

WASHINGTON CANOE CLUB
3700 Water Street Northwest
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS DC-876
HABS DC-876

PHOTOGRAPHS

COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:
WASHINGTON CANOE CLUB
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park
3700 Water Street Northwest
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS DC-876
HABS DC-876

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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1849 C Street NW
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WASHINGTON CANOE CLUB

HABS No. DC-876

Location: 3700 Water Street, NW, Washington, District of Columbia.

The coordinates for the Washington Canoe Club are 77.071863 W and 38.904553 N, and they were obtained in January 2013 with, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

For research purposes, in the land records for the District of Columbia the Washington Canoe Club was described as within the boundaries of parcel 27/36 in the 1910s and by the 1980s as in square 1180, lot 1.

Present Owner/

Occupant: Today, the building is on land within the boundaries of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. The clubhouse was built in the early 1900s by the Washington Canoe Club, and subsequently maintained by the Canoe Club membership.

After a fire and life safety inspection revealed areas of concern, the National Park Service (NPS) closed the building in 2010.¹ The boathouse was unoccupied from that time until early in 2013.

Between 2010 and early spring 2013, the NPS undertook temporary structural stabilization measures to mitigate the damaged framing and to secure the structure. These measures enabled the partial re-opening of the boathouse to club members. Further stabilization work is proposed.² Presently, the eastern end of the building is accessible.

Present Use: The majority of the building is no longer in use, although there is limited access to the interior at the eastern end. The first floor of the eastern end of the building is accessible.³ The immediate vicinity of the boathouse is used by the Washington

¹ A condition assessment (2009), fire and life safety assessment (2009), and structural assessment (2010) of the boathouse were done for the National Park Service and the results led to the temporary closure of the structure.

² A Public Stakeholder Workshop occurred on March 3, 2012; in October 2012, McMullan & Associates, Inc., completed the structural assessment for the purposes of opening the ground floor of the east end of the boathouse for boat storage, access to the weight room, and a make-shift changing area. "Park Service Requires New Boathouse Study," *The Georgetown Current* December 5, 2007, 1, 24; "Georgetown University Boathouse Environmental Assessment," April 2006, NB: table of contents and invitation for public comment, copy accessed on-line July 16, 2013.

³ This assessment reflects access as of November 2013.

Canoe Club members for boat storage and for launching the boats. A chain link fence secures the site.

Possibilities floated for the building's continued use include a potential Potomac River Educational Center. The Center would encourage the paddling and water sports long associated with the boathouse through the Washington Canoe Club as well as the Canoe Club's environmental awareness through proximity to the water and through their cumulative experience of the effects of the tides and climate change. The ideas behind an educational center would expand the programs beyond those initiated by the Washington Canoe Club to include interpretative programming for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park and various health and wellness activities such as canal walks, if funding sources for an interpretative partnership became available.

Activities of the Washington Canoe Club continue on-site, launching canoes from the docks for practice, pleasure, and racing paddle events and introducing the sport to youth and underserved populations.

Significance: The Washington Canoe Club, built in the Shingle style, sits along the Potomac River, between it and the tow path of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. It is one of only two remaining historic boathouses in Washington and an important component of the waterfront landscape. Its presence also speaks to the rise of athletic clubs and an interest in outdoor recreation that occurred during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The outdoor movement gained momentum as industrialization provided Americans with more leisure time, while at the same time there was a growing awareness of the value of physical activity. Likewise, the recreational use of canoes and kayaks in particular became increasingly popular in America and in Europe during this period. According to its charter, the Washington Canoe Club was established for “mutual improvement, the promotion of physical culture, and the art of canoeing.” The club is also important for its role in pioneering the development of flat-water racing as an Olympic sport and helping to set competition standards. And in fact, having won the national competition, Washington Canoe Club members represented the United States in the first Olympic canoeing contest, a competitive demonstration event held in Paris in 1924. The club thus can claim numerous Olympic athletes among its past and current members.

As with most country and athletic clubs of the turn of the century the Washington Canoe Club sponsored other activities in addition to canoeing. Summer activities included boating excursions, regattas, lantern parades, and swimming matches. The ground floor of the boathouse includes a kitchen and a “grill room” to host dining events. A painted frieze in the grill room depicts the club's original members engaging in paddling, beer drinking, and other leisurely pursuits. During

the winter months, the “ballroom” on the main floor was host to ladies’ nights, dances, receptions, minstrel shows, and theater parties. While the club was originally intended for men only, membership was later open to women. By 1930, an addition was made to accommodate more boat storage with an open roof deck above; behind that was constructed a women’s locker room. The deck area was later enclosed to create a workshop for boat repair.

From an architectural standpoint, the Washington Canoe Club is among the best examples of the Shingle style in the city. It is two-and-a-half stories in height with a closed balcony across the principal riverfront elevation, flanking octagonal towers, and a central pavilion. The pavilion culminates in a broken pediment that includes a half-round fanlight and is bisected by a flagpole. To the center of the balcony is the Washington Canoe Club insignia. A hipped roof covers the building; at the center of the roof is a louvered lantern or ventilator. On the interior, the ground level includes, in addition to the grill room and kitchen, a canoe storage area. On the principal level, in addition to the ballroom, are a stair hall, “board room,” and restrooms, with flanking men and women’s locker rooms.

Historian(s): Virginia B. Price, 2013.

Project

Information: The documentation of the Washington Canoe Club was sponsored by the National Capital Region of the National Park Service, with assistance from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. The staff of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) undertook the recording. Dana Lockett, Mark Schara, Robert Arzola, Daniel De Sousa, Paul Davidson, and Jason McNatt performed the fieldwork. The drawings were produced by Daniel De Sousa, Jason McNatt, Paul Davidson, and Mark Schara. Virginia B. Price wrote the historical report, with assistance from Catherine C. Lavoie, who wrote the significance statement above, and Renee Bieretz took the large-format photographs.

The author thanks Jerry McCoy, Faye Haskins, and Michele Casto, DC Public Library; Anne McDonough, Kiplinger Research Library; Kay Fanning, Historian, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts; Frances McMillen, Historic Preservation Specialist, Office of Planning, District of Columbia; the archivists at the DC Public Records and Archive Services; Maureen Foster and Julia Young, National Capital Region; Ahna Wilson, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park; Ernie Brooks, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail; and Jack Brosius, Christopher Brown, Dan Havens, Bonnie Havens, Martin Lowenfish, and Blaise Rhodes, Washington Canoe Club, for their assistance during the research process and for generously sharing their expertise and good humor. I also thank the Park Rangers from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park and Catherine C. Lavoie, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), who facilitated my access to the building for field recording purposes.

The views and conclusions in this report are those of the author and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the National Park Service or the United States Government.

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: The Washington Canoe Club was founded in 1904 and the building was completed soon thereafter, in 1905.⁴

An organizational meeting of the “most prominent canoeists” was reported in the *Washington Post* in August 1905; the newspaper commentary touched on the election of officers, a discussion of plans for the boathouse, and the location of property adjoining the Aqueduct bridge on which to build. Membership was limited to 100 persons,⁵ and the first officers were Willard Fracker, C.W.P. Stoddard, W.B. Whipple, L.F. Eberbach, W.R. Garrett, and J.O. LaGorce.⁶ In November 1906 the Washington Canoe Club adopted a new constitution and by-laws; the club members issued statements from the meeting observing that the nascent club was successful so far, and its “prospects for the future are bright.” The Washington Canoe Club contemplated “vast improvements to its house and [...] expected that these will commence in the early spring.”⁷

On its fiftieth anniversary, the *Washington Post* recalled the Washington Canoe Club’s origins in 1904. Several of the founding members belonged to the Potomac Boat Club, but launched the Washington Canoe Club in order to concentrate on racing canoes; the

⁴ It was finished and occupied in 1906, according to “Washington Canoe Club Has House on Potomac River,” *Christian Science Monitor* September 26, 1913, 4. Club records date the organization’s establishment to 1904; newspaper accounts of the Washington Canoe Club’s inaugural meetings date to 1905. It is possible that the club was organized in 1904, incorporated in 1905 and building plans launched, and construction of the building completed in 1906. This could account for the floating dates noted in the newspapers. Christopher Brown to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 7, 2013.

⁵ In the recent past, membership averages around 200 people each year; when the dues were increased to cover expenses incurred since 2007, some members were forced to leave the club. New members, with interests in specialty canoeing such as outriggers and the Stand-Up-Paddlers (SUPs), have since joined and so kept the statistics on an even keel. Dan and Bonnie Havens to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, June 5, 2013. Blaise Rhodes echoed the Havens’ evaluation of the membership, emphasizing the welcome addition of SUPs and revealing some hardships the club has faced as several paddlers have gone elsewhere to train since the building has been closed. Blaise Rhodes to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

⁶ “Canoe Club Launched,” *Washington Post* August 2, 1905, 9.

⁷ “New Officers Elected,” *Washington Post* November 25, 1906, S3.

Potomac Boat Club members were mostly rowers at the time.⁸ The Canoe Club needed a boathouse, and for that, they needed funding. Ever ingenious, club members participated in a subscription contest to the *Post* and grabbed the first prize money of \$1000. They put on a minstrel show at Poli's Theatre (15th and Pennsylvania, now gone) that raised another \$700. A neighboring club, the Old Dominion Boat Club in Alexandria, sponsored a dance for them as well. With money to build, the Washington Canoe Club consulted with the architect George P. Hales for the club house. The first President was Fracker, and the Vice Commodore was John Oliver. Oliver's son Gilbert belonged to the club in 1954 and so that legacy is just one representation of the strong family ties among Canoe Club members to the club and to their boathouse.⁹ Soon, the club's totem chose them – an owl flew into the building – and became the Washington Canoe Club's symbol.¹⁰

2. Architect: George P. Hales.¹¹

Hales was a paddler from the Boston area and his design for the Washington Canoe Club was said to be an adaptation of those seen along the Charles River.¹²

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: The Washington Canoe Club built the boathouse for the use of their members and the club members maintained it throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.¹³ Until the National

⁸ This has remained true through the years, for example, Blaise Rhodes's father joined the Potomac Boat Club in 1930 and then switched to the Washington Canoe Club in 1933, although the clubs both put Olympians in boats over the years. As plans for the waterfront were discussed, some favored clustering the rowers downriver from the Key Bridge and the paddlers upriver, by the Washington Canoe Club, to facilitate training exercises. Blaise Rhodes to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013; Ernie Brooks to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

⁹ Dan Olesen, "Canoe Club Began with Burnt Cork," *Washington Post* April 18, 1954, C4. The Rhodes family story is another example; Blaise Rhodes met his wife at the boathouse, and they held their wedding reception there. His parents met through Gloriane Perrier, and his kids are already on the water. Blaise Rhodes to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

¹⁰ Dan Havens to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, June 5, 2013.

¹¹ DC Historic Preservation Office, Permit No. 0794, September 18, 1905. Also, "Paddlers of Canoes," *Washington Post* September 3, 1905, S4.

¹² Pursuing this line of inquiry would be an important component to furthering our understanding of the boathouse's architectural context, beyond that of the Potomac River developed in this report, just as the paddlers of the Washington Canoe Club themselves belong to a national and international arena.

¹³ Club lore suggests the members built the boathouse themselves, using salvaged lumber. This origin legend gained credence after a flood in the second half of the twentieth century. At that time, the ruined drywall was removed and the framing was exposed. Jack Brosius recalled seeing evidence of fire and, he and others wondered when there was a fire in the boathouse. They then

Park Service closed the building for repairs, the boathouse served as a social center and clubhouse for members. It afforded storage space for equipment and locker space for clothing and gear. In the movie, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, Smith's locker was in the women's locker room, but is representative of members' use of the space. The *Exorcist* utilized river frontage and docks, and other movies have recorded the boathouse setting in less dramatic scenes.¹⁴

In the beginning the Washington Canoe Club was an athletic club, with canoeing just one focus of several sporting events that ranged as far as track and field, and as the paddlers came to dominate the flat-water racing events, the club's sporting focus narrowed. By the 1960s, the Washington Canoe Club held two regattas at the boathouse and one in Hains Point. They raced nationally and internationally, and joined a city program to encourage children in the District to try the sport and to experience the water.¹⁵

In February 1913 the Washington Canoe Club entered into an indenture or chattel deed of trust with J. Harry Carnes and Hugh B. Rowland to secure a debt (\$2440) owed to Thomas H. Yeager. The indenture was recorded in March, and included the club's interest in the building and its contents as well as any additions to the house or investments in the fleet of boats or equipment. It allowed for continued use of the boathouse by the Washington Canoe Club and stipulated the Canoe Club also would continue to make the rent payments for the land. The inventory attached as exhibit a to the deed of trust enumerated the following: 91 folding chairs, 16 chairs (grill room), 7 tables (grill room), 15 chairs (board room), 1 table (4' x 8' board room), 1 small desk, 1 umbrella stand, 4 chairs (ladies room), 1 table (ladies room), 1 couch (ladies room), 1 dresser (ladies room), 1 settee [sic] (ladies room), 2 water coolers, 1 clock, 1 large mirror, 11 curtains with draperies, 1 pair portiers, 1 heating plant, steam, 1 cook stove, 3 oil stoves, 1 wheel barrow, 1 clothes wringer, 2 American flags, 1 club flag, 9 runways to floats, 1 large float, 1 small float, 1 war canoe, 2 racing canoes, and 17 war canoe paddles. The debt was paid and the indenture released in March 1917.¹⁶

Again in 1922 the Washington Canoe Club leveraged the club's interest in the boathouse and its contents to trustees, Hugh B. Rowland and Reginald Rutherford, as security against a \$5000 debt to W.J. Waller. The monies due were payable in installments over a five-year period. Contents of the building included the following: "75 folding chairs, 30 library chairs, 12 porch chairs, 7 grill tables, 1 board table, 1 small desk, 1 umbrella stand, 1 player piano, 'a lot' of trophies and plaques, draperies, pictures, and other

learned it was because the wood was taken from barns that had burned. The incorporation of donated materials, like the framing referenced here, helped members keep the dues low. Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

¹⁴ Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

¹⁵ Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

¹⁶ DC Recorder of Deeds, Liber 3614, folio 45-49, March 6, 1913; DC Recorder of Deeds, Liber 3953, folio 390-91, March 20, 1917.

decorations.” In the ladies room there were “4 chairs, 1 table, 1 couch, 1 dresser and 1 settee.” Also enumerated were the “1 (steam) heating plant, 1 cook stove, ‘a lot’ of cooking utensils, 12 runways, 1 large float, 3 small floats, 4 racing canoes, 3 cruise canoes, ‘a lot’ of canoe equipment, 1 file cabinet, and 1 typewriter.”¹⁷ The inventory, as did the one taken in 1913, illustrates the social use of the building as a meeting place, club headquarters, and sporting facility.

The precise chain of title for the land on which the boathouse initially stood is hard to define. Not all documents necessary to trace the chain of title could be located, and more complete research findings are required to establish ownership and leasehold interests of land and improvements at various points in time. That said, the broad strokes of the deed transfer are well known. Built beside the tracks leading to the aqueduct bridge and near the tow path of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (C&O Canal), the clubhouse was the province of the members and the ground that of the C&O Canal Company. The C&O Canal Company’s land was transferred to the government when the canal became part of the National Park Service (Reservation 404, Palisades District) in September 1938.¹⁸

Work on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (C&O Canal) began on the same day as that for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O Railroad). It was July 4, 1828. In a ceremony in Little Falls, Maryland, John Quincy Adams turned the first spade of dirt for the C&O Canal, and the track-work for the railroad began to be laid in Baltimore.¹⁹ The two transportation routes to the west competed for business throughout the nineteenth century; the C&O Canal reached Cumberland by 1850 and experienced a post-bellum boom with coal shipping. Economic downturns in the 1870s and a series of floods forced the canal into receivership in 1889. The B&O Railroad became a majority stakeholder in its rival’s fortunes. It was not until the flood in 1924 that the canal era ended and in 1938 the railroad sold the canal to the U.S. government.²⁰ In recognition of the 185-mile canal as a survivor of the canal-building era, the property was declared a National Monument in 1961 and legislation was passed in 1971 to establish the national park. After 1971, further land acquisition began. Parcels not transferred in 1938 were conveyed to the government. Commercial properties with compatible uses, and entities like the various boathouses, were granted special use permits.²¹

¹⁷ DC Recorder of Deeds, Liber 4749, 241-46, July 1, 1922.

¹⁸ DC Recorder of Deeds, Liber 7272/068, September 23, 1938. The National Register of Historic Places nomination identified the boundary lines for the Washington Canoe Club property as Parcel 301/4 of the DC Surveyor’s description of the club’s improvements on Reservation 404.

¹⁹ Summary information for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was taken from www.nps.gov, accessed April 2013; information regarding John Quincy Adams’s role was taken from www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc6.htm, accessed November 25, 2013. [NB: Thank you to Christopher Brown for reminding me of this detail. –vbp]

²⁰ “A Canal Becomes a Park,” *The Baltimore Sun* November 19, 1939, M2.

²¹ B-307319, National Park Service-Special Park Use Fees, August 23, 2007, U.S. Government

The 1922 trust document notes that the clubhouse was on land owned by the B&O Railroad, identified as tax parcel 27/36, and encompassing 1/10th of an acre between the C&O Canal and the Potomac River. Once the C&O Canal Company's land was transferred to the government, leases and special use permits were issued to the boat clubs and to commercial entities along the waterfront. These leases and permits allowed for the continued use of the land on which the various buildings stood.²² This is true for the Washington Canoe Club. The Canoe Club's lease with the C&O Canal Company/B&O Railroad was cancelled out by the 1938 sale, and a special use permit was issued in October 1938 to bridge the gap between lease agreements.²³ A new lease was issued in 1939 between the Washington Canoe Club and the National Park Service. Beginning in the 1970s, and continuing through 2007, special use permits supplemented the lease agreements and allowed for the continued operation of the boathouse by the Washington Canoe Club.²⁴ After 2007, short-term leases were negotiated.

Copies of the lease issued by the National Park Service in 1939 for the Washington Canoe Club could further elucidate the relationship between the two entities, as would copies of the original agreements held with the C&O Canal Company in the first decade of the twentieth century.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: R.Z. Hazell & Bro.²⁵

Accountability Office (www.gao.gov/products), copy on file.

²² See, for example, "Permit #NCR CHOH 6000 422, C&O Canal NHP, Palisades District," Special Use Permit [Expires] January 30, 1988, Reservation 404, National Capital Region, Washington, DC. In the Reservation 404 files, copies of one or two permits are extant. Details on the special use permit relate to a "parcel of land approximately 96 feet by 157 feet, located in the C&O Canal National Historical Park, beside the Potomac River upstream (west) of the Old Aqueduct Bridge, in the vicinity of Georgetown, DC, as shown on the enclosed map...." Appraisals for the boathouse in 1989 identified the property as part of Square 1180, Lot 1, Site No. 18, and as consisting of 36,850 square feet.

²³ United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Project, Special Use Permit, October 1, 1938, copy on file with the author. The permit was in effect to January 1, 1939, and the fee assessed was \$150 per annum, payable in monthly installments. The parcel was 50' x 140' at the time.

²⁴ Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, administrative files, Hagerstown, Maryland. A special thank you is due to Ahna Wilson for her time and for all of her help with this report for the Historic American Buildings Survey. I am most grateful. The sequence of lease-and-permit reconstructed from the park's archives is echoed in the chronology prepared by Washington Canoe Club members, and equal measures of appreciation are extended to the club members for sharing their club's history.

²⁵ DC Historic Preservation Office, Permit No. 0794, September 18, 1905.

5. Original plans and construction: The building permit identifies the architect, George Hales, and the builder of record, R.Z. Hazell & Bro., for the Washington Canoe Club. It was planned to stand on pilings, which would accommodate water access for the paddlers from the clubhouse. The original section was two stories in height with a 40' x 60' footprint; the walls were sheathed in shingles and the roof likewise covered in wood shingles.

In September 1905 a sketch of the boathouse, and photographs of founding members and the architect, appeared in the *Washington Post*. The founding members belonged to the Potomac Boat Club and most were affiliated with the High Island Canoe Club as well. They were among the first to have canoes on the Potomac River and the *Post* noted their prominence in aquatic sports. Of the boathouse, the tag line heralded the building as heated, with lockers, with storage for 125 canoes, and “finely equipped” with “handsome lounging, smoking and ladies’ rooms.”²⁶ A transcription of the *Post*’s catalogue of the boathouse plan and setting follows in the Appendix to this report.

6. Alterations and additions: In 1909, Hales designed an addition to the boathouse.²⁷ The extension cost more than the initial construction, with a permit listing at \$3500. The builders contracted for the work were Howison & Skinker.²⁸ The permit indicated that addition was two stories and to be wood-frame. At this time, the address changed from the C&O Canal to Water Street, reflecting the development of the Georgetown waterfront.²⁹

In March 1910 the *Washington Times* reported on the improvements to the boathouse and pronounced the Canoe Club the finest on the Potomac. The addition provided more space for the social rooms on the second floor as well as provided a dressing room with shower baths for ladies to use. On the ground floor, the expansion allowed for a grill room and a

²⁶ “Paddlers of Canoes,” *Washington Post* September 3, 1905, S4.

²⁷ The photograph of the boathouse published in September 1909 shows the building from the southwest and records the phased construction of the building with the west end completed in 1905. The 1909 permit and subsequent addition extended the building eastward from the cross-gable marking the central pavilion to the present east tower. G.V. Buck took the photograph. See “Here Capital’s Aquatic Sportsmen Find Kindred Souls,” *Washington Post* September 12, 1909, SM4. Other clubhouses pictured were the Potomac Boat Club, the Corinthian Yacht Club, and the Analostan Boat Club.

²⁸ In her study of the Washington Canoe Club for the preparation of the National Register nomination, Betty Bird identified Cleve Skinker and Ray Garrett as early club members and noted their role in the construction firm of Skinker and Garrett. She suggested that Skinker and Garrett may have provided the connection to the architect. I concur with her hypothesis, especially as Skinker’s business (albeit in another iteration) is listed on the permit. Betty Bird, “Washington Canoe Club,” Nomination, 1990, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service. (NRHP).

²⁹ DC Historic Preservation Office, Permit No. 3477, November 26, 1909.

work room for canoe repair. Descriptions of the building also hailed the verandas and the corner towers and called attention to the shingled exterior that characterized its appearance and distinguished it architecturally.³⁰

Expanding the boathouse and accommodating the B&O Railroad lines preoccupied the summer months of 1908 when the desire for an overhead bridge or catwalk connecting the clubhouse to the tow path was discussed and the lease was likely renegotiated. In April 1909 a proposal for replacing the pilings with concrete piers was received; in October that year, once a lease with the B&O Railroad was established and a rent or fee for continued occupancy agreed upon, Hales's design for the annex and the catwalk bridge was approved by the Washington Canoe Club. The expansion of the boathouse was largely finished, except for some interior work, in March 1910. The catwalk bridge was not, but it was anticipated that it would be built by the opening of the regatta season.³¹ Around this time the Washington Canoe Club also entered into talks with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for placing protective riprap above the boathouse and sought a permit to do so. This was done in the early 1910s.³²

In 1913 the clubhouse was described as having been “enlarged and expanded” referencing this work and the growth of Georgetown’s waterfront. The description continued, noting that

The clubhouse is situated on the north back of the Potomac River, about 50 yards above the Aqueduct bridge. It is an attractive frame two-story structure, with shingle sheathing. The first floor is taken up with canoe storage racks, grill room,

³⁰ “Canoeists’ Home Doubled in Size: Enlarged Quarters of Washington Canoe Club Considered Finest on Potomac,” *Washington Times*, March 12, 1910, 4. The author thanks Andrew Soles, of the Washington Canoe Club, for this reference.

³¹ “Canoeists’ Home Doubled in Size,” 4.

³² Trustees of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to Willard Fracker, 1908, [regarding lease dated October 11, 1905]; Trustees of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to Willard Fracker, August 6, 1908 and August 8, 1908; E.A. Schmitt, map accompanying application dated January 4, 1913, of the Washington Canoe Club to build riprap retaining wall; Camp, Curtis, Draper & Co., to [Washington Canoe Club], April 2, 1909; copies from the Washington Canoe Club archives on file, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. In December 1916, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers notified the Washington Canoe Club that a cement retaining wall under the south, east and west sides would be necessary. Paying for this likely prompted the loan for the “foundation, backfill and other betterments” referenced in the Washington Canoe Club records. This loan is likely that recorded in the Chattel Deed of Trust in 1913, and released in 1917. See DC Recorder of Deeds, Liber 3614, folio 45-49, March 6, 1913; DC Recorder of Deeds, Liber 3953, folio 390-91, March 1917. A special thank you is owed to the archivists of the DC Public Records and Archives and to Ahna Wilson of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park who facilitated access to the documents. Similar accommodation was made by those within the National Capital Region (NCR).

kitchen and work room. The second floor contains the ball room, locker room with showers, board room, and ladies' room. Access to the house is by a steel bridge extending from the canal tow path across the railroad tracks to the main entrance.

The club has been financed entirely by members' dues and the proceeds of various entertainments and benefits.³³

Permit records indicate that Hales's practice was active in Washington, DC, from 1905 to 1919. Other boat clubs expanded in this era as well; Patrick Dempsey's boathouse was located to the east of the Washington Canoe Club and near the Aqueduct Bridge. Already one of the largest, Dempsey's planned an addition 200' in length to house approximately 1000 canoes.³⁴ In May 1914, two rows of oak pilings were driven from the west elevation of Dempsey's to the Washington Canoe Club; these are seen in historic photographs.³⁵

Two additions to the boathouse, a three-bay, extension to the east along the north side of the building (now the women's locker room) that most likely occurred by the time of a 1922 photograph and the enclosure of the roof deck in the early 1970s, are evident in the building fabric as well as recollected in club histories.³⁶ Logs for the club attest to

³³ "Washington Canoe Club Has House on Potomac River," 4.

³⁴ Historical accounts of the boathouse's spatial relationship to the Aqueduct Bridge vary from 50 to 100 yards; similarly, Dempsey's planned addition of 200 feet is greater than 50 yards would allow. While the imprecision in descriptions exists, each locates the boathouse adjacent to Dempsey's and in proximity to the bridge, and so convey a sense of the waterfront architecture. The actual distance from the east end of the boathouse to the west side of the pier for the bridge is 99.20 yards, or just shy of the 100 yards later cited. This distance would have accommodated the planned addition to Dempsey's boathouse. Thank you to Christopher Brown for questioning the discrepancies in the historical accounts, and to Deidre McCarthy, NPS CRGIS, for providing the current measurement.

³⁵ "Erects Big Canoe House," *Washington Post* May 3, 1914, R3.

³⁶ The Women's Locker Room has been in place for decades; a ladies' room was included in the original plans and, like the locker room that succeeded it, accommodated the wives, girlfriends and guests of club members before women joined the club as independent members. Women were Associate Members as early as 1950. Frank Havens to Bonnie Havens, relayed to Virginia B. Price, electronic communication, May 30, 2013; *The Washington Canoe Club*, 1. Similarly, the roof deck was enclosed in the early 1970s. Dan Havens to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, June 5, 2013. The deck was enclosed after he returned from the service; the work was completed by members as was customary. Blaise Rhodes also recalls the roof deck enclosure happening about that time. Blaise Rhodes to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013. What remains unclear is when the present locker room was added. Possibly it was added in 1913-15 to "complete" the building with the three-bay extension and gable-roofed locker room to the east of the section designed by Hales and built in two stages (1905, 1909). It was in place by the time of the 1920s photographs, though not in an image taken

members participating actively in club events and in facilitating those activities, from the building of the floats and runways to the house maintenance, including painting, to the social gatherings. In 1936, for example, after the boathouse sustained water damage, members repaired the leak in the radiator of the grill room and noted the need for a new lock on the upper floors. General repairs were done in 1939 and a 80' float was built in addition to fourteen runways.³⁷ Discussion about replacing the upholstered furniture took place in 1941 and when nothing suitable could be found (or donated), the idea of custom-built furniture was mooted. At this time, club members commented on whether or not to replace the wood slat floor in the shower; it became very slippery when wet. Solutions for securing the entries were proposed too, including the installation of barbed wire, suggesting the location of the boathouse made it vulnerable when unattended. In 1957 work was done on the lower canoe room, the women's locker room was painted, and the furnace room door re-hung. Calls for a work-day were made, as well as requests for lumber. Since \$800 worth of lumber was needed, the maintenance of the lower canoe room must have been fairly substantial.³⁸ Repairs of that proportion in that year likely were the result of the boathouse being swept off its foundation piers after heavy rains and melting snows. The building's return to its foundation piers, hoisted as it was like derailed railroad cars were lifted back on the track-lines, generated some repair work of its own.³⁹ In more recent years, Washington Canoe Club member Joe Lederle initiated repairs to the boathouse, including adding supports to the roof over the ballroom.⁴⁰

Other changes to the Washington Canoe Club's boathouse came during repairs made after floods or in response to civic improvements such as the sewer pipe installation.⁴¹ The Potomac Interceptor Sewer System, running from present-day Dulles Airport to the city, was largely completed in the 1960s; residual effects of that installation as identified by the DC Sanitary Commission in 1967 and 1968 were leaks in the canal bed, the

during a flood sometime after the 1909 section/turret was complete.

³⁷ Washington Canoe Club records, shared with the National Park Service, include a letter dated March 7, 1939, that references repairs to the roof over the locker room, the bracing of the newel post at the top of the stairs, and the beginning of work to the grill room. Discussion also touched on paneling for the board room and the suggestion to use knotty pine.

³⁸ Washington Canoe Club Log, 1936-57, vertical files, Washingtoniana Collection, DCPL.

³⁹ Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

⁴⁰ Blaise Rhodes to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013. A conversation with Joe Lederle would be an important component to the oral history of the Washington Canoe Club and to the evolution of the boathouse.

⁴¹ Precedent for the installation of the sewer line between the Washington Canoe Club boathouse and the water's edge likely dates to the right-of-way for a sewer granted by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to the District of Columbia in 1912, and again in 1921; the files for Reservation 404 include references to that effect although the spatial relationship to the Washington Canoe Club is not specified.

undermining of the tow path in places and its subsequent collapse in those areas, and some erosion.⁴² Work near the boathouse was finished ca. 1970.

The sewer installation was a major project along the riverfront, and the riverbank area was filled to facilitate access upriver for emergency vehicles. The concrete deck replaced the Washington Canoe Club's walkway and ramp that led to the floats some 15' out. Two concrete mixing companies donated the excess concrete generated during their work days and club members worked with that material to backfill the sewer pipe and under the boathouse. They removed the floor boards to reach the area beneath the building, filling in around the piers. Adept with water intrusions, the Washington Canoe Club was flooded twenty times, with two major floods taking water to the top step of the second floor (1936, 1972). A brass plate marked the water line from the 1930s flood; the marker was on the wall of the ballroom, about two feet above the floor. In 1972, water filled the stairwell; longtime clubmember Blaise Rhodes's earliest memory of the boathouse is seeing it from the safety of his father's shoulders as they walked along the railroad tracks and, once inside, watching Dan Havens dive down the stairs to retrieve equipment and boats from the first floor.⁴³ Less dramatically, in other floods, water reached the top of the overhead doors. Weather predictions improved and allowed members to prepare the building for a flood. It could be secured in about six hours. Members moved the boats to the second floor, stored furniture in them and then secured the canoes, leaving them to float if necessary in the boathouse. It took far longer to clean the mud out afterward. In 1957, a combination of heavy snows and springtime rain pushed the building off its piers; jacks loaned from the railroad were used to hoist the building back onto its foundations. The lift was unevenly done and the ridgepole was broken.⁴⁴

⁴² "Interceptor Sewer Route to Serve Both States Is Described," *Washington Post* October 5, 1960, B1; "Interceptor Sewer Ready to Operate," *Washington Post* December 8, 1963, K2; "Dulles Area's New Sewer Nearly Ready," *Washington Post* November 11, 1964, D4; Reed Hundt, "Boaters High and Dry As Canal Is Repaired," *Washington Post* August 28, 1968, C4; "C&O Canal Drained for Sewer Work," *Washington Post* November 6, 1964, B3. More detail is offered in "WSSC to Sue to Force District to Finish Sewer," *Washington Post* December 31, 1970, B1-B2, wherein a 3000-foot section was delayed until plans were finalized (and ultimately abandoned) and locations selected for a freeway connection to the proposed Three Sisters Bridge. This is the section near the boathouse; the Key Bridge vicinity is also where the Dulles Interceptor line met the WSSC lines from western Montgomery County that run under Rock Creek. Overflows occurred frequently at the meeting point of the two systems. The delay in the work on the Interceptor sewer line near the boathouse corresponds to Washington Canoe Club members' recollections of the installation of the sewer pipe, and the construction of the concrete pad covering it, around 1968 to 1970. Christopher Brown to Virginia B. Price, electronic communication, November 22, 2013.

⁴³ Blaise Rhodes to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

⁴⁴ Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

The entry for the Washington Canoe Club in the 1968 catalogue *Georgetown Historic Waterfront* includes a photograph of the south (front) façade with the in-fill beneath the building in place and picnic tables and canoes out in front. The floating dock is in place as well. The eastern extension to the building that was erected for additional canoe storage is also complete. All three bays are open, suggesting club members not shown in the photograph were out on the river paddling. Members evident in the photograph are seen standing on the dock and balcony. The roof deck appears to be unoccupied at the time. Regarding the building itself, the flagpoles are present, and the tower windows are open as are most of the ground-floor doors. Fenestration consisted of sash glazed with six-over-six lights, smaller square windows glazed with six lights, and the French or double doors opening from the ballroom onto the balcony. The description accentuates the romanticism of the Shingle style and notes of the floor plan:

The ground is given over almost entirely to the canoes, while the second floor houses the facilities. Recessed at the western end of the second floor is the men's dressing room and at the eastern end, the lounge. In between is a ballroom ornamented by columns supporting the hipped ceiling at either end and by built-in benches. At the north end, or inland side, is a brick fireplace, and at the opposite end, on the water side, is a wooden bandstand.⁴⁵

The emergence of the Georgetown Historic District and its codification in 1950 (Public Law 808) introduced U.S. Commission of Fine Arts oversight to Georgetown. This meant the Commission reviewed planned changes to the architectural landscape in the district, specifically alterations, demolitions, and new construction. No applications are extant for the Washington Canoe Club, although the Commission has a general file on the building attesting to its significance as a landmark along the river.⁴⁶

The riverfront landmark received unexpected attention after a survey or examination of the National Park Service policies regarding special uses, concessions, and public lands was issued by the Department of the Interior, Office of the Inspector General, in 2007. In response, the fence around the Washington Canoe Club was altered and moved to increase significantly the public's access to the water while maintaining a level of security around the building and its contents. Chain link fencing was used to keep views of the Potomac River open. The change in fenceline altered the appearance of the perimeter somewhat; however, the *Private Use of Public Land* report that prompted the shift began a debate over the boathouse itself that has played out in the newspapers and, in the mid-2000s, on Capitol Hill.

⁴⁵ *Georgetown Historic Waterfront: A Review of Canal and Riverside Architecture*, s.v., "Washington Canoe Club," 80.

⁴⁶ The author thanks Kay Fanning, Architectural Historian Extraordinaire, for her assistance with the Commission of Fine Arts archives.

In the 2012 nomination of the Washington Canoe Club to the Washington, DC, Preservation League's "Most Endangered Places" list it was noted that the "interior spaces have changed very little over the years." The DC Preservation League nomination for the Washington Canoe Club highlights the spacious ballroom and the corbelled fireplace that dominates its north wall, plus the paneled ceiling and dropped beams of the board room.⁴⁷ These decorative details distinguish the second-floor rooms, while the frieze painted in the grill room is the most notable feature of the ground-floor level. The location of the painting placed it in harm's way during the periodic floods and ice jams, leaving it susceptible to the rising water more so than the ornamental wood of the floor above. Nonetheless the nomination underscores the integrity of the interior spaces in addition to the building as the embodiment of Shingle style architecture in the District.

B. Historical Context

At the water's edge, the Washington Canoe Club has been at the forefront of local recreation and international racing since its founding over a hundred years ago.⁴⁸ The Canoe Club's storied history securely sites it within its sport of flat-water racing and in Olympic history. Yet the location on the Potomac River introduces a natural danger as topsy-turvy as the tilting matches club members dominated so definitively that other clubs ceased to meet them for the paddle-armed duels. More common in the first half of the twentieth century than today were ice floes that periodically impacted the boathouse structurally. The forcefulness of one of those weather events was described as having an ice floe ram into the Key Bridge, bounce upwards 20' and crash back into the water with sounds akin to artillery.⁴⁹ The possibility of floods remains, even as the threat of ice of that magnitude has diminished in recent years. The preservation of the architectural landmark still depends on a structural soundness to withstand nature's fury, and, arguably perhaps, on an adaptability to the changing tide of opinion about waterfront development and reconciliation of uses of public land.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Christopher Brown, "Washington Canoe Club," Nomination 2012, DC Preservation League's "Most Endangered Places," 2.

⁴⁸ See, for example, "DC Is the Canoeing Capital, Too," *Washington Post* June 5, 1956, clipping file, Peabody Room, DCPL.

⁴⁹ On the force and sounds of the ice at Key Bridge, Dan Havens to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, June 5, 2013.

⁵⁰ This is the author's assessment of contemporary circumstances as plans for the Historic Structure Report are finalized and the Washington Canoe Club and National Park Service work together to mitigate the deteriorating condition of the architecturally significant boathouse. For an introduction to the early efforts to reconcile the inherited conditions that produced the private uses/public lands dichotomy, see for example, "Audit Finds Exclusive Clubs 'Monopolize' Public Parkland," *Washington Post* April 29, 2007, A8; "Paddle Sore: Why Does a Michigan Congressman Have It In for the Washington Canoe Club?" *Washington Post* June 21, 2008; "The Washington Canoe Club and National Park Service Inertia," *Washington City Paper* December 14, 2011.

Waterfront redevelopment plans, including boathouses, made a splash in the late 1980s and again in the early 2000s when a proposal to construct a large boathouse for Georgetown University was put forward. The latter loosely coincided with a re-examination of the National Park Service's concessionaire policies, leases, and special use permits, a policy review that necessarily included those arrangements with the boathouses already standing along the Potomac River.⁵¹ As lease agreements and special-use permits were brought into accordance with contemporary guidance and policies, the status of the existing boathouses shifted. This happened because they stood on public land and within the boundaries of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. Initially the boathouses were located partially on land and partially over water and the leases at the time of construction were with the C&O Canal Company. Concurrent to the 2012-13 Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation, for example, the operation of Jack's Boathouse as a non-concessionaire ceased and the Washington Canoe Club's long-standing relationship to its iconic waterfront building was reevaluated.⁵²

It is essential to note that only two boathouses from the first decade of the twentieth century survive: the Washington Canoe Club and its equivalent for rowers on the river, the Potomac Boat

⁵¹ B-307319, National Park Service-Special Park Use Fees, August 23, 2007, U.S. Government Accountability Office (www.gao.gov/products), copy on file; also, Federal Real Property: Improved Data Needed to Strategically Manage Historic Buildings, Address Multiple Challenges, December 11, 2012, U.S. Government Accountability Office (www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-35), copy on file.

⁵² See for example, "Jack's Boathouse Fights Possible Eviction," *The Georgetown Current* January 2, 2013. In addition to various newspaper reports, on which this report draws, an understanding of the boathouse as a resource of the park comes through the National Park Service Capital Investment Strategy (CIS) that was developed in accordance with the Department and with guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The strategy recognizes optimal bands of assets, relative importance to park operations, and builds on the Director's *Call to Action* and existing Park Asset Management Plan (PAMPs). In her thoughtful response to Steven Roden, a visiting scholar from the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Cultural Resources Program Manager Ahna Wilson referred to the optimizer bands/established criteria as she explained to Roden the lack of funds for the maintenance of the boathouse, despite its recognized architectural significance. Wilson reiterated the crucial need for a long term proposal, and addressed the short-term solution (stabilization of the structure and limited use of the interior). Ahna Wilson to Steven Roden, electronic communication, June 2013, copy on file. The author thanks both the Washington Canoe Club members and the National Park Service staff for facilitating the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) study. Although not always privy to the discussions and site visits among interested parties, I very much appreciate the time all have so generously given. I also must reiterate that this report is documentation of a historic resource for the HABS collection; it necessarily includes a description of events leading to the present discussion about the building's rehabilitation/restoration, but any inadvertent editorializing on the author's part does not represent the opinion of the Washington Canoe Club or that of the U.S. government.

Club. Of these, only the Washington Canoe Club boathouse exhibits the Shingle style architectural choice for recreational structures in the period; and, in Washington, DC, an aesthetic selected for residences of the affluent and one that exhibited many of the characteristics of the Queen Anne style of building seen in the nearby Palisades.⁵³ Although primarily a garage for boats, boathouse construction balanced rusticity and comfort.⁵⁴ Early announcements for the clubhouses emphasized the accommodations and sociability functions of the boathouses as much as their storage capacities.

In early park architecture, however, the provision of lounge areas, offices, and bathrooms depended on the relative remoteness of the boathouse (i.e., a practicality born from a lack of other facilities) rather than distinctiveness or amenities provided to attract members among the individual Canoe Clubs. In *Park and Recreation Structures*, Albert Good, an architect for the National Park Service in the early twentieth century, emphasized the importance of the boathouse's foundation. Good reiterated that a building was only as sound or as long-lived as its substructure. Good also acknowledged the effects of tides, currents, and ice on the design, as the boathouse must provide for high and low water access as well as facilitate the movement of canoes in and out of the water through barn-like doors and sloped platforms on the water side. Docks and floats were auxiliary components but vital. Interiors were well ventilated, like the Washington Canoe Club boathouse was with its unglazed fenestration at the upper levels and the ventilator at the center of the roof. Floor boards, Good advised, should be spaced wide apart to encourage dryness and forestall the inevitable rot that accompanies near constant conditions of dampness.⁵⁵ The "architecture of summer" suited a water sport pastime, in parks and on rivers alike. The shingled mass of the Washington Canoe Club's boathouse quickly came to represent more than summer, becoming a year-round community of paddling enthusiasts and their families. The turreted, Shingle style boathouse is an architectural and historical landmark along the Potomac River, and so visually defines the water's edge west of the Key Bridge much as the club's members define, and continue to edge, their sport onto new heights.⁵⁶

Early Twentieth-Century Boat Clubs and Boathouses in Washington, DC

Echoing the trends that would eventually create the National Park Service in 1916, the appearance of boat clubs in Washington, DC, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century

⁵³ Paul D. Dolinsky to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 12, 2013. Only one property is currently listed as a landmark in DC for Shingle style architecture alone, and the nomination has not yet been forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places. This omission further underscores the importance of the Washington Canoe Club to the architectural landscape of the city. Kim Williams to Patrick Andrus, electronic communication, August 13, 2013, forwarded to Virginia B. Price, August 14, 2013.

⁵⁴ John de Visser and Judy Ross, *Boathouses* (Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 2010), 7-14.

⁵⁵ Albert H. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures* with a foreword by Randall J. Biallas (1938; reprint, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 145-54.

⁵⁶ The "architecture of summer" is borrowed from *The Architecture of the American Summer: The Flowering of the Shingle Style*, with an introduction by Vincent Scully (NY: Rizzoli, 1989).

spoke to the lure of the river and the outdoors. A growing popularity for outdoor recreation and healthful leisure activities took hold. Initially for the well-to-do, the exercise-oriented social clubs were also a province of the male.⁵⁷ In Washington, the first was known as the Falcon Club formed in 1844, and quickly followed by the Gazelle and Undine clubs.⁵⁸ These clubs built boathouses along the city canal; the Undines folded during the Civil War and Fletcher's Boathouse assumed its place in the post-bellum period. Fletcher's was built between the present-day Chain and Key bridges and marks the earliest boathouse in the vicinity of the Washington Canoe Club. The Potomac Boat Club maintained a boathouse near 32nd Street in Georgetown and moved to their present location at the foot of 36th Street and adjacent to the Key Bridge in 1912.⁵⁹ The Columbian Boat Club also had a clubhouse at the foot of 32nd Street. The club was formed around 1880⁶⁰ and along with the 1868 Analostan Club, the 1869 Anacostia (later Washington) Club, and Dempsey's Boathouse (1903-61), it represents the array of boathouses in Washington that grew alongside yacht clubs, like the Corinthian Club and the Capital Yacht Club, and rowing clubs, such as the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's Plate Printers Rowing Club, that made the Potomac a lively place.⁶¹ The boat builders, Johnson & Baker, opened shop

⁵⁷ In her NRHP nomination about the Washington Canoe Club, historian Betty Bird eloquently summarized the recreational trends and attitudes toward exercise that emerged in the nineteenth century as a response, largely, to industrialization so I only reference that here. See Bird, Sec. 8: 2-3.

⁵⁸ John Clagett Proctor, "Succession of Boat Clubs Here Began Century Ago," *Evening Star* May 3, 1936, clipping file, Peabody Room, DCPL.

⁵⁹ Originally the Potomac Barge Club, the PBC was founded by oarsmen at the Union Hotel, and in the early 1900s, members and their families camped up river to escape the heat on the weekends and rowed to the club for supplies. In 1908 they sold the boathouse and began constructing the present building; during the interval, the club was based on the Samuel Langley Ark moored at Three Sisters. By the late 1950s, when the retrospective on the club was written, women were members, canoeists belonged alongside with the rowers, and Washington & Lee High School practiced at the club. Peggy Reynolds, "After 88 Years, Club's Shells Still on River," *Washington Post* July 7, 1957, clipping file, Peabody Room, DCPL. Prior to the redevelopment plans and current debate, the Potomac Boat Club purchased the land on which its boathouse sits and owns it in fee simple. Christopher Brown to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 7, 2013.

⁶⁰ The Columbian Boat Club's genesis was described in the *Star* in April 1880 as a "new boat club-a meeting for the purpose of organizing a new boat club was held Saturday night at the Riggs House and [...] club was formed, with an active list of about 40 members, comprising many of the best known of our amateur boating men. A tasteful house will be erected immediately at some point on the river front at Georgetown, and the flag of new aspirants thrown to the breeze. As the Potomac is broad enough and the material plentiful for another boating association in our midst, it is to be hoped that the existence of a new club will add an impetus to boating during the coming summer never before known in our waters." Two years later the Columbian Boat Club won the regatta in Philadelphia. "Pioneer Potomac Boat Clubs," *Evening Star* August 10, 1941, clipping file, Peabody Room, DCPL.

⁶¹ "The Balmy Days' for Clubhouses Along the Patowmack," and "Boat Club Reviving Old

next to the Columbia Boathouse in 1884, further attesting to the popularity of the sport, and to the presence of “boating parties” on the Potomac.⁶²

Offering some insight to how the boathouses in Washington, DC, were built in this era are the minutes relating to the Corinthian Club’s design and to the Potomac Boat Club as well as the account of a plan for the speculative boathouse adjoining the Aqueduct Bridge. A member provided the clubhouse design for the Corinthian Club,⁶³ while the Potomac Boat Club retained architect Charles Reid. He provided the Potomac Boat Club with a two-story building with a 65’ x 97’ footprint and a 58’ tower. The French (mansard) roof was broken with “gables and peaks.” In keeping with the requirements of an operating boathouse, the lower floor was devoted to canoe and boats while the upper floor belonged to the members with its ballroom and locker rooms, balcony and French windows, and “Eastlake” stairs.⁶⁴ The description of this building is more in keeping with the style of the Washington Canoe Club, than the gable-fronted structure that the Potomac Boat Club erected in 1912. This similarity of aesthetic reinforces the importance of the extant boathouse, making the present form of the Washington Canoe Club’s building a lone survivor of the era.

The speculative boathouse, named the Algonquin, was intended to be larger than the boathouse just completed that could house about 100 canoes (and likely this referred to the Washington Canoe Club given the 1906 date). It was to be built adjacent to the Aqueduct Bridge and connect to it directly by a bridge. The access would lead into the third level; as with other boathouses, the lower levels were for storing the canoes and boats. The social rooms included a smoking room (in the front), a ladies room, 350 steel lockers, toilets, shower baths, and a balcony on the third floor plus a ballroom or reception room on the second floor with a kitchen and quarters for the janitor and his family to the rear. These floors were 51’ x 80’.⁶⁵ The plans for this boathouse were separate from a club, inverting the process with the idea once the facility was ready, boating enthusiasts would join.⁶⁶

Although the plans for the speculative boathouse remain an indication of the popularity of water sports, and canoeing and rowing in particular, Patrick Dempsey’s 1903 boathouse holds the title as the largest constructed on the Potomac River. Dempsey, a sculling champion, built the canoe house east of the site of the Washington Canoe Club. He expanded it in 1914. The addition

Potomac Rivalry,” n.d., clipping files, Peabody Room, DCPL.

⁶² “Historical and Commercial Sketches of Washington and Environs...1884,” clipping file, Peabody Room, DCPL, 247.

⁶³ Clipping files, Historical Society of Washington, DC.

⁶⁴ “Aquatic Heroes: The Potomac Boat Club,” *Evening Star*, June 8, 1889, clipping file, Peabody Room, DCPL.

⁶⁵ Ernie Brooks explained the dimension module, 80’ x 50’, as a standard depth for canoe storage and depth for two walkways between the storage racks. That was true in 1906 as well speaks to the consistent scale and core elements of boathouse design throughout the twentieth century.

Ernie Brooks to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

⁶⁶ “Algonquian Canoe Club’s Proposed Home,” *Washington Post* April 1, 1906, SP3.

extended from Dempsey's to the east end of the Washington Canoe Club and spanned 200' (providing them with a canoe house some 800' feet in total length). Its scale was deliberate and made to accommodate up to 1000 canoes. The addition rested on oak pilings. Reports of its erection along the Potomac shoreline also noted that the summer season was in "full swing" and 1500 canoes would be taking to the river.⁶⁷

The construction of Dempsey's Boathouse in 1903 above the Aqueduct Bridge and the plans for the Algonquin also represent a shift in boating activities from earlier locations downtown, and efforts to entice clubs to the Tidal Basin. The yacht clubs remain in Anacostia and along Maine Avenue today, but the relocation of the Potomac Boat Club to the Aqueduct Bridge area was a source of debate in 1906. Advantages cited for a river bank site included regatta days and ease of viewing the races, although a similar case was made for the seawall at the Tidal Basin. Work on Potomac Park promised a convenient site for the boathouse, and a setting "enhanced 100 per cent by the reflection of the lights of the city,..." Waters above the Aqueduct Bridge were also more dangerous than those in the Tidal Basin. Yet the pull of Dempsey's Boathouse (1903)⁶⁸ and the Washington Canoe Club (1905) boathouse, as well as camp sites near what is known as Roosevelt Island and the Three Sisters, convinced the Potomac Boat Club to stay in the Georgetown neighborhood and lured the club to its present place beside the Key Bridge shortly thereafter.⁶⁹ The competitive spirit of the Washington Canoe Club paddlers likely influenced the Potomac Boat Club's decision to build a boathouse and to train close by. Its choice for a gable-fronted boathouse could also reflect a desire to distinguish the clubhouse from its Shingle-styled neighbor.

The relationship of all the boat clubs to the river also contributed to an environmental advocacy that accompanied recreational and sporting health philosophies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1904, just before the Washington Canoe Club was established, representatives from the Corinthian Yacht Club, the Potomac Boat Club, the Annapolis Boat Club, the Capital Yacht Club and the Inter-Club Canoe Association petitioned against the dumping of "gas tar and other oily substances" into the Potomac River by the manufacturing businesses along the Georgetown waterfront. Contamination impacted the complete health of the river ecosystem and adversely affected the boaters and bathers (swimmers) using the water.⁷⁰ In later years, the three-mile swim would take place upriver, the dumping of sewerage into the water notwithstanding. The paddlers' experience of the water informed not only site locations for boathouses but also views regarding aquatic health and community well-being.

⁶⁷ "Erects Big Canoe House," *Washington Post* May 3, 1914, R3.

⁶⁸ A car plowed into Dempsey's Boathouse at 3600 K Street, NW, damaging the building and about a dozen canoes in 1957; the car went through the wall. *Washington Post* March 23, 1957. Dempsey's burned in 1961. "Famed Dempsey's Boathouse Razed in a Spectacular Fountain of Flames," *Washington Post* May 4, 1961.

⁶⁹ "Boathouse Site in Doubt," *Washington Post* February 25, 1906, F13; "Site for Boathouse," *Washington Post* April 8, 1906, 11.

⁷⁰ "Boat Clubs File Petition," *Washington Post* July 20, 1904, 12.

More typical of the era than the proposed Algonquin Boathouse, devoid of actual canoeists and advocates as it was, was the establishment of the Washington Canoe Club and the canoe club sponsored through the YMCA. The YMCA canoe club was formed in response to the popularity of the established clubs and the waiting list for memberships; the boathouses could store only a finite number of canoes and so membership numbers were necessarily limited. The Washington Canoe Club had about 100 members at this time. The YMCA leased land above the Chain Bridge for a clubhouse, but it is unclear what was built there.⁷¹ In 1905, the High Island Canoe Club's boathouse burned. It was a small club, and the building was owned by about fifteen men. It was not insured and was appraised at \$1500; the fire meant a complete loss of their investment and a set-back to their pastime.⁷² Several of the Washington Canoe Club's founding members belonged to the High Island Club so likely this travesty helped the Washington Canoe Club coalesce and encouraged formal incorporation of the organization in that year.

Around this time as well, students at Columbian University decided to field a crew team. Initial interest was enthusiastic but not universal and so the developing club lacked members for full elections of officers and adoption of by-laws. The Club's mission included purchasing a site for the planned boathouse, as well as planning for the structure. Like the Algonquian, this was more speculative in that the club wanted its facility to open in conjunction with the school's athletic board's acceptance of a crew team.⁷³

Building the Washington Canoe Club

Speculation rather than speculative development surrounded the inauguration of the Washington Canoe Club. The *Washington Post* marked the launch of the Washington Canoe Club in the years 1904 to 1906, chronicling meetings for the writing of by-laws and events for the raising of moneys for the construction of the boathouse. In August 1905 the newspaper reported that property had been "secured" above the Aqueduct Bridge and the meeting that month focused on building plans. Work was to start in two weeks of the printing.⁷⁴ In 1906 the *Post* again reported on the Washington Canoe Club and its boathouse, noting that the building was safe despite rumors to the contrary that concerned the invocation of a right-of-way by Maryland.⁷⁵ It also commented on the newspaper's subscription contest, won by the Washington Canoe Club, with a letter from club member Lawrence Eberbach; Eberbach complimented the competition's participants and the *Post*'s conduction of it as friendly and fair. As a new club, preparing for the contest helped bring the members together and rally as a team.

Other benefits to raise money to pay for the construction of the Washington Canoe Club's boathouse were also advertised in the *Post*, as well as Washington Canoe Club sponsored events like the cabarets and minstrel shows that were popular attractions and that helped finance the

⁷¹ "YMCA Canoe Club," *Washington Post* March 25, 1906, S2.

⁷² "Fire Destroys Clubhouse," *Washington Post* December 18, 1905, 2.

⁷³ "New Canoe Club Forming," *Washington Post* January 22, 1904, 9.

⁷⁴ "Canoe Club Launched," *Washington Post* August 2, 1905.

⁷⁵ "Canoe Club Is Safe," *Washington Post* July 15, 1906, S1.

boathouse.⁷⁶ The communal and social aspects of the Canoe Club led to the installation of a grill room, an “innovation” among boathouses at the time, in the 1909-10 addition and to speculation that T. Arthur Smith would “manage the venture.”⁷⁷ Similarly, in keeping with earlier trends, the Washington Canoe Club supported summer-time camps upriver for members and their families as one way to escape the city heat.⁷⁸ It is unclear how successful the camps were, but it is further evidence of the role of the boathouses and clubs across many aspects of city life. That the National Guard Band played from the Aqueduct Bridge in accompaniment to the Washington Canoe Club’s regatta in 1909 emphasizes this point. Conductor Donald MacLeod directed the musical component of the race day.⁷⁹

The Washington Canoe Club, and its counterpart the Potomac Boat Club, hosted paddlers and rowers respectively, and offered other social and sporting outlets for members. The Washington Canoe Club sponsored the three-mile swim (to Chain Bridge) for years, especially popular in the 1920s and 1930s.⁸⁰ Both clubs fielded football, basketball and other land-based activities, such as bowling, hiking, and cave explorations. They had parties and oyster roasts. They held musical and theatrical vignettes.⁸¹ The boathouse became a gathering place, with friendly competitions among neighboring clubs and the “waterfront’s premier recipe for spicy steamed crabs” bringing generations together. Members spent many hours in the boathouse, making it a second home for some and a place for families.⁸² Keeping a watchful eye on the club members, as well as keeping the recipe for spicy crabs secret, Pembroke Smith served as a steward for the club from 1912 until 1953. His stature within the Washington Canoe Club grew with each year; Pemmy, as he was affectionately known, was doorman, handyman, and chaperon. More importantly, he was part of what made the Washington Canoe Club more than a storage facility, helping it thrive as a community-based clubhouse that rallied around its champion paddlers.⁸³

⁷⁶ *Washington Post* May 6, 1906, 2; “Did Canoe Club Good,” *Washington Post* May 1906, 14; “Canoe Club Benefit,” *Washington Post* May 20, 1906, EA2; “Canoe Club Plans Show,” *Washington Post* May 16, 1909, and May 30, 1909; also, *Washington Post* May 5, 1912, for the cabernet at the Fredonia Hotel.

⁷⁷ “Canoeists’ Home Doubled in Size,” 4.

⁷⁸ *Washington Post* June 10, 1906.

⁷⁹ “To See Canoe Races,” *Washington Post* July 21, 1909, 16.

⁸⁰ There was also the President’s Cup, a speed-boat regatta, held near Hains Point, beginning in Calvin Coolidge’s administration. This brought increased activity to the waterfront as well.

⁸¹ These are referenced in various announcements in the *Washington Post* from 1906 through the mid 1960s as well as summarized in the 50th anniversary booklet about the club that was prepared in honor of its golden jubilee. See for example, “Potomacs Ready for Annual Game,” *Washington Post* October 31, 1921, 11.

⁸² Members who stayed in the boathouse included Gene Cunney, Jack Laine and Iggy Miller; Miller claimed the northern turret as his, he stayed there so often! Others, like the Havens and Rhodes families put multi-generations in canoes and made the boathouse less a locker room and more a community center.

⁸³ Robert Sellers, “The Potomac of my Boyhood,” clipping file, Peabody Room, DCPL; *The Washington Canoe Club* (Washington, DC: Prepared for the 50th Anniversary of the Washington

Paddlers' Beginnings to Olympic Victories

Paddling history looks back to the Royal Canoe Club and its launch of flat-water racing in 1867. The Royal Canoe Club's first contest sparked interest in the sport, and not long after, the New York Canoe Club coalesced. Founded in 1871, the New York club was joined by others along the East Coast, with Washington, DC, being the southernmost center for paddlers. Local leisure pursuits, canoeing out to camps in the Potomac, and healthy exercise fed the canoe and kayak fad. As the presence of boathouses in Washington, DC, attests, a number of clubs were founded and the number of boats on the Potomac duly increased. The Washington Canoe Club, along with the Potomac and Analostan clubs and the Maryland Swimming Club in Baltimore, joined together to form the Southern Division of the American Canoe Association in 1915 and so to formally enter the national arena. The meeting was held at the Washington Canoe Club's boathouse and Commodore W.A. Rogers presided over the inauguration.⁸⁴ Clubs from Washington to New York competed in regattas.⁸⁵ The Canadians posed formidable rivalries. In 1916 the Washington Canoe Club won the fourteenth annual regatta of the Inter-club Canoe Association and by 1920, members of the Washington Canoe Club dominated the sport, including the tilting tournaments, and talk circulated about fielding an Olympic team. At the time six members of the Washington Canoe Club held most of the national titles. The champion paddlers were Harry Knight, Karl Knight, James Burch, Reginald Rutherford, Charles Wagner, and Fred Bammon.⁸⁶

In the 1920s, paddling reached new prominence as a sport and the Washington Canoe Club hit its stride. In 1924, for example, the American and Canadian Canoe Associations won the right from the Olympic Committee for canoeing to be a demonstration sport in the Paris games. Four members of the Washington Canoe Club represented the District, notably the only individual city with a team, and followed the direction of Vice Commodore Harry Knight. The Washington Canoe Club paid for its team's trip to Paris, raising funds within the club to support the sport and make the four top contenders' participation possible. Members of the 1924 team included Knight, Charles Havens, Karl Knight and Hank Larcombe. There were eight members of the U.S. team that year; the Canadian team also had eight members. Teams from England, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, and Finland also competed that year. Canoeing became an Olympic sport in 1936; its recognition was delayed because too few countries participated; however, during these years, the Washington Canoe Club swept national championships and

Canoe Club, 1954).

⁸⁴ "Canoeists Here Plan to Enter National," *Washington Post* June 20, 1915, SP3.

⁸⁵ On try-outs for the racing teams, see for example "Fore'n Aft On the Potomac," *Washington Post* May 13, 1928, 21. On racing in Toronto and the Washington Canoe Club regatta, as well as the Potomac Boat Club's, see "Fore'n Aft On the Potomac," *Washington Post* July 1, 1928, 20.

⁸⁶ "Feature Canoe Race to Washington Club," *Washington Post* May 31, 1916, 12; "Washington Paddlers May Be in Olympics If Canoe Contests Are Added to the Program," *Washington Post* January 8, 1920, 9.

major events, like the international competition at Sugar Island in Canada in 1921 where Harry Knight captured gold.⁸⁷

In the build-up to the 1936 Olympic games the Washington Canoe Club repeated as the U.S. national champions, with the club from Yonkers placing second. The team trials were held in Philadelphia, and nine paddlers from Washington, DC, vied for the coveted places. Harry Knight, the veteran from the 1924 Olympics, led the Canoe Club in training regimens and at the try-outs. Havens had died the year before, during a surgery to remove his tonsils, Karl Knight had to give up the sport, and Larcombe had “disappeared” from the sport since the 1924 games. New members, including promising paddlers from the next generation of the Havens family, took their places. With the Canadians, the German teams posed the most competition for the Washington paddlers. There were ten spots on the U.S. team, for which fourteen clubs competed. There were seven racing events scheduled for, and seventeen countries entered in, the 1936 Olympiad.⁸⁸ Flat-water canoe and kayak racing had arrived.

The Washington Canoe Club won places on every U.S. Olympic team from the 1936 games through 1996, and today boasts the fastest junior paddler in the country. Members moved to the area specifically to train with the club, seeking the camaraderie of the club as well as the competitive edge of its exemplar athletes. Frank Havens, gold medal winner in Helsinki (1952), recalled what it took to win gold, pushing yourself and developing stamina, strength and style of stroke to close out the race. Training with the country’s best elevated club members’ skills, and its regattas were a coveted prize.⁸⁹ Frank Havens also took a silver medal in the 1948 games; Havens’s birth in 1924 kept his father home from the Paris games where the Washington Canoe Club won three of the six demonstration events. His father Bill was undefeated in the 1924 to 1925 season, and flat-water racing was in the genes.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ “Washington Oarsmen to Compete in Olympics,” *Washington Post* March 23, 1923, S1; “Washington Canoe Club in First Drill,” *Washington Post* April 6, 1924, S1; “Canoeists Making Plans to Enter Olympic Games,” *Washington Post* April 20, 1924, S2.

⁸⁸ “Washington Club U.S. Canoe Leader,” *New York Times* December 27, 1936; “9 DC Paddlers Seek Olympic Positions,” *Washington Post* June 27, 1936, 19; “Harry Knight, 49, in Fine Form, Heads DC Paddlers in Trials,” *Washington Post* June 26, 1936, 19. The only American to medal in the 1936 canoe competition was Ernie Riedel of the Pendleton Canoe Club in New York. There were ten members of the team, and seven events. In the national competition before the Olympics, the Washington Canoe Club dominated, particularly Harry Knight, John Long, and Dick Ackad. “Olympic Try-outs in Canoeing Listed,” *New York Times* October 15, 1935, 28; “Washington Club U.S. Canoe Leader,” *New York Times* December 27, 1936, S3.

⁸⁹ “Going for Olympic Gold: A Winner Tells What It Takes,” *Washington Post* April 6, 1984, WK6.

⁹⁰ “U.S. Pair Wins Canoe Event,” *Baltimore Sun* August 12, 1948, 19; “DC Lands 5 on Olympic Canoe Team,” *Washington Post* June 24, 1948, 21; “White Water Canoe Race,” *Washington Post and Times Herald* May 7, 1956, 12; “4 from Area on Olympic Canoe Team,” *Washington Post* July 18, 1960, A17; “Havens Makes Brilliant Bid for Olympics,” *Washington Post* June 15, 1952, C3; “DC Crew Wins Test for Olympics,” *Washington Post and Times Herald* April 25,

The Havens family inspired others to try the sport, including a number of women whose mettle in kayak racing garnered more Olympic medals for the Canoe Club with the performance of Francine Fox and Gloriane Perrier in 1964. Other Washington Canoe Club members followed, with Norman Bellingham's gold medal in the 1988 Olympics a recent highlight. Men and women participate in the canoe and kayak racing, and the Canoe Club is a strong advocate for women's canoe racing on the national and international stage. The U.S. added the women's events as part of the championship competition in 2002; although just the second country to do so then, almost forty others have since opened their national championships to women as well. A women's competition became a World Cup event in 2010, and the Canoe Club is campaigning for a similar slot in the 2016 games.⁹¹ (See Appendix B) The Washington Canoe Club created an Olympic Hall of Fame in the corridor leading to the board room that honored its teams and its leadership of the sport.⁹²

Rising Tides: Floods, Ice and Mud Come to the Washington Canoe Club

As remarkable as the champion teams of paddlers assembled and trained by the Washington Canoe Club is the Shingle style boathouse the early club members constructed. Built partially over the water, on pilings, and in anticipation of the Potomac River's ebb and flow, the boathouse survived many an ice jam and several floods. As early as 1911, not long after the second stage of the original building was completed (adding the grill room and east turret in 1909-10), club members took precautions against the ice packs that clogged the Potomac River in the winter months. Concerned that movement of the ice would impact the outer piers, club members discussed having a wall of concrete or stone placed west (above) the boathouse to protect it.⁹³ It is unclear if that preventive measure was taken and in 1918 flood waters ruined the Analostan Club's boathouse. The flood waters smashing the pilings supporting the building and effectively left the Analostan Club's boathouse to float away (or rather collapse into the water) once the ice melted. The front of Dempsey's was crushed. Monetary damages for the boathouses reached \$25,000 for the Washington Canoe Club, \$10,000 for the Potomac Boat Club, \$15,000

1960, A19; "U.S. Wants Canoeing Retained in Olympics," *Washington Post and Times Herald* June 8, 1961, B1; "Seven Olympians Compete in Canoe Regatta," *Washington Post* April 3, 1974, D9; "William Havens, 79, Canoe Expert, Coach," *Washington Post* May 23, 1976, 24; "DC Canoe Club Makes a Splash," *Washington Post* July 14, 1991. Also, "Honor Roll" from the Washington Canoe Club's 50th Anniversary Publication that included Harry Knight, Dave Lea, Frank Havens, Joe Fraile, and Henry Fowler.

⁹¹ Brown, 2-3.

⁹² Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

⁹³ "Potomac Ice Moves Out," *Washington Post* January 8, 1911, S7.

for Captain Moore's, and \$5,000 for Great Falls Canoe Club.⁹⁴ In addition to the boathouse itself, the canoes stored inside sustained damages from the water too.⁹⁵

In 1924 the Washington Canoe Club was better prepared for the rising water, and the canoes were "securely lashed" even though the building was flooded. Water rushed through the Washington Canoe Club, the Potomac Boat Club, and Dempsey's, and most of the damage was upstream near Three Sisters where the flood waters and mud inundated the summer camps.⁹⁶ A similar fate awaited the boathouses in 1936, with newspaper photographs ominously titled, "Washington Canoe Club Going Under," as the water covered the floats, piers, and ground floor. Only the second floor was visible.⁹⁷ The third major flood – after 1924 and 1936 – came in 1952. Water from heavy snow, ice and rain pushed the boathouse off its pilings in the 1957 flood as well; it moved 5' downstream and was returned to its original position.⁹⁸

Rising Tides: Redevelopment Plans for the Waterfront

Momentarily secured from the water's fury, the Washington Canoe Club's boathouse faced another potential hazard.⁹⁹ The plans to redevelop the waterfront, including the extension of the Whitehurst Freeway begun in the 1960s, and the construction of a bridge at Three Sisters, would wipe away the landmark clubhouse. The boathouse and the remaining arch of the aqueduct bridge would have to be demolished for the access ramps to the bridge. The arch was already a

⁹⁴ "30,000 Throng Aqueduct Bridge and Neighboring Roads to Witness Wreckage Left by Weeks' Flood," *Washington Post* February 18, 1918, 2; "Crest of Flood Is Receding But Damage Has Increased," *Washington Post* April 1, 1924, 5.

⁹⁵ "Flood Danger Passed," *Washington Post* February 16, 1918, 2.

⁹⁶ "Crest of Flood Is Receding But Damage Has Increased," *Washington Post* April 1, 1924, 5.

⁹⁷ "Washington Canoe Club Going Under," *Washington Post* March 20, 1936, 21.

⁹⁸ Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

⁹⁹ James Birchfield, "Canoe Club Threatened," *Washington Star* November 5, 1971; "Georgetown's View of the Potomac Is an Industrial Mess," *Washington Post* March 196- [illegible date, clipping file, Peabody Room, DCPL]; "Urban Renewal and the Georgetown Waterfront," *The Georgetown* January 25, 19--; "Georgetown Park and Shops Under Freeway Urged," *Washington Post* May 9, 1965; "The Georgetown Waterfront Area," National Capital Planning Commission, September 1961; "Landmark Disappears," *Washington Post* September 15, 1968; "Pittsburgh? Guess Again," *Washington Post* February 26, 1962; [Snow Factory], *Washington Post* February 20, 1967; "Whitehurst Freeway Losing a Neighbor," *Evening Star* March 14, 1970; "Beautification Act Funds to Prove Boon for District," *Sunday Star* October 31, 1965; "Ban River industry, Georgetown Advised," *Washington Post* March 29, 1965; Leroy Aarons, "Boat'-Eye View of Waterfront Problems," September 27, 1964, and "Industry Holds Out against an Expanding City," and "The Georgetown Waterfront (/) A Summary Report and Development Proposal," copies on file, Peabody Room, DCPL; "Doxiadis Assigned to Plan Park at Georgetown Waterfront," *Washington Post* December 30, 1955. Also, "Georgetown Canal and Riverside Proposal," and "Georgetown Waterfront Symposium," copies on file, Peabody Room, DCPL.

city landmark; the boathouse was listed as such in 1973. As an alternative, members of the Washington Canoe Club proposed shifting the outbound approach to the bridge, thereby leaving the boathouse and the aqueduct arch in-situ.¹⁰⁰

Contemporary Boathouse Ventures

The boathouse and aqueduct arch survived the urban renewal and redevelopment impetus, and the river welcomed additional paddlers, rowers, and boating enthusiasts. The National Park Service (NPS) responded to the growing popularity of water sports and constructed a water sports facility at the mouth of Rock Creek. The NPS, therefore, entered into the local boathouse trade when it opened Thompson's Boat Center.¹⁰¹ Thompson's facilitated the growth of water sports through its accommodation of high school and collegiate rowing teams as well as the public's participation in rowing, canoeing, and kayaking. One casualty of the new water sport concessionaire was Dempsey's Boathouse. The shed extension of Dempsey's remained as a

¹⁰⁰ A barge with building materials for the bridge or improvements in preparation for it was swept down river, eventually lodging under the 14th Street Bridge and this halted the plans for the bridge and freeway extension over the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

¹⁰¹ "\$216,000 Allotted 'Water Sports Center' Is Among Park Projects," *Washington Post* June 29, 1958, D1; "Boat Center Bids Asked at Rock Creek," *Washington Post* August 12, 1959; "Mole Is Still Choice As Boathouse Site," *Washington Post* July 7, 1959; "'New Water Sports Center Dedicated with Bow to All Who Fought Its Fight,'" *Washington Post* September 25, 1960. Fletcher's was a family-operated boathouse, five generations lived off the Potomac. The following synopsis of the history of Thompson's Boat Center was taken from the website (www.thompsonboatcenter.com/history) on July 15, 2013: "Located at the confluence of Rock Creek and the Potomac River, the 'Harry T. Thompson Boat Center' was built on National Park Service-administered land adjacent to C&O Canal Mile Marker 0 at what was once the terminus of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Originally named the 'National Capital Water Sports Center,' the boathouse was dedicated on September 24, 1960. Brainchild of National Capital Parks Superintendent Harry T. Thompson, the boathouse was built with funds allocated under a 10 year expansion and rebuilding project embarked on by the National Park Service known as 'Mission 66.' The facility was renamed on March 28, 1961 for its champion, who passed away five months after its dedication. (/) Thompson's was constructed to provide public access to Rock Creek Park (established 1890) and the Potomac River as well as the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. The boathouse provides an opportunity for residents and visitors to explore the many treasures that Washington, DC and the Potomac River have to offer through kayak, canoe and bicycle rentals. [...] (/) Though the boathouse saw a decline in use after the catastrophic flood of 1972, it grew in popularity through the last decades of the 20th century. From a humble beginning in a run-down industrial area on the Georgetown waterfront with one high school and one university crew team, and a few rental canoes, it now hosts the prestigious teams from Georgetown and George Washington Universities and 13 other scholastic teams from the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland; two rowing clubs; and several hundred private boat owners who store their vessels on-site."

storage facility but the activity of the boathouse and rental of canoes transferred to Thompson's along with the boathouse manager. Dempsey's obituary in 1961 noted its demise in a fire and its location "on the old C&O Canal right-of-way." No longer occupied, the wood building was susceptible to a spark and, once ignited, burned in minutes. Firefighters struggled to save the adjoining boathouses, and the collapsed shed injured two of the firemen in the process.¹⁰²

Thompson's Boat Center is the newest facility on the Potomac River, joining the Washington Canoe Club, the Potomac Boat Club, Jack's and Fletcher's boathouses and by the early 1990s, all were filled. Arlington rowers wanted a boathouse on the Virginia side of the river; others, such as George Washington University and Georgetown University, lobbied for boathouses on the Georgetown side but the District of Columbia used the waterfront sites for parking and storage and the National Park Service owned the remainder.¹⁰³ The Georgetown Citizen's Association opposed the construction of any new boathouses on the east side of 34th Street, thwarting plans first proposed in 1987 that included seven boathouses, in all, along the riverfront and permitting construction up to 1000' west of the bridge. Of the seven, four were the Washington Canoe Club, the Potomac Boat Club, Jack's Boathouse and Fletcher's Boathouse.¹⁰⁴ Concerns from the Georgetown neighborhood focused on the waterfront park area and the potential encroachment the new boathouses proposed in the 1987 plan would have on it.¹⁰⁵

Also monitoring the proposals for the waterfront park and other changes recommended in the 1987 plan was the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail. Proponents of the trail advocated for a connection between the trail's end at Water Street and the new park area leading into the Georgetown harbor. The scale of the proposed boathouse plans (80'x50') suggested in 1987 offered a solution to the demand for more boathouse space and protected the trail and canal viewsheds; clustering the new boathouse or boathouses as recommended in 1987 further protected the trail from development. At the time of the land acquisition for the trail Georgetown University came into possession of a parcel and an easement of access that was located upriver of the Washington Canoe Club.¹⁰⁶ A boathouse or other university installation on this tract would

¹⁰² "Famed Dempsey's Boathouse Razed in a Spectacular Fountain of Flames," *Washington Post* May 4, 1961; "Fire Levels Historic Dempsey's Boathouse," clipping, Peabody Room, DCPL. Washington Canoe Club member Jack Brosius was working across the river at the time; Brosius recalled it took about 35 minutes to burn. Jack Brosius to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

¹⁰³ "On the Waterfront: Boathouses Cast Their Spell," June 25, 1992; "Boathouses: To Build or Not to Build," *Washington Post* June 25, 1992; "Mooring a New Boathouse Can Be Upstream Struggle," *Washington Post* January 28, 1992.

¹⁰⁴ "Boathouse Blues," September 4, 2003, and "Boathouse Plan Faces Rising Tide," *Washington Post* 2003, clippings on file, Peabody Room, DCPL.

¹⁰⁵ "1987 Park Plan Foresaw Boathouses East of Key," *The Georgetown Current* November 27, 2002, 2, 11; "Anti-boathouse Fever Strikes CAG Meeting," *The Georgetown Current* November 20, 2002, 1, 43.

¹⁰⁶ DC Recorder of Deeds, 493/309, November 21, 1989 (accessed online, August 13, 2013). CSX granted the land (parcel 0301, lot 0142) to Georgetown University, with an easement for

adversely effect both the trail and the canal, and many advocated for a land exchange and pursuit of the 1987 proposals for a boathouse near the existing buildings of Jack's, the Potomac Boat Club, and the Washington Canoe Club.¹⁰⁷

Thus, of the would-be builders of boathouses, only Georgetown University appears to have made headway with the proposed land exchange that would enable the University to build within the national park. The land exchange would transfer the proposed boathouse site to private hands, under a perpetual easement, and so introduced zoning approvals to the negotiations. Plans for the university's new boathouse were put forward in 2001. The proposed boathouse would be 140' x 80' and the second floor would be higher than any recorded flood water (40' the maximum allowed by zoning). The proposed design would allow rising water to flow in and out, leaving mud behind and posing no threat to the structure.¹⁰⁸ The zoning application identified the project as a "matter-of-right" waterfront development because the proposed boathouse was for recreational and competitive purposes. The interior would accommodate storage space for rowing shells, a practice tank, locker rooms, office, multi-purpose space, dock and ramp for water access.¹⁰⁹ It, essentially, would be far larger than the Washington Canoe Club building and far larger than the suggested building scale in the 1987 recommendations or preliminary discussions; its site also extended past the 1000' west of Key Bridge guideline. Objections centered on these points.

Other changes to the waterfront that were discussed for several years before reaching a crescendo in 2001 included the proposal for Clyde's Restaurant to have a river venue. Plans called for a barge resembling a Victorian boathouse to be moored next to Jack's boathouse. Protests erupted over the impact of the project on the water and on rowing in particular. Jack's viability was endangered by the project's proximity; opinions regarding parking for the restaurant were especially contentious.¹¹⁰ Although the assessment by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers doomed the barge, Jack's sustainability remained in question.¹¹¹ By the decade's end, Jack's lease with the National Park Service (NPS) was under negotiation, and it was reported that the decision to convert Jack's into a concessionaire like Fletcher's and the NPS-built Thompson's in accordance with policies and guidance threatened to price the owner out of business. Ultimately

access, in 1989. Covenants indicate only a boathouse could be constructed here, which was not entirely clear in the early discussions about the site, nonetheless, its location and potential development posed a threat to the park and to the trail.

¹⁰⁷ This synopsis was graciously provided by Ernie Brooks, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail. Ernie Brooks to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 13, 2013.

¹⁰⁸ "Proposal for GU Boathouse Moves Forward," *The Georgetown Current* November 14, 2001, 1, 39; "GU Files Boathouse Plans with Zoning Commission," *The Georgetown Current* September 18, 2002.

¹⁰⁹ "GU Files Boathouse Plans with Zoning Commission," *The Georgetown Current* September 18, 2002.

¹¹⁰ "Tempest in a Rowboat," June 14, 2001, 6, clipping on file, Peabody Room, DCPL; "Is Jack's Boathouse Doomed?" *The Georgetown Current* June 14, 2001, 5.

¹¹¹ "Boathouses," *The Georgetown Current* November 2002, 15.

Jack's was re-opened as Key Bridge Boating in April 2013 and in the ensuing summer months has put over 1000 people on the river on the weekends.¹¹²

Georgetown University's proposal looked west of the bridge, but its scale (33,000 square feet) posed the same threats to the water and river embankment as well as to the sightlines that so aggrieved the Georgetown Citizen's Association in earlier years. Environmental groups joined the Washington Canoe Club in opposition to the project, citing as the club did, the 70' extension into the river, the effects of building in a flood plain, and damage to the parklands.¹¹³ Scenic America identified the area as one of America's "last chance" landscapes, and the DC Preservation League echoed the ecological fears with an architectural caution by placing the building on its "endangered list" in 2012.¹¹⁴

Currents of Preservation

Opposition to the scale and site of the proposed boathouse for Georgetown University prompted further consideration of the proposal and environmental assessments. Concurrent to the renewed look at the waterfront, inside the National Park Service other revisions were underway. In 2007, all of the National Park Service special use permits for sites pre-dating the establishment of a park yet understood to serve the public in various ways, like the Potomac River boathouses, came under policy review.¹¹⁵ The Washington Canoe Club successfully argued for its lease extension, but the deteriorating condition of its iconic boathouse jeopardized the club's continued presence on its historic site. Concerns about the structural soundness of the building, and the safety code violations identified in the inspection, caused the National Park Service

¹¹² "Jack's Boathouse Fights Possible Eviction," *The Georgetown Current* January 2, 2013; "Boathouse Future Remains Unclear Due to Lease Issues," *The Georgetown Current* January 9, 2013; "Jack's Boathouse Is Now Key Bridge Boating," *Washington Post* April 12, 2013; "The Fletcher Family's Potomac Journey Nears an End," *Washington Post*, clipping on file, Peabody Room, DCPL. The numbers for the concessionaire that replaced Jack's come from Christopher Brown, who with enthusiasm said it was around 1200 a weekend. Christopher Brown to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, August 7, 2013. [NB: I concur with Chris; that many people on the water bodes well for river-related activities and the health and wellness of the community. -vbp].

¹¹³ "GU Boathouse Critics Pack Zoning Hearing," *The Georgetown Current* May 21, 2003; "Planned Boathouse Would Damage Park," *The Georgetown Current* May 28, 2003. The Georgetown Association favored the proposal, keeping the boathouse west of the Key Bridge; see "ANC Gives Nod Again to GU Boathouse," *The Georgetown Current* June 4, 2003.

¹¹⁴ "The Boathouse," *The Georgetown Current* July 28, 2004; "Boathouse Undergoes New Review," *The Georgetown Current* July 14, 2004; "Boathouse Faces Lawsuit, Environmental Reviews," *The Georgetown Current* November 3, 2004; "Washington Canoe Club Is 'Home of Champions' Again," *The Georgetown Current* June 16, 2004; "Paddle Sore: Why Does a Michigan Congressman Have It In for the Washington Canoe Club?" *Washington Post* June 21, 2008; "Boathouse Study Continues at March 3 Workshop," *The Georgetown Current* March 7, 2012.

¹¹⁵ See note above in reference to the GAO report.

(NPS) to close the boathouse in 2010. In recent months, after stabilization work on the building was completed, the NPS re-opened part of the eastern extension to canoe storage and for a make-shift changing area for the paddlers. Otherwise Olympic hopefuls and the more pedestrian paddlers practice without training or bathing facilities. Undeterred, club members use the docks and look after the boats. Current discussions between NPS personnel and Washington Canoe Club members touch on maintenance and restoration of the structure, clarification regarding the title to the property, and plans for an integrated program for river-related activities.¹¹⁶ As a result, the NPS Historic Preservation Training Center (HPTC) in Frederick, Maryland, submitted a proposal for a Historic Structures Report that would record present conditions and recommend the repairs and restoration work needed for the boathouse's long-term preservation. A completed report is due in May 2014.

Part II. Architectural Information

A. General statement

1. Architectural character: Aesthetically the Washington Canoe Club is representative of the Shingle style, a design popular in the late nineteenth century and associated with suburban housing and resort towns along the New England coast.¹¹⁷ The architect of record, George Hales, came from the Boston area and his familiarity with the Shingle style likely prompted its use in the design for the Canoe Club. The rarity of Shingle style architectural examples in Washington, DC, places greater emphasis on the appearance of this building and its integrity of style and form. The boathouse is an important example of the aesthetic, and a significant feature of the Potomac waterfront below Georgetown.¹¹⁸ A visual hallmark of the landscape, the boathouse exhibits trademarks of the style in its massing, irregular roofline, integrated towers and porch, and sparing use of ornament save the shingled façade and roof. The complexity of the building's shape is countered by a uniformity of material; the shingles bring cohesion to the exterior by overlaying the undulating parts and wrapping around a myriad of openings.

¹¹⁶ "Park Service Closes Canoe Club Building," *The Georgetown Current* July 27, 2011; "Agency Again Floats New Boathouses," *The Georgetown Current* December 14, 2011; "Boathouse Plans to Get Fresh Look by Park Service," *The Georgetown Current* December 14, 2011; "Finding a Solution for all Boathouse Interests," *The Georgetown Current* February 2012; "Boathouses Should Avoid C&O Canal Park," *The Georgetown Current* March 21, 2012; "NPS Kicks Off New Boathouse Study," *The Georgetown Current* March 14, 2012; "Boathouse Eviction On Hold," *Washington Post* December 25, 2012; "Boathouse Is Told to Pack Up the Paddles," clipping on file, Peabody Room, DCPL; "Park Service: Boathouse Lease Old, Doesn't Name Current Owner," *Washington Post* December 25, 2012.

¹¹⁷ On the Shingle Style, Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *The Shingle Style and The Stick Style* (1955; rev. ed., paperback, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

¹¹⁸ Betty Bird, "Washington Canoe Club," Nomination, 1990, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, Sec. 7:2. (NRHP).

2. Condition of fabric: The building fabric is deteriorating, a condition documented extensively elsewhere through the assessments conducted by the National Park Service in 2010 to 2012 and addressed in the current call for proposals for a restoration/stabilization plan and work schedule.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The Washington Canoe Club's boathouse has a rectangular footprint measuring about 142' by 45'. The building faces south, overlooking the Potomac River, and the rear (north) elevation backs up to the walking path (former tow path) of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. The steel footings for the connecting walkway remain in situ near the boathouse. The original section of the building, the western portion of the structure including what is now the central pavilion, measures about 61' by 45'. The 1909 section tacked another 30' onto the east, including the corner tower/east turret, and so giving the building a 92' x 45' footprint overall. The ca. 1920s eastern extension measures approximately 50' by 44' (front by east end).

As completed today, the 1905 to 1909 structure is five bays across, with each bay marked by a large square opening designed for ease of access to the canoe storage racks. Rolling doors slide horizontally on interior tracks to open the four westernmost portals; the doors are made of wood and are painted white. The easternmost of the five openings is a single door made of wood and painted white; it is mounted on hinges and opens inward. The ca. 1920s eastern extension adds another three bays to architect George Hales's 1905/1909 design. It is characterized by contemporary overhead doors wherein the doors are mounted on tracks and roll up to open the space.

The present configuration of the eastern extension includes the gable-roofed addition for the women's locker room; this narrow, east-to-west addition joined the main building on the north end of the east elevation. Because of the terrain and change in grade, the north elevation looks to be only one-story; however, the women's locker room addition was on the main floor. To the south of the locker room was a roof-deck defined by a parapet-like balustrade. This was later enclosed, covered by extending the southern slope of the gable roof into a long shed roof and filling in the walls. The changes are particularly evident on the east elevation. Presently the east elevation fenestration consists of the single door and two windows both covered with plywood and painted to represent glazing of eight lights per opening; the lights are arranged in two rows of four and suggest that these are casement, awning or hopper windows, depending on how the hinges are mounted to the frame.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ With the removal of the plywood coverings, the architectural field team saw that these windows are inward-swinging awning windows; the windows in the women's locker room are hopper windows. Robert Arzola, Paul Davidson, and Daniel DeSousa to Virginia B. Price, personal communication, July 2013.

2. Foundations: The foundations consist of concrete fill.

Originally the building was built partially over the water, on pilings, but in the 1960s, the Corps of Engineers demolished the Aqueduct Bridge and used the stone as riprap. No riprap was placed under the Canoe Club and so the water became stagnant. Further exacerbating the stagnancy of the waters under the building was the installation of a large sewer pipe. The sewer pipe ran between the boathouse and the Potomac River; the Corps filled around the pipe and covered the whole with a 15' concrete apron. This created the concrete pad or deck on the south (river) side of the building seen today, necessitated a change in docks and floats, and produced space for a parking lot and grassy area.¹²⁰

3. Walls: The walls are sheathed in shingles. The exterior is painted green with white trim.¹²¹

4. Structural system, framing: The Washington Canoe Club boathouse has a wood-frame structure. Steel I-beams and some columnar supports have been added in recent years to help secure the structure of the building.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, porticoes, bulkheads: There is an integral balcony extending to either side of the central pavilion and terminating at the towers. French doors open onto the balcony from the ballroom spaces inside. In the French doors, each leaf is glazed with five lights. To the north, there is a small wood porch with a shed roof and an access ramp leading to the rear door.

6. Chimneys: There are two masonry chimneystacks, both placed in the north rear of the building. The main chimney served the fireplace in the ballroom, while the secondary chimney served the kitchen. The kitchen chimney is east of the original building, in the 1909 portion.

7. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: There are five rectangular boat ports in the 1905 construction; a single door glazed with six lights above the lock rail with two panels below which opens just east of the grill room; French or double doors opening onto the balcony; as well as one single door at the east end, plus two utilitarian single doors opening in the east and

¹²⁰ Bird, "Washington Canoe Club," NRHP, Sec. 7:3; Christopher Brown and Jim Ross, "Chronology", outline draft dated April 2013, copy on file. [NB: The copy of the draft chronology was provided to Catherine C. Lavoie by the authors for the purposes of background information for this Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) report. I thank all parties for generously sharing the historic data. -vbp]

¹²¹ The building was painted red initially. A post card with a historic (1910s) view of the boathouse and Georgetown captures the building with its early paint, and the author thanks Bonnie Havens for sharing the image.

north elevations on the first-floor level. The surrounds are made of wood and the members are butt joined. In the east extension, the three overhead doors are set inside the wall plane and the framing is utilitarian.

b. Windows and shutters: Originally many of the windows were not glazed, such as those in the west tower. Later a mixture of wood sash glazed with six-over-six lights or eight-over-eight lights and sash glazed with one-over-one lights was used along with six-light and eight-light casement windows and pivot windows. Presently the window openings are covered in plywood; the plywood has been painted to represent the glazing of the sash behind it. The windows in the women's locker room (overlooking the workshop area) are six-light hopper windows, hinged at the bottom. The surround is butt joined, with the header and sill extending past the stiles.

8. Roof

a. Shape, covering: The main building is covered by a hip roof with a cross gable marking the central pavilion. The roof was shingled, and now is covered in standing-seam metal. The eastern extension is covered with a shed roof.

The ridgeboard is visible from the ballroom.

b. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A ventilator marks the center of the original building, resting at the ridge line of the hipped roof and in line with the cross gable of the pavilion. A flagpole further accentuates the central pavilion. Flanking the pavilion are projecting octagonal towers capped with conical roofs. A balcony with a closed balustrade connects the towers to the central pavilion. Bargeboards (also called vergeboards) create an arch under the cross-gabled pavilion, giving further emphasis to the central bay. The bargeboard arch visually references an arch brace albeit by adding aesthetic interest to the gable rather than true structural support to a truss. Beneath the arch is a fanlight.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: The ground floor plan of the Washington Canoe Club features a central grill room with kitchen and storage located to the rear (north) side; the grill room and supporting service spaces are located in the east tower and the adjacent bay to the west. Flanking the grill room core are open areas for canoe (boat) storage. A weight room was partitioned from the main storage space to the east.

The first-floor plan featured the ballroom in the center of the building as it was completed in 1909, with a stage to the south and a fireplace to the north and ceiling rising up to where the ventilator (also referred to as a louvered lantern) is placed. In the west end and tower is the men's locker room, with a bathroom in the rear and banks of lockers filling the remainder of the space. At the mezzanine level, there are additional lockers and access to the tower chamber. East of the ballroom, in the space that was appended in

1909, is the boardroom; the boardroom opens into the east tower. The main staircase and bathrooms for men and for women are to the north of the boardroom. Both bathrooms open off the stairhall. In the later addition (extending eastward and in line with the north elevation), the present workshop occupies the roof deck and the women's locker room runs along the north wall. The enclosure of the deck happened in the early 1970s, sometime after the present women's locker room was added. Access to this floor level is by a door and ramp in the north rear wall and an exterior stair connecting to the single door in the south end of the east elevation. There is a loft space, for overnight stays, above the north-south hallway that runs along the former east end wall of the building as it stood in 1909 and that adjoins the door and ramp to the north and the roof deck-cum-workshop to the south.

2. Stairways: There are three staircases, two on the interior and one exterior stair leading to a door on the first floor at the south end of the east (side) elevation. In the northwest corner of the ground floor is a stair with a quarter turn near the bottom. It is missing several treads. The other stair is a single run of steps with a closed balustrade and beveled handrail; it is located north of the grill room and is the formal point of ascension to the ballroom and locker rooms. The balusters along the stair head are arranged in a series featuring two plain balusters flanked by a larger baluster. In the larger baluster is a diamond cut-out.

3. Flooring: Materials for the flooring include tile on the ground floor, in the hall, grill room and kitchen; narrow wood boards on the first floor; tile in the bathrooms; and some carpeting, such as in the tower sleeping rooms. The boat storage areas have concrete flooring.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The interior of the Washington Canoe Club boathouse is a mixture of finished and unfinished spaces, with bead board walls and ceilings throughout except for the boat storage areas in which the framing is exposed. A Burlap covering is used to create the effect of wainscoting on the main floor. Also on the main floor, the wood trim for the door architraves, balustrade, benches, trophy cases, piers, and shelf is stained a dark brown, almost black color.

5. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: Most of the doors are wood and paneled; the architraves are mitered or butt joined at the corners. Several are embellished with backbands, such as the cavetto molding seen on the main floor doorways.

b. Windows: The interior surrounds are in keeping with the plain architraves seen on the exterior; the sills are made of wood.

6. Decorative features and trim: Besides the stage or bandstand, built-in benches with curving ends, the bracketed shelf, the corbelled fireplace, the built-in glass-front trophy

cases, and the piers with concave moldings in the ballroom, the most notable feature in the Canoe Club is the decorative frieze painted by Felix Mahoney. The frieze is located in the grill room and depicts members of the club; Mahoney was a cartoonist for the *Evening Star*. The frieze was touched up by Charles W. Lundmark in 1981 to 1982.

7. Hardware: The hardware consists of modern locks for the individual lockers and the windows, as well as door hinges and knobs.

8. Mechanical equipment: The Washington Canoe Club boathouse has municipal services, i.e., electricity and water/sewer, and so the electrical and plumbing systems are contemporary. Lighting is modern, including the nautical-themed lamps and ceiling mounted fixtures.

D. Site

1. Historic landscape design: Designed for boating, the setting for the Washington Canoe Club centered on access to the water. Built partially on pilings initially, the docks for the boathouse, as well as those of its neighbors, defined the water's edge. A footbridge from the tow path connected the canal walk to the back (north) door of the boathouse. The tracks for the Georgetown Spur rail line ran behind the boathouse and dominated that part of the riverfront above the Key Bridge. The immediate setting of the boathouse was altered with the demolition of the Aqueduct Bridge in the early 1930s, the installation of a sewer pipe in the 1960s, and the removal of the rail line around 1990. When the sewer pipe was installed, the area was backfilled and the concrete pad in front of the boathouse was poured. The parking area was made at this time as well.

2. Outbuildings: There are no outbuildings on site, although there are outdoor storage racks for club members' use.

Part III. Sources of Information

A. Architectural drawings: Architectural drawings for the building were done in 2002; copies were discovered during the inaugural stages of the HSAR project in fall 2013. Historic plat maps for the city include the railroad tracks running behind the boathouse and in recent years the footprint of the building itself. HABS quality drawings were produced in conjunction with this report.

B. Early Views: Historic images of the Potomac and of the boathouses are found in the collections of the D.C. Historical Society, the Peabody Room of the DC Public Library, and the Washingtoniana Collection of the DC Public Library. The Canoe Club maintains a photo archive on its website, www.washingtoncanoeclub.org, as do the Friends of the Washington Canoe Club (www.friendsofwcc.org).

C. Interviews:

Club members Jack Brosius, Christopher Brown, Bonnie Havens, and Dan Havens have been especially generous with their time and in sharing their memories of the boathouse. Long-time rower John Cann also graciously shared his recollections of boating on the Potomac River and of the many clubs that competed.

D. Selected Sources:

In addition to plat maps, Sanborn maps, the DC permit files, the National Capital Region Reservation 404 files, the Commission of Fine Arts' minutes, and the clipping files and collections of the DC Public Library Washingtoniana and Peabody Reading Rooms, the DC Historical Society, and individual collections of Washington Canoe Club members, the following source materials pertain to the Washington Canoe Club:

Betts, John Richards. *America's Sporting Heritage, 1850-1950*. MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1974.

Birchfield, James. "Canoe Club Threatened." *Evening Star* November 5, 1971.

Bird, Betty. "Washington Canoe Club," Nomination, 1990, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service.

"DC Canoe Club Victor," *Washington Post* June 27, 1938.

DeBonis, Mike. "Paddle Sore: Why Does a Michigan Congressman Have It In for the Washington Canoe Club?" *Washington City Paper*, September 21, 2007, 12.

Endicott, William T. *The River Masters: A History of the World Championships of Whitewater Canoeing*. Washington, DC: William T. Endicott, 1979.

Fiftieth Anniversary of the Washington Canoe Club, 1904-1954." Washington, DC: Washington Canoe Club, 1954.

Hawkins, Burton S. "Knight, Rodman Dominate Meet." *Evening Star* July 14, 1935.

Hazzard, Jack. "DC Is Canoeing Capital Too." *Washington Post* June 5, 1956.

Hunt, Reed. "Boaters High and Dry As Canal Is Repaired." *Washington Post* August 28, 1968, C4.

Krout, John Allen. *Annals of American Sport*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929.

Lucas, John A. and Ronald A. Smith. *Saga of American Sport*. Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1978.

Olesen, Don. "Canoe Club Began with Burnt Cork," *Washington Post* April 18, 1954.

"Rowers and Paddlers Busy on the Potomac," *Washington Post* April 13, 1924, S3.

Toro, Andras. *Canoeing: An Olympic Sport*. San Francisco: Olympian Graphics, 1986.

"Washington Canoe Club Active Making History in Many Lines of Sport Here Since Early 90s." *Evening Star* June 25, 1933.

Werner, Constance W. *Georgetown Historic Waterfront: A Review of Canal and Riverside Architecture*. Washington: U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, 1968.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated

A comparison of the non-motorized boathouses and canoe and rowing communities in Philadelphia and Boston, for example, might expand the context for the boathouses along the Potomac. Travel for research or for field notes was not available in this project, and initial inquiry at area libraries yielded little.

F. Appendices

Appendix A¹²²

Transcription, "Paddlers of Canoes," *Washington Post* September 3, 1905, S4.

The Washington Canoe Club formed a few weeks ago will begin to break ground for the clubhouse to be built about 100 yards above the Aqueduct Bridge, between the Canal road and the river early this week. Plans for the house were made by George P. Hales, a recent arrival among canoeists on this river but one who has been canoeing on the Charles River near Boston for years. His plans are an adaptation of the canoe house on the Charles River. The house may be easily approached from the end of M street by the use of a flight of stone steps leading from the towpath to the canal. (/) The exterior of the house will be plain, but attractive in appearance, and so built that it should it be desirable at any time to add to the building the addition may be made without marring the symmetry of the structure. At one corner there will be a tower, surmounted by a flagpole, from which will float the pennant of the club. The house will be 40 by 60 feet and two stories in height, with the top of the roof twenty-five feet above the level of the first floor, which will be about six feet above the flood-tide mark. (/) Reached by Bridge over Canal (/) The second floor will be on a level with the Canal road, which is on the embankment

¹²² This account more accurately positions the boathouse 100 yards from the Aqueduct Bridge; the distance from the west side of the extant pier to the east end of the boathouse is 99.20 yards. Thank you to Deidre McCarthy, NPS CRGIS, for the measurement. See also, note 34 above.

at this point, and may be reached by crossing a bridge to the door. Another means of access is afforded by a flight of steps to the door on the first floor. (/) The entire first floor will be used for storing the canoes, and will have sufficient racks to accommodate 125. The members intend to have their canoes in the racks by October 1, if possible, and if they continue to rush the completion of the house as they have the plans and the awarding of the contract they will probably succeed. Each rack will be so placed that the canoe can be removed without moving any of the others. (/) The second floor provides for the indoor entertainment of the members and their guests. The ballroom will be about forty feet square, with an alcove fitted up as a cozy corner, overlooking the river, and casement windows leading onto two balconies also commanding a view of the water. At one end of the ballroom are the ladies' room and the smoking-room, and between them is the hall leading to the locker and bathrooms. The ladies' room will be handsomely furnished. (/) The lounging-room will be fitted up as a den. The locker-rooms will contain 125 lockers, each one ventilated and very roomy. The clubhouse will be adequately heated. The shower baths will be located off the locker-room. A stairway will lead from the locker-room to the first floor. [...]

Appendix B

The Olympics¹²³

Designated as a "Center of Excellence" by the United States Canoe and Kayak Team (U.S. CKT), the national governing body for the sport of Olympic flat-water racing, the Washington Canoe Club continues to shape the sport. Former Olympians and hopeful Olympians train at the club. Also, in 2016, paracanoe and kayak racing will be a formal event in the Paralympics; the Washington Canoe Club works with athletes with physical challenges and hosts several events each year to promote the paracanoe and kayak teams. In 2016, the club hopes to add to this distinguished list:

Washington Canoe Club U.S. Olympic Canoe and Kayak Team Members

Norman Bellingham	1984, 1988, 1992
Jack Brosius	1972
Ruth DeForest	1952
Linda Dragan	1972, 1976, 1980
Francine Fox	1964, 1968
David Halpern	1984
Mark Hamilton	1988
Alexandra Harbold	1992, 1996
Michael Harbold	1988, 1992, 1996

¹²³ This summary is taken from materials prepared by the Washington Canoe Club and available on the club's website www.washingtoncanoeclub.org, accessed June 17, 2013.

Theresa Haught	1980, 1988
Charles Havens	1924
Frank Havens	1948, 1952, 1956, 1960
William Havens, Jr.	1940, 1948
Karl Knight	1924
Harry Knight	1924
Hank Larcombe	1924
Charles Lundmark	1960
Bruce Merritt	1984, 1988
Sandor Nyerges	1988
Gloriane Perrier	1960, 1964
Nancy Purvis	1972
William Schuette	1952, 1956
Dan Schnurrenberger	1984
Edward Trilling	1940
Denis Van Valkenburgh	1964
Andreas Weigand	1968, 1972, 1976, 1980
Peter Weigand	1968
Al Whitney	1972

Appendix C

Illustrations

Figure 1. Detail view of historic plat map for Washington, DC, that shows the Washington Canoe Club parcel as well as that of the Potomac Boat Club. The plat maps are in the collections of the DC Public Library (both the Washingtoniana Room and the Peabody Branch library have copies) and the Kiplinger Library of the Historical Society of Washington.

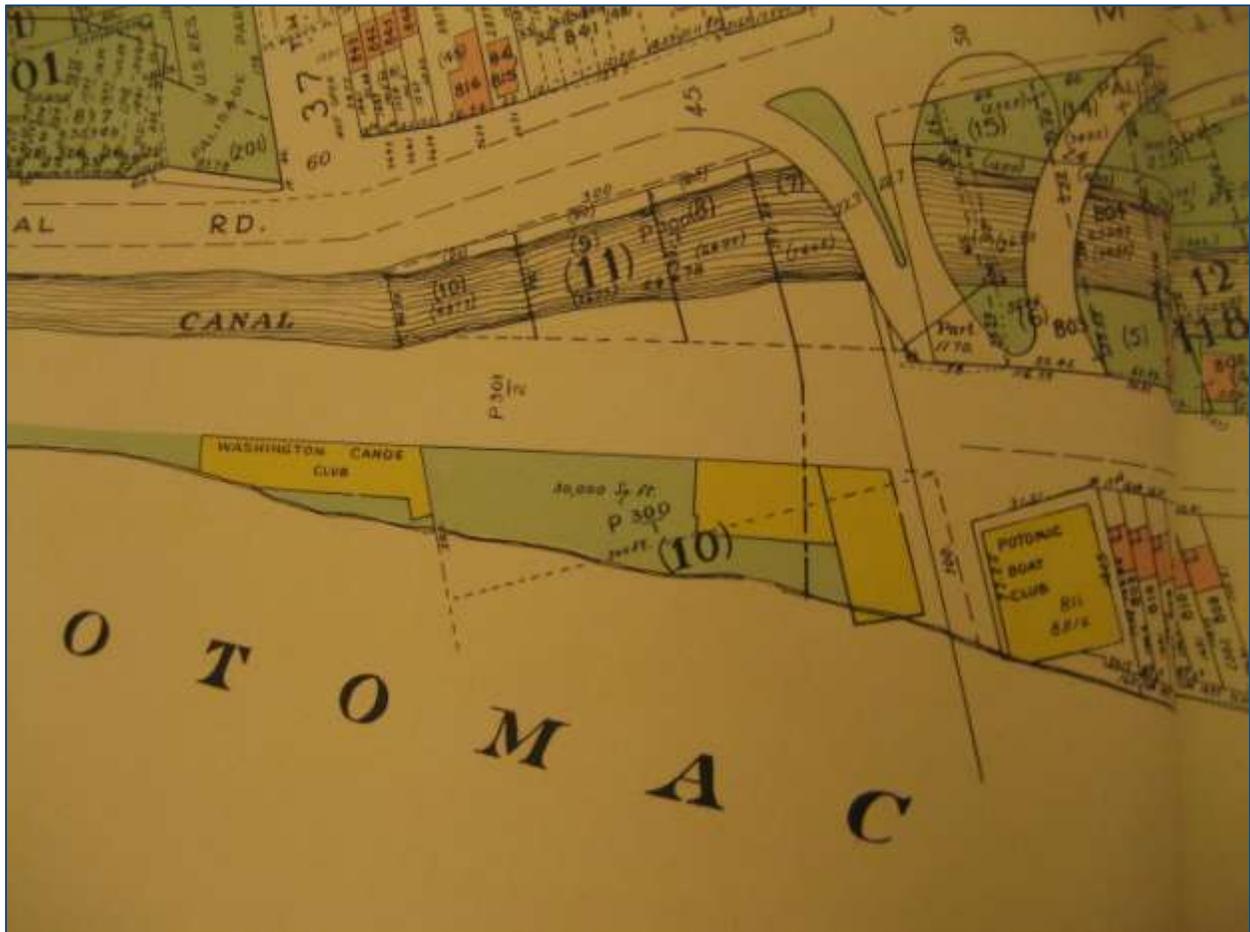
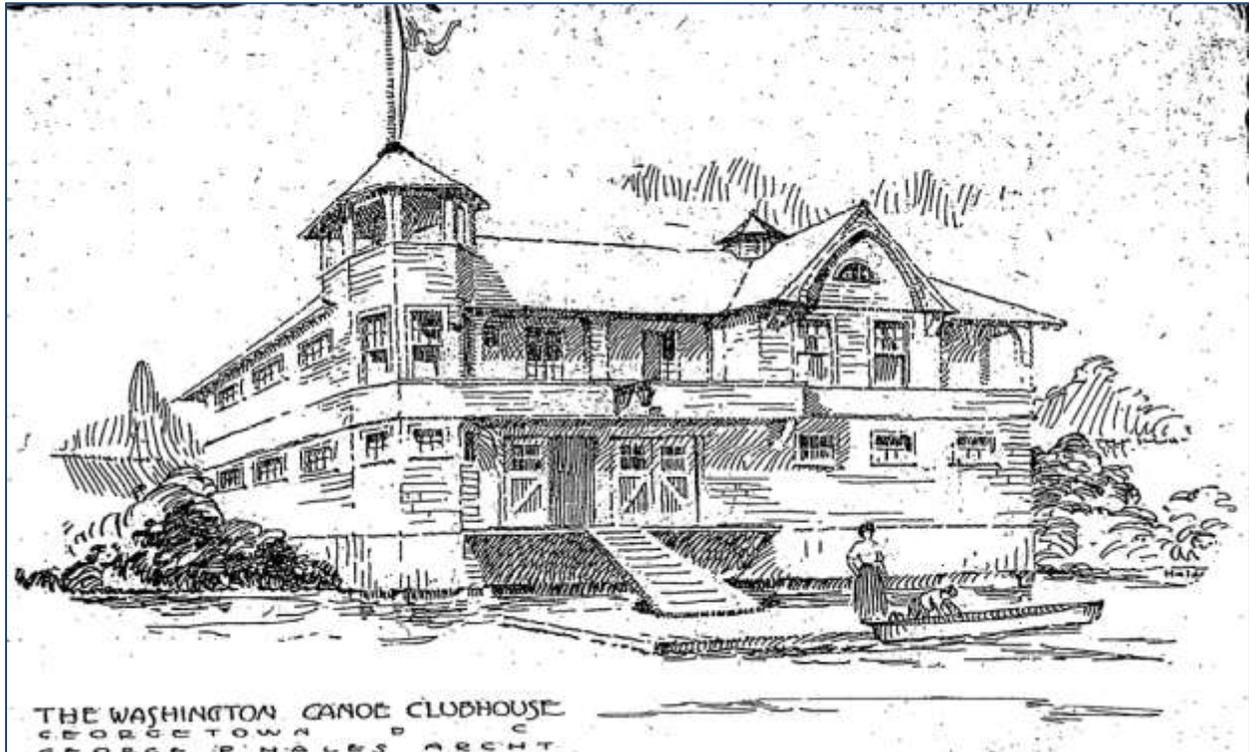


Figure 2. Drawing of the Washington Canoe Club for “Paddlers of Canoes,” Washington Post September 3, 1905, S4.



Historic photographs record the phased construction of the building beginning in 1905 and continuing with the bridge or catwalk to the towpath and east turret in 1909. Two photographs included the 50th anniversary booklet for the Washington Canoe Club record the boathouse in this form, and the proximity of the railroad tracks to the north (rear) elevation.

Figure 3. Like the drawing above, this photograph records the Washington Canoe Club as it was completed in 1905-06. (Courtesy of the Peabody Library, Georgetown, DCPL).



Figure 4. Perspective view of the Washington Canoe Club from the Aqueduct Bridge or Key Bridge that illustrates the completed, original concept for the boathouse as designed by George Hales. The photograph also records the piers and protective riprap at the foundation/waterline, the walkway along the south front and ramp, and balcony that wrapped the east side. Also in the image are the railroad tracks to the north of the boathouse and two smaller boathouses to west, upriver from the Washington Canoe Club, illustrating how a to-scale boathouse in that location would be in keeping with recreational architecture in the city around 1930. (Courtesy of the Peabody Library, Georgetown, DCPL)



Figure 5. View of the Washington Canoe Club looking from the southeast, ca. 1920s. The three-bay addition to the east has been completed. The Canoe Club is seen to the far left of the image. (Courtesy of the Washington Canoe Club).

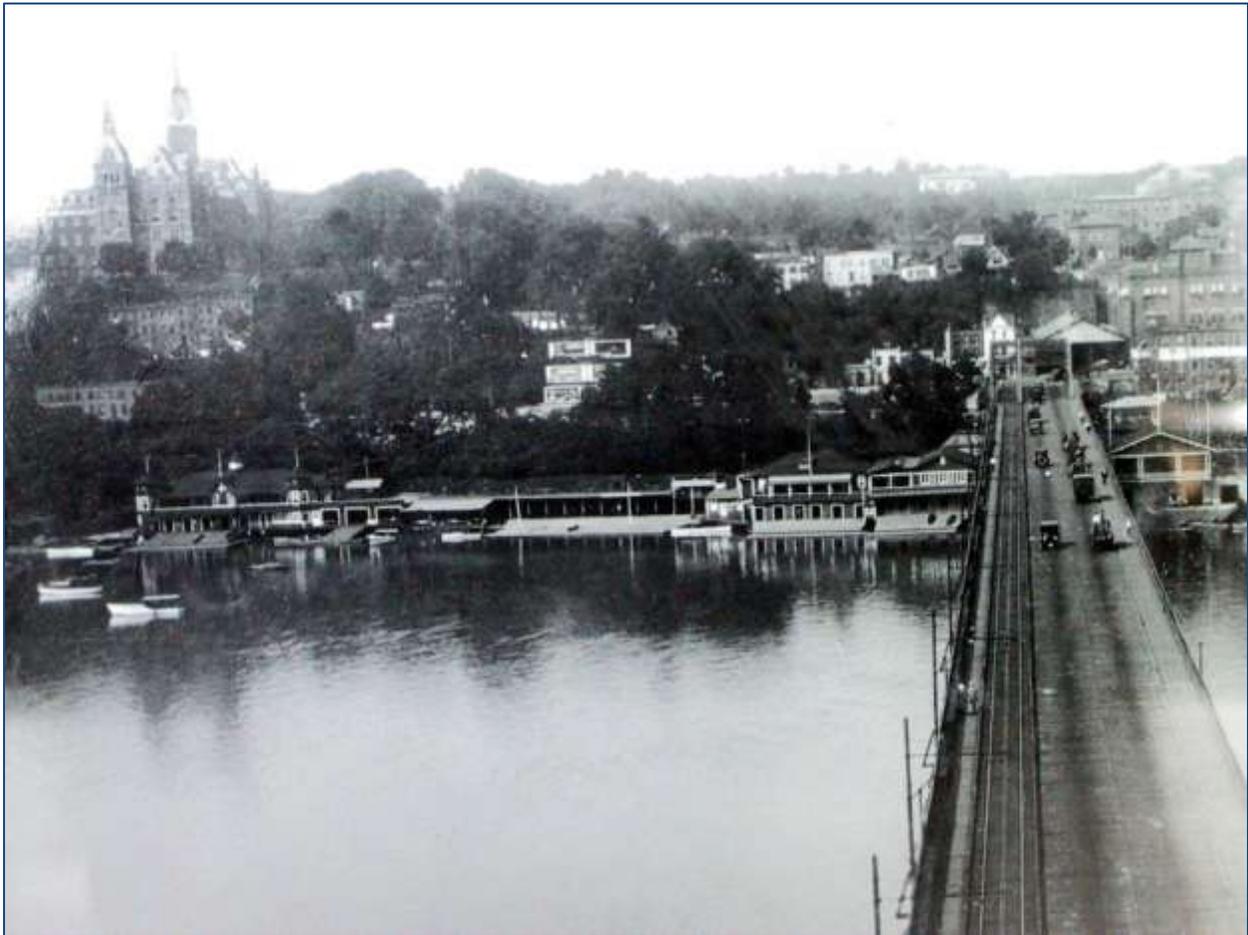


Figure 6. Close view of the Washington Canoe Club in the early 1920s that suggests the east addition is in place, with the parapet wall along the south elevation of the roof deck. The parapet appears to extend east, rather than wrap to the north along the side elevation. (Courtesy Washington Canoe Club)



Figure 7. Interior view of the ballroom. (Courtesy of the Washington Canoe Club).

