

Roosevelt Base, Gatehouse  
(Building No. 40)  
Corner of Ocean Boulevard and Gate 1  
~~Naval Base Long Beach~~  
Long Beach  
Los Angeles  
California

HABS No. CA-2663-I

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

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

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROOSEVELT BASE, GATEHOUSE (Building No. 40)

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**Location:** Corner of Ocean Boulevard and Gate 1, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California.

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 11.384990.3735690

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

Building 40, a former gatehouse, is significant as a complementary structure to the original Main Gate 1 and Labor Board Building on the east. The low-pitched hip roof with red tiles and wide overhanging eaves are noted elements of the Mediterranean Revival, and the ribbon windows are noted elements of the International Style. Various changes over time have compromised its architectural integrity.

**Description:** Exterior. This rectangular one-story building, measuring 35'4" x 51', faces east. It is constructed of reinforced concrete on a reinforced concrete pile foundation. The walls are reinforced concrete, 9" thick, coated with light brown, rough-textured, sprayed-on concrete plaster. The hip roof is covered with red shingle tiles over rolled composition roofing. It has overhanging eaves, 4 feet wide, with fixed metal gutters and smooth concrete soffits. There are two original single glass doors in metal frames on the main (east) side of the building, with bronze horizontal bars with vertical bronze cylindrical hand grips, 6" long and 1" in diameter. There are no doors on the west, north, and south sides of the building.

The east side has one rectangular window with a fixed center pane flanked by casement windows in metal sash, and a window wall with 32 rectangular, 30" x 36" fixed-glass panes in metal sash, with the top row consisting of top-hinged transom windows; some of the glass panes are covered with a mylar reflective surface.

The north side has a rectangular window with a fixed center pane flanked by casement windows in metal sash, protected with a metal mesh. The west side has a set of three-pane transom windows with wire-glass panes in metal sash protected with metal bars, a modern sliding glass window in aluminum sash, and one metal sash window with a fixed center pane flanked by paired multi-pane casement windows. The south wall has paired metal sash transom windows with clear and obscured glass.

Interior. The interior floor of Building 40, with a total gross floor area of 1,578 square feet, consists of six rooms which were used for offices and storage areas. The rooms have linoleum tile floors with black rubber baseboards. The interior walls and ceiling are smooth concrete plaster; original yellow-glazed tiled walls remain in the four bathrooms. Altogether the rooms, storage area, and closet spaces have a total of 11 modern doors, some made of hollow-core wood and some of steel.

Alterations. The northeast corner was infilled in 1947 for an office. The east glass window wall panes were covered with mylar reflective surface and the exterior wall was covered with rough-textured spray-on concrete. A modern aluminum sash sliding glass window was added on the west side.

The interior rooms have been altered from three to six rooms. The former guards' entrance office/ waiting room has been partitioned to make an office lobby and a storage/ shop room to accommodate the services of a Veterinarian Clinic. The guards' dormitory room has been changed to a storage room, the detention room was converted to an office, and the passage and some of the storage closets have been re-arranged for the room additions. The original interior lights were replaced with hanging fluorescent tube lights.

Surroundings. The Gatehouse is surrounded on the north by the original Main Gate 1 and Ocean Boulevard. Across the gate entrance to the east is Building 41, set off by a green lawn and a small parking lot. To the south is Building 42, a parking lot, and Coffman Avenue; and to the west is a grassy area with mature trees.

**Historical Context:** Building 40 was built in 1942 at the cost of \$31,896. Its construction was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet anchored in San Pedro Harbor. The construction of this complex was part of a nation-wide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy, through Allied Engineers, hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the

International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

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

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

Building 40 was used as the gatehouse for gate 1. It functioned as an inspection point for pedestrians with day passes entering the Base. Originally the glass bay extended from the building's east side, providing the guard with a clear view of the gate's traffic. A second function of the building was as a Shore Patrol Detention Center. Marines assigned to the Base would bring drunk or disorderly enlisted men to the detention room for holding until the ship's personnel came for them.

The Gatehouse has had various uses over time. In addition to its gatehouse function it was used for armory offices in 1969, Administrative Offices and a Police Station in 1978-79, an Exchange Maintenance Shop in 1980 and finally in 1987, as a Veterinarian Clinic. It was closed in 1994.

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

**Sources:**

A microfilm copy of architectural drawing #1248-34-161, dated May 15, 1941, is located at Building 20, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California.

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

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

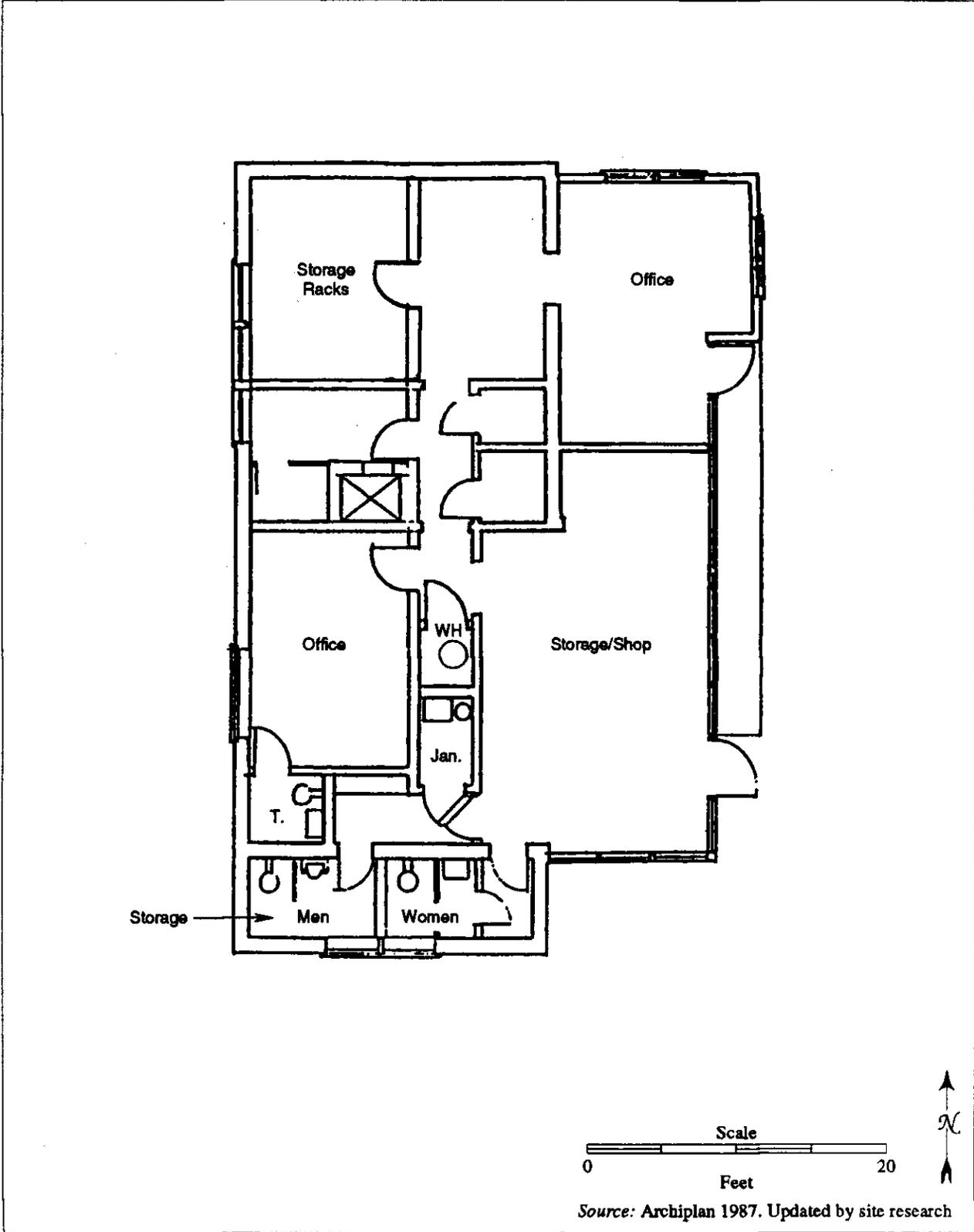
Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

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

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

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

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



LAYOUT OF BUILDING 40. 1996