

Roosevelt Base, Field House
(Building No. 22)
Corner of West Virginia Street and Reeves Avenue
~~Naval Base Long Beach~~
Long Beach
Los Angeles
California

HABS No. CA-2663-F

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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, FIELD HOUSE (Building No. 22)

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Location: Corner of West Virginia Street and Reeves Avenue, Naval Station Long Beach,
Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

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

Coordinates: 11.384840.3735210

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 22, a fitness center, is significant as an original part of the recreational facilities designed for the Pacific Fleet personnel. It retains its architectural integrity.

Description: Exterior. This one-story complex consists of two L shaped buildings, measuring 160' x 295'2", connected by arcades. The bases of the Ls are joined by a short arcade and the legs of the Ls are linked by the large arcade, Building 234, forming a quadrangle that encloses the swimming pool. A windowless section on the east L houses the racquetball courts. Built of reinforced concrete beams on a reinforced concrete pile foundation, the buildings have reinforced concrete walls, 10" thick, with a 4' x 8' plywood form-board exposed finish, and flat roofs with rolled composition roofing over concrete slabs.

The three main entrances to the complex are on the north side. The central entrance, through the short arcade, consists of five shallow steps with two pipe railings leading to the landing of the arcade and from there to the swimming pool, protected by a chain link fence. Modern aluminum-framed glass double doors topped by large fixed glass panes provide access to the east and west Ls on the north side. These doors are set in projecting concrete frames with a modern metal canopy and open onto wide porches with five shallow steps made of textured concrete, with pipe railings. Original lights flank these entrances. They consist of

metal back plates with ribbed cylindrical glass inserts and were manufactured by the Crouse Hinds Company.

The entrance to the Navy Relief offices at the southeast corner of the east L, has triple glass doors in a metal frame, topped by fixed three-paned windows in metal sash. The original doors have bronze horizontal bars with bronze vertical cylindrical hand grips, 6" long and 1" in diameter.

Ribbon windows, both fixed and transom, set in projecting concrete frames, are found in the east L on the north, south, east, and west sides, and in the west L on the north, south, east, and west sides. Multi-paned window walls in metal frames with both fixed and top-hinged transom windows in metal sash are found in the southeast and southwest sides of the east L housing the Navy/Marine Corps Relief offices. The south side of this ell has a concrete geometric grille.

Interior. Building 22 has a total gross floor area of 26,142 square feet. The east L has two gym/fitness offices, two large exercise rooms, six storage rooms and a room for issuing gear and towels. There are four racquetball courts with a second floor spectators gallery. The Navy Relief has a six-room office at the southeast end of this L. The west L houses the women's lockers, a sauna, showers and bathroom in the north, and men's lockers, bathrooms, showers, and towel and storage rooms in the south.

The interior walls are of smooth concrete plaster, with modern ceramic glazed tiles in the bathrooms and showers. The Navy Relief Office, the gym offices, the hallway, the exercise rooms, and the spectators' gallery in the second floor have dropped ceilings with fluorescent lights, and wall-to-wall carpet. The racquetball courts have hardwood floors, the bathrooms and showers have glazed tile floors, and the rest of the rooms have smooth concrete floors.

Alterations: Exterior alterations include the replacement of the north doors with modern doors and the painting of a mural of blue and yellow wide stripes inscribing "Gymnasium and Fitness Center" on the concrete wall of the racquetball courts on the east side. Most of the interior spaces have been remodeled and there is no original fabric remaining. The original Reading Room with wooden book shelves, tables and chairs was changed at some point prior to 1962, and remodeled into offices. In 1975 it became the Navy Relief Society offices. The east L originally had a large locker room, four squash courts, and four handball courts separated by a passage way. On the second floor of this wing was a spectators' gallery. In 1986 this wing was altered to become a fitness center. The locker room was converted to an exercise room with wall-to-wall carpet and fluorescent lights. The toilet, showers, and drying rooms that were part of this locker room were taken out and the space is

currently used for storage, including one gear and towel issue room. Portions of the squash courts' walls were cut out and the area was remodeled to become a large exercise room. The hardwood floor was covered with wall to wall carpet, and a dropped ceiling with fluorescent lights was installed. The handball courts were changed to racquetball courts. The squash courts' viewing deck on the second floor spectators' gallery was filled in.

The west L had two original large locker rooms equipped with showers, toilets and drying rooms. The north locker room has been partitioned in the middle to create separate women's and men's locker rooms. A sauna was added in the women's locker room. The bathrooms, showers and drying rooms in both the men's and women's lockers have been remodeled with modern glazed tiles, and lights. Replacement doors were installed in the foyer by the women's locker room. The original office and First Aid rooms have been changed to lockers and a men's sauna room. The original towel room and men's toilet in the south section of this large locker room have been changed to a varsity cage, storage, and equipment rooms.

Surroundings. Building 22 is surrounded on the north by Reeves Avenue, and to the south by the Arcade 234 and the Enlisted Men's Club 20. To the east is West Virginia Street and to the west is a parking lot and building 23.

Historical Context: Building 22, built in 1942 at the cost of \$326,454, is one of the group of recreational facilities for the enlisted men. The construction of Building 22 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.

Building 22, the Field House, as well as the gymnasium and athletic fields to the north, were designated as Stark Field in 1941 in honor of Admiral H.R. Stark, USN, Chief of Naval Operations, who had been one of the officers responsible for obtaining approval and appropriations for the Fleet Operating Base on Terminal Island. When wartime necessitated the use of the athletic fields for a training drill field, the complex then became known as Stark Center (Rouse 1954: 180-181). The facilities, as well as the lounge and bowling alley, were used by the enlisted men assigned both to Roosevelt Base and the Small Craft Training Center.

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:

Original architectural drawings #29190 and #24649 are located at Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard archives. They are date May 12, 1941 and May 29, 1942. A microfilm copy of architectural drawing #1248-34-218, dated May 15, 1941, is located at Building 20, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California.

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.

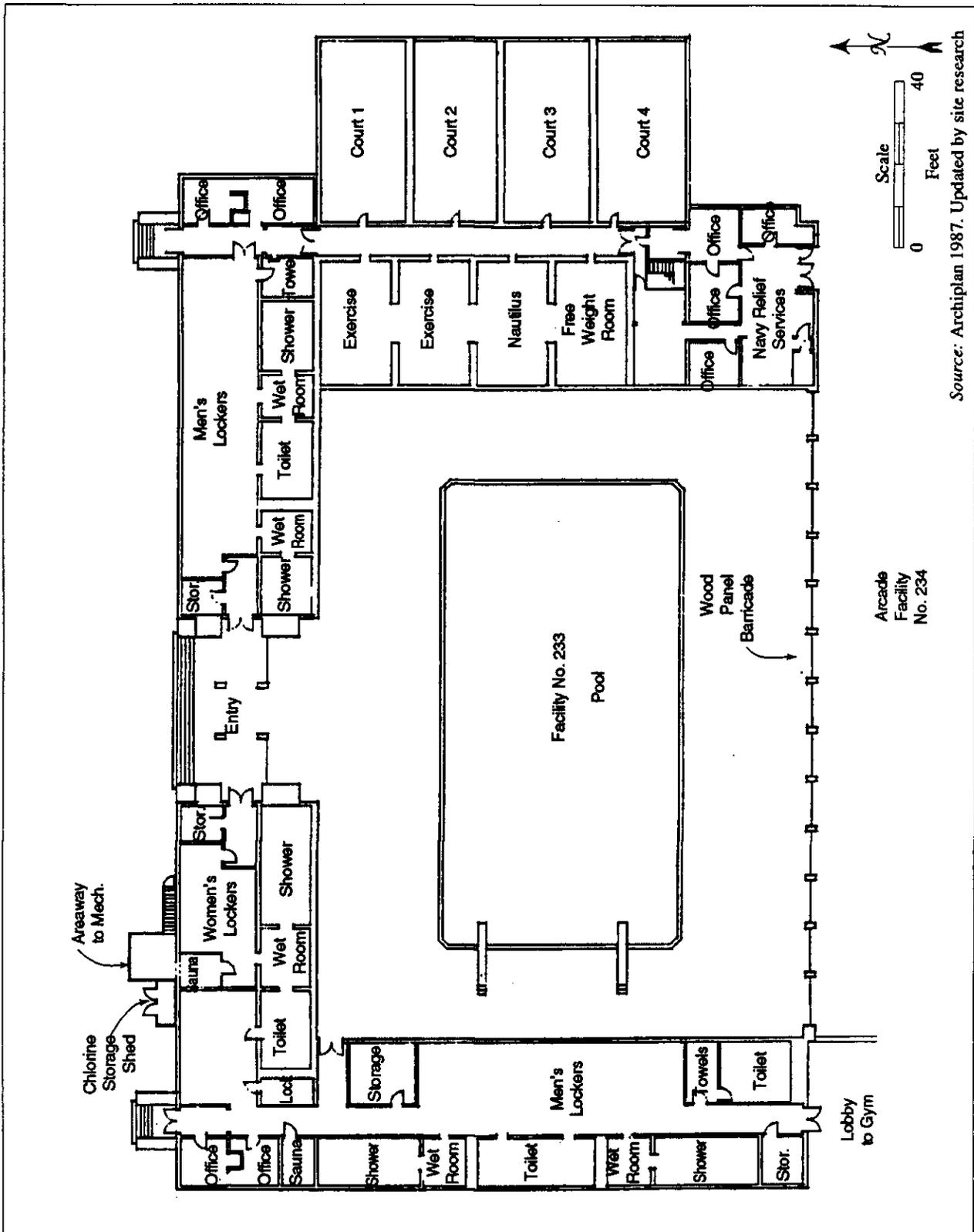
Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

“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.



Source: Archiplan 1987. Updated by site research

LAYOUT OF BUILDING 22. 1996