

fixed windows in metal frames. This door is recessed behind a projecting concrete frame and opens to a porch with a wide landing and three steps covered with carpet. The remaining doors are modern and varied: single and double metal doors; double varnished wood doors; modern aluminum frame double glass doors with glass transoms; sliding glass doors; and single metal doors.

The east side has two horizontal wood sash windows with eight panes each, three original high ribbon windows in metal frames with two, three, or four sets of panes; a double slider window; and a double plate glass window. The west side has five sets of original high ribbon windows of obscure glass in metal sash, a modern louver window in aluminum sash; and a modern fixed five-paned picture window in anodized aluminum sash.

The north side has original ribbon windows in metal frames, and a large modern fixed window with tinted panes in aluminum frames. The south side has an original window wall of multi-paned metal sash windows, and four large modern fixed tinted panes in aluminum sash. The top cupola has fixed mirrored glass panes in metal sash.

Interior. The original structure had a total gross floor area of 27,686 square feet. This interior space, enlarged over the years to 50,932 square feet, is divided into dining rooms, bars, a lobby, offices, women's powder room and bathrooms, locker rooms, a recreation rental equipment room, kitchen, delivery, storage, and other utility rooms. The walls are covered with plywood paneling and/or wall paper. The dropped ceilings are covered with acoustic tiles with inset fluorescent lights. The floors are covered with wall-to-wall carpeting. The original staircase to the second floor is of concrete covered with carpeting; the concrete balustrade is topped with a rounded varnished wood hand rail.

Alterations. Over the years extensive alterations and additions have been made to Building 24.

Exterior Alterations: On the north side the original loggia was enclosed in 1956, enlarging the original grill room into a dining room. The central open patio was enclosed for a dining room the same year. An Officers' swimming pool (30' x 60') and a children's wading pool (12' x 18'), constructed in 1954, were filled with dirt in 1992 and made into a lawn. In 1992 a concrete block boiler room was added on the northeast wing.

Building 24 received large renovation funding in 1968, and as a result, major exterior and interior additions and remodeling were undertaken. On the roof over the main entrance a second story addition was constructed. A gable-roof wing addition for offices and a game room was added to the southwest corner. On the south side; alterations included an infill of the original lounge porch, on the southwest, reusing

the original windows, and the extension of the original dining room. On the east side three large storage wings were added. The wing at the northeast section has a recreational equipment rental room, and a camp storage room with ice and cool drink area. The central wing has the service rooms for the kitchen. The wing at the east and south, also has two storage rooms, a mechanical room, a linen room, and a band room.

Interior Alterations. Every room has had cosmetic and/or functional alterations. The original smooth concrete plaster walls were covered with plywood paneling and/or wall paper. Dropped ceilings covered with acoustic tiles have replaced the original textured plaster ceiling. All the original lighting, including free standing torchiere lights, recessed ceiling lighting, indirect cove lighting, and overhead school-house type lamps with white glass globes have been replaced with fluorescent lights.

Surroundings. Building 24 is surrounded on the north by a grassy area where the swimming pool used to be with the tennis courts (221) beyond. To the south is a large expanse of lawn, olive trees, and a row of palm trees along Richardson Avenue. To the east is a service court, a paved parking area and building 23. To west is a "U" - shape drive, with grass, rose gardens, palm trees in the landscaped area within the U, and a large decorative anchor and a pole sign advertising the Allen Center.

**Historical Context:** Building 24, built in 1942 at the cost of \$350,586, was designed for use as a recreational area with swimming pool, dining facilities, locker rooms, and lounges for officers. It is currently used as an Officers' Club. Its construction was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet anchored in San Pedro harbor. The construction of this complex was part of a nationwide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy, through Allied Engineers, hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost \$18 million, funded by Congressional appropriations. Included were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233) and tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), and fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41), gatehouse (40), and main gates (gate 1), and a net pier (pier 7, structure 126), and extensive landscaping.

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for personnel of the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not used initially for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion; new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facilities were used during World War II as support for a Small Craft Training Center and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

The Officers' Recreation Center, including the Officers' Club House, tennis courts, and swimming pool, were designated Allen Center in honor of Captain Ezra G. Allen, USN, Director of Budget and Reports, Navy Department, who had been one of the officers responsible for obtaining approval and appropriations for the Fleet Operating Base on Terminal Island (Rouse 1954: 180). These facilities were used by the officers assigned to both Roosevelt Base and the Small Craft Training Center for dining and recreation.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support the U.S. Navy ships' personnel either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense downsized at the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

**Sources:**

Architectural drawings #1834, #18355-1, #18368-2, #18369-1, #18369-2, #18370-1, #18370-2, #18371-1, #18371-2, #18373-1, #18373-2, #29188, #18462, #18463, #29186, #29187, #18392, #18393, #18394, #18395, #12121, #12123, #12124, #24454, #24455, #25648 are located at Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard archives. The original drawings date to June 6 and December 12, 1941. Alterations date to 1954, 1962, 1965, 1968, and 1975.

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California*. Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment - Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California*. San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

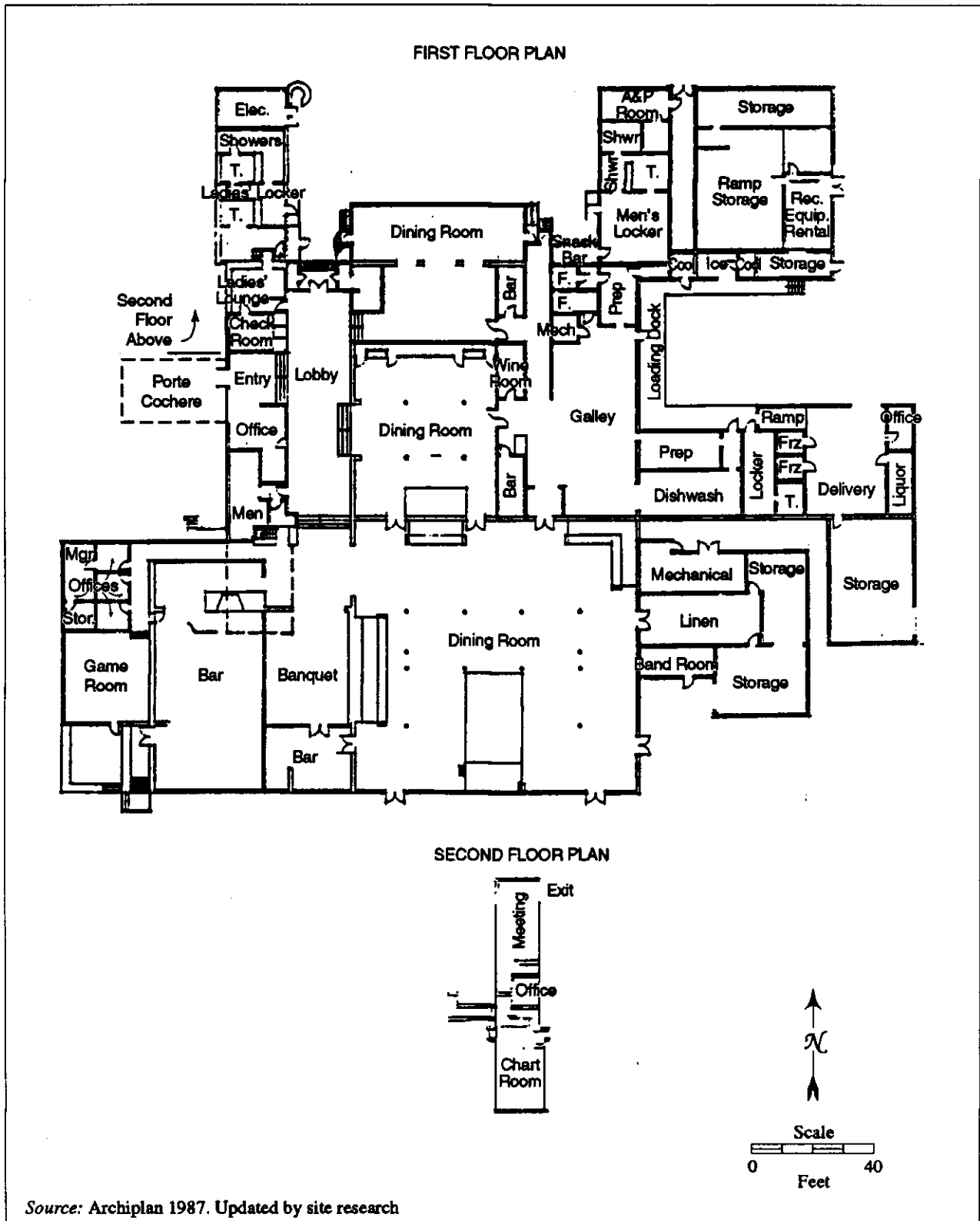
Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

**Project Information:** This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated \_\_\_\_\_ 1996, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.



LAYOUT OF BUILDING 24. 1996