

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name

other names/site number

Alibi Club

N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 1806 Eye Street, NW

not for publication N/A

city or town Washington

vicinity N/A

state District of Columbia

code DC

county N/A

code 001

zip code 20006

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

x Robert L. Mallett
Signature of certifying official

9/1/94
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Alibi Club

Washington, DC

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In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the
National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for
additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

4. National Park Service Certification

=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the
National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible
for the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible
for the National Register

☐ removed from the
National Register

signature date of action

Edson H. Beall

10.21.94

Entered in the
National Register

____ other (explain): _____

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

0

sites

0

structures

0

objects

1

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Clubhouse

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

roof Metal

walls	Brick
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other Stone

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance 1869-1944

Significant Dates 1869,

1886

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

___ previously listed in the National Register

___ previously determined eligible by the National Register

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

___ Federal agency

___ Local government

___ University

☒ Other

Name of repository: Alibi Club

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	322900	4307670	3			
	--	-----	-----		--	-----	-----
2				4			
	--	-----	-----		--	-----	-----

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Alibi Club
Washington, DC

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11. Form Prepared By

=====
name/title Glen Leiner/NR Coordinator
organization DC Historic Preservation Office date 1 August 1994
street & number 614 H Street, NW
telephone (202) 727-7360
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001
=====

Additional Documentation

=====
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner

=====
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____
telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

=====
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Description

The Alibi Club, located at 1806 Eye Street, NW, is a three-story flat-fronted rowhouse which is situated among larger commercial buildings in downtown Washington, DC.

The main facade is three bays-wide and is composed of molded red brick crowned by a projecting cornice. Situated at the sidewalk without any greenspace, the building also has a partially exposed sub-grade basement.

The wooden entrance surround and entablature, windows, and cornice suggest the Italianate in their overall character and are similar to those of surviving contemporary residences in other sections of the city. A non-original four-panel door has been added to the transomed entryway. Of particular interest are the window sashes which feature broad center muntins that simulate casement units. The two windows on the first story are further distinguished by their intricate 36-over-36 sashes. Louvered and paneled shutters along with limestone sills and lintels distinguish each window. The cornice is supported by eight brackets aligned with the window openings below. Two iron entrance steps join with the public sidewalk and connect to the iron railing (circa 1915) for the basement access which is parallel with the facade. The railing consists of five "turned" iron posts and pipe rail with decorative joint sleeves.

The property was originally rectangular in its plan, with a modest two-story brick extension that was added in 1889 and fronts the rear alleyway. The historic 19th century character of the property has been well preserved and the building survives as an anomaly within its densely-developed locale.

With only minor exceptions, the interior plan has remained true to its original form with many features and ornament intact. The character of these spaces adds to the understanding of the significant social history and club activities associated with the property.

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Section 7 Page 2

Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Description (continued)

The entrance stair hall is a narrow 4'-wide passage which widens at the rear to a 5'9"-width in order to accommodate the stairs that go up the east wall. As suggested in Mr. Loring's early 20th century history, there has been a tradition of members donating a wide range of objects, artwork and other furnishings. These artifacts and memorabilia cover nearly every square inch of wall and floor space on the first and second floors. In areas such as the front hall, it remains possible to see small sections of simple base board moldings and a chairrail to which brass pulls have been added at 4-5' intervals along the stair wall. The banister is a handsomely turned form, which follows the Nantucket tradition by incorporating an ivory knob atop the newel which marks the final mortgage payment.

The front and back parlors were originally two separate rooms with no direct passage between them. The wide opening between the two rooms serves to join them into one large space, with each area distinguished by different surface finishes. The front parlor is approximately 14'-wide and 19'-long. It has raised wall panelling, which is frequently obscured from view by decorative artifacts. Along the east wall above the pannelling are wooden lockers adorned with French etchings which date to the early 20th century. The 9'9" ceiling has exposed beams that run the width of the room, parallel to the front elevation. The back parlor differs in that the exposed beams do not run the full width of the building. Each runs nearly half way across where it ties into a cross beam.

The panelling in this room differs from that of the front parlor, however there is an overall uniformity in the decorative finishes. The floor throughout both parlors is a 2 1/2"-width board. There is one fireplace in the front parlor, on the east wall and another on the south (back) wall of the back parlor. The shelves and molding around each are heavily decorated with artifacts, however they appear quite plain at the mantel shelf level with a decorative swag motif.

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Section 7 Page 3

Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Description (continued)

Directly behind the back parlor and the stair hall is what was once referred to as the vestibule between the front and back buildings. This 19'-wide by 12'-deep space has plaster walls above a 4'-high wainscoting. The walls are colorfully decorated with framed caricatures of club members and more lockers like those found in the front parlor. It is possible to see the late 19th-century door surrounds framing the three openings in the room. The vertical stiles have a simple reeded molding and the corner blocks have been turned with bulls-eye patterns. There is a brick chimney on the north wall that aligns with the chimney in the back parlor. This mantel bows into the room.

The Dining Room is an early addition to the property which features walls (like those of the vestibule) finished with a 5'-high wainscoting finished in dark brown. At all but the northeastern corner, there are built-in cupboards and in the southwestern corner there is also a dumbwaiter which connects to the kitchen above. The western wall has a central fireplace with an inset mantle stone inscribed "Alibi." The south wall has a pair of casement type windows that have clouded amber glass lights. The room is furnished with a large oval tavern table surrounded by more than thirty Windsor chairs.

The front parlor of the second floor was remodeled in the 1930s and is finished with 6-8" vertical panels in a chestnut color. Most of these walls are covered by a series of framed caricatures of past members which were given to the Club by Larz Anderson. The floors are of 6" boards and there remains a fireplace on the west wall.

The "Japanese Scroll Room" is a 12'-wide by 16'6"-long space which once featured pastoral murals and now features a permanent display of Japanese scrolls within wooden showcases.

The kitchen is linked to the front of the house by the remains of the S.S. Alibi passage (complete with beams and portal). Installed in 1909, some newer equipment is evident; the cabinets and flooring suggest an installation date of about 1925. The

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Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Description (continued)

dumbwaiter, which was installed in 1909 to link this facility to the dining room below, remains operative.

The third floor has three chambers which have been used for storage since acquisition of the building by the Club in 1886 and, as a result, the finishes in these spaces remain the most original in the house. There are two chambers at the north (front) and one at the western side of the south (rear). The stair hall on this level lacks some of the applied decorations seen below and the hand rail is continuous from the ground floor the third. The western front chamber has a fireplace which is finished with a plain marble surround. Closet space was introduced in the rear chamber in the early 20th century. Each of the door openings and surrounds are consistent in size and ornament which suggests that the room configuration has not undergone alteration. These rooms are indeed secondary in nature yet retain the greatest degree of architectural integrity and convey the early residential use of the property.

The basement is divided into two basic sections; one beneath the front portion of the house and the second beneath the vestibule and dining room. The latter appears to have been the focus for excavations done to create cellar storage space in 1909. It is interesting to note that the floor joists supporting the dining room area, in particular, appear to be some of the oldest timber in the building and it may be possible that this flooring is a remnant of Richard Joyce's building (first indicated on this site in 1844). The front section of the basement appears to have been a finished working space since the building's original construction. A substantial fireplace surround located on the west wall would further suggest that this may have originally been finished as a basement kitchen with two window and one door openings at the north (front) facade.

There has been very little change made to the interior or exterior architectural character of the building since 1937. The earlier modifications serve to convey the historic use of the residence as

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Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Description (continued)

a private social club. The property retains a high degree of integrity and is a distinct architectural element in its immediate locale.

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Section 8 Page 1

Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Significance

The Alibi Club was founded in 1884 by seven Washingtonians as a private social club and has included many well-known political and social figures among its membership. Since 1886 the club has occupied the brick rowhouse which survives as a rare example of the early architecture which once typified its immediate neighborhood. The significance of the property is chiefly tied to its rich social history as one of city's oldest and most important private clubs and for its well-preserved architecture.

The merit of the collective social history of the club is presented as eligible rather than an association with individual members who have been recognized for their achievements and contributions elsewhere. Further, accurate records of individual member activities reinforce the position that the social history of the club is the basis for its eligibility.

Since 1886, the building has housed the Alibi Club, one of Washington's most elite men's social clubs. Designed as a single family residence and constructed between 1864 and 1869, this property has continuously served as a retreat for members who often played major roles in national and foreign affairs. They include important diplomatic figures, politicians, military, corporate, and civic leaders. The Club's continuous occupation of 1806 Eye Street since 1886 is especially notable among such institutions in Washington and adds to its history and understanding.

The club was organized in 1884 by seven distinguished Washingtonians: Marcellus Bailey, B. H. Buckingham, W. C. Charlton, John Davis, David Jones, Linden Kent, and Dr. Francis B. Loring. Marcellus Bailey, who is purported to have been the leader, was the son of the famous editor of that day, Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, who owned and published the National Era Weekly News, the paper which first presented "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in serial form.

The purpose of the club, as outlined in the its "Historical

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Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Significance (continued)

Notes" was to foster "mutual improvement, education and enlightenment." It stated that "convivial men the world over find pleasure and recreation in association with others like minded. This mutual association manifests itself in social clubs organized...to relieve the mind of what some call the monotony of domestic life and the routine and toil of business."

The founders of the Alibi Club were all originally members of the Metropolitan Club, which underwent a major expansion in the early 1880s. There is little explanation for the establishment of the new club other than as a possible alternative to the military character of the then-expanding Metropolitan Club. Alibi Club members appear to have always enjoyed the eclectic and humble surroundings. Their first location was at 17th and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW; two years later the club moved to the subject property. At both locations, the appearance of the facility contrasted with the high style, Victorian "new" Metropolitan Club of 1883. Unlike the Alibi, it would appear that Metropolitan Club tradition of adapting residential structures for their clubhouse ended with the post-Civil War refounding and expansion of the club.

The earliest gentlemen's clubs of Washington included the Metropolitan Club (1863), the Cosmos Club (1878), the Alibi Club (1884) and the University Club (1936). Each of these has reflected the varying distinct intellectual, political, business and social sectors of Washington society. Several, including the Alibi and Cosmos, began and continue operations within adapted residential structures. The Alibi is distinguished as the only club to occupy the same property for all but two years of its existence. On the other hand, the Metropolitan Club was the first to build quarters expressly for the clubhouse purposes.

The history of late-nineteenth century clubs in Washington is an important aspect of the city's heritage and reflects national trends. Lappin's Club Book of Washington (1893) explains how

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Section 8 Page 3

Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Significance (continued)

these institutions, like their counterparts in London, Paris and Berlin, were the outgrowth of literary and social gatherings of like minded individuals during a time when urban civilization was changing.

The backdrop, and basis, for many clubs as American cities underwent rapid growth during the industrial age was reform. Clubs frequently addressed the issues of poverty, sanitation, education, political corruption, and increasing demands for adequate public works.

The specific purpose of the Alibi Club was articulated in its certificate of incorporation. Like the language used for other private mens clubs of the time, members of the Alibi desired to associate themselves for literary and educational purposes and for mutual improvement. The Alibi Club, like its predecessor the Metropolitan, had both Washington residents and out-of-town members. The Alibi and other such clubs have traditionally made arrangements for reciprocal privileges with their counterparts in other places. Though difficult to document, it is more than likely that exchanges of this kind played an important role in generating a flow of information between communities that would help in the development of strategies to address civic issues. Washington, in particular, as a developing city in the late nineteenth century, could no doubt benefit from the experiences of members who were civic leaders in New York, Boston and Philadelphia.

Clubs like the Alibi appear to have played a noteworthy role as complements to domestic of members. Lappin's 1893 assessment of these institutions suggests that "a good club is the next best place to a good home" and for the non-resident members the Alibi Club--such as those in the military, foreign service and members of Congress--such a refuge was particularly important. The club was the regular site of refreshment and feasts for its members and guests. Historically, the Alibi Club also took pride in its

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Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Significance (continued)

complement to domestic life by providing its members with an alibi when their whereabouts was questioned by wives and family. For many years there was no telephone in the facility and when one was installed the number remained unlisted. In these early times the only way to reach members was to send a telegraph or messenger and in either instance, the recipient of the message upheld a tradition of providing the member in question with an alibi.

Distinguished members of the Alibi Club are noted for their roles as philanthropists, diplomats, politicians, attorneys, military leaders, and leaders in Washington's corporate sector. Early members of this institution reflect the caliber of personage that distinguishes the membership to this day. Members who distinguished themselves as civic leaders included Larz Anderson, philanthropist, diplomat and original owner of the Massachusetts Avenue mansion which he gave to the Society of the Cincinnati; Major Gist Blair, donor of the Blair House to the U.S. Government; Thomas Corcoran, philanthropist and banker; George E. Corcoran, grandson of W.W. Corcoran founder of the Corcoran Gallery of Art; Charles C. Glover, III, President of the Riggs Bank and one-time appointee to the Board of Managers of the Columbia Historical Society and the Committee of 100 for the Federal City; William Hibbs, financial leader in D.C. in the first quarter of the 20th century; Walter Bruce Howe, founder of the National Symphony Orchestra; David C. Karrick, Commissioner of the District of Columbia; Samuel Kaufman, President of the Evening Star; Benjamin Mosby McKelway, Editor of the Washington Star; and John F. Wilkins, Publisher of The Washington Post.

Prominent members of the legal profession and appointees of the high court were also among the Club's early membership including: Chandler Anderson, international lawyer and arbitrator in the Black Tom Explosion proceedings; George Hamilton, Jr. lawyer, philanthropist and banker in D.C.; Nelson Hartson, founder of the prominent D.C. law firm of Hogan and Hartson; John Lord O'Brian, government official and leader of the National Bar; Stanley F.

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Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Significance (continued)

Reed and Potter Stewart, Justices of the United States Supreme Court; and Clarence R. Wilson, a prominent lawyer in D.C.

Politicians, cabinet members and other leaders appointed by Presidents of the United States were also among the Club's early membership. Such figures include: David K. E. Bruce, personal representative under six Presidents from the terms of Harry S. Truman through Gerald Ford; Prescott Bush, U.S. Senator from Connecticut and father of President George Bush; Dwight Davis, Secretary of War; Alan Dulles, Director of the CIA; John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State; Walter Edge, Governor of New Jersey; Gordon Gray, Chief of Staff to President Eisenhower; Rear Admiral Cary Grayson, confidant of Presidents Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt; Alfred M. Grunther, Deputy Commander and subsequently Supreme Allied Commander in Europe; Frederick Hale, U.S. Senator from Maine; Christian A. Herter, Congressman and Secretary of State; John Kean, U.S. Senator from New Jersey; Blair Lee, U.S. Senator from Maryland; Nicholas Longworth, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Robert Lovett, Secretary of Defense and Chairman of Union Pacific; General of the Armies George C. Marshall, subsequently Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State; General Maxwell Taylor, top advisor to President Kennedy and Commander of the Airborne Forces during World War I; J.W. Wadsworth, Sr., Member of Congress and U.S. Senator from New York; and Major General Blanton Winship, Governor of Puerto Rico.

There were also important figures from the diplomatic arena including: Truxton Beale, Robert Woods Bliss, James Dunn, George A. Garrett, Joseph W. Grew, and Thomas Nelson Page.

Major military leaders, many of whom went on to be diplomats and/or appointees of Presidents, are also on the roster of early Alibi Club members. Among them were: Colonel Archibald Hopkins, Union Officer with General Grant at Appomattox; Admiral Jerry Land, Chief of the Maritime Administration during World War II; Colonel Henry Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy; and Major General William Wright, a World War I hero. The Alibi Club

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Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Significance (continued)

credits the recording of much of the institutions early history to a distinguished military leader who has been a member since 1929. Admiral Jerauld Wright, one-time Supreme Commander of the NATO Naval Forces (SACLANT) and Ambassador to Republic of China, has developed and maintained all of the records documenting the history of the Club's membership and the clubhouse at 1806 I Street, NW. Admiral Wright is further credited for his role in the preservation of Washington's landmark Decatur House.

Finally, the Alibi Club has included distinguished members of the profession of architecture. Among them were Jules Henri de Sibour, architect of many Washington mansions and the McCormick apartment building (now the home of the National Trust for Historic Preservation) and Frederick N. Brooke, of the Washington firm of Donn and Deming. Mr. de Sibour is credited with the design of numerous grand residences on Massachusetts Avenue and in the Dupont Circle area including--numbers 1700, 1746, and 2200 on Massachusetts Avenue, as well as the Guggenheim House at 1201 16th Street, and the Lawrence House at 2221 Kalorama Road, NW (now the French Embassy). Late in his career he built Oxon Hill Manor in Prince Georges County. Educated at the firm of Ernest Flagg and Bruce Price in New York, de Sibour completed his training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. By 1909 the number of Washington D.C. commissions had increased substantially to warrant his moving to this city. Several of his commercial and institutional commissions include the Keith-Albee Building, the Investment Building, the McLachlen Building, the Hotel Hamilton, the Racquet Club (now the University Club) and the Chevy Chase Club. Mr. Brooke's firm of Donn and Deming is credited with the designs for the Masonic Temple and the Union Trust building in downtown Washington. Mr. Brooke is specifically credited for the design of an annex addition made to the west side of the Metropolitan Club in 1923.

Throughout its history, the Alibi Club has hosted visits of numerous world leaders at its 1806 I Street home. These have included kings, queens, princes, and prime ministers alike.

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Alibi Club
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Significance (continued)

Among the early visitors were King Leopold of Belgium, Prince Albert of Belgium, the Duke of Abruzzi, Prince Henry of Prussia, and Li Hung Chang, Ambassador of China.

With so impressive a list of members and guests, the Alibi Club seems to have coveted simplicity in the informal surroundings of the clubhouse. Perhaps it is best summarized in the sign above the dining room door which calls on all who enter to leave rank and precedence behind. These club traditions are what seem to have protected much of the historic integrity of this late nineteenth-century residential structure. As this area of Washington continues to be intensely developed with high rise office buildings following a 1958 zoning decision, surviving examples of early residential architecture such as the Alibi Club building are extremely rare. This type of middle-class row house, adjacent to the core of the city, distinguished the West End until the late 1940s when the State Department, the Pan-American Regional Office, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund constructed buildings in the area. Since that time, the expansion of these institutions and the George Washington University have eroded the historic character of the once-residential locale.

Despite the building's estimated age of 125 years, it has had relatively few owners. In turn, relatively few changes have been made to the physical fabric of the building. The most recent modifications made to accommodate the institutional use were completed in the early twentieth century. These modifications to the interior spaces have taken on historic significance in their own right and greatly add to the interpretation of the Alibi Club and the historic row house it occupies.

Washington's West End was historically the center for industrial operations that located in the new capital in the late eighteenth century. Industries were attracted to this area given its

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Alibi Club
Washington, DC

Significance (continued)

proximity to the Potomac River and the military operations which were established here in the 1790s and became more permanent with the completion of the Naval Observatory in 1844. The two earliest industries beside the military were a glassworks and a brewery. Over time industry was expanded to include the earliest Washington Gas Light Company, several kilns, a wood yard, a shipyard and several factories. Commercial activity was concentrated along the water and residences began to grow up at the periphery of this district. Relatively few households were recorded by city directories in this area before 1843. However, several well-to-do residents of the early city located themselves along K Street which was the principal thoroughfare between Georgetown and the White House during this early period. Among them were Thomas Peter, son of Robert Peter of Georgetown; and two British ministers to the United States, Anthony Merry (1806) and Henry S. Fox (1840s).

By the time of Boschke's recording of the area in 1859, the I Street corridor, between 17th and 21st Street, had become substantially developed with row houses. Nearly all of square 105 was developed with the exception of the northwest corner and the southern central portion of the block. Directly across the street from 1806 I, there was a Friends meeting house, the only designated religious property in the immediate area at that time. It seems that by 1859 this area had established itself as a residential neighborhood that served as a link between the grand residences of the K Street corridor and the industrial sector of the water front. As city directories confirm, the nature of residents in the area ranged from the skilled, professional, commercial and unskilled classes. Over time the population of the area became increasingly unskilled with nearly half recorded as such in the city directory of 1860. Many of these people lived in alley dwellings built inside the large city blocks.

The decline of the area as a residential neighborhood became increasingly apparent in the early twentieth century as the water front and canal became secondary to the rail road in terms of

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Alibi Club
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Significance (continued)

importance to industry. With the introduction of major institutional developers such as the State Department, the World Bank, the World Health Organization and George Washington University after World War II, the residential character of the neighborhood became increasingly threatened.

It seems that the majority of residential structures that survive in the area today, do so because they were assumed for private institutional uses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With neighboring institutions such as the Metropolitan Club, (at 17th and H Streets from 1880), the F Street Club (at 1925 F Street since 1924) and the Arts Club of Washington (between 20th and 21st Streets on I beginning in 1919), the Alibi Club remains as one of the first clubs to establish its permanent home in this area. The story of club histories in Washington D.C. continues to unfold with ongoing research. As it does, it is important to recognize the role of leaders such as the Alibi Club in selecting this area as a center for early club activity. It is this type of property use which has ensured the protection of several landmarks in Washington's everchanging downtown.

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Alibi Club,
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Verbal boundary description

The property occupies Lot 814 within Square 105 in the District of Columbia.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The subject property has been associated with the lot in its present configuration since its construction.